



SPOKESPERSON V CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



MEDIA RELEASE

22th February, 2013
Díli, Timor-Leste

2013 State Budget of Timor-Leste unanimously approved

On Monday the 18th of February the State Budget for 2013 was approved by National Parliament with the vote of all 64 MP's present, only one MP was absent at the time of the vote. This occasion marked a new era of cooperation and maturity in the Budget Process of Timor-Leste with all four parties represented in the 65-seat parliament voting in favor. The one abstention was due to the absence of one member from the house at the time of the vote.

Following the vote to approve the Budget in Generality taken on the 6th of February, discussions turned to the specific budgets for each entity of Government. On the 7th of February, in an effort to promote consensus, a proposal to create an inclusive committee to consider proposals for amendments to the budget, was accepted by members of Parliament. This committee consisted of the President and Vice President of National Parliament, six representatives of the opposition party FRETILIN, one representative of each of the three coalition parties and Presidents (or Vice Presidents) of the Standing Committees. Government members were able to participate in the work of the committee with the constant presence, as much as possible, of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

The committee had three days to collect, discuss and decide by consensus various proposals and amendments to the 2013 Budget in order to present suggested amendments to the plenary. Their proposed changes in the Budget Law, presented on the 14th of February, were accepted by Parliament and led to the unanimous final vote on Monday evening, the 18th of February.

The budget now stands at US \$1.6 Billion, \$150 Million less than the original proposal. This net reduction is the result of \$193.3 Million in cost cutting plus \$43.3 Million in additional funding. The biggest reduction was a \$150 Million cut to the Infrastructure Fund. The additions totaling \$43.3 million were made to support areas including the District Integrated Development Plan (PDID) for small local infrastructure, special needs of the PNTL and improvements to legal services in Díli. Planned withdrawals from the Petroleum Fund during 2013 have now been reduced to be in line with the Estimated Sustainable Income (ESI) amounting to \$787 Million. In addition to these changes a clause has been placed within the Budget law stating that the Government must inform National Parliament when they approach an expenditure level of \$1.3 Billion.

The Spokesperson for the Fifth Constitutional Government, Minister of State H.E. Ágio Pereira, noted "the constructive and inclusive approach of Budget deliberations over recent days has lead to an historic unanimous vote of approval in National Parliament. In this event we see evidence of a maturing political process in Timor-Leste, one which underscores the commitment across all parties to prioritize inclusive and sustainable development for the Timorese people. With the budget approved, we now focus on effective and efficient implementation to deliver quality services and benefits for all the citizens of our Nation. Beyond the budget process, this new conjuncture highlights the fact that, on matters of national interest, the Timorese are able to stand united above the interests of respective political parties." **ENDS**



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