

Press Release

Meeting of the Council of Ministers of March 25, 2020

The Council of Ministers met at the Dili Convention Center and analyzed the Draft Civil Protection Law, presented by the Acting Minister of the Interior, Filomeno da Paixão de Jesus and the Secretary of State for Civil Protection, Alexandrino de Araújo. This Draft Law contains the fundamental principles of civil protection, defines and organizes the bases of civil protection in Timor-Leste, highlights the Civil Protection Authority, as an authority that will encompass the entire civil protection system, defines the Civil Protection National System structure at regional and municipal level. The draft Law will be examined again at a later meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The Secretary of State for Youth and Sport, Nélio Isaac Sarmento, presented a proposal for a deliberation, approved by the Council of Ministers, on the postponement of the holding of the XII Sports Games of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), scheduled to take place in Timor-Leste, between 10 and 22 July 2020. Considering the international situation, caused by the spread of COVID-19, which represents a real threat to public health and similar to what has been happening worldwide, the Government recommends postponing the holding of the XII CPLP Games to a date to be defined later and instructs the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to promote the necessary communication with the competent CPLP bodies.

The Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Fidelis Manuel Leite Magalhães, presented a draft Government Resolution, approved by the Council of Ministers, on the policy for reducing the negative economic impacts and for economic recovery resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The approved document provides for a set of measures to be implemented by the Government in a timely manner, in order to anticipate possible intervention needs, in the face of an outbreak of COVID-19 in the country. Measures envisaged include ensuring the continuity of the distribution and supply of essential goods, such as food, medicines and clinical equipment, ensuring continuity of the provision of electronic communications services and their widespread accessibility by citizens, temporary exemption from the payment of taxes and electricity and water tariffs, and the creation of credit lines at reduced interest rates and financial support for citizens and businesses. Ministers were also mandated, within the framework of the tasks of their ministries, to carry out all the initiatives and procedures necessary and appropriate for the implementation of the measures presented, in particular in the preparation of the necessary normative acts, negotiation of the necessary agreements with service operators and preparation of procurement procedures.

Following instructions given by the Prime Minister, Taur Matan Ruak, to the members of the Government, at the last meeting of the Executive, and in order to initiate a significant reduction in the presence of employees in the workplace, the Government approved a draft Government Resolution with the aim of instructing the Members of the Government and the executive bodies of public legal persons within the indirect administration of the State to identify the human resources strictly necessary to ensure the operation, under minimum services, of the public services they run. Minimum services are those whose provision is essential to ensure the functioning of the Public Administration and the provision of goods and services to citizens and businesses that are of an urgent nature or which cannot be postponed. The human resources of the public administration which are exempted from the duty of attendance in their services should remain contactable by telephone and present themselves to the services where they usually provide their professional activity whenever they are summoned by their superior. Where possible, their human resources should be allowed to provide their professional activity on a non-face-to-face basis and through new communication and information technologies. It is also recommended that the human resources of the public administration temporarily exempted from the duty of attendance in their services, adopt social isolation behaviors, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to contribute to the competent authorities in the efforts to contain the number of infections. **ENDS**