

MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS, RDTL

Press Release

14 October 2011

The 12th Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted the National Report of Timor-Leste on 14th October 2011.

The National Report, which contains the progress made and the challenges faced by Timor-Leste in the efforts to protect and promote human rights in the country, was presented by an inter-ministerial delegation, lead by H.E. Mrs. Lucia Brabdão Lobato, the Minister of Justice, on the 12th of October.

In her introductory remarks during the presentation of the report, Minister Lobato expressed Timor-Leste commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, and stated that the pursuit of human rights is historically rooted in the Timorese society. Citing the conclusion of the national Report, Minister Lobato said, "The struggle of the Timorese people to gain their Independence is, in its essence and in all its dimensions, a struggle for human rights."

During the three-hour interactive dialogue, delegations of other States raised numerous questions and recommendations. Issues raised include, among others, accountability and civilian oversight of the security forces, protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, domestic violence, treatment of religious minorities, corporal punishment, and past human rights violations.

Responding to questions regarding past human rights violations, the Minister stated, "Timor-Leste and its society needs to grow in many areas in order to be able to face its past history in a dignified and courageous manner. This time unfortunately for the victims, has not yet arrived."

From the interactive dialogue, 125 recommendations were addressed to Timor-Leste. Out of these, 46 were accepted to be implemented in the future and 42 have already been, or are in the process of implementation. Thirty-six recommendations were referred for further consideration and decision by the Government, while one recommendation was rejected. In his final remarks after the adoption of the report by the Working Group, Ambassador Joaquim da Fonseca, the Permanent representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations Office in Geneva, thanked the delegation of other States for their active participation in the review of Timor-Leste's National Report.

The Universal Periodic Review was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 as a process through which the human rights records of Member States of the United Nations are reviewed and assessed. The Government of Timor-Leste is a strong supporter of the UPR process, reflected in the seriousness of its approach to the preparation for the UPR. The preparation for the UPR was conducted by an inter-ministerial working group made up of human rights focal points and benefited from a broad participation of civil society organizations and communities. This process was coordinated by the Ministry of Justice.

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