



REDE Feto Timor Leste

Submission on the Timor-Leste Draft Petroleum Fund Act

Introduction

Rede Feto Timor Leste is a national network connecting, informing, and supporting people and organizations to improve the lives of women and girls, and advance gender equality and women's rights for sustainable development in Timor Leste.

Recognizing that the revenues from the Timor Sea's oil and gas reserves are vital not only for the country's development, but also for addressing the challenges for women's and children's development, Rede Feto organized an informative meeting on the Petroleum Fund to involve women's organizations in this important national issue. In meeting with the Government officials from the Ministry of Planning and Finance and representatives from the JPDA and Timor Sea Office, Rede Feto and its members have the following recommendations on the Draft Petroleum Fund Act.

I. Access to Information

Rede Feto suggests that to ensure that the Timorese people have a clear understanding how their natural resources are being developed and used, and how the resources are being allocated from the fund, that information be published in accessible formats and made available to Timorese people, with specific efforts to include women not only in the reporting phase, but in the planning and budgeting phase.

Recommendations:

1. That the draft Petroleum Fund legislation be amended to require that reports are made available in full to the public in Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian and English so that Timorese people can access the information and that the information be disseminated in accessible formats for rural Timorese women (such as community radio).
2. That the draft Petroleum Fund legislation be amended to require broad public consultations on the use of the Funds during the planning process.

II. Composition and Role of Independent Consultative Council

Rede Feto strongly supports the creation of the Independent Consultative Council as a watchdog and advisory body, but suggests the following measures be included in the legislation to reinforce the Council's power to fulfill this role.

Recommendations:

3. That the Draft Petroleum Fund legislation be amended to specifically include a representative from a women's organization in addition to the representative from civil society.
4. We suggest that the number of representatives on the ICC be defined in the legislation.
5. That the draft Petroleum Fund legislation be amended to empower the Council to initiate investigations and issue opinions as it sees necessary.

III. Transparency mechanisms

Rede Feto encourages strengthening the draft legislation to safeguard the management of the Petroleum Fund to support lasting transparency and accountability. If there is a system of "double disclosure" whereby the extractive companies and the Petroleum Fund must publish their payments, public understanding and confidence can be built as to the management of the fund.

Recommendation:

6. That the draft Petroleum Fund legislation be amended to require companies to publish the details of their payments to the fund.

Rede Feto
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