



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME PROGRAMA DE
MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL**

Press Release

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JSMP submits report on pardons to the Ministry of Justice

On 8 October 2010 the Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) through its Legal Research Unit submitted a report to the Ministry of Justice on the President's authority to grant pardons or commute sentences. In this proposal JSMP presented its thoughts and stance on how this issue should be addressed. The title of this report was "Competency of the President to grant pardons and commute sentences".

The Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio, explained that JSMP issued this report to propose that the government, and in particular the Ministry of Justice, should draft a law on the competency of the president to grant pardons. Also, he stated that the draft law on presidential pardons should include clear criteria to set out how the authority of the president is to be exercised, together with several other measures to ensure that the justice sector can continue to develop and provide justice to the people of Timor-Leste.

In addition, the Executive Director of JSMP stated that the proposal offered to the Ministry of Justice was aimed at helping the Ministry to draft a law on pardons so that any presidential pardons granted to prisoners will be based on the law.

The Minister of Justice, Lucia Maria Brandão Lobato, stated that her ministry was very happy to receive the report submitted by JSMP even though she was acutely aware that all reports, including those from JSMP, are critical in nature, but she believes that this is normal in a democratic nation. The Minister pledged to continue to work together with JSMP in the future so that JSMP can contribute to the drafting of a law on the issue of pardons. The Minister stated that she is willing to speak at a seminar to discuss the issue of granting pardons.

JSMP wishes to reiterate that JSMP is always ready to work together with the Government, especially the Ministry of Justice to draft a law on granting pardons; however JSMP is not in a position to make this happen in the near future, in consideration of JSMP's current resources. Nevertheless, JSMP will examine this proposal to see how JSMP can contribute to the development of the judicial system in Timor-Leste.

For more information, please contact:

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