



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

**PRESS RELEASE**

8 March 2006

## **Participation of Women in the Justice System of Timor Leste**

Article 17 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, on Equality between men and women, states that “*Women and men shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social and cultural life*”.

This statement provides a guarantee, protection and the opportunity for women to be involved in development in all areas of Timor Leste. Moreover, respect towards the dignity and human rights of all women in the world is stipulated in the UN The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Although, the government has issued a package of laws aimed at respecting and protecting the position of women, the fact is that women still face a number of problems relating to their emancipation in many areas, including the justice sector.

The Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP) is a national NGO which performs judicial monitoring, legal analysis and prepares thematic reports on the judicial system. Monitoring conducted by JSMP in all district courts in Timor Leste has found that the participation of women in the judicial system and police is good in some areas but needs improvement. This is evident from the composition of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police in decision making and the judicial system in Timor Leste.

Statistics obtained from the Human Resource Department of the PNTL show that on a national level:

- There are 569 women within the PNTL (around 20% of the total) including women in positions such as Police Inspector, Sub-Inspector and Agent. Also women hold positions within the police force such as Director of the Human Resources Department, Deputy Director of Administration and Planning, Deputy District Commander, Deputy of Criminal Investigations and Head of Administration. One female member of the PNTL has been given the opportunity to be involved in an international peace mission overseas;
- There are five women (two national Judges and three International Judges) out of 10 judges who are practising now;
- There 14 women among 61 private lawyers;
- Currently, there are 27 people who are being trained to be Judges, Prosecutors and Public Defenders. There are 9 women among these 27 attendees; and
- The Judicial Training Centre has currently accepted 15 attendees to enter first phase of selection to be considered for the positions of Judges, Prosecutors and Public Defenders. There are 4 women among 15 candidates.

Therefore, with great pleasure JSMP welcomes the celebration of the 8 March as International Women’s Day . Through this International Women’s Day. JSMP would also

**JSMP**

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like to demonstrate its own support, and invite every component of this nation to support the efforts being carried out by women in Timor Leste to:

- a) Improve the status and role of women in all aspects of nation and state through policies implemented by institutions who are capable of pursuing and achieving gender equality and justice; and
- b) Improve the quality and independence of women's organizations by continuing to uphold values of unity and integrity as well as the historical significance of the struggle of women, in efforts to continue to empower and improve the welfare of family and community.

Finally, JSMP sends its warm regards to every woman in the whole world, in particular women in East Timor. JSMP and the Women's Justice Unit would like to extend a happy regards to celebrate International Women's Day and we hope that the issue of gender will continue to grow in importance and spread into every aspect of national and state life in this democratic country.

**For more information:**

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