



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press Release

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**President of the Court of Appeal requests JSMP to
continue its monitoring of the justice sector**

On 3 April 2014 a team from JSMP (Judicial System Monitoring Program) met with the new President of the Court of Appeal, Guilhermino da Silva, in his office.

“This important meeting enabled JSMP to inform the President of the Court of Appeal about the role of JSMP and its findings in the justice sector, and to discuss the possibility of cooperation, support and involvement of judges from the Court of Appeal in future JSMP activities” said Luis de Oliveira Sampaio, Executive Director of JSMP.

The main objective of this meeting was for JSMP to congratulate the President of the Court of Appeal on his appointment. JSMP also used this opportunity to discuss its findings based on court monitoring and complaints from the community, and its proposal to establish a mechanism to improve communication with, and public access to the Court of Appeal. JSMP developed this proposal in response to a wide range of public complaints about very limited access to the Court of Appeal.

The President of the Court of Appeal explained that there are no legal provisions that oblige the court to provide public access on a regular basis to case statistics and documents, including decisions from the Court of Appeal. However, if a particular party, institution or the media has some specific interest, the court will generally make the cases in question available to the public. In relation to complaints that the outcomes of appeals are often not conveyed to the parties, the President of the Court of Appeal emphasized that it was the responsibility of lawyers and public defenders to communicate with their clients about the developments or resolution of a case they are handling.

During the meeting, JSMP emphasized the importance of ongoing legal training programs at the Judicial Training Centre and professional development for private lawyers, including the establishment of a mechanism to enable law graduates to apply for and take part in training. The President of the Court of Appeal said he would discuss this matter with the Ministry of Justice which is responsible for considering these programs.

The President of the Court of Appeal also requested that JSMP continue monitoring the justice sector to improve the performance of the justice system, and that JSMP participate in short term training organized at the Judicial Training Centre.

The meeting concluded with JSMP providing copies of recent JSMP publications to the President of the Court of the Appeal, including the *Overview of the Justice Sector 2012*, *Parliament Watch Project Annual Report 2012*, and its thematic report *Law Against Domestic Violence: Obstacles to implementation three years on*.

For more information, please contact:

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