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***Press Release***  
***National Parliament***  
**17 September 2014**

## **President urges parliament to amend the Pension Law for Ex-State Officials and to Pass the Anti-Corruption Law**

On 15 September 2014 President Taur Matan Ruak urged the National Parliament to prioritize the discussion and passage of the draft Anti-Corruption Law, the draft Land Law, the draft Law on State Protocol and to amend the Law on Pensions for Ex-State Officials.

The President made this statement during a ceremony to mark the return to work of the third legislature of the National Parliament after a recess of one month. The President stated that, in order to eradicate corruption, the Anti-Corruption Law needs to be strengthened and he also recommended the amendment of other laws that provide benefits to the people, such as the Law on Pensions for Ex- State Officials and other laws.

“JSMP supports the appeal made by the President because, until now, the National Parliament has not had a national legislative plan to identify legislative priorities for each year. It will be very difficult for the National Parliament if there is no national policy on legislative priorities,” said Luis de Oliveira Sampaio, the Executive Director of JSMP.

JSMP believes that when the National Parliament develops a national legislative plan, this will enable the National Parliament to identify legislative priorities for each year. This includes amending the Law on Pensions for Ex-State Officials (*Lifelong Pension Law*) and the Anti-Corruption Law, which is often debated by members of parliament through their political statements in the parliament, without supporting legislative interventions or concrete actions to strengthen the relevant institutions.

In his welcome address, the President stated that corruption hurts and undermines the State because it discourages foreign investment and leads to

institutional instability. Therefore, President Taur encouraged the strengthening of criminal investigations and stated that the courts must be strong to deal with corruption, and must be able to work independently without interference.

The President recognizes the criticism of him about the pardons he recently gave to several convicted persons on the anniversary of referendum day. However, the President stated that justice does not only involve punishing people. Rather, the law aims to rehabilitate and contribute to the reintegration of convicted persons into society. Therefore, pardons are not an intervention in the work of the courts and justice, but rather the exercise of competence granted to the President in the Constitution.

The President also touched on other issues in his welcome speech, including political and social unity, economic reform, health, education, gender, infrastructure and veterans.

The President appealed to all components of the nation, and men in particular, to reject violence against women, to promote family harmony through education and health to build strong families, and to contribute to developing families' livelihoods.

The President delivered this message because many women are victimized by their husbands who are supposed to protect their wives and children. Women are victims of all kinds of domestic violence, including simple and serious assault, and even acts of cruelty in their own home.

The ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet, diplomatic representatives and civil society.

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