



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

National Parliament

Press Release

18 July 2023

JSMP presents its findings at the National Parliament on the V Legislature:

President of the National Parliament requests for JSMP to continue contributing towards improving the work of the Parliament

On 13 July 2023 the JSMP Team met with the President of the National Parliament, Her Excellency MP Maria Fernanda Lay, in her meeting room, Office of the President, National Parliament. The JSMP team comprised the Executive Director, Ms. Paula Marçal, Program Manager, Mr. Casimiro dos Santos, Coordinator of the LRU & UTA Unit, Ms. Flora S. Menezes, Coordinator of the POP Unit, Jose Pereira, Senior Officer for Advocacy, Mr. Jose Moniz, Researcher, Observer of National Parliament, Mr. Mateus Xavier and Ms. Eurosia Almeida.

The main aim of this meeting was first to congratulate the President of the Parliament and her new structure, including the Heads of each Bench and the Presidents of the Specialised Standing Committees of the VI Legislature. Secondly, a short introduction was provided about the work of JSMP and finally a presentation was made summarizing information about the activities of the V Legislature of the National Parliament with recommendations for the VI Legislature of the National Parliament.

“JSMP really appreciates the consideration given by the new President of the National Parliament, Her Excellency MP Fernanda Maria Lay, to the written request to have a meeting with JSMP and to promptly hold this meeting. JSMP hopes that the new leadership can create a new environment in the National Parliament in terms of the work and functioning of the parliament, to make it more effective and efficient in terms of law making, oversight and political decision making according to the constitutional mandate. JSMP also hopes that that the thoughts, comments and recommendations regarding the justice sector and legislative sector, that were made both orally and in written form and submitted during this meeting, can be given consideration to make improvements and changes in the future,” said the Executive Director off JSMP, Ms. Ana Paula Marçal.

Also, in this meeting the Executive Director of JSMP passed on congratulations from JSMP to the President of the National Parliament as a woman who has been entrusted to assume the role of President of the National Parliament to lead this second organ of sovereignty in the State of Timor-Leste. In addition, congratulations were also given to members of the Chair of the National Parliament, the Parliamentary Benches, including the Specialised Standing Committees in this VI Legislature.

During this meeting JSMP also conveyed JSMP findings based on monitoring at the National Parliament during the V Legislature to the President of the National Parliament. These points were the issue of punctuality relating to members of parliament, productivity, the National Legislation Program, public participation in the law making process, not enough time given for public consultation and summaries in Tetum of the contents of draft laws to facilitate public access to these draft laws, and the lack of a rule to oversee execution of the State budget and Government programs at the grassroots level.

JSMP also recommended for the VI Legislature to consider recommendations made by JSMP to continue improving the work of members of parliament in the future to increase the productivity and quality of the discussion process regarding legislation to produce laws that respond to the reality in Timor-Leste.

Meanwhile, the President of the National Parliament thanked and expressed appreciation to JSMP for its work to date to monitor the justice sector and the National Parliament. The President of the National Parliament requested for JSMP to continue contributing towards improving the work of the Parliament. JSMP is a strong partner who will observe the work of the Parliament in order to make constructive recommendations to further improve the work of the Parliament during the mandate of the VI Legislature.

Lastly the President of the Parliament also made a request for JSMP to meet with the President every six months to share thoughts or information about the Parliament and issues in the justice sector.

Finally, JSMP also submitted annual reports relating to the legislative sector and the justice sector including thematic reports and opinions, namely:

Legislative sector reports:

- Annual report on the National Parliament 2022¹.
- A summary of information on the “Work and Functioning of the National Parliament during the V Legislature and Recommendations for the VI Legislature”².
- Thematic Report - Observations on Electoral Campaigns and the 2023 Parliamentary Elections³.
- Thematic Report on the Amendment of Article 1475 of the Civil Code on the Recognition of Marriage: Legalising Religious Discrimination and Human Rights Violations⁴.

¹ The complete report is available on the JSMP website: <https://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/Relatoriu-POP-2022-final-print-25-Abril-2023.pdf>

² The complete report is available on the JSMP website: <https://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/Sumariu-serbisu-no-funsiamentu-PN-V-ho-rekomendasaun-ba-VI.pdf>

³ The complete report is available on the JSMP website: https://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/Relatoriu-ElPar-2023_TETUM.pdf

Justice Sector Reports:

- 2022 Annual Report on the Judicial Sector.
- Research Report “Harmonization of the age of minors in the Penal Code and Civil Code”⁵.
- Justice Update “Difference between the Interpretation and Application of Article 145 of the Penal Code and Article 154 of the Penal Code in Cases of Domestic Violence”⁶.

Legal Opinions:

- Draft of the Law Acknowledging Religion and Religious Freedom.
- Alternative Structure of the Draft on the Law Acknowledging Religion and Religious Freedom.

In relation to JSMP’s opinion on the draft law Acknowledging Religion and Religious Freedom with an alternative structure and the thematic report on the amendment of Article 1475 of the Civil Code, the President of the Parliament said that she would submit them to the Specialised Standing Committee that is responsible for these issues.

For more information, please contact:

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⁴ The complete report is available on the JSMP website: https://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/Relatoriu-tematika-Artigu-1475-KS_TETUM.pdf

⁵ The complete report is available on the JSMP website: <https://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/JSMP-Product-Report.pdf>

⁶ The complete report is available on the JSMP website: https://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/JSMP-AtualizasaunJustica_TETUM-1.pdf