



## JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME

### PROGRAMA DE MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL

#### *Press Release*

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#### **JSMP Launches New Program “Parliament Watch Project” (PWP)**

For almost ten years the Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) has been committed to its role monitoring the judicial system, advocating for human rights and improving the Timorese public’s understanding of international human rights standards, particularly in relation to the right to a fair trial.

This year, with support from USAID through The Asia Foundation (TAF), JSMP is launching its new initiative, the **“Parliament Watch Project (PWP)”**. The project will involve JSMP monitoring the Parliament and disseminating information with the aim of increasing the quality, transparency and accessibility of the legislative process. A key component will be undertaking activities designed to increase the ability of the public and civil society to understand and participate the legislative process. JSMP hopes that this project will also assist Members of Parliament to improve communication with their constituents and to gain a deeper appreciation of the importance of accountability, transparency and consultation in the legislative system.

JSMP recognizes that the National Parliament is a new institution and that other international and national organizations have been working in the area of parliament monitoring. JSMP looks forward to working with the National Parliament and other civil society institutions to deepen observation and analysis of the Parliament’s work, and increase opportunities for the public to access information and participate in the legislative system.

The PWP will involve monitoring a range of parliamentary activities including: Plenary Sessions of the National Parliament, meetings of Parliamentary Committees, Public Hearings and the activities of Members of Parliament. It will also involve writing about specific draft laws that will have an especially significant impact on communities and their needs. JSMP also wants to assist the public to be involved in the consultation processes surrounding draft laws, to enable members of the public to put forward their aspirations and hopefully to see these opinions incorporated in the laws that will directly affect their lives.

By organising workshops in the districts, JSMP will assist the public and civil society to increase their knowledge about the legislative process and the ways that they can participate. JSMP will also strategically choose a number of specific draft laws that have a significant impact for the public to be the subject of a series of ‘Focus Group Discussions’ (FGD). These FGDs will be held prior to a draft law being approved so that participants can understand the law and contribute to the consultation process. After each FGD, JSMP will assist representatives from the FGD come to Dili to observe the work of Parliament and provide their contributions directly to the legislative process.

With the launch of this new project, JSMP looks forward to contributing to the promotion of democratic values in Timor-Leste. JSMP hopes that in the future all citizens will have access to information about their political and legislative processes and will have maximal opportunities to participate in the development of their nation. JSMP also hopes that this project will assist Members of Parliament to communicate effectively with their constituents and to appreciate the value of the people’s voices as the voices of democracy, which everyone praises with the well known words: *government of the people, by the people, for the people.*

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