

UNDP Timor-Leste **ELECTORAL PROJECT**

Newsletter

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PROJECT UPDATES

Findings of Disability Access Monitoring for National Elections 2017 released

Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO) with UNDP Electoral Project- LEARN and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) have released a report on Disability Access Monitoring for 2017 National Elections. This report provides the status and findings on the accessibility of people of disabilities in the political and electoral processes. Through this report, recommendations are provided to the Government, Election Management Bodies (EMBs), Political Parties and its Candidates and other Disabled Persons Organisations to address the issues and challenges faced by people with disabilities.

For Disability Access Monitoring Programme, RHTO deployed 12 Medium-term and 130 Election-Day monitors covering 44 political party campaigns and 124 polling stations respectively. Trainings and orientation were provided on different aspects of electoral processes, conducting interviews with voters and using checklists.

The findings in the report suggest the need for the EMBs to have an overall strategy for dealing with disability access to elections. While monitoring the campaign events for the parliamentary elections, it showed that 82% of the campaign venues were not accessible to people with disabilities and only in 21% of the events, the speakers mentioned about their issues. Out of the 33 political campaigns monitored only one event had sign language interpreter.

On Election-Day report highlights the barrier to the people with physical disabilities while accessing the polling



stations of which 69% had no ramp and 79% with some form of obstacles restricting them the accessibility. 63% of polling stations monitored the placement of the voting compartments was not suitable for wheelchair. The monitors observed 253 voters with disabilities being assisted to vote out of which, 76% were allowed to freely choose who will assist them to cast their ballot which, was in line with the law.

Timor-Leste according to the 2015 National Census, 3.2% (38,118 persons) of the total population of 1.18 million are identified as having some form of disability. UNDP Electoral Project- LEARN with IFES through Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DEFAT) supported RHTO, to conduct the Disability Access Monitoring in 12 municipalities and One Autonomous Region of Oe-Cusse.



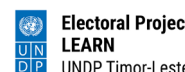
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FACTS & FIGURES



3.2%
of population
have a disability



94%
polling stations
provided priority to vote



31%
No stairs
or a ramp



67%
voted without
difficulty/assistance



64%
Obstacle free
voting area



47%
political campaign event
materials were accessible

Project Launches Comprehensive Training for Strengthening the Capacity of Journalists

Promoting democracy and development through strengthening the capacity of journalists of Timor-Leste has been one of the UNDP LEARN Project's key intervention through political journalism component. The focus has been on improving the capacity of journalists serving in key media such as print, broadcast and online, encouraging them for widespread political engagement. It has been working together with stakeholders to enhance civic awareness and knowledge of voters through media actors.

The project has been working together with Press Council of Timor-Leste which was established as an independent state body in 2016 to promote and protect the freedom of press and expression in accordance of the constitution. Previously, during the parliamentary elections, both entities together with a TV channel implemented an event "Political Party Meet the Press" providing journalists to directly interact with the political parties and their leaders. During the event, it was assessed that journalists have

low capacity in political reporting particularly on socio-political matters and utilizing data and evidence.

Therefore, capacity building of the journalists was needed to enhance their professional journalism skills; critical thinking on socio-political matters; on-site observation and interviewing; and organising TV debate with political party representatives. A Comprehensive training programme is organised to address such need. UNDP Electoral Project-LEARN and Press Council is implementing six months training programme for journalists which includes two modules every week. This activity is conducted with the partnership UNESCO.



Project Award Grants to CSOs for Raising Awareness on Women Political Participation

Grants are provided to create an enabling environment for civil society organisations (CSOs), specialized in gender equality and gender mainstreaming, to assist political parties to perform their capacity-building activities for female politicians. It aims to strengthened the women political leaders analytical skills and critical thinking to ensure women's meaningful participation in all levels of decision-making. The civil society organisations will raise awareness within the public and political stakeholders about the positive impact of women's political participation.

UNDP LEARN project through these grants is supporting civil society organisations in making the political sphere more gender-friendly and welcoming to female political actors, integrating gender equality into party platforms especially at the time of municipal elections. Although there has been increase of women as Suco Chiefs in the 2016 Suco elections, the proportion of their representation in comparison to male counterpart is quite low. Therefore, awareness programme for increasing women participation at all level is utmost important and civil society organisations can fulfill the role.

Community Radio Journalists trained on Community Engagement

A six-days training to the community radio journalists has been provided with the aim of strengthening their capacity in three main areas- access to political information; radio journalism and community engagement. The training took place on 2-6 October in Dili for the journalists of community radios from Dili, Liquica, Aileu, Manatuto, and Ainaro. Okinawa Peace Assistance Center (OPAC), Timor-Leste Media Development Center (TLMDC), Radio Rakambia conducted this training to journalists with the

support from UNDP Electoral Project- LEARN. The journalists after the training are able to identify, research and provide information on civic education to wide range of audience in their community through their radio stations. They have been capacitated to understand different approaches to gather information and engage with communities to generate contents especially on civic education for the radio programme.



Radio Equipment procured for SECMCOMS

As part of the proposed activity to the Government of Japan, the project has completed the procurement of the radio equipment for Secretary of State for Council of the Ministers and Social Communication (SECMCOMS) to conduct outreach activities in remote communities. SECMCOMS with this equipment are installed in the vehicles and will conduct activities on civic education and air community radio programmes in areas where the reach is low and information is out of reach of people.



EMBs Participates in BRIDGE Workshop in the Philippines

As part of support of capacity building of the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) UNDP LEARN Project is providing support to STAE and CNE to participate in the United Nations Workshop on Electoral Observation/Round Table Discussion on Women's Political Participation to be held in the Philippines from 4-6 December. The president of CNE Dr. Alcino de Araujo Baris and Director General of STAE Mr. Acilino Branco will attend the three days event.

The workshop on Electoral Observation will be through a modular professional development program called BRIDGE designed to be used as a tool within a broader capacity-development framework on electoral matters. The two-day workshop will be immediately followed by one day Round Table Discussion for sharing best practices on promoting women's participation in electoral and political processes.

Continuous Voter Registration Begins Nationwide

Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) has commenced the continuous voter registration at the municipal level in all 12 municipalities and one Autonomous Region of Oe-Cusse. STAE has deployed necessary logistics including personnel. This registration process would also give opportunity to voters to correct their domicile if they have relocated to another place. UNDP LEARN Project is supporting the EMB to develop and disseminate public information campaigns for the continuous registration of the voters especially targeting the first-time and young voters.



UNDP Leveraging Electoral Assistance for Regionalized Nation-Building (LEARN)

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