



**REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE
MINISTÉRIO DAS FINANÇAS**

Media Release

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Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste proceeds with telecommunications reform

The Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste, Ms. Emilia Pires, has met with Timor Telecom today to encourage joint cooperation with Government plans to reform telecommunications. Timor Telecom was awarded a monopoly concession contract in 2002 under the previous Government for a fifteen year period.

In March, The Government announced plans to establish a taskforce charged with developing a new and progressive telecommunications policy to spur economic development. By planning to open the industry to free market competition, the Government hopes the result will be to increase investment into communications infrastructure offering citizens better delivery, lower costs, and increased services.

Ms. Pires has today formally invited Timor Telecom to engage in consultation on the reforms, encouraging shareholders “to enter into discussions in a constructive way in order to consolidate the image of the company and to show that it wishes to remain in Timor-leste, not just for the remaining years of the concession, but indefinitely into the future.”

In early 2008, it was estimated telephone penetration was approximately 9%, of the population one of the lowest rates in the world for comparable countries. Internet connections are not available at speeds for professional use, and ‘broadband’ services cost between US\$500 to US\$3.450 per month depending on connection speed.

Pires noted the objective of the reform is to provide fair and accessible telecommunications for the people of Timor-Leste which can only be achieved by fostering a competitive environment within a free market, the life blood of any democracy.

The Government intends to undertake significant public consultation in developing the most effective regulatory framework for the people of East Timor and anticipates widespread support from them. Telecommunications reform is just one amongst a series of planned reforms across sectors of the economy to improve the conditions of the nation. **ENDS**

For further information please contact: Ms Ines Almeida, mobile: +670 723 0032