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Press Release

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**U.S. Embassy, the Government of Timor-Leste and Bayu-Undan Joint Ventures Honor
Timorese Academic Exchange Program Scholars**

More than 100 Timorese recipients of the J. William Fulbright Scholarship, the Fulbright-SERN Scholarship, the United States-Timor-Leste (USTL) Scholarship, and other programs received special recognition during a celebratory event at Timor Plaza on February 7, 2020.



The six recipients of this year's Fulbright Scholarship

U.S. Ambassador Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick joined the representative of Autoridade Nacional do Petróleo e Minerais Minerals (ANPM), Mr Oscar Faria, ConocoPhillips Timor-Leste representative Robin Araújo, and other distinguished guests at the reception. The event featured six (6) outstanding Timorese who will depart over the next several months for their Fulbright and Fulbright-SERN funded studies in the United States. Ms. Maria Barreto Gama received a

Fulbright Scholarship. Mr. Atanasio Pereira Xavier, Mr. Januario Riberio da Costa, Mr. Nelson Mesquita, Mr. Shobari Guterres Nunes, and Mr. Gregorio do Rosario Pinto received this year's Fulbright-SERN Scholarships. The students will pursue master's degrees at various U.S. universities.

In her remarks, Ambassador Fitzpatrick noted the importance of education for Timor-Leste's future. "Education initiatives such as this bring us closer to meeting our shared goals, and I believe that young Timorese are ready to meet the challenges we face." She also noted the high level of dedication these scholars show to their country, saying, "One of the reasons our talented recipients were selected for this scholarship is because they embody President John F. Kennedy's famous quote: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.'"

The U.S. Embassy and its partners will continue efforts to broaden Timorese participation in these programs as an effective means to strengthen bilateral ties while fostering security and economic growth in Timor-Leste. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs sponsors the Fulbright Foreign Student Program and the USTL Scholarship Program, with additional support from the Bayu-Undan Joint Ventures for the Fulbright-SERN Graduate Scholarship.

ConocoPhillips, on behalf of the Bayu-Undan Joint Venture partners, are proud to have partnered with the ANPM and the U.S. Embassy on this valuable program. As part of the Timor-Leste local content commitment, the Bayu-Undan project has contributed to date USD\$1.3 million to the Fulbright-SERN scholarship program, contributing to the development of human resources in Timor-Leste.

To date, 20 Timorese students have successfully graduated from the program in their respective fields related to petroleum and minerals areas from their chosen university across the U.S. Many of them have returned and contributed towards the development of the country in various public and private sectors.

Robin Araújo, representing ConocoPhillips at the event, said "Today, we are proud to welcome another graduate from Fulbright-SERN, Gisel Borges, who completed his Master in Geology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and returned to Timor-Leste on 24 December 2019. Likewise, we wish every success to six Fulbright recipients who will be departing to U.S. this year. We hope you make good use of your time there and be good Timor-Leste ambassadors in the United States."

The ANPM, on behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, appreciates the collaborative efforts to continue awarding outstanding Timorese with scholarships from the prestigious Fulbright-SERN Program for the fifth batch in 2020. "We thank the Government of the United States of America, ConocoPhillips and Bayu-Undan Joint Ventures for showing commitment to the program by awarding Fulbright-SERN Scholarships to these five (5) excellent Timorese today," said president of ANPM, Mr Gualdino da Silva in his remarks on the event. "We believe this is an excellent opportunity for selected Timorese nationals to pursue greater academic achievement in oil and gas-related fields of study in the United States to continue contributing to the development of Timor-Leste." This program has been implemented successfully and has contributed significantly to the human capital development of Timor-Leste particularly in the petroleum, natural resources, and energy related fields." Mr Oscar Faria, representing the ANPM at the event, added that, "With ongoing cooperation between all relevant partners in achieving the goal of the SERN-Fulbright program, an increased number of qualified Timorese will work in the energy sector and other fields in the coming years. At the end of the program we will have 26 qualified, Fulbright graduates Timorese. The ANPM on behalf of the government appreciates and grateful with the good cooperation with ConocoPhillips and the U.S Embassy in Timor-Leste throughout the implementation of the program."

More information about these scholarships and other exchanges is available on the U.S. Embassy [website](#) and ANPM [website](#).



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