

FORUM ONG TIMOR LESTE THE TIMOR LESTE NGO FORUM



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Statement by NGOs

Timor-Leste and Development Partners' Meeting

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We thank the Ministry of Finance for enabling the voices of NGOs to be heard at this forum and through civil society participation in formulating and monitoring the 2010 national priorities. We recognize that the National Planning process has started to bring a rhythm to annual planning processes and that indicators are increasingly achievable, although we worry that focusing exclusively on short-term sectoral priorities may reduce attention to longer-term, integrated needs and solutions.

We therefore **welcome the Government's** upcoming presentation of the Strategic Development Plan - bringing a longer term vision to post-crisis Timor-Leste. However, we are concerned that mistakes made while formulating first 5 year strategic plan are being repeated: that government officials are writing the plan internally, without involving civil society or people in the districts. We urge the government to make this truly a national plan, with input from a variety of people and sectors, before it is implemented, and we hope that a timetable and process for consultation and Parliamentary approval will be made available together with the draft plan, in the next week or two *We urge all partners to ensure that public consultation and involvement reaches beyond Dili and NGOs.*

Since no information has been shared with us about the Strategic Development Plan, we have arranged our comments according to the 2010 national priorities

NP1 Infrastructure

Roads and infrastructure

Infrastructure, especially rural roads, transport, sanitation, social services, water, energy and communications, are the key to enabling the rural population of Timor to contribute to nation building and state building, and we **applaud the government's** recognition of and investment in this.

We hope that the 2009 *Pakote Referendum* will be used as a learning experience – that unplanned, off-budget, unspecified, poorly-overseen small projects cannot substitute for a national infrastructure plan which identifies priority needs and projects and integrates them into Timor-Leste's **national** requirements. Infrastructure construction should have the requisite Parliamentary budgetary approval, clear Terms of Reference, and transparent, open tendering processes. The emphasis should be creating

lasting improvements in people's lives, not on temporary repairs or providing cash for start-up local companies. Subsidies for business development may be appropriate – and could be done through the Ministry of Economy and Development, Social Solidarity or State Secretariat for Vocational Training and Employment – but they should not be confused with the construction of capital infrastructure, which **must be well planned and implemented to serve our people's long-term needs.**

And when roads have been built and water systems installed, what of their maintenance? Community involvement takes time but it is the key to sustainable rural infrastructure. *We recommend that the government invests in building community skills in order to secure community ownership of their local infrastructure.*

Heavy Oil

Energy supply, including electricity, is important to people's lives. Although we share the Prime Minister's dream that people across Timor-Leste should have lights and other benefits of electricity, we fear that the heavy oil power plant, even if it works, is an unreliable, expensive, import-dependent, temporary, polluting way to reach for that goal. We believe that it can be achieved with an integrated, decentralized system, and we encourage policy-makers to use Timor-Leste's own renewable resources – wind, solar, hydroelectric, biogas, gas and oil seeps and others – in a planned, coordinated, long-lasting energy policy which will meet our people's current and future needs without destroying the local or global environment or sending hundreds of millions of dollars to China.

Water

Diarrhea is the leading cause of under 5 child deaths in Timor-Leste, accounting for 22% of a total of 5000 children that die every year. The average Timorese child has 2-5 cases of diarrhea each year, causing suffering and growth stunting. Significant improvements can be achieved through total sanitation coverage, which would cost \$2 million for each of the next 6 years. Although the government has given top priority to water supply, rural sanitation remains under funded, with less than \$300,000 allocated for sanitation in 2010. *We recommend investing of \$2m per year in sanitation starting in 2011.*

NP2 Food Security

Timor Leste is a rural country. About 80% of our population lives in rural areas and relies on agriculture, forestry and fisheries for their livelihoods. In the districts, agriculture represents 95% of what is produced, yet food insecurity is still widespread. Agriculture is the foundation of Timorese society and economy, and we fully support the second Nat. Priority of Food Security with a focus on Productivity, and encourage its expansion to include **food sovereignty our people's ability to feed themselves.**

Reducing dependence on subsidized white rice

Increasing food prices have threatened food security and food, leading the Government to subsidize rice imports. This approach is not sustainable and will continue to stifle local food production. Although white rice has become the preferred staple of many Timorese, it has very little nutritional value, especially for women and children. Donors and the GoTL should support diversifying food production to other staples including corn, cassava and potatoes, increasing local food production while reducing subsidies over time.

More focus on community and household based agricultural systems

Government and donors should help rural Timorese people overcome food insecurity and gain greater access to nutrient-dense foods by supporting longer term low-cost organic agriculture at family and community levels, including on-farm seed storage, kitchen gardens, composting and integrated crop

management. Market and transportation links would encourage farmers to produce more food than their families consume, generating cash income in rural areas. We would like to see the GoTL take the lead in research and experimentation on weed control for rural farmers. We applaud the reduced use of subsidized hybrid rice seeds, which are expensive, create a dependence on external suppliers, and cannot be replanted.

Having said this, we also recognize that the development of these agricultural systems needs to be aligned with **the communities' and GoTL's capacity to implement, monitor and sustain them.**

Chemicals

The use of chemical inputs in agriculture will have long-term negative consequences for Timor-Leste's land, environment and farmers. We ask the GoTL and donors to give more support to organic agriculture techniques, which is better for the land and environment and produces more nutritious food.

Food security and nutrition are linked

In achieving food security, we would appreciate more attention to Nutrition. This is not automatic, and often nutritious food is sold to obtain money to purchase less healthy food such as noodles, candy and rice and non food items. Linking nutrition to food security programs would ensure that children are eating locally-produced, quality food.

Improving livelihoods of (non-rice) farmers by increasing their market access

Timor-Leste should support farmers who grow crops other than rice in order to increase food sovereignty. Many coffee farmers in Ermera, for example, feel they have not gotten enough attention, and wish they could access training on improving quality and enhancing producing and marketing to improve their livelihoods.

NP3 Human Resource Development

Basic School governance / management and better qualified teachers

NGOs have been fully participating in Government efforts to ensure that teachers are qualified. *We suggest that GoTL work with NGOs and teacher associations to develop a teachers training framework focusing on inclusive child-friendly teaching & learning methodology, classroom management, lesson preparation and student evaluation.*

Many teachers struggle to deliver specialize subject matter with confidence. This lack of confidence also undermines their ability to teach creatively. *We recommend that, in partnership with NGOs, that specific, subject-based, in-service training be devised and delivered by the Ministry of Education and qualified partners to teachers in their own school environment.*

Teachers are pivotal and respected, bringing their leadership skills and education to their students and to their communities. In order to encourage teachers to feel and act like the professionals that they are, *we propose that additional equipment and transport support be provided to teachers.*

Increased school enrolment and retention

The installation of new suco councils presents an important opportunity to engage local authorities in increasing enrolment and preventing school drop-out. *We urge the Ministry of Education to work with the Ministry of State Administration to train local authorities as key influencers in promoting the importance of education and motivating parents to keep children in school.*

Children in rural areas are raised speaking their local language. Internationally, educators recognize the importance of having early education rooted in mother tongue. *We recommend that the importance of learning in mother tongue be recognized in the planned national language policy, particularly in relation to Early Childhood Education and early years Primary.*

We urge increased use of Tetum in schools, as one means of increasing children's understanding and making curriculum content more relevant to their lives.

This will cause more students to pass their classes and stay in school.

Teachers have little understanding of why children, particularly girls, drop out of school. We recommend that the management of teachers address teacher behaviour and teaching methodology to reduce girl's dropping out. *We recommend that Teachers develop a code of conduct for their behavior, based on **the teachers'** competencies already identified by the Ministry of Education.*

Early Childhood Education is critical for the development of young children, giving them the head start that all children deserve. Most of the few pre-primaries in Timor-Leste are concentrated in cities, and children more remote areas rarely have access. This in turn affects their retention and repetition of grades when they enter basic schools. The government should educate parents on the importance of ECE. *We urge GoTL to work with the Church and NGOs to give the best start to these children by showing their commitment to pre-primary education by allocating sufficient human and financial resources.*

The school feeding programme provides a vital boost to children's nutrition. However, the current programme's main objective is not nutrition, to encourage parents to send their children to school. *We recommend that the Ministry of Education work with the Ministry of Health to evaluate and improve the nutritional benefits of this programme, which should be expanded to pre-primary and nutritionally vulnerable children with the support of parents.*

We further recommend that Ministry of Education work with Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs to increase the use of locally produced food in schools.

We commend the government's commitment to literacy, particularly for adult women as a means to increasing participation. However, *we counsel that criteria for evaluating literacy programs should be carefully reviewed to ensure that participants are able to develop functional literacy.*

Young women and men successfully complete labour market orientated vocational training with employment outcomes.

NGOs who provide non-formal and vocational training for youth struggle to find funding for their programs. We recommend that SEFOPE and donors involve NGOs in the vocational training network to enable training in rural areas, where there are limited service providers.

Since Timor-Leste hopes that an LNG plant and other petroleum facilities will play a key role in our future economy, *we urge government and donors to increase resources and attention to science, maths and technical education in Timor-Leste at the secondary and tertiary levels.*

We acknowledge the Government and donor efforts to provide training for youth in business and industrial development, both in Timor Leste and abroad. *We recommend that the Government provides motivation and support to those returning to help them to establish small businesses and industries, creating jobs and promoting economic development.*

Boost youth participation and creativeness and build civic and arts culture

Youth Centers and District Youth Councils need better facilities so that they can develop effective projects based on guidelines from the State Secretariat of Youth and Sports in areas such as capacity building, conflict resolution, civic education, sports and arts, and child protection. Neutrality and gender balance are particularly important. *We recommend that SEFOPE supports Youth Center projects that generate possibilities for Center self reliance.*

Donors should support Government initiatives in involve youth with participation, creativeness and civil/arts culture, drawing on the experience of NGOs/civil society organisations who have run such programs in the community, and involve them in the planning phase. The Youth Parliament (YP) program should be clearly socialized to NGOs before it is implemented. The Secretary of State for Youth and Sport and the Ministry of State Administration should coordinate more closely, as both are implementing large-scale youth participation programs: Youth Parliament and the Program Dezensolvimentu Joventude (PDJ), through apparently different mechanisms.

NP 4 Access to Justice

Justice for past human rights violations

We are very concerned about accountability for past human rights. Again, we welcome the resolution from Parliament to follow up on the CAVR and CTFCA reports and *hope that Parliament, Government and the Development Partners to implement the recommendations in these reports. We urge leaders not to undercut international efforts - including those from civil society – to bring those responsible for past human rights violations to justice.*

When Timor Leste surrendered to pressure from Indonesia and released Maternus Bere, it signaled that our government does not support accountability for past human rights violations. We believe this **undermines Timor Leste's national sovereignty, constitution and the rule of law.** *We urge development partners, especially the United Nations, to implement the often repeated promise that impunity can never be tolerated for crimes against humanity.*

In relation to the Crisis of 2006 – *we urge all parties and leaders not to interpret or make political comments on trials. Rather, we counsel that concerns about perceived unfairness of judicial decisions should be dealt with through legal mechanisms, such as appeals.*

In relation to the 11 February trial, we are concerned that although the court convicted 24 people including some who were involved in the attack on the President and the Prime Minister, the Court did not identify **who shot the President and at the Prime Minister's car. Neither was it proved by the Court who shot at Alfredo Reinado and Leopoldino.** Although this was the largest trial yet held in Timor-Leste, and was done by Timorese judges, the limited capacity of the court made it difficult to ascertain all the facts. We urge the Government to strengthen the court system.

We commend the Government's commitment to create a Supreme Court as an important appeal mechanism to make judicial processes fairer, and we hope it will be implemented soon. We request that the Government clarifies its plan to establish the Supreme Court.

Separation of powers

Executive interference in the Maternus Bere case is an alarming violation of separation of powers. Although the Prime Minister was able to avoid a vote of no confidence, that does not make his action constitutional. The Tribunal Recurso stated **that Bere's release was illegal**, but we are concerned that they

did not take further action. If similar violations recur, they will further weaken our judicial system, endanger our democracy, and make our country less stable. *We urge all state organs to respect the separation of powers and the rule of law*

Gender justice

NGOs welcome the general Parliamentary approval of the Domestic Violence law. This is an important step forward to protect women and children from domestic violence. The law emerged from a thorough consultative process and reflects inputs from a range of sectors including government, service providers and civil society organizations. We hope that the members of Parliament will recognize this fact and enact the law in its current form. *We urge Parliament to approve the law this year.*

We warmly endorse the initiative of the government to develop a gender justice policy and its plans to **link the policy to RDTL's obligations under CEDAW**. *We urge the government to ensure a genuine effort to address gender justice issues.*

Legal aid law

We salute the government's draft law on legal aid which has recently been released for consultation, and the agreement from the Ministry of Justice to consult widely with civil society. We trust that inputs from civil society will be taken into account and that the final law will reflect the needs of those who are vulnerable and most in need of legal aid.

Juvenile Justice and Adoption Laws

NGOs express concern at delays in parliament discussing the Juvenile Justice and Adoption Laws. *We urge the parliament to ensure that concrete progress is made this year.*

Private Lawyers training

We are concerned that although the Private Lawyers Bill (Law No 11/2008) provides for a transition period of four years (from promulgation of the bill) for private lawyers to have completed practical training at the Judicial Training Centre, the first private lawyers course at the Judicial Training Centre has still not started. *NGOs recommend that the Government extend the transition period in the Private Lawyers.*

Draft laws in Tetum and Portuguese

When draft laws are only available in Portuguese, civil society, Parliamentarians and others have difficulty analyzing and commenting on them. *NGOs urge government and development partners to ensure that all draft Parliamentary and decree-laws are available in a timely manner in both Tetum and Portuguese so that more people can participate.*

Police

As a key justice institution, we urge that the police have access to *more training in national and international law, including in understanding their legal mandate.*

Law of Association and Foundation (5/2005)

NGOs are meant to operate under this law, but fewer than 50 NGOs, international and national have succeeded in registering. Most local NGOs are unable to meet its criteria, making the law unusable. *We strongly recommend that this decree law be reviewed in light of the operating environment and the nature of rurally based NGOs in Timor-Leste.*

Presence of legal actors in the districts

Increasing human resources in the justice sector must continue to be a priority, especially in the districts where access to justice is limited by the few judicial actors. Private legal aid lawyers continue to fill in for absent public defenders and prosecutors, and a lack of official interpreters for regional languages reduces the fairness of trials. *We recommend that district human resource constraints are prioritised for action in 2011.*

NP5 Delivery of Social Services

We congratulate Ministry of Health and MSS on the content and ambitions included in NP5. We particularly commend the innovation of the joint Ministry of Health and partner task force to support district health services to achieve National Priority commitments.

Health

We commend the Government's commitment to roads and the MoH's continuing commitment to SISCa and to increasing rural access to health services. Limited access is the significant obstacle to reducing maternal and infant mortality and improving maternal and child malnutrition.

However, data collection and quality of data are weak, and local authorities and community health volunteers do not yet coordinate and share data successfully. We recommend that MoH continues to improve data collection processes and *urge the development of health service relationships with local leaders to strengthen support to and management of family health promoters (PSF).*

More local health personnel are needed to provide quality service. Further, rural health staff members are often away for training and are unable to attend SISCa. This places a heavy burden on the Community Health Volunteers who are under compensated and undertrained for the services that they are expected to provide. *We recommend that MoH develop a national health workforce policy that anticipates the needs of a growing population and changing demographics and considers the sustainable management of community health volunteers (PSF).*

Disaster Management

We commend the work of the Government strengthening implementation of the National Disaster Management Policy through the creation of disaster management structures at the national, district, sub-district and community levels. This support is not, however, sufficient to sustain community commitment in these early years. *We recommend increased financial commitment to the strengthening of these structures and devolvement of responsibility to district level structures to enable timely assessment and response to natural disasters.*

The Community Based Disaster Risk Management working group is not functioning, hampering coordinated learning at the national level. *We urge speedy reactivation of this important national learning forum.*

The National Disaster Management Policy also references human-created disasters, and we encourage further attention to prevention of disasters by limiting tree-cutting, erosion, or unsafe construction. We also recognize the Government's efforts to support conflict prevention and encourage development partners to consider how their assistance can help reduce structural causes of conflict. We encourage stronger links between the National Directorate of Disaster Management, the National Directorate of Community Conflict Prevention and civil society organizations working to prevent conflict. At the same time, resources are required to ensure communities are supported to take action in response to conflict factors identified before these escalate into violence.

Child Protection

We welcome the government's establishment of child protection mechanisms across 13 Districts, as well as their support to strengthen the capacity of the members of Child protection networks, District child protection officers and sub district animators. We further appreciate that the Government signed a memorandum of understanding in May 2008, showing their commitment to the Child protection mechanism, but we are concerned about the lack of adequate coordination and insufficient support from the ministries. *We recommend that the Government strengthen its efforts to ensure the full functioning of child protection mechanism and increase its financial commitment to strengthen these structures, while continuing to cooperate with NGOs with relevant.*

Disability

We commend the government on its commitment to developing a Disability policy and *urge its approval, on schedule, in September 2010. We further urge Timor-Leste's to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

We regret that data on persons with disabilities has not been updated since 2002, and encourage the Government to do so, with more *health personnel trained to identify disabilities*. This, in turn, will aid Cefe Sucos and Cefe Aldeias to accurately register disabled people for government subsidies.

We recognize the work of the Water sector in considering the needs of persons with disabilities and *urge other Government departments to make a similar commitment to ensuring that disabled **people's** rights are respected.*

Social Housing

We are concerned about the quality of social housing in the districts and lack of clear housing allocation processes. *We recommend that local community be involved in identifying criteria and selecting beneficiaries for social housing.*

NP6 Good Governance

Good Governance depends on participation, which requires **citizen's access to information**. Communities across the world, geographically more isolated than Viqueque or Oecusse, enjoy cheaper, more accessible and more interactive communications than the people of Timor Leste, and we hope that the recent opening of telecommunications will change this. We were amused to see the billboards **proclaiming the Government's new website to the less than 1% of the population who access the web**. *We strongly urge the government to enable all Timorese people to communicate among themselves and with their government.*

Inviting the Resource Curse

Timor-Leste is the most petroleum-dependent country in the world: 98% of state revenues and 83% of **Gross National Income are from oil and gas**. **Consequently, we are in danger of falling into the "resource curse" that affects countries which rely on converting non-renewable natural resource wealth into cash.** Oil money comes in easily – but only for a short time – and it is tempting to spend it freely, without considering the consequences for current and future generations.

Bayu-Undan production will decrease every year from now on, and stop entirely in 13 years. Sunrise and other fields may provide additional income, but the total revenue to Timor-Leste from all known and possible oil and gas fields will be less than \$50 billion U.S. dollars. Unfortunately, this is not enough to make Timor-Leste a rich country – when spread over 50 years of production and shared equally among our rapidly growing population, petroleum revenues will provide less than one dollar per person per day.

During 2009, Timor-Leste reported \$258 million worth of imports, while non-oil exports totaled only \$8 million, nearly all of which is coffee. This is unsustainable, made possible only by our temporary oil revenues, supplemented with a little donor money. It is a classic symptom of the “resource curse” and will create huge problems as our population grows and oil revenues decline and stop.

We urge policy-makers to give more attention to other sectors of the economy, and to prioritize strengthening Timor-Leste’s ability to produce food, water, energy and other necessities from our own human and physical resources, rather than spending dollars on imports, cash handouts, impulsive large projects and subsidies.

State Budget

In order to ensure budget wisdom and accountability, it is critical that civil society be involved in budget processes, which requires timely information in Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia. *We recommend wider consultation in drafting the rectification and 2011 budgets, and encourage more collaboration among state organs and with civil society.*

We are concerned by the Government’s plans to borrow billions of dollars later this year, to pay for centralized physical infrastructure and other projects. Although revenues from our only producing oil and gas field will end by 2024, debt repayment will continue. It will be difficult to provide education, health and other services to our growing population when debt service will have first claim on our smaller revenues.

Enacting legislation

The Council of Ministers has announced a very ambitious legislative agenda, with more than 100 laws and decree-laws to be enacted between February and July of this year. We hope that these can be drafted with appropriate levels of forethought, coordination and consultation. During the past year, several new Parliamentary laws (especially those on land, decentralization and the anti-corruption commission) received good public consultation, and we *encourage transparent, inclusive and deliberative processes for all future parliamentary and decree laws, with drafts provided in Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia, and longer, more broad-based consultations.*

Sustainable income (investment) and the Petroleum Fund

98% of Timor-Leste’s state income comes from oil revenues, which should be used sustainably and wisely to support medium- and long-term development, in accordance with the principles of intergenerational equity in the Petroleum Fund Law.

We are unhappy that the Government overspent the Estimated Sustainable Income in 2009, and appreciate that the 2010 State Budget stays within it. We hope that the mid-year rectification and future budgets will also respect sustainability, and that this principle is maintained when the Petroleum Fund Law is reviewed.

When the Petroleum Fund law was adopted, drafters hoped that investing the Fund would earn a return 3% higher than inflation, and designed the Sustainable Income estimate around that. Unfortunately, global economic conditions have made it impossible to earn 3% from investing the Petroleum Fund, notwithstanding that the strategy over the last five years has produced the highest return possible. We support gradually diversifying Petroleum Fund investments beyond U.S. Treasury Bonds to other currencies and secure investments, but this must be done slowly and cautiously as Timor-Leste gains experience. Particular care should be taken not to risk our principal by purchasing equities. The

government's eagerness to spend more and earn a higher return on our investments should not lead to major changes to the Petroleum Fund Law, taking ill-considered or self-interested advice, or assuming unwise risks.

In addition to being invested for a monetary return, the Petroleum Fund pays for virtually all activities of our State. These expenditures should be chosen prudently, with an eye toward reducing our dependency on oil revenues. Wise spending will invest in human and physical capital – such as education, preventive health, agriculture and rural infrastructure – to strengthen non-oil sectors of Timor-Leste's economy, providing livelihoods and services after the oil runs out.

Decentralised planning

We support the direction of government policy towards decentralization and would welcome more space for communities to participate in national development planning. *We recommend increased access to planning information, as well as providing opportunities for suco leadership to engage communities to identify and prioritise their own development priorities that can be fed into the national processes in a timely manner, before national priorities and budgets are set.*

Civic education

To ensure participation in all the above planning and implementation, government and donors should invest more in civic education for public officials and citizens. This should encompass providing accessible and clear information about processes including: budget and development planning; state expenditure and revenues; development of legislation; constitutional and legal structures; the definition and identification of corruption and the process of decentralization. *Information should be targeted at communities and local authorities to empower communities to actively contribute to democratic processes.*

The future success of decentralization depends on good governance and the active participation of the population. For the population to understand new processes, the workings of the Camara Municipiu and the Assembleia, Civil Society must be included in all training of elected representatives and government staff. *We urge the government to include civil society in government capacity building towards decentralization in municipalities.*

Anti-Corruption

We welcome the selection of the Anti-Corruption Commissioner (KAK) and deputies. KAK should be allowed to conduct their own investigations of any alleged corruption cases. *KAK should have the authority to audit government transactions. KAK and other agencies must be provided with the resources to work with communities, civil servants and officials to define, prevent and detect corruption.*

We also urge the expeditious establishment of the High Tax and Audit Court.

NP7 Security

Security means freedom from fear – that people can live without worrying about violence, crime, civil disorder, repression, starvation, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. Although military and police can help, long-lasting security does not come from armed forces or threat of prison, but from knowing that the rule of law will be followed, families can live without major disruptions to their lives, and basic needs will be fulfilled.

The more difficult and fundamental necessities require inclusive, equitable service delivery and economic development, and social settlements at all levels of society. Indeed, if many people remain impoverished and alienated while a few enjoy the benefits of affluence and power, no amount of intimidation by men and women with guns can provide security.

Timor-Leste is a young, post-conflict, post-colonial, impoverished, traumatized, non-renewable-resource-dependent nation – an unfortunate, fragile condition which makes genuine security difficult. We urge development partners to use their expertise effectively in Timor-Leste to ensure long-range social and economic development.

Development efforts have benefited from the continued improvements in security, and government and development partners have invested considerably in strengthening the police and military. Nevertheless, instability continues on the horizon, and Timor-Leste needs an open discussion of the role of security forces across Timorese society.

As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of PNTL 10, we acknowledge the important role PNTL plays in protecting the nation and its increasing assumption of responsibilities from UNPOL. In the past, our people have endured repression by foreign security forces and militaristic forms of policing. *We are, however, concerned at increasing reports of human rights violations by PNTL and the growing use of military weapons and tactics.*

Open the Doors on Security Sector Reform

We commend the inclusion of NGOs in the national priority working group discussions. Yet we also find elite groups - national and international - discussing security reform in Dili, isolated from public scrutiny, national opinion, and those the reforms are intended to benefit. Citizens, not only elites and active members of civil society organizations, must be engaged in making decisions, not locked out of discussion.

We strongly recommend that senior representatives of the security forces publicly debate the role of security forces with the citizenry across Timor-Leste, and sit in local, public forums, to identify the best ways the state can provide security.

Recognize Traditional Peace Makers as Security Brokers

Community leaders enjoy wide public support, often serving as the main source of law and justice in their localities. Yet security sector reform efforts often fail to include local leadership in training and capacity building, information and outreach, and operations and planning.

We strongly recommend that the government empower local governance structures to provide security through training, information sharing, communication technology and formalized partnerships with security forces.

Form an Integrated Task Force for Security Response

Many security concerns do not require a direct response from security forces, especially when threats are illusory. More broad-based participation collecting, analyzing and evaluating potential or real sources of violence will provide better results.

When responding to expected security problems, we urge the government to include the Ministry of Social Solidarity and relevant Suco Councils in a task force, together with security forces.

Educate the Public on Security – People's Rights and Responsibilities

Few citizens, including members of the PNTL and F-FDTL, know their rights and responsibilities under the formal legal system. Although the security climate in the country has improved, perceptions of insecurity depend on the strength of the social fabric within the country, which was frayed in 2006, and by ongoing historical divisions in the population. The Government should continue and strengthen efforts to reinforce national unity by promoting educational and other campaigns emphasizing shared history and tolerance.

Timorese are still accused of crimes in a language that they do not speak – young people sitting in prison may have only understood their sentence 3rd hand, Police officers should be able to explain the law and **suspects' rights** in local languages when questioning suspects and arresting, moving or detaining accused criminals...

We strongly urge government to require PNTL officers to explain the applied law to citizens.

Conclusion

Timor-Leste needs an integrated and inclusive development plan, which should incorporate input from all the components of our people, including Civil Society and rural citizens. This will determine the **plan's** quality. We hope that the national plan will be submitted for Parliamentary enactment to ensure wide discussion and acceptance.

We urge development partners and government to broaden their thinking, planning and coordination. Developing **Timor-Leste's economy and democracy is a long-term**, complex, difficult task which cannot be accomplished by a plethora of disconnected, short-term projects. Even when designed, implemented and evaluated well, projects by their very nature do not consider long-term implications or integration with other activities, especially those in other sectors.

We hope that the National Plan will begin to change this approach, which is deeply engrained both here and in worldwide development assistance patterns. Both Government and donors should consciously think about how each of their individual activities can contribute to the long-term benefit of the people of this country. Recent experience has shown that projects or policies designed to address short-term needs may have long-term negative consequences.

We look forward to the results of this week's discussions with the hope that their positive outcomes will compensate for their negative impact on the global climate.

On behalf of National and International NGO members of FONGTIL, with many thanks to all our colleagues for their input,

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