

Comments from Civil Society to TLDPM 2014

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Governance/Institutional Development Sector

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Background

In order to understand the current agenda in Timor-Leste regarding the governance and institutional building sector, with a focus on democratic institution, service delivery, rule of law, and anti-corruption.

Let all us not forget the principle of good governance and value the human rights integrated approach in all sectors based on human rights resolution 2000/64 includes:

- Transparency
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Participation
- Responsiveness (to the needs of the people)

Yes indeed there are progresses that has been made within twelve years after our independence, for that reason I would like to congratulate to all development partners for their contributions in supporting our country.

Despite all progress that has been made, **we still see the following challenges still faced by our government. These include:**

- 1) Decline in the quality of citizen-state relations,
- 2) Decreasing of public trust in Government,
- 3) High expectations for a peace dividend that has not been delivered
- 4) Fragmented and traumatized society pose significant governance challenges to Timor-Leste;

We suggest that the organizational culture in Timor-Leste's public sector poses great challenges to Good Governance and Democracy. This culture, where accountability does not always exist, where impunity often rules, where 'transparency' is a word used by politicians to pay lip service is sometimes given to partners' requests for change.

Failing to acknowledge this culture will continue to result in endless squandering of funds. Partners are most welcome to help civil society and Government to promote real change in the public service sector. We hope that this will mean that development partners will understand the context that they are working in and develop legislation and policy that reflects the Timorese reality and culture and not be a copy-paste from another country.

Despite these problems in the public sector, let us not forget the hypocrisy of our time. On one side of the ring, partners see a weak State, in the other side of the ring, civil society sees development partners looking at the weaknesses of our State, and their experts, advisers who are incapable of saying no to preposterous plans, afraid of antagonizing Government;

There are ways of saying no, without antagonizing, there are ways of advising without feeling like an arm-wrestle match. Civil Society would like to see this happening.

Until we all acknowledge our mistakes and shortfalls, until development partners acknowledge that plans with more than 30 priorities may not be workable, rather than cherry-picking priorities that fit with the Development Partners preconceived ideas of how Timor-Leste ought to strengthen its Governance.

Recommendations

- We recommend the use of public sphere governance framework, so as to ensure cross-sector planning and donor coordination to create synergies and to capture public sphere dynamics;
- We recommend more investment to support processes that establish and build the communication interfaces between state institutions, civil society and media.
- We recommend more work with civil society, media and government to ensure a common understanding of and respect for their respective roles, and avoid Government systematic attacks on the civil society organizations and private sector through hand-outs;
- We recommend development partners to continue to support programs that foster healthy citizen-state relations, manage expectations, build trust and enable different stakeholders to co-create stronger governance;
- We recommend development partners to continue to support programs entry points for public participation and to the “listening” capacity of both, central and local structures
- We recommend development partners to continue their support to collaborative Governance, including co-management of important natural resources.
- We recommended to development partners to ensure support are provided to line ministries and mainstream gender in all governance sectors.

We look forward to see changes, and improvement in the public service sectors, that will benefit and responsive to the needs of the people in the future.