

**Statement by**  
**Dinorah Granadeiro**  
**Executive Director, Timor-Leste NGO Forum**  
**to the**  
**Timor-Leste and Development Partners' Meeting**  
**3 April 2009**

The NGO community thanks the Ministry of Finance for this opportunity to participate, and we appreciate the support and interest from Timor-Leste's development partners. Please excuse our omission of individual remarks of respect.

We would like to use this opportunity to highlight some of the major challenges still facing Timor-Leste.

***Justice and governance: towards a peaceful future***

**One of the most important of these challenges is the ongoing need to demonstrate a commitment to criminal justice, by holding perpetrators of serious crimes to account, and ending the ongoing cycle of impunity which dates back to 1975.**

**We therefore call upon the government to hold a full and proper parliamentary debate of the CAVR report and take action on its recommendations. The international community must now implement the UN's repeated promises by allocating the necessary political, financial and legal resources to end impunity for these crimes against humanity.**

People in Timor-Leste, and particularly vulnerable groups, currently face serious barriers in seeking information about and giving input to government decisions and legal information, and therefore understanding rule of law and accessing rights and justice.

As we requested a year ago, **we continue to call for the government to legislate for improved, timely public access to significant government information.** Furthermore, we recommend that the government consult meaningfully and consistently with NGOs and other members of civil society, and take their inputs into account.

***Development: towards the Millennium Development Goals***

**Another fundamental responsibility is to ensure that all Timorese citizens, including those in rural areas, can enjoy their basic human rights, such as the rights to education, food and health, and the environment is protected to safeguard the rights of future generations.** Development, especially for Timor-Leste's rural poor, is essential if Timor-Leste is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as outlined in the National Priorities.

While the government is taking clear steps towards decentralization, and has made rural development one of its National Priorities, rural areas still lag behind urban areas in terms of access to services. Budget cuts to rural sanitation and water are only one example. **We therefore call on government, donors and the UN to commit to prioritising development in rural areas, and donors in particular to commit multi-year funding to rural development.**

Rural development in many sectors needs to strike a balance between providing essential services immediately and strengthening capacity in the longer term. **For service delivery today, greatest capacity frequently lies with national and international NGOs and they should be supported to scale up programs, with a particular focus on strengthening the resources and capacity of Timor-Leste's NGOs and local communities to be able to meet these needs in the future without international advisers.** In parallel, capacity strengthening of local government must take place, including human resource development plans.

### ***Effective aid: towards stronger partnerships for development***

**A third responsibility of government and donors is to ensure that aid is spent – and evaluated – effectively, to ensure it reaches the Timorese communities for whom it is intended.**

The public frequently is not provided with information on the impact of development programs, in contradiction to the Accra Agenda for Action, which calls for sharing information with the public about the results of development expenditure. **We urge the government and donors to agree on indicators for measuring aid effectiveness, and involve civil society in this process.**

The theme of this meeting highlights the progress that we have made since 2008. We recognize that focusing on short term National Priorities has brought fast results in some areas. **However, the development of Timor-Leste is not a short term project and we therefore urge government and development partners to, once again, foster a long term approach through the development of a 5 year plan this year.**

### ***Conclusion***

We NGOs, national and international, remain proud of our contribution to social justice and sustainable development in Timor-Leste and we appreciate the support from development partners which has made this possible. We look forward to working with Timorese communities, the government and donors in building a stronger and peaceful future for all Timorese people.

We encourage you to read our full statement, which presents our position on these issues and others in more detail.

---

*The full statement and other documents are available at*  
<http://www.laohamutuk.org/econ/09TLDPM/09TLDPMindex.htm>