

Dili—March 4, 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Timor-Leste leads the way with pilot program on International Engagement in Fragile States

On March 2nd and 3rd, Timor-Leste was host to the **First Consultative meeting on Monitoring Implementation of the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations.**

The aim of the meeting was to initiate a dialogue between the Government, civil society and international actors on the key challenges and priorities of Timor-Leste while agreeing on key actions to improve implementation of aid delivery according to the principles outlined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on good international engagement in fragile states.

In September 2008, at the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, it was decided that Timor-Leste would become one of six fragile nations to be monitored for the impact of international engagement and aid effectiveness against ten identified principles. The principles were established to help international actors foster constructive engagement between national and international stakeholders in fragile nations, complementing the Paris Declaration which promotes ownership, harmonization and alignment of aid delivery between Government and donors.

The forum was launched by the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, His Excellency Jose Ramos –Horta who highlighted the impressive achievements in 2008.

H.E. President of Parliament, Mr Fernando ‘Lasama’ De Araujo was also present at the meeting which was well attended, a good indication of the commitment of all stakeholders.

The Prime Minister, His Excellency Xanana Gusmao noted “We are aware that international assistance for development is not enough by itself, no matter how coherent and coordinated its mechanisms may be. The reforms that the Government of Timor -Leste has been designing and implementing are the key to making sustainable and real development happen, and to enable technical assistance projects in our country to be more effective.”

The Minister of Finance, Her Excellency Emilia Pires, who chaired the two day symposium gave a comprehensive overview of Timor-Leste’s current economic conditions noting the nation has experienced about 11% economic growth in 2008. “It is a testament to the coordinated efforts between the Government, civil society and the international community that this year we are experiencing improvements, now we must maximize our efforts. This forum gives us the opportunity to facilitate better mechanisms for better results.”

Antonio Franco, Country Manager of the World Bank commented “The Government has shown strong leadership in bringing all the stakeholders to the table – including representatives from civil society, the police and the military – and initiating a dialogue on how to make the transition from post-conflict to a path of sustainable growth and development. It is now the turn of the international partners to ensure better coordination among themselves and consistent engagement with all national actors to assist Timor-Leste in making a successful transition”

Over the two days, the assembly agreed on several key actions which would improve aid effectiveness including broadening the division of labor by region so that the focus was not ‘Dili-centric’, moving to a long-term project framework, improving rapid response capacity by international actors and working in tandem on the creation of a Strategic Development Framework to improve donor alignment and national ownership of development programs. The strongest consensus was the focus on state-building as a central objective with a shift to fuller alignment through a multiyear development framework with sector strategies led by the Government.

Gusmao closed by saying “Let us work together so that the reminders of fragility in our country do not mean that we remain a fragile state”

END

For More Information, Please contact: Helder Da Costa +670 736 4617