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Timor-Leste

## PRESS RELEASE

### GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY SUPPORT TO TIMOR-LESTE

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The first Global Environment Facility (GEF) National Consultative Dialogue took place at the Timor Hotel on Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> and Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> of January. The Prime Minister Dr. Mari Alkatiri, the SRSG and UNDP Resident Representative Dr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, and Dr. Elisabeth Huybens, the Country Manager for the World Bank attended the opening session to open the discussions.

The GEF is an international financial mechanism that provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities. GEF projects are implemented in participating countries through three agencies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank (WB). Seven executing agencies are also involved in implementing GEF projects including, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

The purpose of the GEF national dialogue is to provide information to the key government and non-governmental stakeholders in Timor-Leste to help them better understand how the GEF operates and how it can assist the country. The first GEF project to be launched in this country is the US\$225,000 National Capacity Self Assessment Programme, which assists the government in identifying the areas in which it needs to develop capacity, in order to fulfill their obligations under Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement's (MEA's).

"The GEF funds projects that protect the local environment and benefit the global environment while also promoting sustainable livelihoods in local communities." Said GEF Country Relations Manager, Ms. Funke Oyewole, who is in Timor-Leste for the Dialogue.

Dr. Hasegawa, the UNDP Resident Representative encouraged the dialogue. "Ensuring the future sustainability of the environment is vitally important for future generations in Timor-Leste. This dialogue is a significant step for the Government of Timor-Leste and the GEF to explore ways that will lead to better protection of the environment and will encourage sustainable development in this country." He said.

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“The World Bank looks forward to working with its GEF partners towards promoting growth in a way that protects the environment of Timor-Leste. We will, for instance, consider mobilizing GEF grant co-financing for developing renewable energy resources to replace the use of firewood as fuel. Protecting the forests to protect land degradation and landslides is another area of concern, as is preserving indigenous flora and fauna in protected areas.” Said Elisabeth Huybens, Country Manager for the World Bank in Timor-Leste.

The participants expected to attend this workshop will include representatives from key government ministries, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, scientific communities, donor organizations, the private sector and the media.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), established in 1991, helps developing countries fund projects and programs that protect the global environment. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants.

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