

# PRESS RELEASE



Timor-Leste

## UNITED KINGDOM ASSISTS RURAL DEVELOPMENT

*17 February/ Dili*

The United Kingdom has announced further support to Timor-Leste, providing additional funding for three UN Agency programs focusing on Rural Energy Development, Human Rights and Food Security. The agreement was signed at a meeting between the Ambassador for the United Kingdom, Ms Tina Redshaw, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General and UNDP Resident Representative Dr. Sukehiro Hasegawa at Obrigado Barracks on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February.

The US\$237,000 contribution will be disbursed to three projects being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Working with the Government of Timor-Leste, UNDP has developed the 'Participatory Rural Energy Development Programme'. Due to long distances, low electricity consumption and small number of households per square kilometre, the Power Sector Development Plan recognises that it may not be feasible to connect all rural households to electricity grid in the near future, which will leave approximately 44,000 households in remote rural areas without power.

With funding from UNDP and the United Kingdom, this pilot project will assist 18 selected remote communities in Ainaro, Manatuto, Liquiça and Dili to identify sustainable rural energy alternatives to produce clean, safe, low cost energy to be used for such things as lighting, cooking, and heating. It will also assist the government establish a rural energy policy and the regulatory framework to support the development of rural energy programmes in Timor-Leste.

The 'Development of Mini-Silos for Food Security', technically assisted by FAO, will complement the existing food security initiatives of the AMCAP project currently being implemented in partnership with UNOPS. The aim of the 'mini-silo's' component is to help farmers reduce the loss of harvested food such as rice and maize, due to insect infestation, rodents, and moisture, through the use of small silos. Using this simple locally produced storage device, post harvest losses can be reduced from 30% to less than 3%, helping to ensure food security in low yield seasons.

Activities will include training for 4 local blacksmiths and the provision of tools and materials to build silos in their home districts. The silos will be then be sold to farmers at subsidized prices by the blacksmiths themselves. Working with an on-going FAO project, the farmers will be given demonstrations on the use of Silo's, and 6 farming communities will receive some post-harvest machinery.

The UNDP 'Institutional Capacity Development Support Project' also received funding for an advisory position in support of the Commission for the Reception Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR).

"With the signing of this agreement today, I am delighted to be continuing our partnership with UNDP. By supporting these crucial areas of rural energy and food security, the UK aims to develop further our assistance to the sustainable development of Timor-Leste." Said the Ambassador for the United Kingdom, Ms Tina Redshaw.

Dr. Hasegawa thanked the UK for their continuing commitment, in particular their support to rural development. "We are very happy to continue our partnership together in the areas covered by this

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support.” He said. “At this critical time in Timor-Leste’s development, continued attention must be paid to rural communities to assist the people to improve their livelihoods, strengthen food security and allow sustainable development in remote areas.”

*UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.*

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