

East Timor welcomes Annan

In a message of hope and encouragement, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said during his recent visit to East Timor that the country's "strength and dignity" has inspired the world to unite in support of rebuilding efforts.

Countries have pledged over US\$500 million in assistance and "that money must soon start to flow," Mr. Annan told a cheering crowd of more than 8,000 East Timorese and UN staff gathered in front of UNTAET headquarters at the former Governor's office on 18 February.

The Secretary-General added that in his talks with the region's leaders prior to his arrival in Dili, "each expressed a willingness to help and each recognized that East Timor is an important part of the region."



United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan receives a traditional sword (surik) during his first official visit to East Timor.

Photo by OCP/UNTAET

Joining Mr. Annan on the podium were the families of four UN Timorese staff members who were killed during the violence following last August's vote for independence. "Your other family – the United Nations family – joins in mourning your losses," he said.

Upon his arrival the day before, the Secretary-General traveled to Liquica, where, in an emotion-filled visit, he laid a wreath in memory of those who had died during last April's massacre at a village church.

The survivors standing nearby cried and one after another embraced the Secretary-General and his wife. Mr. Annan told the villagers that he found it "particularly shocking" that a house of worship would be desecrated.

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Prosecutors take oath of office

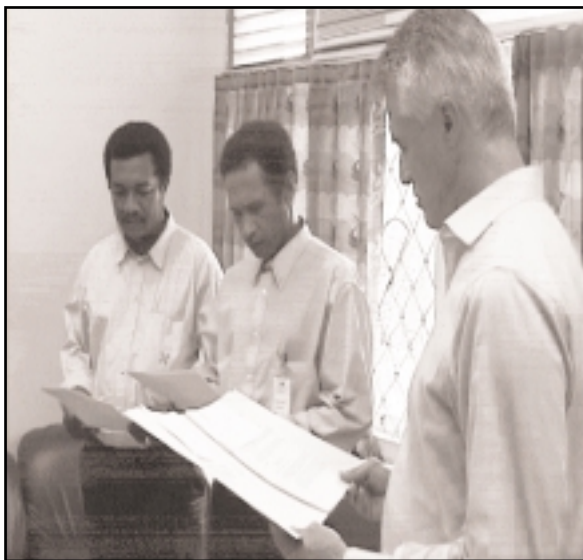


Photo by OCP/UNTAET

Two new prosecutors, Amandio de Sa'Benevides (left) and Alcino de Araujo Barris, being sworn in by Transitional Administrator Sergio Vieira de Mello. They join 10 others - six judges, two prosecutors and two investigating judges - who were appointed in January as the first members of the newly established East Timorese judiciary. The jurists were recommended for appointment by the Transitional Judicial Service Commission (TJSC), which is composed of two international and three East Timorese lawyers and is chaired by Bishop Basilio do Nascimento. The jurists have taken up their duties at the Dili District Court and are currently processing over 100 criminal cases.

UN - funded projects hope to make quick impact on East Timor's economy

Craftsmen in Manatuto District will have the opportunity to begin making bamboo furniture again thanks to a United Nations-sponsored programme that provides immediate funding for small startup businesses and community rebuilding projects.

"UNTAET began the Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) programme as a way to respond to East Timor's unemployment problem and to help kick start the economy," said Simon Williamson, UN Humanitarian Affairs Officer in charge of coordinating the programme so that projects could begin with minimum delay.

QIPs, which range in size from US\$500 up to US\$50,000, will also support urgent community-based needs in a simple and quick manner since the small projects can also help rehabilitate public infrastructure and restore services and utilities, Mr. Williamson said.

Project proposals are prepared by interested agencies in close collaboration with community leaders and submitted to UNTAET District Administrators. However,

the key to QIPs is a streamlined decision-making process, which allows funds to be disbursed almost immediately, Mr. Williamson said.

In Manatuto, where there has always been a long tradition of bamboo furniture making, community leaders and the local representative of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) were quick to submit a proposal to purchase tools for the people who used to depend on the craft for their livelihood.

During the violence last September, many craftsmen had their tools – manual drills, chisel, nails, tape measures, hammer, saw, sandpaper, and choppers – looted or destroyed.

Another problem has been transporting the harvested bamboo. Peregrino Xavier Martins, the head of the furniture makers in one Manatuto village, said that currently workers get bamboo from remote mountain places and have to carry it back to the village on foot, a very time-consuming part of the manufacturing process. "Having a car would

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A resident of Liquica attending the event, Martinha Conceicao, said that she had just come back from West Timor and was excited that her return coincided with the visit of the Secretary-General. "But I am also sad because some of my friends were killed" in the post-ballot violence, she said. "Besides, there are still many residents of Liquica in West Timor."



United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan comforts families members of those slain last April in a Liquica church.

In his remarks, Mr. Annan urged those still in West Timor to return: "My message to those still in exile is simple: come home; East Timor is your country."

Before flying by helicopter to Liquica, Mr. Annan met in Dili with UN Transitional Administrator Sergio Vieira de Mello and independence leader Xanana Gusmão. He later held talks with Nobel Laureate Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Bishop Basilio do Nascimento.

Later in the day, the Secretary-General addressed staff members of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor

(UNTAET) and non-governmental organizations.

For logistical reasons, Mr. Annan did not travel to refugee camps in Atambua as originally scheduled.

Manuel Carrascalao, one of the leaders of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), said of Mr. Annan's visit: "It is important the Secretary-General see for himself the reality of the destruction in East Timor and understand how the country should be rebuilt according to the will of the East Timorese people."

Group helps women learn about rights, how to solve own problems

Nearly 20 years ago, Loukai went home during a school holiday and never returned: Her parents told her that she was going to be married.

Loukai (*not her real name*) had no choice. The man who wanted to marry her had agreed with her parents on the *barlaki*, or dowry, and she had to obey their wishes.

Today, Loukai, 36, is a mother of five and constantly busy with the daily activities of a housewife. "I can't say that I'm happy but the reality is that I've got five children, so I'm happy now with my children," she says.

In the eyes of some East Timorese women, the arranged marriage that Loukai was forced into is a form of domestic violence and a violation of human rights.

Laura Abrantes, 32, one of the coordinators of a Dili-based women's rights group, says that traditionally, only a few women have been given the opportunity to better themselves.

"Men have always been considered strong and clever," she says. "Even in family situations, parents usually believe a son's opinion rather than a daughter's, causing

women to feel inferior and not free to make decisions or take action."

Since 1997, Ms. Abrantes' organization, the Forum Communication for East Timorese Woman (FOKUPERS), has been supporting women by educating them about their rights, building their abilities and helping them gain the confidence to solve problems on their own.

Many of the group's members are wives who find themselves suddenly helpless after they have been shunned from their communities because their husbands are in jail or have committed crimes.

Some of FOKUPERS's services include counselling by a psychologist from the Philippines and providing shelter, counselling and a secret place to stay for domestic violence victims and their children.

In late January, FOKUPERS provided five days of trauma counselling to 20 women in Suai who reportedly had been sexually attacked by members of the Indonesian military and militias or had been traumatized by seeing their husbands killed.

As for Loukai, she says that if she were forced into an arranged marriage today,

Speedy release of aid money promised for Timor's reconstruction

Transitional Administrator Sergio Vieira de Mello said that he has received assurances from international donors that funds needed to reconstruct East Timor would be disbursed quickly.

Mr. Vieira de Mello said that he had held a number of "very good meetings" with donor countries, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the course of his two-week trip to Indonesia, Geneva and New York.

Senior officials of the World Bank, including the President, Jim Wolfensohn, who visited East Timor on 21 February, have promised him that no effort would be spared to make sure that disbursements actually start in March, he added.

"One of our priorities is to ensure a speedy disbursement of funds under the six-month reconstruction programme, [and] we received strong assurances that this will happen," Mr. Vieira de Mello said after returning to Dili on 9 February.

At a press conference two days later, Xanana Gusmão, the President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), said that on his own recently completed Asian tour several countries pledged financial support and a willingness to provide training programmes to East Timorese.

The CNRT delegation visited China, which announced a donation of US\$6 million; the Republic of Korea, which promised to build a new parliament; Singapore; Thailand; the Philippines and Malaysia.

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she would know better now what to do. "I would report it to FOKUPERS, and together we'd try to find a solution," she says.

Kenyan soldiers bring medical care, love of sports to East Timor

With four medical clinics established throughout Dili and East Timor, military doctors and medics from the Kenyan peacekeeping force have been treating scores of ailing adults and malnourished children.

The 240-strong "reinforced company," which became part of the UN Peacekeeping Force (UN-PKF) on 14 February when the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) handed over command of Sector Central, also includes infantry, military police and engineers, who have been repairing the Dili to Aileu road.

The medical facility set up at the mosque at Kampoalor has already treated about 1,000 patients since the Kenyans first arrived in mid-December, said Colonel S.N. Karanja, head of the only African contingent participating in the UN-PKF. Meanwhile, the Kenyans' two mobile clinics have seen



Photo by OCPI-UNTAET

Kenyan troops with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UN-PKF) have also been providing medical care and taking on engineering projects such as repairing the road from Dili to Aileu.

about 2,000 Timorese in all.

Besides providing medical care, another way the Kenyans see themselves helping the Timorese is by promoting sports and athletics, Col. Karanja said, noting that his soldiers have already played two football matches with FALINTIL.

And as a country with a rich tradition of producing world-class runners, the Kenyan troops can help teach children about running, he added.

Reunions at East & West Timor border give divided families time to reconnect

When a border agreement was reached last year between the Indonesian military (TNI) and INTERFET, one of the unintended consequences was that scores of families and communities were left divided and living on opposite sides of the boundary.

But since December, thousands of Timorese have been coming together for weekly "family reunions" to exchange gifts and share news at several border points, mostly in Bobonaro, Covalima and Oecussi Districts.

The initiative was started after many people felt unsafe crossing the border to visit relatives and asked the UN Military Observers (UNMO) to help make arrangements with TNI command for supervised gatherings.

A free zone around the border points – where no weapons are allowed – was eventually set up, with both INTERFET and TNI officers screening visitors from both sides before and after the meetings.

Noemia Gomes, 23, regularly attends

the Motaain-Batugade border gatherings in Bobonaro and was able to convince some of her relatives that the conditions in East Timor were not as bad as they had been reported.

"People in West Timor are told that common items are especially expensive and limited and that people in East Timor are dying because there is no food," she says. "But because of the chance I had to meet my family members and to tell them the truth about conditions in East Timor, I was able to convince some of them to come back."

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which has been providing logistical assistance for the border visits, the reunions have had the effect of encouraging people to return home.

On 4 February, the UNMOs, INTERFET and TNI held a meeting to discuss the family reunion visits since they were not originally covered in the Border Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of November 1999, which provides for security arrangements for the overland repatriation of East Timorese refugees in West Timor.

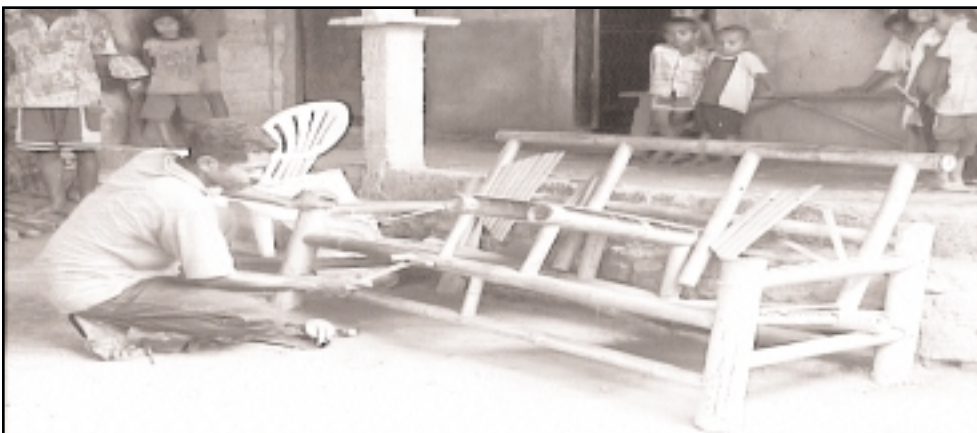


Photo by OCPI-UNTAET

Funding from the UN-sponsored Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) will allow craftsmen in Manatuto to restart traditional businesses like making bamboo furniture.

News in brief

East Timorese nun dies. Sister Margarida Paulo Soares, who dedicated her life to bringing peace to East Timor, died on 16 February. She was 82.

Sister Margarida was often called on to intervene in clashes between East Timorese youth and Indonesian soldiers. In one incident, troops were about to open fire on students demonstrating in front of Parliament when Sister Margarida knelt before the soldiers and asked them to put aside their weapons.

According to Felicidade Monteiro Nunes, who looked after the nun, when violence broke out last September, Sister Margarida went around the city to pray for and to comfort the elderly, mothers and children. She even stayed in Bishop Belo's destroyed home until the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) arrived in Dili.

UN-PKF take over of security completed. United Nations peacekeepers have formally taken charge of security throughout East Timor as the Australian-led international force turned over leadership of the remaining Sectors to UN commanders.

In a ceremony on 23 February in Dili, Transitional Administrator Sergio Vieira de Mello and INTERFET Commander Major General Peter Cosgrove signed the papers that decommissioned the International Force in East Timor, five months after it had arrived to quash the violence that wracked the country.

On 21 February in Suai, Sector West was handed over to the UN Peacekeeping Force (UN-PKF), led by Brigadier Duncan Lewis of Australia. A week earlier, the UN-PKF took over security responsibilities in the Central Sector, which includes Dili, and the enclave of Oecussi.

Sector Central is now commanded by Col. Lima Pinto of Portugal, while in Oecussi, Col. Farjat of Jordan heads the UN-PKF there.

UNTAET-funded projects continued from page 1

help because there are other locations where bamboo is available that are reachable by roads," he said.

Besides furniture making, other QIP proposals currently under consideration include upgrading the central market in Lospalos, rehabilitating the water infrastructure in Oecussi, refurbishing a sawmill in Manufahi, as well as numerous road repair projects throughout the country.



Photo by OCPI-UNTAET

President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal (centre) greets the Bishop of Baucau, Basilio do Nascimento (left), outside the Dili Cathedral. President Sampaio is accompanied by the Bishop of Dili, Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo.

Portugal's President pledges to help rebuild East Timor

President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal, in his country's first official visit since 1975, pledged to help East Timor rebuild its judiciary, public buildings and health and education sectors.

Lisbon has already contributed 750 soldiers to the United Nations peacekeeping effort and US\$56 million to multilateral and bilateral funds and programmes.

President Sampaio's arrival on 12 February was greeted with rain, which to some of the more than 5,000 people waiting to see him speak at the former Governor's office symbolized the East Timorese plight after Portugal's withdrawal a quarter-century ago. "It's the tears of the people who had passed away," said one elderly Timorese woman.

Following the President's address on Saturday, Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo conducted a special mass at the Dili Cathedral. The next day, President Sampaio held meetings with Transitional Administrator Sergio Vieira de Mello, CNRT President Xanana Gusmao and the commanders of the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) and the UN Peacekeeping Force (UN-PKF).

During his visit, President Sampaio also traveled to Baucau, where he met with Bishop Basilio do Nascimento, and to Aileu, where he was greeted by traditional dancers and a FALINTIL honour guard.

Tiu answers questions ...

About the Transitional period

Dear readers, many people in Timor Lorosa'e are still asking the question "When will the transition period start?" Well, a few days ago a young man named Juliano came to me after speaking to one of his relatives who works with UNTAET.

Juliano thought he knew the right answers, but some of his friends gave him a difficult time, saying they didn't think what he was saying was correct. Well, let me tell you the story that my young friend told me:

Juliano: Bondia Senhor Jose. How are you?

Senhor Jose: I'm fine but how are you? You look a bit down, what happened?

Juliano: Well, I had a hard time last night during a discussion with some people about when the transitional period will start. You work at UNTAET, can you tell me more?

Senhor Jose: Juliano, that's old news. Everyone knows that the transition to independence has started already. Why do you still want to know and what are you expecting?

Juliano: Even though it might be old news to you, it's not for the people I talked to last night. They insisted that the transitional period only started this month while others were saying it will start in March or even June because they haven't seen the dramatic changes to life in Timor Lorosa'e like they've been expecting.

They keep waiting to see regular police patrols on the street and traffic put back in order again and other things that show that life is back to normal.

Senhor Jose: I suppose it can be confusing trying to understand the United Nations, but when the Security Council established UNTAET with Resolution No. 1272, the transitional period began on 25 October 1999. Which means that we are already working to build Timor Lorosa'e for independence right now.

The changes in life your friends were talking about are happening, Juliano, but those kinds of things take time. We must

remember to have patience while things get done.

Juliano: I knew I was right! So tell me more. What kind of authority does UNTAET have?

Senhor Jose: UNTAET is responsible for the overall administration of East Timor and has the power to make laws and to make sure that they are put into practice. UNTAET also oversees the administration of justice and is here to help East Timor until it is ready to have its own government.

The Transitional Administration does all of this with the help of other UN agencies and non-governmental groups and in consultation with the Timorese, which are represented by the National Consultative Council (NCC).

The NCC discusses many important issues when UNTAET wants to make major decisions. Eleven of the 15 NCC members are East Timorese, including Xanana Gusmao, Felicidade Guterres and Padre Jose Antonio da Costa.

Juliano: My friends said there were a lot of foreigners here. How many people are actually part of UNTAET compared to last time, when the UN helped Timor Lorosa'e organize the popular consultation?

Senhor Jose: As of early February, there were probably close to 2,000 foreigners in East Timor helping to rebuild the country. About 310 of them were international staff working with UNTAET. There were also close to 200 UN Military Observers and more than 600 Civilian Police. There are also 8,500 soldiers from 23 countries who are part of the UN Peacekeeping Force (UN-PKF).

By the way, more than 760 Timorese like myself work as local staff with UNTAET and at least another 2,000 more work for other agencies and NGOs.

But remember young man, there are also hundreds of other people who are not part of the UN but who belong to non-governmental organizations and who work in Timor Lorosa'e for the moment. Hey Makay, I have to go or I'll be late to the office.

Juliano: Senhor Jose, is it possible for us to have more chats like this one because it sounds like you're the right person to talk to anyway.

Senhor Jose: Deskulpa Juliano, I better be going because I have a lot of things to do in the office today but we will talk tomorrow. Goodbye!!!

Well, dear reader, that was Juliano's story. Did his relative help you understand UNTAET a little better, too? If you are still confused about other things, remember this column because if you read it carefully, your confusion will be solved.

East Timor's cultural centre and museum



Photo by OCPI-UNTAET

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank are providing support to restore the future East Timor cultural centre and museum. Beginning in April 2000, exhibitions and cultural attractions will reintroduce the richness of Timorese arts and crafts to the people of Timor Lorosa'e and serve as a living reminder of their cultural identity. Renovations during the project's second stage will enable the entire premises to become the permanent cultural centre and museum of Timor Loro Sae.



The name Tais Timor conjures the image of the careful, time-honoured process that goes into making the traditional Timorese cloth used in all important life events. As the different "ingredients" that make up East Timor come together during the transitional period to rebuild the country, Tais Timor aims to record and reflect those events that weave the beautiful tapestry that is Timor Lorosa'e.

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