**Land and Environmental Rights of Communities in Timor–Leste**

**PWYP Asia Pacific Regional Meeting 2019**

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**What is La’o Hamutuk**

- Timorese and international people “walking together” on the journey to create a new Nation.
- An independent, Timorese, non-governmental organization which does research, policy analysis, public education and advocacy.
- A force for participatory, equitable, sustainable and evidence-based policies and practices.
Topics

- Legal frameworks
- Existing major infrastructure project linked to extractive industries: South Coast Petroleum Industry (Tasi Mane Project), TL Cement, and a few other mining activities in Timor-Leste.
- Major challenges to local communities’ lives
- Key recommendations

Legal framework

**Environmental Laws**
- Decree–Law no. 26/2012 on Basic Environmental Law
- Decree–Law 5/2011 on Environmental Licensing
- Ongoing processes on the new Mining Law.

**Land Laws**
- Land Law and Expropriation Law
- The government has the power to take land for development purposes including for extractive industry activities
- The process of taking land from the community has to go through a consultation process involving community members

International pact and best practices:
- EITI, PWYP and other
Current major infrastructure projects

South Coast Petroleum Infrastructure Project (*Tasi Mane Project*): Supply Base, Refinery, LNG–Plant, Highway
TL Cement project

- Cement plant, Marine jetty, Belt conveyor, and associated infrastructure
- Limestone mine
- Clay extraction
- Road improvements and new roads

Challenges

1. Lack of public consultation
2. Impact on community: Farmers lost their land and their livelihood
3. Fisher folks can lose their livelihood
4. Community faces difficult access to their farms (because of the highway)
5. Unsustainable compensation policy
What we expect will happened in the future

- The government are planning more on-shore extractive industry (mining activities).
- More land will be taken from the community.
- Destruction of the environment as the consequence of these activities.
- More actions are needed to prevent the negative impact of the community livelihood and the environment.

Key recommendations

- Extractive industries must follow current legal framework (environmental and land laws) and best practices to guarantee protection of community rights.
- An in-depth social, economic and environmental study of the impacts of these projects should be in place before the start of any extractive industry activities.
- Stop extractive industry, and focus on development of productive sectors including agriculture, tourism and small industry.
- Strengthening regional and global networks to fight for the rights of communities facing the impacts of extractive industries.