

Rede ba Rai Timor-Leste

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[English translation of Tetum original]

Dr. Lúcia Lobato,
Minister for Justice,
Justice Ministry building,
Colmera, Dili

10th June 2009

Dear Minister,

We write regarding the draft transitional land law which will be released this Friday (12th). This law will decide a structure to determine who owns land in Timor-Leste, in order to resolve confusion over land ownership after years of colonialism and conflict. It is critical to the land rights of all of Timor-Leste's people. For this reason we write to offer the attached recommendations. The NGO Forum Land Network is a group of civil society organizations working on women's, refugee, environment, agriculture and justice issues in Timor-Leste — all of which are effected by land policy. Our network works to promote informed public discussion, debate and participation on issues related to land.

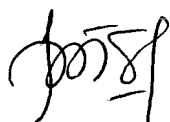
We have listed what we believe to be the minimum measures needed to ensure a public consultation that truly incorporates the ideas of Timor-Leste's people in the development of this law, and that ensures their voice is heard. These measures are based on the experience of some of our members, as well as informal discussions with others on effective participation processes. Effective and inclusive public consultation will minimize the likelihood of resistance to this law, and help to promote an effective land regime that is best suited to the needs of the people of Timor-Leste. We hope these recommendations will assist the development of an effective public consultation.

We are happy to discuss these measures further, as well as additional ideas we have about the strengthening of the public consultation process, and the involvement of civil society and NGO's in this process. We can be reached via the Land Network Coordinator Meabh Cryan on 730 7800.

Respectfully,



Meabh Cryan,
Coordinator,
Land Network



Inês Martins
Agriculture Researcher
La'o Hamutuk



José Amaral
Advocacy Coordinator
NGO Forum

Representatives of the Land Network Legislative Working Group

CC: Mr. António Verdial de Sousa, Director of the National Directorate of Land, Property and Cadastral Services
Mr. Nigel Thomson, Director, Ita Nia Rai
Ms. Fernanda Mesquita Borges, President, Commission A, RDTL National Parliament