INGO CONTRIBUTION

This document was developed by representatives of a number of International NGOs currently working in Timor-Leste. It is organised in terms of “pillars” of the National Strategic Development Plan. It is an effort to raise a number of issues which we see as important in the context of discussions at the National Working Group meetings.

It is not meant to be a comprehensive document. Instead, this document highlights some particular issues in which INGOs are involved. It is complementary to the FONGTIL (National NGO Forum) Civil Society Statement which represents both INGOs and Timorese civil society organisations and addresses a number of fundamental issues regarding Timor-Leste’s development.
SUMMARY

Since the Restoration of Independence in 2002, Timor-Leste has made very positive steps towards development. The cessation of conflict now opens up the grounds for significant progress and the opportunity for people’s lives to be improved in very real and meaningful ways.

Introduction: Civil Society Organisations (CSO) are a cornerstone of society and need support to fully reach their potential and overcome significant challenges. Several mechanisms have been established by government and CSOs which need additional support.

Social Capital: Health and Education are key areas which require more work by both government and international development partners. The National Nutritional Strategy is a step in the right direction to address the measured increase in key indicators such as stunting and low birth rates. Education, beginning at pre-primary is underdeveloped and underutilised.

Social Capital: Peacebuilding and State building continue to be core areas of focus for government as indicated by the establishment of the Department of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion. Politically driven conflict provides challenges and remains an area where the government needs further support.

Economic Development is often cited as positive despite the fact that 41% of the population remain poor and chronic malnutrition is suffered by 58% of children under five in Timor-Leste. Women, land and food security are three key areas that development partners can provide much needed assistance.

Effective Institutional Frameworks can provide the basis for a stable and secure future in Timor-Leste and to date some positive developments have been made. Policing, access to justice, civil society participation and the right to protest and participate in effective working groups are all recognised as areas that need strengthening.
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1. Introduction: Development in Timor-Leste

The information presented here aims to provide further insight into opportunities and challenges that accompany development in Timor-Leste and hopefully provide some guidance for government and international development partners on key issues affecting the country. Times are changing and the global financial crisis has had a serious impact on many of us and the state of international funding. In the context of Timor-Leste, this means that a large number of small/medium donors are no longer able to provide support to CSOs who have long appreciated smaller, more flexible funds.

Bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors will be responsible for the vast majority of contributions, both financial and technical, to government and CSOs. The INGOs therefore believe that it is very important to share our insights and knowledge to continue contributing to the future. A list of key contacts and readings are provided at the end of this document for the benefit of development partners. We hope that if you have any further interest, questions or concerns that these will be of use.

International Civil Society Organisations congratulate the people of Timor-Leste on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the Restoration of Independence. We can be proud of the role we have all played – civil society included – to build this country. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the discussion in the Timor-Leste Development Partners’ Meeting about what we have achieved together and where we go from here.

a. Challenges and Opportunities for Civil Society Organisations

The global economic situation affects us all and presents one of the critical challenges that Timorese NGOs face. For CSOs, tighter funding generally has highlighted our need to be more efficient and more focused than ever. We need to be good stewards of donor funding, and we need to deliver results. This is not always easy for Timorese NGOs, as many lack a good understanding of how to access support and funding. They need institutional strengthening and they need to build skills.

They need donors who place new demands on them and expect quick results to have a greater contextual understanding including how development in Timor-Leste takes time and long term commitment. There needs to be better coordination mechanisms between CSOs, donors and the government to enable this. Successful and enduring outcomes have been demonstrated by projects with longer-term funding support. CSOs need to know more about the relevant support and funding streams available and about development partner long-term strategies for supporting the advancement of a strong and vibrant civil society in Timor-Leste.

1 In this document where the term “Civil Society Organisations” is used, it refers to Timorese and International NGOs. Otherwise references to Timorese or International NGOs are specified.
I was particularly struck by the vibrant and active engagement by civil society working on human rights and poverty issues during the mission.”

Special Rapporteur

Such investment and commitment is crucial as civil society has a critical role to play in Timor-Leste's democratic and economic development. CSOs provide services, support government programs, serve as watchdogs and offer new ideas and approaches to arising issues. By partnering with CSOs, the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) and the donor community are likely to produce sustainable outcomes.

The New Deal right emphasizes the need for ‘Timely and Predictable Aid’ as part of the process for building ‘mutual trust’ which is integral for the enabling of more effective management of resources and provision of aid. Such trust and ‘equal’ partnership, however, can be undermined by the sheer nature of the power relationship between CSOs, government and development partners. Civil society has noted that there are significant changes happening with regards to the mechanisms and types of technical and financial support available for Timorese NGOs and that these changes have not necessarily considered the reality of civil society within the larger aid effectiveness dialogue and framework.

Through the positive relationships established with governmental and donor partners through civil society’s engagement in the National Priorities process to date, CSOs, led by FONGITL, remain steadily committed to the Aid Effectiveness dialogue and processes. Timorese and International NGOs will continue to engage with government and donors to explore options for analysing, monitoring, supporting and implementing of the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan.

There are plenty of challenges for all of us. Timor-Leste has come a long way in ten years but we cannot turn a blind eye to the challenges of a growing income gap, malnutrition, land evictions, and gaps in education and rule of law. We would like to touch on some of our concerns in these areas.

Two leading Timorese NGOs face losing most of their funding from 2013 as some INGOs will be finalising their operations in Timor-Leste. This highlights the significant changes that are being faced and an area which needs serious consideration by government and development partners.

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2 See Further reading for details
3 See list of Further Readings at the end of this document for further information
2. **A New Deal: Peace Building and State Building Goals**

The new approach towards setting a Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal Strategy, as set out in The New Deal: A New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, is a very positive tool for engaging government and development partners in a nationally owned commitment to strengthening the foundations and frameworks for sustainable development.

Despite the importance of a cross-cutting approach to Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals (PSG), it is important to continue supporting the various direct initiatives that focus specifically on peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives. There is a need to address both structural and proximate conflict factors to support the valuable efforts from all actors towards the achievement of the PSG.

We commend the GoTL’s focus on conflict prevention and response through the establishment of the Department of Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion (DPBSC) within the Ministry of Social Solidarity as well as the development of the National Directorate for Community Conflict Prevention (NDCCP) within the Secretariat of State for Security. These two institutions have made steady progress in consolidating the capacity for state actors to respond to community based conflict, and we encourage further coordination between them to strengthen response.

Civil Society would also like to commend local government in all 13 districts for engaging in a positive and proactive manner in community based conflict prevention initiatives, particularly the sub-district level Conflict Prevention and Response Networks (CPRNs) and the suco⁴-level ‘Community Policing Councils’.

The Strategic Development Plan confirms the continuation of the government’s valuable work to date in providing social assistance to the vulnerable. Within the context of social assistance attention could be paid towards maintaining the delicate balance between the proportions of assistance allocated to providing support to Veterans and other vulnerable social groups, such as children and adults with disabilities. We strongly encourage the new GoTL to ratify the Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities⁵ during its tenure.

Civil Society is ready to engage with government and its partners in the process of conducting the Fragility Assessment referenced in the ‘FOCUS’ approach to the New Deal implementation through offering monitoring, research and analysis support.

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⁴ Suco is the term for village
⁵ See [http://www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities) for further information
3. Social Capital – Education and health

CSOs congratulate the GoTL for holding the first national Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) conference in Sept 2011 and for approving the National ECCD policy.

a. Education

Despite the ECCD, statistics indicate that only 5-11% of Timorese children have access to pre-primary learning; the current quality of preschool education is considered very basic and there are very low levels of coverage nationally. Transition into primary school is very challenging for Timorese children due to a variety of factors, including prevalence of violence in learning environments. It is also noted that some parents do not make optimal use of available pre-school learning environments in support of the development of their children due to pressures in maintaining their livelihoods.

Therefore, CSO encourages the GoTL to deliver its commitments to Timorese children by 2015 so that by then, at least one half of all Timorese children, boys and girls alike, between 3-5 years old will be receiving quality pre-school education. We further urge the GoTL to develop a new national pre-primary school curriculum inclusive of teacher training programmes and approved learning guides. CSOs encourage donors to support the GOTL to achieve the above targets in ECCD. In addition, the GoTL should consider investing in parenting education/parent support groups, community pre-schools and further integration between pre-schools services and SISCA (Comprehensive Healthcare Service Delivery at Suco Level) services.

b. Health: Maternal and child health

CSOs also congratulate the Ministry of Health for sharing the first draft version of the National Nutritional Strategy in May, 2012 and supports their commitment to finalising this strategy within the present government tenure.

Despite these positive steps, the 2009/2010 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) provide a bleak picture of childhood malnourishment. Based on data from the DHS 2003 and 2009/2010, it is evident that national stunting, wasting and underweight prevalence in children under 5 all increased. Furthermore, prevalence of Low Birth Weight (LBW) is 10% of all births.

Inadequate access to food, disease, and poor feeding and caring practices are among the causes for such statistics for malnutrition of child under 5 years of age.

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7 Demographic and Health Survey 2003, 2009/10
Therefore, CSOs encourage the GoTL to improve the nutritional status throughout a person’s lifecycle, with particular focus on pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 2 years of age. CSOs encourage donors to support the GoTL to achieve the above targets in the nutrition sector, work with CSOs throughout the process and invest in scaling up high impact nutrition interventions.

CSOs further warmly congratulate the GOTL on the reductions in maternal and infant mortality that have been achieved over the past ten years in Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste is on track to achieve its MDG target for reduction of infant mortality, but both infant and maternal mortality, particularly in remote rural areas, remain unacceptably high. CSOs urge the government and the Ministry of Health to continue and strengthen their efforts to improve access to quality health care (including sexual and reproductive health care and access to family planning information and services) to achieve further gains critical to improving the lives of the most vulnerable women and children in Timor-Leste.

CSOs also congratulates the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Infrastructure for promulgating the National Sanitation Policy in January 2012. This has helped to set clear direction for implementation of sanitation program to CSOs. The rural sanitation coverage is only 37% of the total population, short of the MDG target of 55%. To address this gap, we urge the GoTL to allocate enough funding over the next three years.

As a result of enough funding allocation in rural water supply sector, the MDG target of 75% is going to be met. In Timor-Leste extremely high proportion of the newly built water supply system breaks down due to lack of maintenance and we therefore urge the government to allocate enough funding for the maintenance of the water system.

“The results indicate that achieving the Millennium Development Goal of a 50 percent reduction in the prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age by the year 2015 continues to be a challenge”

DHS 2009/10
4. Economic development

This past year, Timor-Leste hosted the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. Her visit highlighted a number of key issues regarding poverty issues and development and it is critical that government, development partners and civil society address these issues with urgency. Her particular concerns were: food security and nutrition, education, housing, social protection, employment, land reform and access to justice.

The Rapporteur urged efforts to develop a sustainable economy which brings benefits to all – in spite of progress made to this point 41% of the population are still poor, 58% of children under five still suffer from chronic malnutrition, and 70% of young people in Dili cannot find work. Investments must be made to address this poverty – but public expenditure on education, health and agriculture have in fact been decreasing proportionally in order to put funds to infrastructure projects. In the 2012 budget, only 12% allocated for social sectors (Health (3.2%), Education (7.2%), Agriculture (1.6%)).

Attention needs to be paid to a growing wealth gap where a minority of people are disproportionately progressing economically while the lives of others remain unchanged – it is estimated that now the richest segment of Timorese society, mostly in Dili, enjoys almost 180 times the wealth of the poorest of the poor.

a. Rural Development – Land Tenure

The Rapporteur also raised the critical issue of land rights and evictions. Government and some development partners have not wanted to engage on these issues, though they are key to human rights, good governance, sustainable development, and conflict reduction – all issues which government and development partners have claimed to be priorities. But in practice, the situation on evictions has been different. Evictions that took place during the past year, authorised by government, involved abuses of police power, lack of transparency and consultation, abuses of human rights and demonstrated a worrisome lack of coordination between offices of government. If Timorese CSOs had not taken action, there would have been no monitoring of the situation and no support to the effected people, with other actors cautious to step into the issue for fear of repercussions. If the government wants to proceed with its ambitious development plan, it must fulfil its obligations to human rights and particularly to assessment of social impacts of projects and provision of alternatives to effected people. After struggling for Independence under a banner of human rights, the leaders of Timor-Leste cannot ignore rights issues now in order to develop the country.

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“While it is important to recognize all the improvements that Timor-Leste has made, we must recall that development must be inclusive, equitable and sustainable. The inequality in living standards between those in Dili and people in rural areas is stark.”

UN Special Rapporteur

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8 La’o Hamutuk’s analysis of 2012 State Budget Allocation
9 Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions. See: www.laohamutuk.org/Agri/land/tl/SubTLL_COHRE.pdf
b. Agriculture

The Government of Timor-Leste has put Food Security at the centre of its long term strategy with both health and nutrition as Pillars, and the focus on Economic Development and Agriculture as a National Priority. In addition the GoTL’s commitment to and investment in the Agricultural Extension Worker system is commendable and should be supported. Its previous investment in such material and tangible programs such as the nationwide Tractor Program (albeit with challenges) did increase production for a large portion of Timorese ‘medium sized’ farms. The ‘Seeds of Life’ program, within the GoTL, is actively working to increase quality and variety and availability of seeds for farmers and addresses storage and related issues.

The Ministry of Agriculture and related departments within GoTL has been taking a very active role in coordinating stakeholders working in the sphere of agriculture and nutrition, and there has been improved Early Warning Systems around Food Security. The Government needs to further invest in these initiatives to truly ensure that any results or gains are sustained.

Challenges:
- There is a heavy reliance on the Extension Worker System but with little investment into enhancing the capacity of the many agricultural extension workers.
- There is also very little in the way of real reward/benefit/disciplinary actions applied systemically across the board to incentivize the best workers.
- Access to markets, broadly, continues to be a huge constraint to the development of the agricultural sector which is the result of poor roads, and lack of access to finance, information, services etc.
- There is, in addition, a gap in rigorous research and development in the Agricultural sector and specifically in how Food Security and Access to Markets are linked.
- There is a lack of communication and other links between the local (Suco-sub District) to District and beyond and challenges remain in addressing these from a market based perspective in Agriculture.
- There is a lack of serious investigation into the potential of Aquaculture to address food security.
- Lastly, a coordinated focus at the Household Level and using this as the unit of analysis and intervention can have large scale immediate short term impact if managed correctly.

INGOs will continue to further invest in building the capacity of extension workers and this is an area where many of us have expertise and are filling a short-term, gap. Some INGOs will work on advocacy and on influencing at the policy level whilst others will work on seed and crop diversification, the level of value chains and in input/output supply markets. Lessons learned from such practices will be disseminated widely among the community of stakeholders.

“Growing products for local consumption, should be the priority, and farmers must be involved at every level of decision-making and implementation”
La’o Hamutuk
5. Institutional Framework

The Suco Development Planning process initiated by the GoTL shows its commitment to
decentralisation and to empowering citizens to participate in the development of their country.
Increased decentralisation brings more opportunities for increased community ownership of
development efforts. The INGO community recommends that in the local level planning process,
there be sufficient opportunity for children, youth and women to exercise their right to participation
in both the identification and prioritisation of community development opportunities. To achieve
this, increased capacity and mechanisms to encourage their access and ability to participate are
required. The Strategic Development Plan recognizes the role of civil society in nation building,
therefore one area of continued CSO engagement will be building the capacity of sub-district and
Suco Development Committees in planning, monitoring and evaluation of development initiatives in
their respective areas.

a. Justice – Rule of Law

We commend the GoTL’s cooperation with development partners towards promoting a culture of community-
oriented policing within the PNTL (The National Police of Timor-Leste). We recommend that government commits
its own funds towards such initiatives to demonstrate its commitment towards supporting this approach.

A key area in need of attention is better cooperation
between policing units and organisations or groups who plan peaceful demonstrations. This valuable
tool for political engagement by citizens should be encouraged and facilitated by the government
and discussions between demonstration organisers and police in advance of planned events would
assist in facilitating their peaceful and guided implementation.

CSOs are actively engaging with communities and the district-based policing unit to proactively
encourage a culture of cooperation and good relations between community members and their local
police representatives such as Community Policing Councils and Conflict Prevention and Response
Networks. These local forums provide opportunities for police and community members to engage
in dialogue to identify challenges and trends within their communities and to design cooperative
response mechanisms to address their concerns through formal and traditional legal and conflict
transformation structures.

There is a need to continue to engage in the debate around the interface of traditional and formal
law including determining how best to maximise both the traditional and the formal systems to serve
community members, in particular vulnerable members. The traditional system, while more
accessible to some in the community, remains largely unmonitored, and has insufficient guarantees
of due process. The formal system does not yet reach out to remote areas, is under resourced and
not accessible to many. Work done to pilot mobile courts is positive and should be continued.

Legal aid is in crisis and needs public funding with development partners
having funded the sector for the last 10 years. This government recognised
the importance of funding legal aid through private lawyers by drafting the

"The justice sector plays a crucial role in the consolidation of peace and stability, guaranteeing the rule of law and promoting accountability and transparency in our institutions”

NSDP

"Legal aid is in crisis"
Access to the Courts law – but it needs to be passed as soon as possible to allow for state funding for community legal organisations who have been funded by donors for 10 years. A network of four legal aid organisations currently serve around 600-800 new clients a year, with 63% of those clients women. These organisations are meeting community needs and complementing the services of the Public Defenders’ Office and are at risk due to funding difficulties.

b. Public Sector Management and Good Governance
   i. National Working Groups

We commend the continued engagement of Civil Society through the National Priorities process to-date and the invitation to CSOs to continue to engage through the new coordination structure towards the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan.

While we recognise the value of streamlining the working groups to ensure more targeted discussion on clear targets, the new structure of 22 groups within the 5 pillars does present a risk of fragmenting some discussions and threatens cross-ministerial coordination where multiple actors are relevant. The large number of groups also creates an increased time commitment for government units, development partners and civil society representatives who have engagement in a series of topic areas. Consideration of mechanisms for ensuring cross-cutting issues can be discussed, potentially by bringing relevant working groups together for joint meetings, would be commendable to promote inter-ministerial coordination.

To encourage CSO’s engagement, we suggest that discussion agendas are flexible enough to include current topics as well as reporting on achievement of progress. This would enable the groups to also provide a forum for dialogue on current concerns as they arise and reduce the need for separate sets of parallel working groups on the same topics.

More clarity around the specific objectives of the National Working Groups process, particularly as to whether the meetings are intended to be primarily a government planning mechanism or a government-donor coordination mechanism, would be of benefit. Such clarification may hone the discussion format and encourage better government engagement in understanding the purpose and benefits of the process, as well as indicating how civil society can best contribute to these discussions.

ii. Engaging with Civil Society

Civil Society is ready and eager to continue and increase its engagement with the Government and the New Deal implementation through the National Working Groups process.

Civil Society would suggest that more Timorese NGOs are invited to be present in Quarterly Development Partners Meetings. We would encourage donor partners and government to reach out to a variety of CSOs, rather than using FONGTIL as the single entry point to civil society. We recognise that a number of line ministries are already engaging very productively with civil society partners. This would ensure that CSOs remain up to date with the dialogue progression and have the opportunity to engage in the process from the planning to implementation stages rather than just being observers to the course of action.

As noted, civil society congratulates the government and development partners for all the achievements to date and for the continued commitment to engaging with the people of Timor-Leste in a meaningful way. Only with open dialogue and more space for civil society voice and participation, can the development outcomes that government of Timor-Leste is striving for, be effectively achieved.
6. Concluding Statement

Ten years ago when Timor-Leste celebrated the Restoration of Independence, it was clear that a lot of effort was needed to develop the country. The GoTL, CSOs and other development partners have made significant contributions to date which should be recognised and supported.

The Strategic Development Plan makes a significant contribution to planning for the future of Timor-Leste. However, there are some notable gaps and areas that need addressing. For example, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is an area of growing concern. Timor-Leste’s experience of frequent floods, landslides and prolonged dry spells which can trigger disease and threaten food security. The UN SRSG for DRR reported that there appeared to be a missed opportunity that risks, including of disasters and climate change, were not considered as part of the strategic assumptions on which the implementation of the Plan are based. Without such consideration, key components of development, such as infrastructure (especially schools and hospitals), food security and the livelihood of the poorer parts of the population, will remain highly vulnerable to disasters and assets potentially lost. She recommended that the GoTL with the support of partners, develop a clear and comprehensive disaster management and response system and, with CSOs already effective in this sector, actively promote disaster risk reduction and strengthen resilience in communities.

There is still a long way to go and many more steps that need to be taken on the road to development in Timor-Leste. In the key areas of poverty, economic development, access to justice, governance, health and education long term efforts and commitment are needed to affect change. The landscape of development partners is changing and necessitates an approach that is more adaptive and flexible.

This contribution has sought to provide additional information to the Civil Society Statement to the TLDPM and highlight the following:

- Despite progress made to date, there are some significant areas that need attention in Timor-Leste. Namely:
  - Child and maternal malnutrition rates
  - Access to justice, particularly regarding land laws and legal aid
  - Rural development and agriculture
  - Coordination mechanisms between CSO, GoTL and development partners
  - Environmental considerations, including DRR, are built in to all development plans
- Changing donor landscapes and the downscaling of smaller INGOs will leave a significant funding gap for Timorese CSOs presenting a significant risk for their future
- Communication by CSOs and development partners with the GoTL needs to continue and improve to support initiatives and call for accountability
### Key International NGO contact people

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8. Further Reading

Websites

La’o Hamutuk (Timor-Leste Institute for Reconstruction Monitoring and Analysis)
An extensive list of documents, reports, statements and research conducted by La’o Hamutuk
www.laohamutuk.org

Fundasaun Mahein (Monitoring, research advocacy of the security sector)
Reports, documents and commentary about current affairs relating to the security sector
www.fundasaunmahein.org

Documents

**Government of Timor-Leste**
Ministry of Health
Demographic and Health Survey 2009/2010:


**Civil Society Organisations**
The Asia Foundation “A Survey Of Community-Policing Perceptions in Timor-Leste” 2008
www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/InstitutionalizingCommunityPolicinginTimorLeste.pdf
http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/TimorLesteCommunityPolicing.pdf

Centre for International Conflict Resolution:
www.cicr-columbia.org
Early Warning, Early Response Policy Brief, Conflict Sensitive Social Assistance Provision: Supporting the payments process of pensions to Veterans and the Elderly

Conflict Sensitive Social Assistance Provision: Supporting the payments process of pensions to Veterans and the Elderly

Save the Children, 2012, A Life Free from Hunger: Tackling child malnutrition, Every One Campaign
www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/life-free-hunger-tackling-child-malnutrition

**Special Reports**
UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty (November 2011)
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/CountryVisits.aspx

Justice for the Poor: Articulations of Local Governance in Timor-Leste: Lessons for Local Development Under Decentralisation