

Video statement by MADRE to the 20th Session of UN Human Rights Council

under Agenda Item 3

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

In relation to the report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights on her visit to Timor-Leste (A/HRC/20/25 Add.1)

Presented by Inês Martins NORONHA SOARES

20 June 2012 (Recorded 15 June)

I speak for MADRE and for La'o Hamutuk, the Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur's report.

Half of Timor-Leste's population lives in poverty, with little productive economy. With more than 95% of state revenues from oil and gas exports, Timor-Leste is afflicted by the "resource curse" -- inflation, waste, corruption, poor planning, neglect of human resources, import dependency and inattention to non-oil development.

Timor-Leste plans to borrow billions of dollars. Debt repayments will start small, escalating when the oil is used up in about 12 years. At the same time, our post-war "baby boom" will reach working age.

If the country has not built a strong, sustainable economy by then, it will be unable to support its huge trade deficit or provide basic services. When there is no oil money for subsidies or to trickle down, people will starve.

We ask you to help us:

- Reduce 40% annual growth in State expenditures, while improving basic services for vulnerable people, especially women and children.
- Invest in health care, education, water and rural roads to let people raise themselves out of poverty.
- Stop borrowing and wasting money on huge infrastructure projects without much economic or social return.
- Strengthen the non-oil economy, especially agriculture and light industry, to reduce imports and provide livelihoods and basic needs.
- Help Timor-Leste take responsibility for its own development.

We thank the Special Rapporteur and the Council for your support.

MADRE - 121 West 27th Street, #301, New York, NY 10001 USA <http://www.madre.org/> email: catlas@madre.org

In cooperation with **Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis (La'o Hamutuk)**, Box 340, Dili, Timor-Leste. <http://www.laohamutuk.org> email: info@laohamutuk.org Tel. +670-332-1040.

A more comprehensive description of these issues is in the written statement to the Human Rights Council submitted by Franciscans International (FI), the Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).