

## FORUM TAU MATAN

Sekretariado FORUM TAU MATAN, Rua Fatu Meta, Sub-distritu Dom Aleixo,  
Dili, Timor-Leste. Telemobel. (+670) 390. 724 2099.

Her Excellency Ms. Margaret Twomey  
Ambassador of Australia  
Australian Embassy  
Dili

8 June 2005

Dear Ambassador,

We are writing to you in relation to a letter that Forum Tau Matan (FTM, a local human rights NGO) received on 7 June 2005 from Mr. Ellis of AusAID. In this letter, addressed to me as the General Coordinator of FTM, AusAID informs us that the Australian Government is unable to provide support to FTM, for a proposal submitted in October 2004. This proposal concerns 'Human rights monitoring and dissemination information, and human rights popular education in the development of Timor-Leste's Justice System'.

We were surprised to receive the 7 June letter given that a binding agreement had been signed between AusAID and FTM on 25 January 2005, wherein AusAID declares that the Australian Government had approved funding of A\$65,830.00 for the proposed project. The agreement also states that upon written confirmation of acceptance of the grant by FTM, which was given on 22 February 2005, a cheque would be handed over to FTM. After being informed by AusAID on two occasions in March, FTM made preparations to receive the cheque. AusAID however twice requested a postponement. AusAID informed FTM in May that it needed to consult with Canberra in relation to the approved project. On 7 June, AusAID told FTM that it will not be given the promised funds, as the Australian development cooperation program had been reviewing the ways in which the Australian Government engages with NGOs. He explained that the decision not to fund FTM was taken in Canberra.

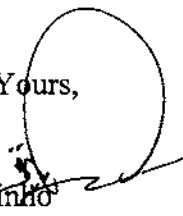
The 25 February agreement does not contain any clause for revocation of the agreement in the event of a change of government policy. FTM was therefore confident that the approved funds would be disbursed and embarked upon its one-year programme in March. Several activities have been carried out since and expenditures made.

May I also bring to your attention that the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs of issued a press release on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2004, wherein he congratulates, among others, FTM on receiving funds for the concerned project.

We would like to request your assistance to discuss the matter with the relevant persons in Canberra, as FTM is committed to continue its activities as approved under the project. We would like to request the Australian Government to fulfil its obligations under the February agreement.

We would be happy to provide further clarification if required. We would also appreciate it if you could inform us of any developments regarding the matter.

Sincerely Yours,



Joao Pequinho  
General Coordinator  
Forum Tau Matan  
Dili  
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Attached:

- 1) Letter by AusAID of 7 June 2005
- 2) Letter of agreement between AusAID and FTM of 25 January 2005
- 3) Letter by AusAID of 15 December 2004
- 4) Media Release by Minister of Foreign Affairs of 10 December 2004
- 5) FTM project proposal of October 2004

Copy to: AusAID  
Mr. Peter Ellis  
Australian Embassy  
Dili