

The EU supports rural development, democratic governance and civil society in the Republic of Timor-Leste

Today, the European Union has approved a package of four strategic programmes for a total amount of €39 million in favour of Timor-Leste. These four strategic programmes are: a Support to Rural development for €23 million; a Support to Democratic Governance for €10.5 million; a Support to Non-State Actors for €4 million and, finally, a Technical Cooperation Facility for €1.5 million.

"The EU support covers some of the key sectors for the Republic of Timor-Leste development and will be used to increase agricultural productivity and strengthen rural infrastructure, to improve democratic governance and to support Non State Actors." said the Head of the EU Delegation in Timor-Leste, Ambassador Juan Carlos Rey.

Support to rural development is an imperative necessity in the country since 80% of the population is living in rural areas, with highly dependence from subsistence agriculture. The difficult access to rural areas hampers agricultural and social development. The support of the EU, for an amount of €23 million, aims at increasing agricultural productivity and improving the rural roads network, as well as other rural infrastructures such as irrigation schemes.

Intervention in favour of democratic governance, totalling €10.5 million, includes specific support to the areas of Justice, Parliament, media and communication. Support to these basic democratic institutions remains a pillar for the consolidation of the organic structures of the country.

The civil society will be also supported by the planned intervention in the area of non-state actors (€4 million), as an element of transparency and citizens' participation in the life of the country. Special consideration will be given to the gender and youth components of civil society.

Finally, a Technical Cooperation Facility (€1.5 million) will facilitate the implementation of EU-Timor-Leste cooperation, with emphasis on capacity building.

Background

The Republic of Timor-Leste is the youngest country in the world since it gained independence in 2002 after a 24-year period of conflict under Indonesian rule. Today, the country is faced with several difficulties and ranks at 162nd (out of 182) in the Human Development Report (2009). Poverty hits 41% of the population (2010), and is mainly concentrated in rural areas. Timor-Leste is considered as a fragile state, but the Government is making significant efforts to ensure the stability, the setup of the institutions needed to consolidate the structures and development of this young country.

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