



## GOVERNO

### MINISTERIO DOS RECURSOS NATURAIS, MINERAIS E POLITICA ENERGETICA GABINETE DO MINISTRO

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#### Media release

Dili, 17 June 2007

### **Timor-Leste's FRETILIN Government Keeps Community Water and Sanitation a National Development High Priority**

Timor-Leste's Minister for Natural Resources, Minerals and Energy Policy (MNRMEP), José Teixeira today announced that a technical evaluation process involving Timor-Leste Ministry of Health, MNRMEP and Ausaid officials to select a contractor to implement the Ausaid Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project had come to an end and a contractor to work with the Timor-Leste government to implement the project would be announced next week.

The Aus\$50 million RWSSP assistance package is a follow on from Ausaid's Aus\$154 million Community Water Supply and Sanitation Project. Between December 2001 and March 2006 CWSSP and the government of Timor-Leste worked together in 3 districts (Covalima, Boponaro and Viqueque) to improve access to water and basic sanitation by rural communities as well develop the capacity of communities to manage and operate their water systems. The project has been 12 months in the planning, consultation and negotiation between the government of Timor-Leste and the government of Australia. "We also consulted with Non-Government Organizations, Community Based Organizations and communities in order to find the right mechanism to implement this new partnership with Australia," said Teixeira.

Timor-Leste has taken great strides in expanding and increasing community access to water throughout the country, even before the restoration of independence on 20 May 2002.

"For example in 2001 in Rural Areas only 13.46% had access to water (a tap 100 metres or less). In 2006, 40.00% of the rural population had access to water on the same criteria.

"In Urban Areas, Dili and district and sub-district capitals, in 2001 only 13.36% of people had access to water. This increased to 45.21% in 2006. These figures have increased so far this year (over 50% of people in the country have access to water) and will continue to increase dramatically with the FRETILIN government's planned investment program in water and sanitation throughout the country over the next five years. We can cover near 90 to 95 % of the country within the next four years. That will be great for our national development," stressed Teixeira.

Over the next 5 years 30,000 additional families will benefit from the FRETILIN government's fully planned and costed proposed Program for Accelerated National Development, which will see USD\$75 million over six years. An additional 55,000 families will also benefit from increased and better sanitation facilities.

"Next week, Ministry officials together with AUSAID officials will finalize the tender process for the contractor for the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project which will invest AUS\$50 million over 10 years, with AUS\$30 million in the first five years. This investment will be channeled through the National Directorate for Water and Sanitation of the MNRMEP and the Ministry of Health in terms of primary health issues related to basic sanitation. There will also be an injection of substantial technical assistance and support package to increase human resource capacity to implement and deliver the services contemplated by this project as well as those contemplated the government's own investment budget," said Teixeira.

The FRETILIN government has always made a priority to investment in rural communities, especially in basic services, and we will continue to increasingly do so. The result of this work in negotiating and

finalizing this program with Ausaid is further evidence of FRETILIN's commitment to this basic service needed by Timorese for their social and economic development.

“The results in these short years in the water and sanitation sector indicate sound results from our previous investment programs. But we must continue to invest into infrastructure and capacity to build a sustainable system of delivering water and sanitation to rural communities. This must remain our priority. Improving water and sanitation improves the health of our people and therefore we must continue to keep it a high priority in our national development goals,” added Teixeira in conclusion.

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