



PRESS RELEASE

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NATIONAL PROPERTY DIRECTORATE PARTICIPATES IN TRAINING OF TRAINERS FOR DISPUTE MEDIATION

The Government, with support from USAID's Strengthening Property Rights or "Ita Nia Rai" project, is preparing to collect data about land rights in Timor-Leste over the coming 5 years. This process will be undertaken in order to build a national database about property rights. During the implementation of this process, the National Directorate for Land, Property and Cadastral Services (DNTPSC) will also provide a mediation process for disputes about land boundaries or ownership. Mediation is a key technique that local leaders can use to help communities find solutions and resolve disputes peacefully.

In light of this goal, the Strengthening Property Rights project will provide training to DNTPSC staff in order to improve their skills as trainers so that they can provide instruction to local leaders. This training is in line with DNTPSC's plan to provide training to Chefe Sucos in the area of mediation. The training of trainers programme follows on from a participative workshop in which DNTPSC identified their primary needs, and will take place from 4-6 June 2008.

Mr. Antonio Verdial de Sousa, the Director of the DNTPSC commented that "this training is being undertaken in line with DNTPSC's action plan for 2008, which sets a target of training 100 Chefe de Sucos in the districts in order to build their capacity to act as mediators in their localities". He also explained that the training of trainers will focus on team building, creating materials that will help trainers to improve their skills as facilitators, and on teaching trainers new techniques in order to improve DNTPSC's overall programme. The training will also include materials on ensuring gender equality.

After the training of trainers, DNTPSC will undertake their own training in Liquica and Manatutu districts in June, and will provide training to 20 chefe de suco, chefe de aldeia and community leaders in mediation and dispute resolution. This training is important to develop local leaders' ability to use mediation to find peaceful solutions to land disputes in their communities. A study undertaken in 2007 by local NGO Belun found that land disputes and property disputes were a significant conflict factor in 60% of the sukus studied.

Once the training has been completed, the DNTPSC and the "Ita Nia Rai" team will conduct evaluations in order to improve the mediation training materials. After the evaluation, DNTPSC plans to expand the training to chefe suco and community leaders in other districts.

The Strengthening Property Rights in Timor-Leste project is a five-year USAID-funded project that aims to help the Government of Timor-Leste secure land tenure and property rights in the country. Working with the National Directorate for Land, Property and Cadastral Services (DNTPSC), a directorate of the Ministry of Justice, the program provides technical and policy support to develop a sustainable and transparent property rights system in Timor-Leste.

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