



PRESS RELEASE

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TIMOR-LESTE GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES LAND DATA COLLECTION IN BAUCAU AND AILEU

The Director of the National Directorate for Land, Property and Cadastral Services (DNTPSC), launched today in Baucau, and will launch tomorrow in Aileu, the land data collection process in these two districts. The community land data collection, by which individuals, groups and organizations can submit a claim to land ownership, will begin in selected areas in the two districts on 11 May 2009, following community consultation.

This brings to four districts so far the coverage of the land claims registration activity being undertaken through the locally-named “Ita Nia Rai” (Our Land) program, a five-year project supported by USAID that is working with the Ministry of Justice and the DNTPSC to develop property rights and land administration systems in Timor-Leste. Since November 2008, the program has registered 891 land claims in the pilot districts of Liquica and Manatuto.

On the occasion of the launching ceremony in Baucau, Antonio Verdial de Sousa, the Director of DNTPSC, said: “The land data collection process is a critical step forward for our nation. The system that we are creating today will contribute to stability and economic development in the future.” Director Verdial also explained the process carefully: “Making a land claim does not mean you will get a land title. However, the Government can use the database of land claims to issue titles in the future, according to the Law that has yet to be passed.”

The Director also added: “This process is voluntary and free of any charge. All Timorese people have the right to choose to make a claim to land if they believe it is theirs. Anyone who wishes to make a claim has the right to do so free of any discrimination, intimidation or violence.”

Nigel Thomson, “Ita Nia Rai” Chief of Party, said to the local leaders present at the launch: “Help your people to participate in this process fully and peacefully. Work hard to promote dispute resolution and peace between families and neighbors. By doing this, you can provide a more secure future for your community in years to come. This future is in your own hands today.”

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STRENGTHENING PROPERTY RIGHTS IN TIMOR-LESTE **Balide, Dili, Timor-Leste**

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