



UNMIT Photo / Martine Perret

Timor-Leste currently produces 40,000 metric tonnes of rice per year and imports 50 to 60,000 tonnes.

UNMIT: “No danger of starvation in Timor-Leste” from global food crisis

Timor-Leste is not at risk of starvation from the global food crisis as the Government is managing the situation by importing stocks of rice and selling it at subsidized prices.

This was the joint message of Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General Finn Reske-Nielsen, World Food Programme Country Director Joan Fleuren, and Chana Opaskornkul of the Food and Agriculture Organization, who discussed the global food crisis and its effect in Timor-Leste at a press conference in Dili on 14 May.

Mr. Reske-Nielsen said current stocks and expected imports will last for the immediate foreseeable future, a short-term solution that will provide time for the Government to work on the medium and long term.

“The Government is working hard to increase its imports,” Mr. Fleuren said. “These imports are a good solution for the short term to make sure there is no food crisis,” he added. The root cause of the problem, Mr.

Opaskornkul noted, is that Timor-Leste does not produce enough food to feed its people. “It’s important for the country in the medium term to increase capacity of farmers to produce more,” he told journalists.

The UN is considering a study of the socioeconomic impact of the food crisis over the medium and long term. “As a first step, Timor-Leste has been selected as one of 20 countries that will be visited by a UN mission over the next two to three months to do a country-specific assessment that could then lead to further advice down the line,” Mr. Reske-Nielsen said.

Campaign encourages dialogue to resolve differences peacefully

A campaign aimed at helping communities affected by conflict to resolve their differences peacefully through community dialogue was launched this week by the Government of Timor-Leste and UNDP. The project will also target local leadership by promoting their role in conflict prevention and resolution and set the stage for a process of national reconstruction and recovery.

The initiative was formally endorsed by the Minister of Social Solidarity Maria Domingas Alves and UNDP Resident Representative Finn Reske-Nielsen, at a signing ceremony in Dili on 12 May 2008.

“This project is being led by MSS and is able to go ahead because of the commitment of UNDP,” Minister Alves said.

“During the transition period, implementation was in the hands of the UN. Now we have moved a bit so that the project will be implemented primarily by the Ministry of Social Solidarity,” she added.

“The project is nationally owned and nationally driven,” Mr. Reske-Nielsen said. He commended Minister Alves for her efforts in resolving the IDP problem in the country, and thanked the Government of New Zealand for donating one-third of the project’s funding, calling on other donors to fill the funding gaps.



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Minister Alves (standing) and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão (to her right) at a recent community dialogue in Fatuhada. Photos of other meetings can be seen on page 2.

Upcoming UN Events and Observances – May 2008

Date	Where	What
Saturdays, Sundays	National	<i>Futuru Nabilan</i> , UNMIT Radio weekly programme broadcast by RTL on Saturdays from 6:00-6:30 PM and Sundays from 5:30-6:00 PM
21	Baucau	Public Outreach Meeting – Humanitarian Support to Timor-Leste
23	Oecusse	
24	Dili	Cristo Rei Clean Up for Peace
29	International	International Day of UN Peacekeepers – 60 th Anniversary of UN Peacekeeping

Community dialogues organized by MSS in Fatuhada and Bairro Pite



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