



Local Governance Monthly Bulletin

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Local Governance as the key to Development

State of Victoria visits the MSATM to discuss bilateral cooperation to support future municipalities in Timor-Leste



Photo: Thaiza Castilho, UNCDF

Australian representatives meet with the MSATM Minister, Dr. Arcângelo Leite and his staff

On 7 September a delegation from the State of Victoria, Australia, visited the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) to discuss the future cooperation for support to the decentralization process in Timor-Leste.

At the meeting were present the Minister of MSATM, Dr. Arcângelo Leite, together with the Director of the Directorate of Local Development and Territorial Management (DNDLOT), Mr. Miguel de Carvalho, and Mr. Richard Wynne, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs and the Australian Ambassador of Timor-Leste, Mr. Peter Heyward.

Dr. Arcângelo briefed the Australian representatives on what has been accomplished so far on the

decentralization process and which steps the government of Timor-Leste is undertaking in order to start the set-up of the municipalities in early 2010. "The local government law is soon to be discussed at the National Parliament. Meanwhile the government has been preparing trainings and subsidiary legislation to strengthen the municipalities once they have been established", stated the Minister.

The MSATM Minister and DNDLOT Director

encouraged Australia's support in to the Joint National Decentralization Programme, that is being developed with the support of the joint UNDP-UNCDF Local Governance Support Programme, in order to coordinate activities between the government and key stakeholders involved in this process.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of sending Timorese staff, who will work in the municipalities, to Australia to attend training and undertake on the job work experience in local municipalities.

"The Australian government is willing to assist the Timorese colleagues on the decentralization process. We have been successfully implementing the decentralization in our country and I'm sure that we can support Timor-Leste with mentoring and training to effectively set-up the municipalities", affirmed Mr. Wynne during the meeting.



Photo: Thaiza Castilho, UNCDF



MSATM discuss strategic plan for the next 5 years

On 15 September the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) organized an all day consultation meeting at the Canossiana Center, in Delta Comoro, to discuss the Ministry's strategic plan for the next 5 years. The purpose of this consultation was to prepare a new strategic plan for the MSATM in order to promote activities such as the national policy and the local development programmes, how the Ministry can work effectively to achieve social and economical development.

This was also an opportunity for the stakeholders to discuss future activities of the Ministry, which plan to reorganize the current directorates to focus on strengthening delivery of basic services, developing technical and managerial capacities for the set up social, industrial and commercial infrastructures and support the decentralization process.

More than 150 people attended the event among ministry staff, NGOs, line ministries, international organizations and academics and discussed about issues such as administrative reform, national development, decentralization and the provision of public services.

Dr. Arcângelo Leite, MSATM Minister, stated during the event that: "this consultation workshop is an important step to bring key stakeholders closer to the Ministry and to develop the capacity of our staff with regards to systems and structures. It is also an opportunity to reflect upon the current system and identify means to improve it in the future".

The decentralization process was also part of the discussion, and the participants talked about the preparation for the set-up of the municipalities, means for an effective implementation, what are the

responsibilities of the MSATM and other ministries in this process.

The Vice Prime-Minister for Public Administration, Eng. Mário Viegas Carrascalão, responded to the concerns about the implementation of the decentralization process as the 'decentralization of corruption' in the municipalities: "the decentralization process will not facilitate corruption because, specifically in the case of municipalities, it will be much more difficult for corruption to take place. There will be many more

people involved and the population will be able to watch closely the government to ensure accountability and transparency".



Photo: João Santos, UNCDF

Eng. Mário Carrascalão, Dr. Arcângelo Leite, Mr. Florindo Pereira, Mr. Jorge Teme and Mr. Miguel Pereira de Carvalho at the strategic plan meeting

MSATM organizes training on leadership and strategic planning with UNDP support

On 24 September the MSATM organized, at Boa Ventura Hotel, a training course on leadership and strategic planning for ministry staff to develop the capacities of government officials in these areas.

The Secretary of State for Administrative Reform, Mr. Florindo Pereira, opened the training session and stating that this initiative will reflect in the future activities developed by the MSATM as an important key to guarantee an efficient administrative reform and decentralization process in all Timor-Leste's territory. "This training is relevant to all the ministry staff and should be applied in your daily activities so you will be prepared for the future", said Mr. Pereira.

More than 25 participants among directors, department chiefs and officers attended the training which was led by the

international consultant, Mr. Sambamoorthy, from the UNDP Civil Service Project.

Mr. Jaimito do Rego, Internal Audit Officer from the National Directorate of Finance Administration (DNAF), attended the training and stated: "I learned many things from this training and I believe that the Ministry should encourage this initiatives to develop the potential of the staff. Now our task is to apply what was said today at our work", he affirmed.



Photo: Duarte Santos, MSATM



DNLOT Director participates of radio panel discussion on the establishment of municipalities

On 24 September the DNDLOT Director, Mr. Miguel Pereira de Carvalho, the Director from NGO Forum, Mrs. Dinorah Granadeiro, and a representative of the community, Mrs. Marta Soares, participated in a radio panel discussion at the Central Radio Community about the establishment of the municipalities in Timor-Leste.

"The government is preparing a gradual transfer of responsibilities which will occur in various phases. In the beginning of the decentralization process the first services which will be devolved or

delegated to the municipalities, are primary health, water provision and the set-up of the municipal administration. In future we expect that other ministries will embark on decentralizing responsibilities", stated the DNDLOT Director.

Mrs. Dinorah and Mrs. Soares expressed their views on how they expect the government to assist and provide guidance for the people living in remote areas to understand about the municipalities. "The government's plan to establish the municipalities is a good

idea, because it will transfer power to the local level. For all of us living in the community we expect that the local government will be able to implement laws and benefit the people. It is also important that the community be active during this implementation to assist in the

development by working together with the local leaders", said Mrs. Soares.

The DNDLOT Director stressed at the discussion the opportunities that the decentralization will bring to the people of Timor-Leste. "The main benefits of the decentralization process are the improvement of service delivery - where the citizens can have a more proximate and accessible source of public goods and services, and the diversity that different parts of the country will be able to exercise a degree of self-governance", stated Mr. Pereira.

These radio discussions are part of the Communication Strategy of the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management, with the support of the UNDP-UNCDF Local Governance Support Programme, to disseminate a 30-minute radio program with information about the decentralization process, the legislation on local government and the establishment of the municipalities for the people living in remote areas of Timor-Leste and with limited access to information.



João Santos, LGSP Communication Officer, interviews DNDLOT Director, Mr. Miguel de Carvalho at the Central Community Radio

Name and Quotation



Dr. Manuel Carrascalão is the Vice Prime-Minister for Public Administration

"Decentralization will bring the government closer to the people and with this process the community can also observe and participate by contributing with ideas for local development. One of the main benefits of the establishment of the municipalities

is that the community will not need to rely only on the central government to resolve local issues, for example to request a business license or basic services such as water and sanitation will be possible at the municipal level", stated Eng. Carrascalão.



Let's understand the decentralization process

In June 2009 the National Parliament started to discuss the set of three Local Government laws that will determine the creation and development of the municipalities in Timor-Leste.

So far, the first of these laws, the Law on Administrative and Territorial Division, was approved by the National Parliament, while the other two are pending discussion.

According to the law, the territory of Timor-Leste will be divided administratively into collective territorial entities, named municipalities, and each of which will represent a local government unit.

The purpose of this law is to guarantee the interest of the respective populations, in each of the municipalities, so they could benefit national unity and local development.

In Timor-Leste there will be 13 Municipalities and they will have the same boundaries as the districts.

According to article 4, see below the map of the 13 municipalities of Timor-Leste:



In our next Edition

In October:

- Local Government Law discussion at the National Parliament
- Launch of the Civic Education Campaign on the establishment of the municipalities

Local Government as the key to Development



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Management

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So if you now live in the district of Covalima, you will live in the Municipality of Covalima and vote for the members of the Municipal Assembly of Covalima.

The set-up of the municipalities will ensure that each of them will maintain the current territorial division to respect local culture, language and traditions.

Do I have to go to the district capital for everything?

Each Municipality will have branch offices for basic services that are closer to the people. They are not a level of government, but an extension of the Municipal services. Most of these will be located in offices that are now based in the sub-district towns. You will be able to go there to ask for help with municipal services.