

JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA DE MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL



Press Release
June 2008

Dili District Courthouse Officially Reopened

On 13 June 2008 the Dili District Court was officially reopened after being rehabilitated for approximately 8 months. During this period of rehabilitation the Dili District Court functioned out of the Court of Appeal. However, it is important to note that the Dili District Court has actually been functioning normally since the middle of May 2008. The President of the Dili District Court, Judge Maria Natercia Gusmão, in her speech stated that the aforementioned court was rehabilitated to help improve justice for the people of Timor Leste. It is crucial to have favorable working conditions in the court to enable the judicial process to be managed efficiently.

The President of the Court said that funds totaling \$US 250.000 were allocated in the 2007 state budget and approved by the National Parliament. Judge Natercia appealed to the National Parliament to continue allocating funds to the court. Also, there is a need for adequate regulations and legislation to strengthen the justice system in Timor Leste.

Judge Natercia added that the Baucau District Court is also being rehabilitated and this process should be completed this year. Two houses are also being rehabilitated in Baucau that will accommodate judges assigned to the Baucau District Court. Two other houses are being rehabilitated to accommodate judges assigned to the Suai and Oecusse District Courts respectively.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Jose Luis Guterres, in his address stated that the court is an institution that performs a crucial role, and therefore the court actors need favorable conditions in order to carry out their duties and functions efficiently and effectively.

The Deputy President of the National Parliament, Maria Paixão, in her address admitted that the shortcomings in the judicial process in Timor Leste could perhaps be attributed to the National parliament itself for failing to address the needs of the court actors. Therefore there is a need to provide special subsidies to this institution.

The President of the Court of Appeal, Claudio Ximenes, in his address stated that in order for judges to be able to carry out their duties and functions properly they needed administration, logistics and trials to be managed effectively, and they relied heavily on the collaboration of all parties.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was carried out by the Deputy Prime Minister and a plaque was signed by the President of the Court of Appeal and the courthouse was blessed by Father Jose Antonio da Costa. Therefore, on 13 June 2008 the Dili District Court was officially reopened. JSMP observed that this newly refurbished courthouse has been equipped with office equipment to facilitate the day-to-day work of the judges and individual laptop computers and other equipment had been placed in the chambers of each judge.

JSMP believes that the official reopening of the Dili District Court and the provision of office equipment is a positive and progressive step forward in the Timor Leste judicial sector. JSMP hopes that the state budget allocated to the judicial sector will be utilized properly by the Ministry of Justice to rehabilitate other courts.

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