



Press Release
19 April 2023

JSMP contributes to the revision of Rules regarding *Tara-Bandu* (Traditional Prohibition) in Samalete Village before holding a ceremony to reactivate Tara-Bandu rules.

On 13 April 2023 the local authorities in Samalete Village together with community members conducted a ceremony to reactivate tara-bandu rules in their village to prohibit the destruction of flora, fauna and the violation of people's rights. The process to revise the tara-bandu rules was supported by non-government organizations, the Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP) to guarantee that the tara-bandu rules are harmonized with national laws.

"JSMP was really happy to help the local authorities as well as the community members in Samalete Village during this process, to revise the tara-bandu rules because this is also one of the aims of collaboration carried out by the Samalete Village community with JSMP on support for community justice so that communities can have rules that do not contradict national laws in regards to their implementation," said Ms. Ana Paula Marçal, Executive Director of JSMP.

The Samalete Village Chief, Mr. Antonio Soares, said that the ceremony to reactivate tara-bandu rules was held with the aim of making a better contribution to Government programs to protect the environment and to promote art and culture in communities. The Village Chief also said that Samalete Village has had its own tara-bandu rules since 2018 and implementation has clearly shown that the communities have managed to protect a range of flora and has also guaranteed tranquility in their village.

The Village Chief was also really happy with the support of JSMP to revise these tara-bandu rules.

"This year we are really happy with our tara-bandu rules because we received support from JSMP as our new partner to contribute towards the examination of our tara-bandu rules so that they do not contradict national laws. We hope that in the future the implementation of tara-bandu rules can uphold the interests of all people," said the Samalete Village Chief.

Also, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Inacio Amaral, the Deputy Commander of PNTL in Ermera Municipality, said that he was really happy with the contribution of JSMP

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through its program in Samalete Village, and he also congratulated the authorities in Samalete Village and the entire community for the initiative to reactivate tara-bandu rules including a request for JSMP to expand this program to other villages to increase the knowledge of local authorities.

“I am also happy because the NGO JSMP had the initiative to work together with local authorities to ensure that these rules do not contradict laws, because we have been concerned about this and have heard that tara-bandu rules contradict the law, especially in relation to sanctions and they also prohibit some behaviours that are not criminalized in the formal law. I also congratulate the authorities in Samalete Village and the entire community for protecting flora, fauna and also for ensuring that communities can live with respect for each other. Therefore, if possible, I ask for JSMP to expand this cooperation with other villages so they can follow up and further increase the knowledge of local authorities so they can ensure that there are no violations of the rights of community members in relation to the implementation of these rules,” said Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Inacio Amaral Ermera.

Mr. Tomas da Costa Soares, the Railaco Post Administrator, in Ermera Municipality, asked for local authorities to utilize this opportunity to work together with JSMP to increase their knowledge about the formal justice processes so that the implementation of tara-bandu rules don't violate the rights of citizens.

His Excellency, Mr. Deometrio Amaral, the Secretary of State for the Environment, really appreciated the fact that the village authorities and the community members of Samalete Village wish to continue using tara-bandu rules in order to protect the environment and also to regulate their lives in the community.

His Excellency, Mr. Teofilio Caldas, the Secretary of State for Art and Culture, said that he considers this initiative as a positive step to protect and enrich these rules that come from East Timorese culture and do not contradict national laws. Also, he was happy with the JSMP program in Samalete Village.

“Tara-bandu are really positive rules because they come from customs that have existed for a long time, however we need to pay proper attention because some customs contradict our national laws as well as some sanctions that are sometimes too harsh in relation to people's capacity. Therefore, I am happy that JSMP has worked with the village authorities to carefully consider these rules, and they can also increase the knowledge of authorities and communities so that they can have a good understanding of the rules and they can discontinue those rules that are not appropriate,” said His Excellency, Mr. Teofilio Caldas, the Secretary of State for Art and Culture.

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The ceremony to reactivate the tara-bandu rules was attended by representatives from the Government who made some short speeches, and also Assistant Inspector, Mr. Sudensio de Jesus, Commander of the Railaco Administrative Post Station, Mr. João Mestre, representative of the President of the Ermera Municipal Authority, Mr. Tomas da Costa Soares, the Railaco Administrative Post Administrator, Ermera Municipality, the JSMP delegation, the authorities from Aamalete Village, customary elders from sacred houses, and also community members.

The Community Security Support Program (PASK) is a joint effort between JSMP and The Asia Foundation (TAF) which is financed by the New Zealand Embassy to conduct research on the effect of community justice to resolve disputes in the community.

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