



REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE
MINISTÉRIO DA AGRICULTURA E PESCAS
GABINETE DO MINISTRO



**FEW WORDS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF
 THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
 AT THE DONORS MEETING**

The **Agricultural Sector**, from now and in the near future, will continue to be the major sector for Timor-Leste as more than 75% of its population are farmers who live in the rural areas. There are many farmers who are still rely on subsistent agriculture. Many people keep practicing wild fire, illegal and uncontrolled logging, that cause the destruction of forests and the extinction of biodiversity, as well as many other environmental related problems. Therefore, it requires good natural resources management to ensure the sustainable utilisation of the natural resources for the benefit and welfare of many people.

Being a Government Institution that is responsible to assist the farmers to increase the agricultural production, ensure Food Security and increase their economic income, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in collaboration with the developing Donors and NGOs in Timor-Leste, are working side by side to develop the agriculture sector through the programs of intensification, "*extensification*" and diversification of agricultural practices so as to increase land productivity and agricultural production, improve the livelihood of farmers, ensure Food Security and provide continued supply of carbohydrate, protein and minerals that are most needed for people's health. Furthermore, all efforts that have been done in collaboration with the Donors aims to shift the mentality of the farmers from subsistent agriculture to a market-oriented and sustainable agriculture, at the same time, could provide new jobs and reduce poverty. In this context, the Fourth Constitutional Government has considered the Agricultural Sector and Food Security as the **2nd National Priority** and plan to continue increasing the agriculture **Productivity** from 2010 and onward.

To achieve those targets as mentioned above, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has prepared the Strategic Plan, Programs and Activities to be executed by each Directorate since 2010 and in the years to come.

Due to budget constraints, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries still need financial and technical support from the developing Donors who are interested on agriculture development and would like to help the farmers to improve their economic income. Therefore, as of today, this Ministry has received assistance from the **UN Agencies** such as the **FAO, UNDP**, and Donors, **GTZ, ADB, ABC, AusAID, USAID, IPAD, JICA**, the **European Commission**,

AECID and others, including NGOs. In this regard, on behalf of my Ministry, I would like to thank and highly appreciate all support you have provided to this Ministry. However, as a new Country, Timor-Leste still need for your continued assistance and cooperation in the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.

As of today, there are many programs and activities that have been conducted jointly by this Ministry and the Donors, such as the introduction of Hybrid rice, application of *Integrated Crop Management*, rehabilitation of the irrigation channels, utilization of good and healthy seeds, provide different kinds of training including the training on the application of organic fertilizers, improve the agriculture mechanization through the introduction of hand-tillers and tractors for ploughing the land and utilization of equipments for sowing and harvesting of rice and maize, conduct the vaccination of big ruminants and poultry, conduct training to the fisherman at the costal zones, doing research, etc. In the mean time, I would like to invite the interested Donors to provide assistance for the construction of animal installation and green house at the Quarantine posts in the entrance points along the border with the Indonesian Province of West Timor, aiming to control the movement of animals and plants in and out of Timor-Leste.

In addition, MAF also cooperates with other Government Ministries in establishing silos for seed storage, construct new warehouses, and promote the consumption of local products through a program "*merenda eskolar*", etc. MAF will continue to promote the programs on "*combat against land degradation and deforestation*" and programs on adaptation to Climate Change.

In addition, MAF has conducts the viability study on watershed in 4 rivers (4) and in eleven riversides (11) to build dams for water conservation before canalising to the farms and rice fields. Therefore, I am taking this opportunity to invite ADB and the interested Donors to provide financial and technical support for this initiative.

I do recognise that right now, my Ministry is facing several constraints and barriers such as having staffs with limited technical capacity, un-sufficient budget, negative impact of the Climate Change, Free Trade and the absence of a comprehensive and integrated Plan for MAF and the Donors or the Implementing Institutions operating in Timor-Leste. Therefore, as of today, there are certain programs that are being executed not in line with MAF's Plan and consequently have less impact to farmers' need and their lives.

I believe that the agricultural development in Timor-Leste will be on target and much improved if Donors' programs fit into MAF's national program.

Beside the constraints as mentioned earlier, I do recognise that Climate Change is not a problem for the farmers only but it is a global problem that has negative effect to most developing sectors in all countries. As such, I believe that with continued support from the Donors and UN Agencies, will allow Timor-Leste to minimise the negative impact from this global problem.

To mitigate the negative impacts of the Climate Change, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will conduct awareness campaign to the farmers, requesting them to protect forests, avoid wild fire along the slopes and at the plain areas, start implementing the Sustainable Land Management in order to avoid soil erosion and start adopting the appropriate technologies to reduce the negative impacts of the Climate Change. This is the contribution that can be provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, but since Climate Change is a global environmental problem, therefore, it requires big commitment from all Governments and Countries to cope with this problem by reducing activities of deforestation and increasing reforestation, etc. that benefits the development in general and human health.

From this short intervention, I would like to remind you all on the following:

- That the agricultural development is a continued process and it is not possible to achieve everything within a short period of time;
- Agricultural development will keep moving on and it needs support from the farmers, UN Agencies, Donors and NGOs;
- That any support provided by the Donors, UN Agencies and NGOs – for the improvement of agriculture sector, should be implemented in line with the Policy and Programs of MAF; and should involve MAF's staff in the preparation of the project proposals and during implementation of the project activities in the field;
- Donors are also requested to provide support to the Quarantine services such as to construct the Animal installations and green houses for Plants at the Quarantine posts along the border with the Indonesian Province of West Timor and provide training to improve the technical capacity of the staffs according to their needs;
- Shall protect forests and promote reforestation; and shall implement the principles of the Sustainable Land Management in agricultural activities and others that are directly or indirectly related with the utilization of land.
- That Timor-Leste should be more involved in the global effort with other countries to combat the negative effects of Climate Change.

Thank you for your attention.

Díli, 6th of April, 2010

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