



Five new bridges in Viqueque and Lautem districts

Five bridges linking some of the remotest areas in Viqueque and Lautem are now ready for use by the people of Timor-Leste. This ends a two-year construction effort funded by the European Union and the Government of Timor-Leste and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). A formal ceremony for the inauguration of the bridges was held on 18 November at Irabere Bridge.



UNMIT Photo/Rohit Kohli

The new bridges will facilitate the transport of products to the markets.

Irabere Bridge is the longest, at 200 metres, of the 5 bridges, and its completion in September marked the final phase of the Access Improvement to Markets (AIM) project. The other four bridges were constructed in Bebui, Wekain, Mauma'a and Lihulu sections, located along the key Viqueque to Los Palos route.

The total cost of the project amounts to \$9.2 million, with \$1.2 million coming from Government of Timor-Leste funding and an \$8 million grant from the European Union. This project aims at improving rural development by opening up new markets for agricultural products, allowing communities and families to travel easily in the country, and creating new possibilities for increased social services provision in the two districts.

The President of the Republic Jose Ramos Horta presided over the ceremony in the presence of the European Union Ambassador Juan-Carlos Rey-Salgado and Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General (A-SRSG) Finn Reske-Nielsen, who is also the UNDP Resident Representative. Wang Yue, Director of UNOPS Asia Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok also participated in the event that started with a traditional welcome ceremony organized by the local community.

Festival of Peace in Dili: to bring down the highest rate of violence in Timor-Leste

"The President's Festival of Peace" that took place in Dili at Mercado Lama on 21 November was the first of a series of initiatives organized by the Office of the President in conjunction with local groups across the country to promote peace. Dili is one of the key targets of this initiative as it is the district with the highest rate of violent crime in Timor-Leste.

The 'Festival of Peace' was a joint project with NGO's Ba Futuru, Arte Moris, Uma Juventude and Knua Buka Hatene, together with film maker Thomas Nehrman. The purpose of the festival was to provide at-risk youth with opportunities to gain new skills and celebrate peace through art, peace education, film and drama. It also included Timor-Leste's first Independent Film Festival. In addition to this festival, the President's project includes the initiative, 'Dili, City of Peace', scheduled for the beginning of next year and supported by UNMIT, as announced by SRSG Atul Khare during his regular meeting with the national NGOs on 12 November.

The focus on Dili is based on the fact that the Timorese capital has the highest rate of violent incidents in the country. According to police analysis, while the national rate of violent incidents is 1.8 per 1000 people, in Dili, the rate is 5.8 incidents per 1000. On average, every month there are around 100 incidents in Dili. Meanwhile, Ainaro, Bobonaro and Covalima have been the most peaceful districts in the country with an average of less than one incident per month.

The type of incident most frequent in the whole of Timor-Leste in the last 11 months has been assault. Other types of incidents recorded by the Police include arson, assault, family related assault, public disturbance and homicide, among others.



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A registered voter checks his name on the voter registration list at his Suco Office.

Exhibition and challenge of voter registration until 28 November

The records of all registered voters are now on exhibition in all Suco Offices throughout Timor-Leste. During this period all Timorese voters have the opportunity to check whether their data has been correctly registered by STAE. This is an important stage of the electoral process since the voters may not be allowed to vote in the next local elections if the information at the polling station, for example the number of the voter cards, does not correspond to the identification documents presented by the voter.

The local elections for Suko and Aldeia Chiefs are expected to take place in 2009. As in all stages of the electoral process the National Commission for Elections (CNE) is monitoring this period by examining voter complaints and having its commissioners traveling to the districts to supervise the process.

Immunization campaign against tetanus: second round

The second round of the immunization campaign against tetanus took place in all districts between 17 and 21 November. The campaign targeted girls and women between 12 and 45 years of age and aimed to prevent the transmission of the disease from mother to child.

By taking the vaccine, future mothers will create anti-bodies that they will pass-on to their children thereby preventing the emergence of Neo-natal tetanus.

The third round of the immunization campaign, when the targeted population will receive the third boost of the vaccine, will take place in June 2009. This campaign, run by the Ministry of Health with the support of WHO and UNICEF, covers one fourth of the whole population of Timor-Leste.

Tetanus is a disease that affects the nervous system caused by the bacteria *Clostridium tetani*. Infection generally occurs through wound contamination. It occurs everywhere in the world but is more common in hot, damp climates like Timor Leste. The spores of the bacteria are widely distributed in the intestines and faeces of many animals such as horses, sheep, cattle, dogs, cats, rats, guinea pigs, and chickens. In agricultural areas, a significant number of people may carry the organism without being sick.

Investigator, prosecutor and judge explain the justice system

On 14 November, the Head Investigator of UNMIT's Serious Crimes Investigation Team Marek Michon, Prosecutor Adérito Tilman and Judge Duarte Soares invited the Timorese press for a visit to the Dili District Court. The purpose of the meeting was to explain how the justice system works in Timor-Leste, what is the criminal procedure from the moment that someone commits a crime until the final decision from the court, and what is the role of each agent involved in the judicial process.

The Timorese journalists accepted the invitation and showed particular interest in knowing how to obtain information from the several institutions involved in a criminal case: police, public prosecutor and court. The confidentiality of the investigation, the rights of the accused, the witnesses and the victims were some of the subjects explained by those Officials. Furthermore, Judge Soares clarified that although trials are a public event, the judge may decide to prevent the public and the press from observing, mostly in cases where the nature of the case may hinder the dignity of the person.



UNMIT Photo/Rohit Kohli

Prosecutor Adérito Tilman, Judge Duarte Soares and Head Investigator of UNMIT's Serious Crimes Investigation Team Marek Michon