

REPORT TO	Ordinary Meeting of Council	ITEM NO. 2.2
MEETING DATE	20 November 2000	
SUBJECT	Report on Visit by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Delegates to Los Palos, East Timor	
PREPARED BY	Bruce Douglas, Director - Infrastructure and Physical Services	
AUTHORISED BY	Chief Executive Officer	
FILE NO.	0540/040/210	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to brief Council on the outcomes of the visit to Los Palos, East Timor. The intent of the report is to determine how best to provide immediate assistance to the Los Palos community, and to establish a framework for the Mornington Peninsula Community to focus its ongoing friendship and assistance relationship.

BACKGROUND

Following discussions with Mr Abel Guterres, the Victorian representative of CNRT (now the National Council for East Timorese Resistance it is a pro-independence representative body of nine political parties in East Timor), Council considered a report at its meeting on 2 May 2000 and resolved as follows:

1. THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FORMAL FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE AND THE PEOPLE OF THE DISTRICT OF LOS PALOS.
2. THAT AN OFFICIAL LETTER EXPRESSING THE SHIRE'S WILLINGNESS TO LINK UP WITH THE DISTRICT OF LOS PALOS BE SENT TO THE PRESIDENT, XANANA GUSMAO.
3. THAT OFFICERS OF THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE COUNCIL CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EAST TIMOR LEADERSHIP TO EXPLORE WAYS IN WHICH THE LASTING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY AND THE DISTRICT OF LOS PALOS CAN BE FURTHER CEMENTED AND TO EXPLORE SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH THIS MUNICIPALITY CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF LOS PALOS.
4. THAT COUNCIL CONTRIBUTE \$3,000.00 TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES AND WATER PURIFICATION EQUIPMENT FOR THE DISTRICT OF LOS PALOS.

On 3 May 2000 Mr Xanana Gusmão Leader of CNRT visited the shire and invited the Mayor to visit East Timor and to establish a friendship relationship with (the sub-district of) Los Palos.

BACKGROUND (CONT'D)

At a subsequent meeting of council on 4 Sept. 2000, Council resolved to send a delegation to East Timor as follows:

1. THAT COUNCIL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY NO. 1.11 ENTITLED “ATTENDANCE AT INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES” APPROVE THE DELEGATION VISIT THE LOS PALOS DISTRICT OF EAST TIMOR AS DETAILED IN THIS REPORT.
2. THAT THE GROUP CONSIST OF THE MAYOR, CR JUDITH COUACAUD GRALEY, CR SNEZ PLUNKETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND PHYSICAL SERVICES.
3. THAT AN EAST TIMOR COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE BE INVITED TO THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE, FOR THE PURPOSES OF SKILLS TRANSFER, WITH COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE VISIT PROVIDED BY COUNCIL.

It was subsequently decided due to the Chief Executive’s conflicting commitments that Council Officer Graham Gregson should participate in place of the CEO.

The purpose of the visit was to explore with the Los Palos community leaders, their needs and priorities which would then guide the Mornington Peninsula Shire community in the further development of the friendship relationship.

The Mornington Peninsula community with assistance from Western Port Marina and Australian Volunteers International has raised some \$27,000 to assist with the recovery of Los Palos, and it was initially envisaged by Mr Abel Guterres at an early meeting with Mornington Peninsula Community and Shire representatives that these funds could be used to purchase a bus and a water purifying plant to assist the Los Palos community and an orphanage in the town run by the Salesian Brothers.

The visit to Los Palos was recommended to assess first hand the needs and priorities of the local community.

The visit also provided an opportunity to view first hand the extent of the damage to the country’s infrastructure, administrative and social systems.

The council team has returned humbled, yet enthused by the potential for our community, in partnership with other like-minded communities and with the support of the local government sector peak bodies and non-government aid agencies, to provide a meaningful and sustaining support relationship with the people of East Timor’s (sub) district of Los Palos.

THE TRIP

A four (4) member delegation from the Shire travelled to the Lautem District during the period 17 to 22 October, 2000, to make contact with representatives of the local community in Los Palos.

The Council team which visited the district comprised the following people:

- The Mayor – Cr Judith Couacaud-Graley;
- Councillor Snez Plunkett;
- Director of Infrastructure and Physical Services – Mr Bruce Douglas; and
- Road Asset Co-ordinator – Mr Graham Gregson.

For an account of the observations made by the delegates during the visit please refer to Appendix 1 of this report.

The priorities which have been identified and are addressed in the conclusions to the report were developed during meetings held with:

- Los Palos Community leadership (CNRT district representatives);
- Representatives of the Salesian Brothers Order (which runs both the Agricultural College in Fuloro and the orphanage in Los Palos); and
- The United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) District Administrator.

In summary these priorities seek to restore the agricultural capacity, which would serve to ensure food security and to implement ways to improve communication throughout the district.

The priorities expressed by the CNRT leadership during the delegate's brief meeting in Los Palos are clearly reflected in the content of a speech by Mr Xanana Gusmão titled:

FROM THE DREAMS OF THE MOUNTAINS - 5 APRIL 1999
(A Message to the Strategic Development Conference)

The text of this speech is attached for information as Appendix 2 to this report.

We were also advised that at some time in the future, the local CNRT Leadership would like to send a representative to the Mornington Peninsula Shire to gain first hand experience of the responsibilities of our local government and public administration and to identify those areas where future training programs could be set up for their community.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

There is already a widespread interest throughout the Mornington Peninsula community regarding council's visit to East Timor and the desire of many in the community to work together to assist Los Palos.

It will be important for council to work in partnership with the interested groups and individuals who wish to support East Timor.

It is envisaged that a "Friends of Los Palos" committee will be developed to be chaired by a notable member of the Mornington Peninsula Shire community with wide membership including representatives of council, Western Port Marina, The Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem, Australian Volunteers International, Community Aid Abroad and other groups, agencies, or individuals who have expressed an interest in participating.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE (CONT'D)

The committee will report to council and its purpose will be to direct and manage the future fundraising, and to foster and focus the ongoing development of the friendship relationship.

Suggested Committee Priorities

Agriculture

It is suggested that as a high priority, the committee investigates the price and availability, then arranges the supply of one or more of the following pieces of farm equipment:

- Rice Thresher;
- Corn Miller;
- Coconut Oil Cold Press; and
- Rotary Hoes or Tillers.

The equipment should be supplied through the UNTAET district office to be given to CNRT to manage on a collective basis for the villages in the Los Palos sub-district. Don Bosco Agricultural College at Fuloro could be approached to assist with training in use of equipment.

In addition, the need for communication between the agricultural officers within the district was identified due to the significant distances to be covered, lack of transport and lack of telecommunications.

Both CNRT, and UNTAET conceded that the most useful assistance in the first instance would be provision of motorcycles to enable the village representatives to attend planning meetings, share knowledge, and co-ordinate food growing. This would immediately overcome both the transport difficulties and lack of telephone system.

Cultural Heritage

It is suggested that the committee could provide support for the restoration of the Portuguese residence at Tutuala and its development as a local museum, with a community craft shop and market, for which an initial contribution of \$10,000 is required.

This is an extremely worthy project which would provide employment and income for the local village and be readily embraced by the East Timorese Women's Association (OMT) and should be pursued.

Local Administration

The committee would be encouraged to recognise the importance of establishing, facilitating and managing a training program covering basic health care, land management and community governance skills and planning. This would integrate well with the Australian Volunteers International support program.

CONCLUSION

This report provides some detail of observations made by council delegates during their recent visit to East Timor (Appendix 1) and recommends to following immediate actions, identifies the main priorities for guiding the future relationship with Los Palos and suggests a structure for the ongoing management of the relationship by the Mornington Peninsula Shire community.

CONCLUSION (CONT'D)

It is the view of the delegates that there is a role for Council and the broader Shire community to play in helping the community of Los Palos, working with them to identify and implement short and longer term infrastructure programs and ongoing training needs.

It would be useful for the Shire and the community committee to work with other local government agencies involved in East Timor through VLGA which has recently formed a committee to provide a forum for sharing information and ideas and to enable these parties to co-operate in projects which assist communities in East Timor. A Statement of Principle is attached as Appendix 3.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT COUNCIL ENDORSE THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OF LOS PALOS.
2. THAT COUNCIL ENDORSE THE FORMATION OF A COMMUNITY COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE A MEANS AND FOCUS TO SUPPORTING THE ONGOING FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE OF LOS PALOS.
3. THAT COUNCIL RECOMMENDS TO THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:
 - 3.1 SUPPLYING OF SIX MOTORCYCLES TO THE LOS PALOS AGRICULTURE PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR USE BY THE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR AND THE DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS TO BE CONSIDERED AS A PRIORITY.
 - 3.2 SUPPLYING ONE MOTORCYCLE TO THE COMMUNITY RADIO STATION FOR COLLECTING STORIES FROM AROUND THE DISTRICT.

COUNCIL DECISION

MOVED: CR. PLUNKETT
SECONDED: CR. ADAMS

THAT THE RECOMMENDATION BE ADOPTED.

CARRIED

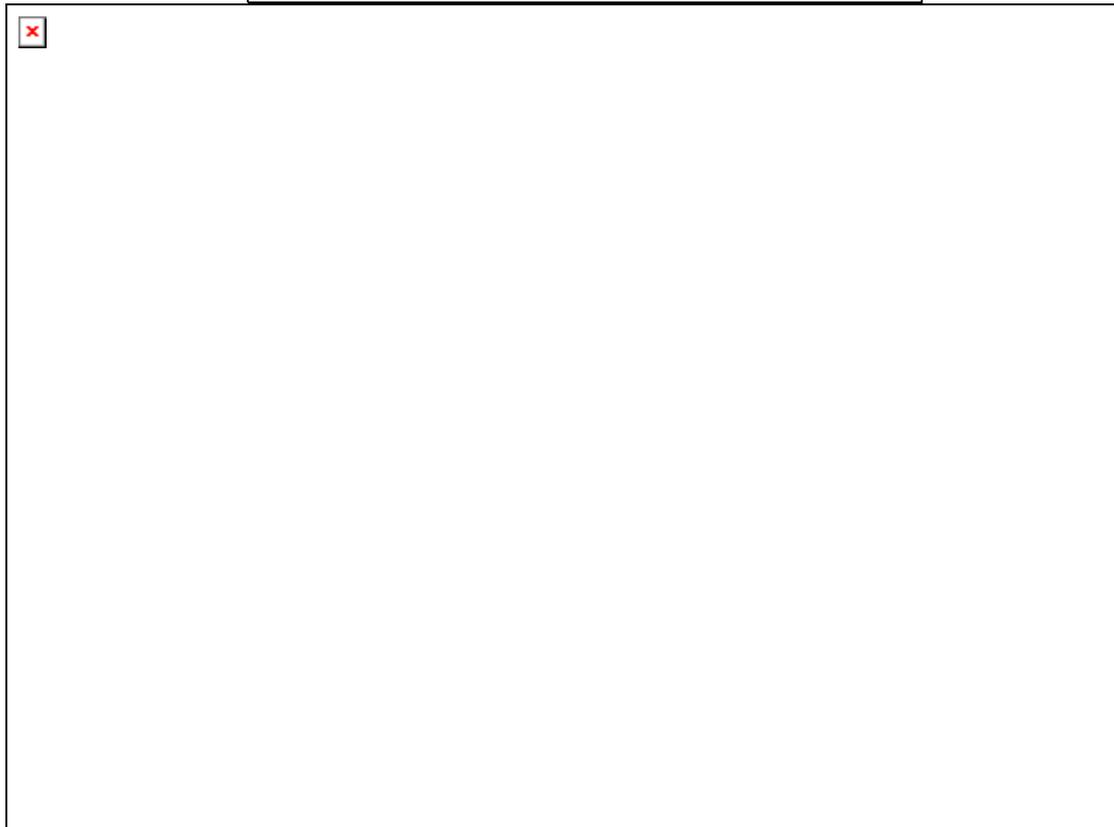
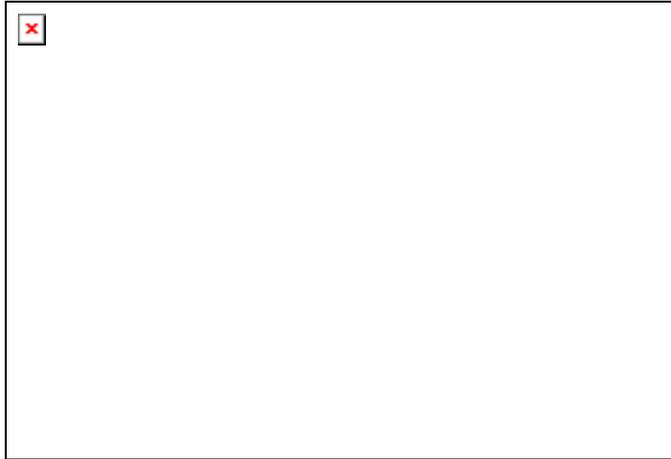
Note: Cr. Plunkett tabled the following items, relating to East Timor:

- UNTAET brochure;
- The World Bank and East Timor;
- Trust Fund for East Timor; and
- Profile of Lautem District.

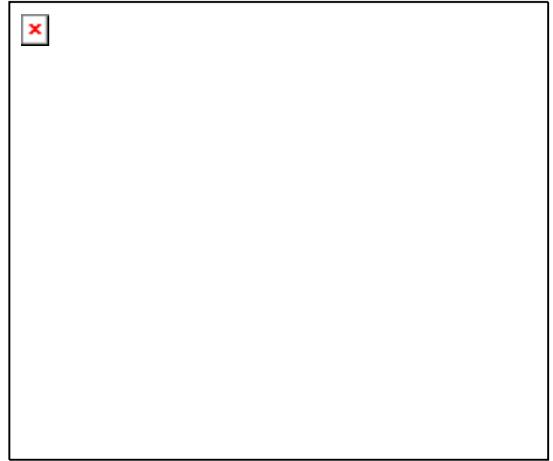
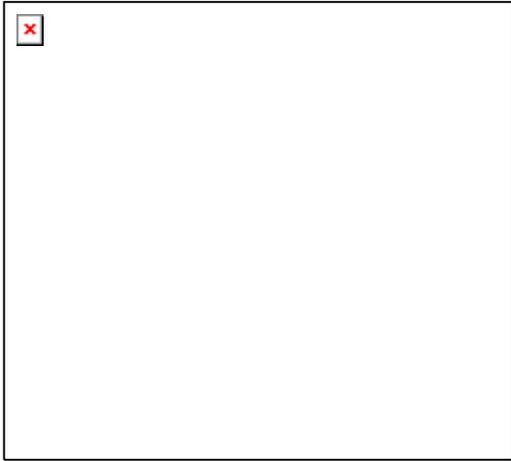
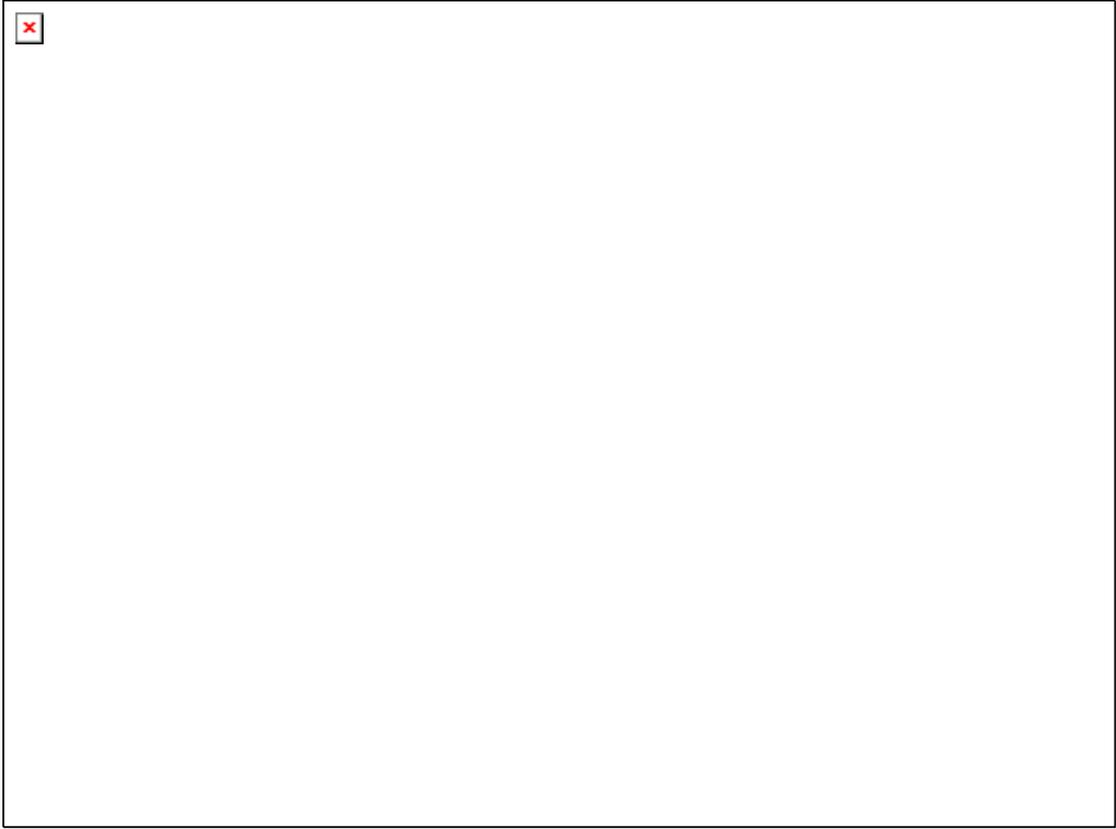
APPENDIX 1

1. *General Observations on the way to Los Palos*

The whole of East Timor is very rugged and mountainous country with generally sparse vegetation and pockets of tropical rainforest.



The mountains are defined and bisected by deeply incised and very wide river valleys down which the rivers flow in great torrents during the wet season.



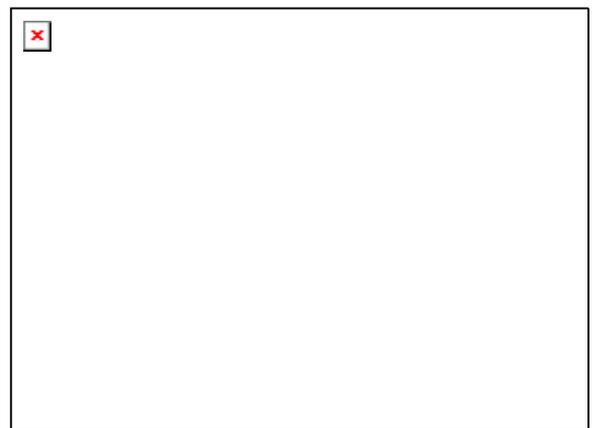
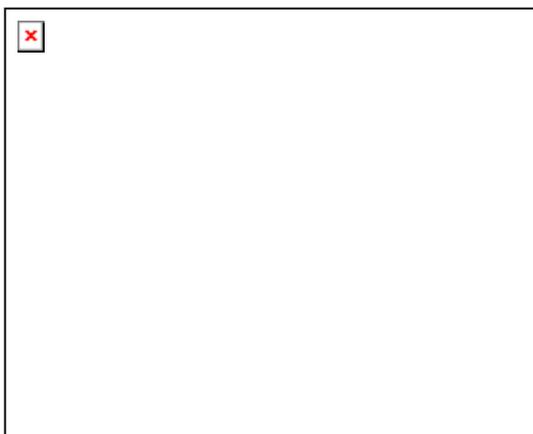


To just glance at the countryside and coast of East Timor gives the impression of a very beautiful place with breathtaking views of palm tree lined stretches of beaches, clear blue waters and small, straw thatch roofed huts forming the small fishing villages. To look more closely reveals the astonishing extent of the destruction of the country's core infrastructure and social systems.

Damage to Infrastructure

Every building within reach of the retreating militia has been torched and destroyed, most drainage pits in the towns have been smashed in and the pipes filled with concrete and rubble, or blown up.

In the capital Dili, and the major towns of Baucau and Los Palos, every street light has been smashed and much of the aerial power cabling pulled down and laid to waste.





Fleets of buses and trucks have been lined up and burnt and where they could not be burnt, tyres were slashed and parts destroyed rendering them useless.

In many locations we passed through we were told of mass executions of villagers who were guilty of nothing other than exercising their right to vote for an independent state, or simply for being with those who had done so.

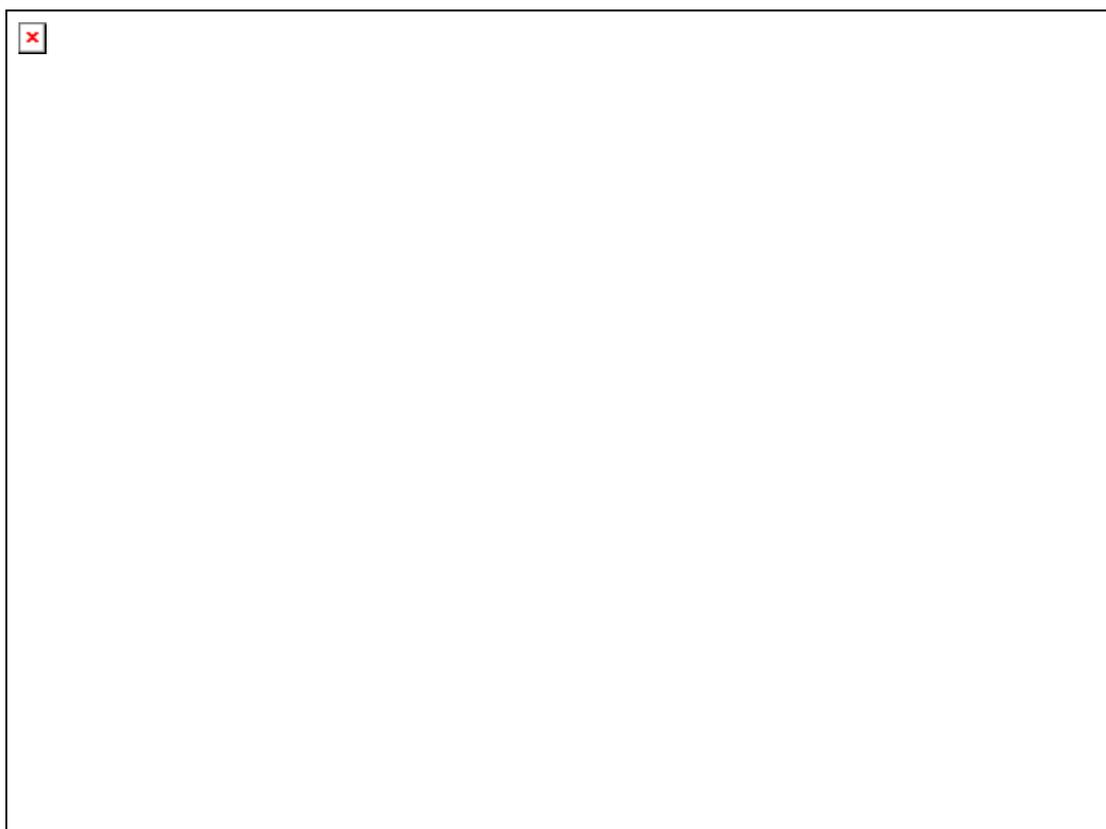
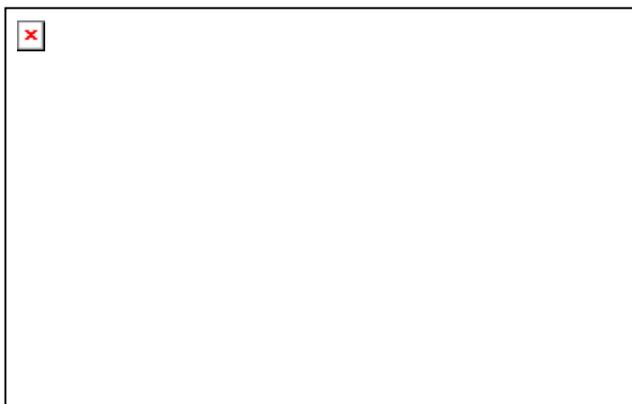
Prior to the conflict which culminated some 12 months ago, 90% of the country's population of approximately 800,000 lived in rural areas and contributed to the country's primarily agriculture based economy. The only significant export from the country was coffee.

At present there is a substantial percentage of the population in the order of 25 % that is still dislocated and living in refugee camps in West Timor. Of the population that remained or has returned, those that are able to are progressively returning to their farms but are being confronted with an almost total lack of basic tools to carry out their work.

Soil Erosion

The villages which we visited around Los Palos are located on a fertile plain about 500 m above sea level and bordered on the north and east sides by very steep mountain ranges. The only roads into this area wind through these mountains and are cut into the highly erodable rock which makes them very susceptible to being cut off.

During our short visit we noticed that there are many washouts on the roads and this is primarily due to lack of basic maintenance of road drainage infrastructure. Blocked culverts have caused table drains to flood, scouring the road pavement and wetting up the subgrade and this in turn has lead to the whole pavement sections in some areas failing by sliding down the hillside.



Travel on roads is slow due to this problem and in places where the interim repairs have been made most of these are very rough and have not been sealed. Many of these repairs will not last for the coming wet season and sections of road will completely collapse. Because these small communities will be dependent on food supplies from Dili, there is a very real risk of starvation and death for the frail, aged and very young members of a number of these villages.

Damage and Lack of Maintenance on Farms

Those areas which we travelled through on route to Los Palos which were formerly farmed as rice paddies have suffered substantial damage during the last wet season again due to the lack of basic maintenance on the irrigation and diversionary drainage structures. Levies have been completely washed away and much work is needed to restore the function of these systems before many of these areas can be farmed again.

Without proper farm management resources in place water buffalo, cattle and goats are trampling what remains of the rice paddies and causing quite severe damage to the contour drains and paddy borders.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds are endemic and are not being controlled and are seriously threatening farmers livelihood. In many locations on route to Los Palos on road reserves, within creeks and on farm properties, Siam Weed has become heavily infested and is preventing stock from gaining access to water and pasture.

It is clear that these small rural communities will need external aid just to survive for at least 2 to 3 years whilst the communities are helped to restore farming activity and secure their food supply.

Unsustainable Farm Management Practices

Many of the farming practices followed by farmers in the villages we visited are not sustainable in the long term. For generations these farmers have used burning as a method of establishing farm plots.

While this practice may be tolerable in flat terrain in the hilly areas removal of existing vegetation to plant maize and other crops is resulting in substantial soil erosion and loss of wildlife habitat.

From discussions with priests at a seminary which was visited and from observing land management practices in the villages along the way to Los Palos, there seemed to be very scant knowledge, if any, of the value of composting or the importance of preserving a balance of natural and cultivated-vegetation systems. (For example, an UNTAET report which was obtained prior to the trip indicates that logging is a very serious threat to the country's ecosystem).

During our brief time in East Timor we were all struck by the obvious absence of bird life.

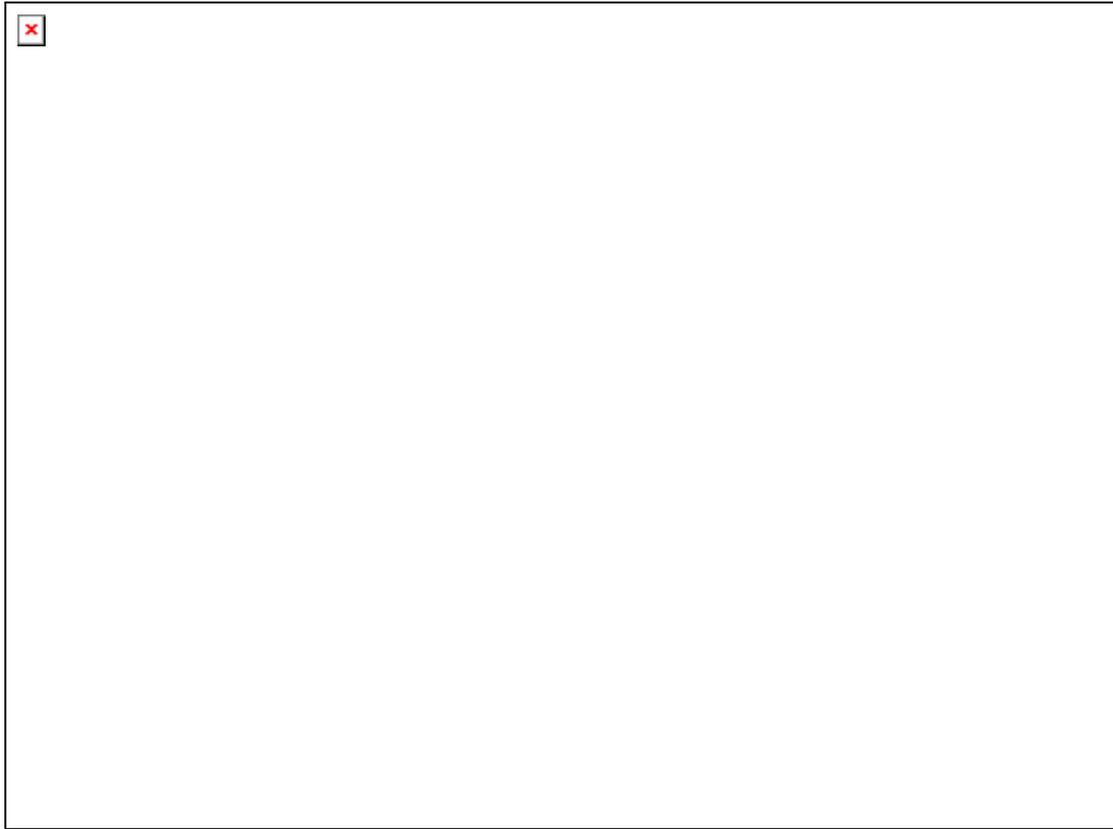
2. *Inspection of Tutuala Village and Surrounds*



During the short time the delegation was in the district a visit was included to the village of Tutuala and the beach opposite Jaco island which it is understood was, and will again become a very popular recreational destination.

During the brief visit to the village the UNTAET Administrator – Mr Ivan Mwaka indicated that there is a plan to refurbish the Portuguese period residence on the promontory at Tutuala ,and develop it as a cultural and heritage museum and use of the surrounding area as a local craft market. The estimated cost of the repair is \$30,000 AUD and an amount of \$10,000 AUD would be enough to get the project started.

Of primary importance is the restoration of the access road to the village. The town administrator expressed extreme concern about the condition of the road to and through the village itself. There are three locations along this road where immediate and substantial road works are necessary to prevent its total collapse. With the onset of the wet season, and the advanced deterioration of the road in these locations which are at the Tutuala village end of the road, there is the imminent and very serious threat that the villagers will be cut off.



Such an outcome would be extremely detrimental to the welfare of the villagers and would be highly likely to result in the death of a quite a number of them unless food supplies were to be subsequently airlifted in to the town.

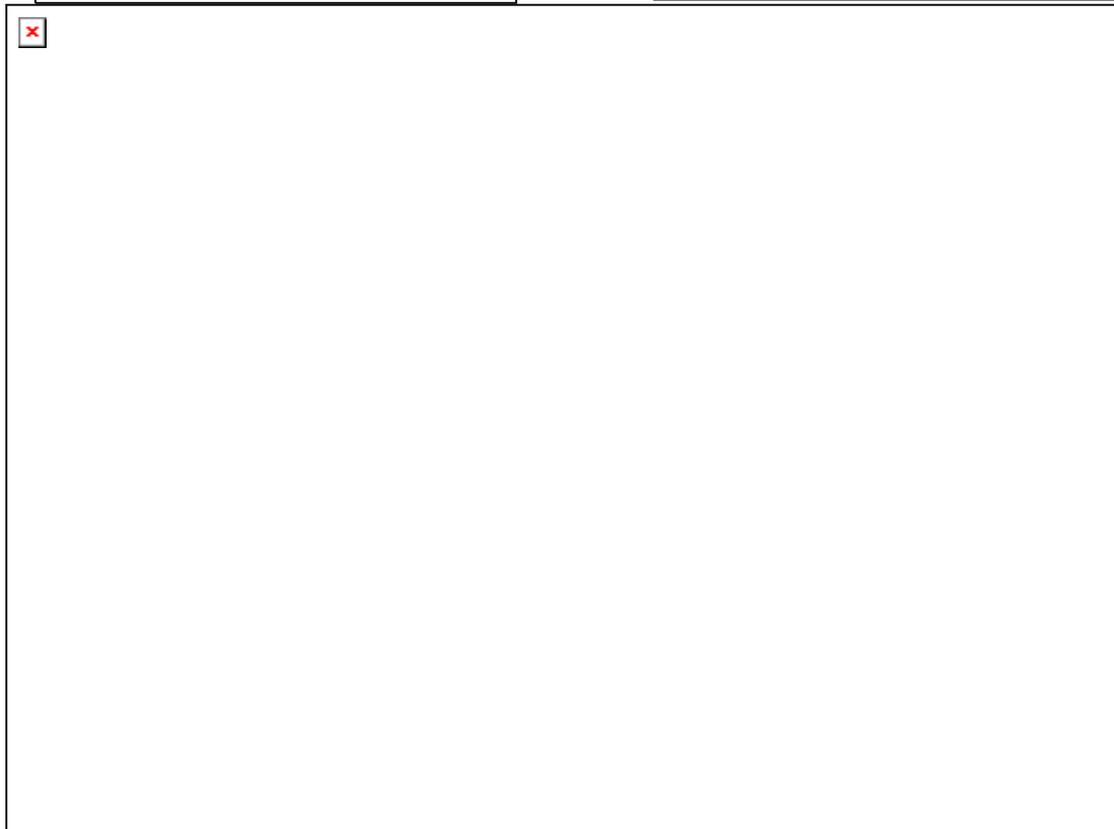
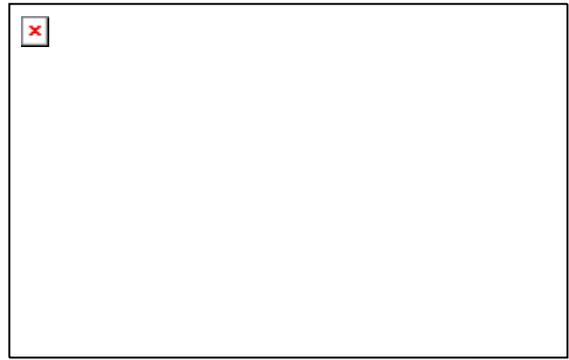
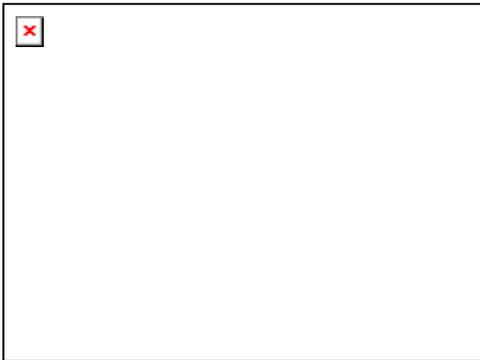
It is the view of the delegates that the seriousness of this situation cannot be understated. Any offer of assistance to refurbish the residence to establish a museum would be worthless and

irrelevant unless the road failures are first repaired and these must be undertaken to a proper, safe engineering standard with the utmost urgency.

Whilst support for the restoration of the residence was considered worthwhile, the immediate requirement is for the repair of the road.

3. Condition of Los Palos Infrastructure

Many of the buildings in the town of Los Palos have been burnt and only the walls remain. (The Lautem district had a population of 57,000 people, and the entire sub-district of Los Palos had 25,000 people). The few buildings that were left intact have been occupied by the United Nations Transitional Administration (UNTAET) and much work is needed to reconstruct houses and other commercial buildings.



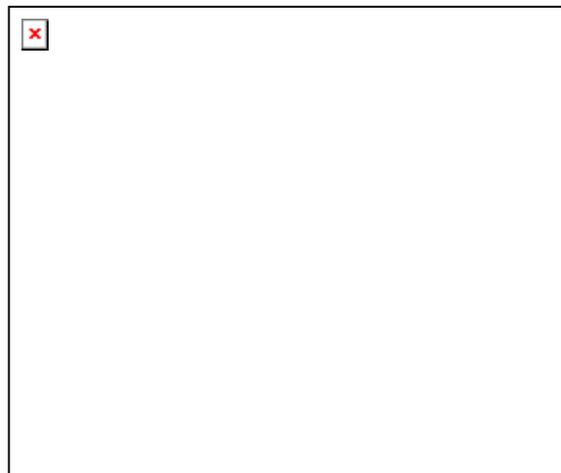


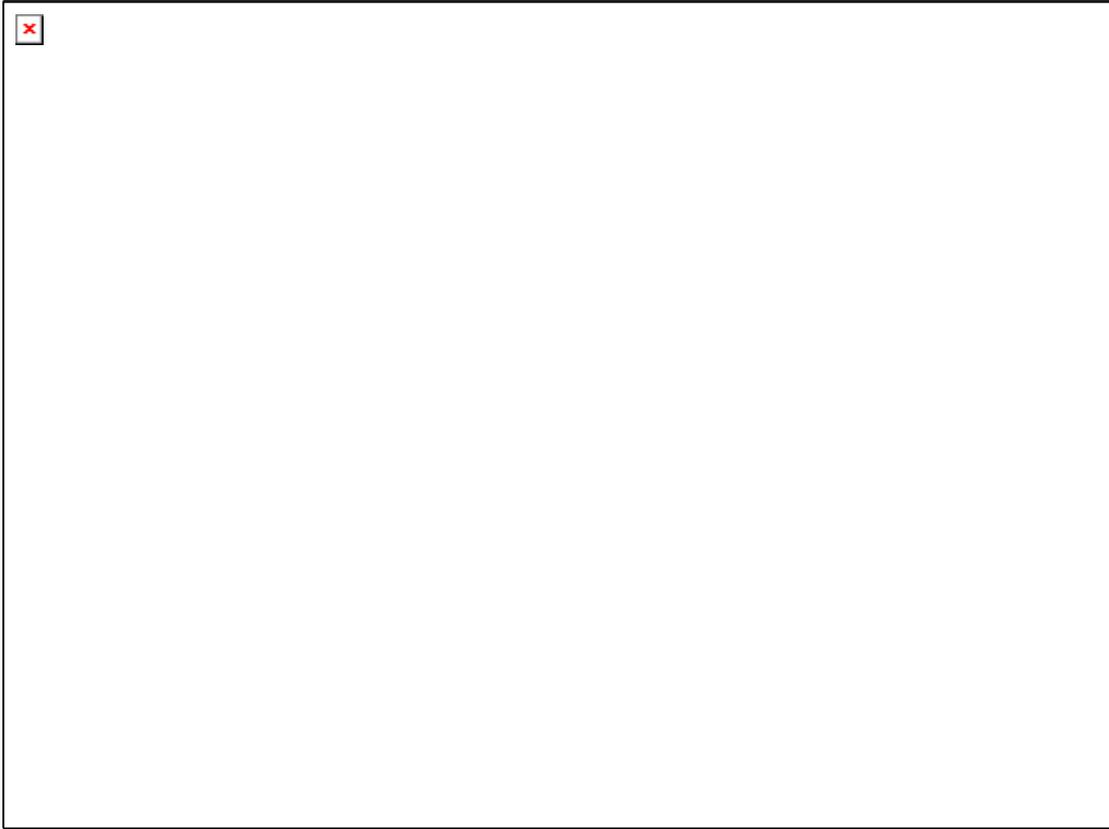
The town has little of its water system functioning and power supply for 18 hours per day. There is no waste management system and no local capacity to repair and/or maintain the public road and drainage infrastructure. (*UNTAET report information*).

Most drains are broken down and pit lids have been smashed in and the drains filled with rock rubble

Roads in the township area are in very poor condition and most are completely overgrown with weeds and potholed. It is clear that there has not been any significant investment in pavement rehabilitation for many years and although many of the roads were initially very well constructed, quite a number have sustained very serious damage or have degraded to the point now where major restoration work is needed to restore acceptable service levels

There are many substantial government buildings in the township area but none of these have yet been restored.

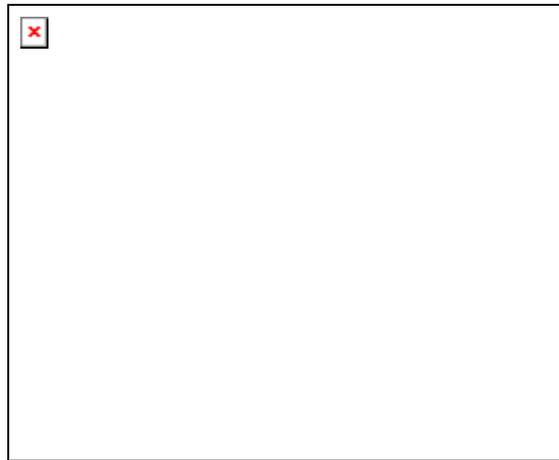




The town has an impressive Portuguese colonial style municipal building which could be restored

Many of the ornamental trees in the town have been butchered for fire wood or completely destroyed.

4. *Meeting with Community Leaders*





Council delegates were fortunate to be able to meet with approximately 22 men who were CNRT leaders from villages surrounding Los Palos. These men had gathered in Los Palos to hear feedback from the recent national CNRT forum in Dili.

Once they had conducted their main business we were able to spend about one and a half hours with them discussing first hand their main priorities and concerns.

Identification of Community Leaders' priorities.

From these discussions it was made clear that their main priorities were as follows:

- first was to take action to restore their **agricultural productivity**;
- second on their list was procurement of **basic building materials and tools**;
- third was the establishment of **transport** infrastructure and acquisition of vehicles; and
- fourth was facilitation and encouragement of low key **tourism** which they acknowledged would bring much needed income to the region.

Communication Difficulties

In discussion with the community leaders mention was made of their difficulty in communicating with other villages and outlying farms. They indicated that they had acquired two good quality radio transceivers but did not have the AC:DC voltage inverters to make them function.

Some of the men present at the meeting had motorcycles for transport but others had to make their way to the meeting on foot, or hitch rides from passing UN vehicles.

5. Meeting with UNTAET District Administrator

During our stay in Los Palos council delegates met with Ms Heran Song, UNTAET District Administrator and her assistant. Also present at the meeting was Ms Nharebat Mtchasso - an Agriculture Officer for Lautem District.

Ms Song advised delegates that the Sydney University is preparing to undertake a study of the Tutuala dialect which is thought to be the origin of local language in East Timor. Studies are also underway into the cultural and archaeological significance of the cave paintings near Tutuala.

UNTAET Advice of Local Priorities

The main priorities for the area as understood by the UN are agriculture and community health and major programs are being implemented in these areas. Programs to restore basic the utilities of power and water are in hand. However, beyond the basics of preservation of life, the UN is unable (due to lack of funding) to sponsor projects that will preserve and enhance the local culture and also give greater capacity to women to participate in income generating activities.

Community Empowerment Program

Together with the World Bank, the UN is supporting a program of community empowerment, the first stage of which has begun already. This project consists of setting up of village development councils, assisting villages to select a man and a woman from each one to participate in district council meetings where decisions are made regarding local development priorities.

The nominated delegates from each village are not to be CNRT members or the village chief. These people are considered to have substantial influence in their own right and it is considered more important to give the opportunity to participate to people who may not otherwise get the chance.

When Local Government administration is restored, these district councils will be disbanded but until then they will serve as a mechanism for empowering local people to participate in the restoration of their communities.

Agriculture Program

This program involves setting up a network of five district agriculture officers with a supervisor. These people are local people who are being trained in modern farm management practices and they will travel around all the villages in their district assisting farmers restore the productivity and sustainability of their farms. At present neither the officers or their supervisor have any transport and the program coordinator suggested that the donation of six motorcycles would significantly enhance the value of their program.

The program coordinator also indicated that the community needs to have access to basic planting, harvesting and processing equipment including:

- Rice threshing Machine
- Corn and rice Milling Machine
- Coconut Oil Cold Press
- Rotary hoes and tillers

Some further research needs to be done to determine the cost of this equipment and what power source is available to run them.

UNTAET can collect & distribute machines to local leadership to manage on a co-operative basis.

Community Radio Program

The District Administrator advised that with the help of the UN, the community had re-established a local radio station and this was now functioning and providing news and current affairs information across the district. One of the difficulties that they face with the community radio project is that their roving reporters have no transport so they find it very difficult to travel between villages to collect news stories and do interviews.

It was suggested that a gift of a motorcycle to this program would be of considerable benefit to them. This was also confirmed in a conversation with Father Jo at the Salesian Orphanage.

It may be that some of our local newspapers or radio stations could be interested in contributing in some way to achieve this goal.

6. *Meeting with World Bank East Timor Program Coordinator*

Council delegates were able to visit the Dili office of the World Bank and spoke with program coordinator Ms Laura Bayley. Laura advised that a \$150million East Timor Trust Fund (TFET) had been established and much has been done and much more is planned at this broad scale level.

The Community Empowerment Program – Local Government Project is one of 10 different projects run under the TFET banner. The Primary objective is to co-ordinate the humanitarian assistance for reconstruction and development. The program has already started and its focus is educating people about democratic processes.

The program will also support the rapid redevelopment of the private sector in those activity areas which are sustainable and which benefit the poorest.

The bank now recognises that to achieve realistic and ongoing results, there is a role for agencies like our Councils to play in partnership with other NGO's.

The program manager at the Dili branch would be a good contact for possible future projects and alliances as one of the roles the bank plays is to co-ordinate donor assistance to avoid duplication.

The bank's program coordinator agreed that we could play a role at a local level in facilitating ongoing training programs, providing access to basic skills training across the broad spectrum of local government functions.

These functions will be the responsibility of the new Government, post-election which is expected to be held in November 2001.

7. *How Can We Help?*

It is the view of the delegates that there is a role for Council and the broader Shire community to play in helping Los Palos, working with them to identify and implement short and longer term infrastructure and ongoing training needs.

In the past, very few Timorese people were appointed to positions of administrative or technical responsibility.

All the people with the knowledge and skill to perform these tasks have fled the country, most were Indonesian.

People will have to be trained in many different professional areas and encouraged to move back to the area in order for the town, its hinterland and surrounding villages to be restored and become sustainable.

For example, any road infrastructure maintenance work that is currently being done is by manual methods which means that it is excruciatingly slow and highly susceptible to further damage during the coming wet season as it in most places is incomplete.

Modern plant is available in the country but is not accessible to the local communities because they have neither the capacity to pay commercial rates of hire, or trained plant operators or construction managers to plan and implement the necessary work.

The district friendship's concept is one way that our local government sector can participate in helping our neighbour country get back on its feet.

The VLGA has taken up the challenge of this task by establishing a committee which provides a framework for interested Victorian councils to join together to assist East Timor.

Project focused fundraising, direct sponsoring of volunteers to go to East Timor to carry out short course training programs or hosting East Timor representatives of the new administrations here in Victoria to observe and learn modern work practices to apply back home are some of the ideas currently being developed by the committee.

Until these new administrations can procure local skilled labour, little restoration or maintenance will be possible because of the high price of buying in the necessary expertise.

Primary functional skilling of a local workforce is essential so that they can do it for themselves.

There is also a pressing need for construction of basic infrastructure such as Grain Silos and Water Storage Tanks. These assets could be supplied and/or constructed on site in partnership with service clubs and the community committee over the coming years, and the local people trained in how to source materials and build them for themselves.

APPENDIX 2

FROM THE DREAMS OF THE MOUNTAINS - 5 APRIL 1999

(Message to the Strategic Development Conference)

"Dear Compatriots, I am not the right person to give an expert opinion on the development program for East Timor. Nevertheless, if you allow me, I will try to draw the vision that our Falintil fighters have always carried with them to justify their sacrifices.

The cornerstone of the rapid and efficient development of any country is the cultural strength of its people. What we see now is that the Timorese people are unable to provide for their children's school expenses. Hence they are not motivated to attend school. It should be the policy of our new East Timor state that there is compulsory and free education for all.

Allied with this policy, the state must pay careful attention to realistic programs of professional development oriented to the needs of our human resources.

But the serious health problems of our population also deserve our concern. TB and malaria characterise the general state of health of our people. Leprosy, goitre, elephantiasis and infant mortality constitute areas where medical assistance is inadequate and are evidence of the absence of preventative measures. Our children are born and are growing up in poor health and nutritional conditions; hence we need to provide free health assistance to the whole population of East Timor. Let us not be tempted to build and develop modern hospitals that are costly and in which only half a dozen people benefit from good treatment. Let us concentrate above all on planning intensive campaigns of sanitation and prevention, and the treatment of epidemics and endemics for the whole population.

Vitamins will not be useful while malnutrition continues to grip the villages, whilst our people continue to be condemned to a subsistence production which offers a very little quality and quantity, and which will continue to leave people hungry for most of the year. Let us try to understand the variety of conditions in our territory so as to enable us to implement an agricultural policy that promotes the harmonious growth of the districts, allowing self-sufficiency to each of them through a wealth of methods and organised traditional techniques. This diversification itself will be useful in promoting and enriching rural communities.

Parallel to this, we should provide incentives for agribusiness and the fishing industry as the two main sources of our people's diet. The potential resources in these two sectors are enormous and their gradual growth will bring much needed industrialisation in food preparation and distribution."

"Speaking of industries, we will perhaps have to attend to three sectors:

- small industries concentrating on the manufacture of primary goods;
- medium-term industries for the production of goods and services necessary for the revitalisation of the nation;
- strategic industries specialising in the production of export items to generate revenue for the nation.

A beautiful country like East Timor, with its determined and heroic history, must not be promoted through a tourist industry which creates a small modern world of luxury hotels. Rather, we should accelerate the creation of conditions for ecotourism as a means to promote the unique identity, personality and character of our people, with a dimension of more humane relationships between people.

It is necessary that we be uncompromising in our defence of the environment, with all the consequences this may bring, because we should never lose sight of the small language of the land which is our nation, which has to be preserved as our birthplace, as the green lawn from where the future generations will grow, and as a grave full of flowers for all the generations that have gone before.

You have heard the Falintil fighter's dream, shrouded in the mist from the mountains.

Finally, I wish to appeal to all Timorese to be prudent in our actions and behaviour. We must learn to be tolerant and patient, given that there may be others who have not yet been called upon to contribute better ideas. Let us try to construct our nation collectively and, although I respect political parties, I appeal to everyone to consider this first effort as essentially a technical and professional task.

In this context, all Timorese professionals have an obligation in the present and in the future to contribute within a strong civil and wholesome democratic society, to the great undertaking that East Timor demands from its children.

I do not want to miss this opportunity to appeal to governments and NGOs to define together with us, the Timorese, a concerted aid package with which to create the best conditions to construct the new nation, where we will secure respect for human rights, promote equality of rights and opportunities for all components of the Timorese society and defend the Timorese culture and identity.

Peace is possible in East Timor.

Viva the martyred people of East Timor!

Xanana Gusmao
CNRT President
Falintil Commander.¹"

1. Niner, Sarah (2000), *To Resist is to Win, The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmao with Selected Letters & Speeches*, Aurora Books, David Lovell Publishing, Australia (p238-p240).

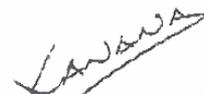
STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

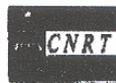
FOR VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORKING IN EAST TIMOR

In recognition of East Timor as an independent nation and in acknowledgment of the struggles of the heroic people of East Timor, the people of Victoria through their representatives in local government and the people of East Timor through their representatives in the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) hereby agree that:

- ◆ A lasting friendship shall be built on a partnership of mutual respect; this friendship shall at all times respect and value local as well as national cultures and decision-making processes;
- ◆ Local governments and organisations at a community level have expertise and experience in caring for and developing local communities;
- ◆ The knowledge and expertise of local governments in Victoria shall be shared through partnerships with the people of East Timor;
- ◆ This agreement welcomes East Timor as a close neighbour of Australia at all levels of democratic government.
- ◆ Material contributions by local governments in Victoria to the re-building of the nation of East Timor shall most effectively be provided in consultation and co-operation with the local as well as national representatives of the people of East Timor;
- ◆ Recognising the need to supplement the contribution of the United Nations, other international agencies and non-government organisations the parties now wish to implement community to community partnerships; and
- ◆ We shall respect and honour the efforts of all those Victorians and East Timorese who in a spirit of democratic endeavour work to improve the quality of life of their communities.

Signed this day 4 May 2000


Xanana Gusmao
PRESIDENT CNRT

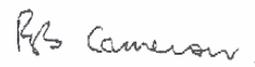



Cr Julie Hansen
PRESIDENT VLGA




CL Brad Matheson
PRESIDENT MAV




Hon Bob Cameron MP
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
VICTORIA