

## **Council for Asia Europe Co-operation (CAEC)**

### **Comparing Experiences with State Building in Asia and Europe: The Cases of East Timor, Bosnia and Kosovo**

# **EAST TIMOR: ASSESSING UNTAET'S ROLE IN BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

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## **Introduction**

United Nations operations generally begin with optimism and often end in soul-searching. The obstacles and uncertainties that confronted the United Nations Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) at the outset of its mission did not dampen initial enthusiasms for the possibilities for the creation of the new nation of Timor Lorosa'e. It is, as yet, too early to assess with clarity the extent to which these possibilities have been achieved. Nevertheless it is clear that perceptions of these possibilities and their achievement vary greatly among commentators.

While the creation of Timor Lorosa'e is still in process, a clear timetable has been set for the transition to independence. This transition is now in its final phase. Elections for an 88 member Constituent Assembly were held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2001. These elections were carried out successfully with voter turnout of over 91%. Fretilin, the party that had led the struggle for independence prior to the creation of the National Council of East Timorese Resistance (CNRT), obtained just over 57% of the vote, giving it 43 nationally determined seats and another 12 district seats in the new Assembly. On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Constituent Assembly was sworn in and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, a "Second Transitional Government", consisting entirely of East Timorese ministers, vice-ministers and secretaries, was appointed by the UN's Special Representative, Sergio Viera de Mello. Mari Alkatiri, the Secretary-General of Fretilin was named as the Chief Minister of the new Government. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, the United Nations' Security Council endorsed the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2002 as the day for the official transference of sovereignty. The Constituent Assembly has now produced a draft constitution of some 151 articles, has been systematically debating these articles since the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December and has set the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 as the date for passage of the Constitution.

All of these developments are critical milestones in the process of the creation of the new state. The strength of the foundations of this state and its course for the future are as yet unknown. The process of development, which will take time, will provide the crucial evidence on how well the United Nations has done in building the essential capacities for nationhood.

### **The Initial Tasks for the United Nations**

At the beginning of its mission, the United Nations had three tasks: (1) to conduct peacekeeping operations; (2) to sustain and reconstruct a devastated area with a significantly displaced population; and (3) to establish the political, economic and social underpinnings for a new nation. The transition to nationhood was at the heart of all of these tasks.

The first of these tasks was carried out with a high degree of professionalism that was a credit to all of the participating nations. The second task involved a complex (and at times uneasy) partnership between the UN, the multilateral banks, particularly the World Bank, and a host of international NGOs. Coordination was critical and the United Nations' role was central but much of the task was driven by the exigencies of the immediate situation and was dependent on the particular policies of individual donor nations. The task of reconstruction is far from complete and a portion of the East Timorese population has not yet returned.

The third task – establishing the basis of a new nation – was certainly the most important of these undertakings and the one for which the United Nations as an institution has had primary responsibility. It is an elusive task with an array of components that often appeared to be at odds with one another. In transforming a small province of Indonesia into a separate nation, the United Nations laid a set of foundations that were different from what had been before. It is this transformation from one set of foundations to another that is fundamental to the future functioning of the new nation.

Under Indonesian rule, for example, East Timor had had an inflated government bureaucracy of approximately 33,000 public servants. By contrast, the UNTAET in close consultation with World Bank officials and the East Timorese leadership has set an affordable limit to East Timor's civil service (including teachers and health personnel) of 10,500 to 11,000. In the Indonesian system, the bureaucracy functioned as a kind of safety valve to provide some form of employment to a new generation of school leavers. This possibility will no longer exist for East Timor. Hence employment, particularly urban employment, will probably be the most pressing problem facing the new nation.

Under Indonesian rule, the economy and particularly the agricultural/food sector of East Timor was centrally directed and broadly subsidized. In its place, UNTAET has set about establishing the basis of a market economy for Timor-Leste, eliminating all previous support systems for farmers and introducing the US dollar to replace the rupiah as the means of local exchange as well as international trade.

The UN's capacity to implement the use of US currency at the district level, where as yet there are no banking facilities, has been limited. In the enclave of Oecussi located in West Timor, such implementation has not occurred. Small-scale cross border trade has been hampered by the new exchange regulation and since most local farmer transactions are for less than \$ US 1.00, the rupiah has remained in many areas, particularly along the border, as a de facto currency.

UNTAET adopted Indonesian law as the legal framework for East Timor and used this law for its judicial system but then almost immediately began to issue regulations and directives, some of which fit uneasily within this official framework. Despite the functioning of the courts, critical issues relating to land and property rights were left unresolved. Without clear resolution of these issues, the possibilities for foreign investment in a market economy are therefore severely limited (Fitzpatrick 2001).

While acknowledging East Timorese leaders' desire to establish Portuguese as the official language of the new nation, UNTAET has relied on English as its working language and has supported the use of Indonesian in the court system and in schools. The language issue is not a simple matter and there are fundamental differences both between the generations and between those who joined the diaspora and those who remained under Indonesian rule. These differences will continue to percolate among the East Timorese. Although some directions have tentatively been set, many important issues concerning law, land and language have, in fact, been left for future resolution by an independent Timor Lorosa'e.

The purpose of UNTAET was precisely to effect a transition from a dependent administrative structure to an independent self-supporting administration. To appreciate this process, it is essential to have some idea of East Timor's previous institutional structures.

### **East Timor Prior to Indonesian Occupation**

Prior to the Indonesian occupation, East Timor was a colony with limited development of local capacities. Education was confined to a small minority of the population, most of whom were subsistence farmers whose livelihood was largely based on local exchange.

In 1959, the Portuguese began a policy to increase elementary education. From 1959 to 1969, the number of students enrolled in elementary school rose from 4,898 to 27,299; at the secondary (Lycee) level, there was an increase in enrolments from 175 to 376. In the mid-sixties, seminary schools, which provided an elite education, enrolled approximately 65 students. The technical school enrolled another 333 students annually. The Salesian training/agricultural colleges at Fatu Maka and Fui Loro provided additional education to a relatively small number. The Chinese of Dili maintained their own schooling system in Chinese with graduates going on to universities in Taiwan (*Timor: Pequena Monografia*, 1970:89-101).

As the distinguished German geographer, Joachim Metzner, noted in his monograph, *Man and Environment in East Timor*, the only study of its kind on East Timor during the Portuguese period: “Reliable statistics are...hard to come by...The only available sources are the reports of the annual tax assessment...These comprised the only statistical source in Portuguese Timor, so there were no statistics whatsoever on the size of the sucos, or on migration, agricultural production, cultivated areas, interregional commerce, or on the degree of monetization and turnover at weekly markets” (1977:xxviii). Given the lack of reliable statistics, it is difficult to construct a baseline for assessing East Timor’s local capacities prior to 1975. (For a brief history of East Timor, see Fox 2000; for background on the territory’s physical and social environment, see Fox 2001a.)

### **East Timor as a Provincial Administrative Unit**

The period following the Indonesian invasion in 1975 was a fearsome and destructive time. By the early 1980s, the apparatus for a provincial administration had been put in place with a formal structure no different than that of any other province in Indonesia. This formal structure comprised sixteen government departments. A Provincial Statistical Office (Kantor Statistik, Propinsi Timor Timur) had also been established and had begun to produce annual reports in a standard format: *Timor Timur Dalam Angka*. These reports document the establishment of local capacities and the steady buildup of a large administrative bureaucracy.

In 1982, for example, there were already 4745 civil servants in the provincial administration with 2912 of these administrators working at the district level (Tingkat II). There were, however, a further 805 individuals considered as candidates for the civil service – an indication that the local administration was undergoing rapid expansion. These numbers do not include 2610 school teachers, most of whom (2226) were elementary school teachers (*Timor Timur Dalam Angka, 1982*).

Indonesia’s largest investment in local capacities was in education. By 1985, there was an elementary school in every village in the province. Gavin Jones in a recent paper, “East Timor: Education and Human Resource Development” has documented the expansion of education in East Timor under Indonesian rule. This expansion went from 47 elementary schools with 499 teachers and 13,489 pupils in 1976-77 to 652 schools with 6656 teachers and 127,792 pupils by 1994. By this same time, there were 21,779 students at the junior high school level, 18,303 at senior high school level and 2,658 students at tertiary level (Jones 2000:46-47).

This expansion of education produced a remarkable difference among the population at different age levels. Based on 1995 SUPAS figures, illiteracy was extremely high (80% or more) for the population over the age of 40 but dropped dramatically to around 20% for boys and 30% for girls in the 15-19 age group. By 1995, 35% of the age group 24-29 had completed at least lower secondary school compared with just 1% in the 40-59 age group. Although many thousands of East Timorese were sent for study in Java and elsewhere in Indonesia, there was a high drop-out rate among these students and many of those who did complete tertiary education, chose not to return to the province. Nonetheless, by 1995, there was a core of about 500 East Timorese with university level

education living in the province (see Jones 2000:46-51) and this number continued to increase during the second half of the decade.

In 1996, in preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup> National Five-Year Plan, the Provincial Department of Labour (Depnaker) carried out a detailed profile study of the work force and projections for the future based on expected education levels. This study projected a work force by the year 2000 of over 107,000 individuals with training at senior high school level and potential of over 34,000 with more advanced training including many with university education (“Perencanaan”, Depnaker 1996).

Despite this considerable investment in education and a substantial investment in the expansion of irrigation capacities for rice, the economy of East Timor was dominated by its relatively undeveloped agriculture. (Indeed the major problem for Indonesia – and the continuing problem for East Timor in the future – was and will be the lack of employment opportunities for the high school educated who no longer regard farming as a suitable occupation.) In the 1995 Intercensal Population Survey, 73% of employed workers identified agriculture as their primary source of income although only 30% of the province’s GDP derived from agriculture (“Antar-Sensus”,1995). This imbalance between a high level of employment in agriculture and agriculture’s low contribution to GDP reflects an extremely low labour productivity in agriculture.

The economist Anne Booth has admirably described this situation. After more than two decades of Indonesian rule: “East Timor remained poor and underdeveloped. The great majority of the population were dependent on agriculture for most of their income, and a combination of small average landholding sizes, low productivity per hectare and a dearth of off-farm employment opportunities meant that farm household incomes were very low. The minority of the labour force employed in the urban services sector (mainly in the public sector) was much better off, with the result that there were quite sharp disparities in the personal and spatial distribution of consumption expenditures and incomes” (Booth 2001:248).

In effect, there was a serious bifurcation in the provincial economy of East Timor. A majority of the population lived in rural areas where they were employed in near subsistence level agriculture whereas, by contrast, a minority were located in towns, with Dili as the largest of these urban centres. In these urban centres, those who were employed worked mainly in a much enlarged public service.

While the older rural population remained largely illiterate, the educational system was rapidly drawing youth from the countryside and training them for non-existent positions in urban areas. Although many of the better educated East Timorese sought suitable employment outside of the province, a major problem that East Timor faced was a growing number of unemployed younger school graduates. This problem was further exacerbated by the employment of a large number of non-East Timorese in government service. The agricultural sector offered limited opportunities to the urban youth who had no desire to return to a life of bare subsistence farming.

This bifurcation in the economy with its corresponding sharp differentiation in the age, education and potential capacities of the East Timorese population constitutes the principal problem facing East Timor in its development. The problem itself has been further heightened by the return of a large number of young East Timorese graduates from advanced training schools and universities in Java and elsewhere.

UNTAET has done little –and perhaps could do little, in the short term – to address this problem. If anything, it has contributed to the problem by acting, correctly and quickly, to reestablish the educational system while giving little attention and investment to East Timor’s agricultural sector.

### **The UN Rhetoric of Local East Timorese Incapacity**

Given the nature of the UN’s primary role, that of providing for East Timor’s transition to independent nation status, perhaps UNTAET’s most striking policy inconsistency was the decision, taken in the first months of its mission, to establish a large administrative bureaucracy filled entirely by international personnel. This was an immensely costly decision resulting in several hundred million dollars in expenditure on international advisors and administrators and on the logistics needed to bring them to Timor. It severely limited employment opportunities for local personnel and hampered the possibilities for administrative experience and training for the East Timorese who would eventually take over from the UN.

In line with this decision, the UN committed itself to an initial rhetoric that pervaded the mission, claiming fundamental incapacities coupled with a significant lack of knowledge and experience among local East Timorese. Ironically, the fact that the upper echelons of the Indonesian bureaucracy, which had inhibited local promotion, had left East Timor was cited as a reason for an overwhelming and exclusive international administrative apparatus. Too little was done, at the outset of the mission, to identify and evaluate local capacities and there were relatively few training programs to build on the capacities that did exist. Interestingly, some of the first initiatives in this direction were in the judiciary where young lawyers were identified for further training, whereas in the agricultural sector where local knowledge exceeded international expertise and could have been put to effective use, identification and training was slow to occur.

Too few of the international personnel who were recruited had the language skills, particularly Indonesian, to communicate with local East Timorese. This meant that they did not have the means of judging local capacities. Even more galling to East Timorese with deep local knowledge of their territory, only East Timorese who had returned after years in the diaspora and who could communicate with the UN’s international staff were judged capable of administration. They were the ones who were relied upon for an understanding of local conditions.

A further aspect of the rhetoric of the situation was the assertion that UNTAET’s role was to foster genuine participation and ‘national ownership’ in new forms of governance,

whereas in fact the forms of administration that were put into effect closely replicated the Indonesian system, with which local East Timorese were well-versed but nevertheless initially excluded.

For much of its first year, UNTAET's policy was more exclusive and less participatory than that of the previous Indonesian government. Excluded from significant participation were the majority of educated local East Timorese, including most former local administrative personnel. These officials could, at best, hope to become drivers for the flood of international personnel who took over the processes of administration.

To his credit, the UN's Special Representative, Sergio de Mello, began significantly changing this policy by the middle of 2000, in advance of an understanding of a change in directions among the international personnel recruited to the mission. Thus some of the rhetoric of the previous policy was still evident in publications emanating from the UN to the end of the year.

A good example of a kind of mixed rhetoric, reflecting the changes that were in train, can be found in the publication, *East Timor: Building Blocks for a Nation*, produced by a UN country team in November 2000. In the sections on 'Good Governance', 'Institution Building' and 'Capacity Building' are the following statements:

"In the immediate aftermath of the events of September 1999, East Timor faced what was essentially an institutional vacuum...The challenge for East Timor is nothing less than building a new nation from almost zero... It is imperative to foster national ownership over the nature, direction, and management of the transition process. Without this, there can be no sustainability. Bearing this in mind, the structure of UNTAET has been changed to ensure the direct participation of East Timorese, particularly at the senior levels, and to actively involve East Timorese in the executive management of the transition...After long periods of systematic underdevelopment of human resources, it is not surprising that East Timor faces a lack of skilled and experienced people to build the new nation...Although a number of well-qualified and experienced East Timorese from the diaspora have returned to help rebuild the country, they alone cannot fill even a small percentage of the 9,000 or so posts in the public service" (*Building Blocks* 2000:94-97).

### **Shifts in the Policy of 'Timorisation'**

At the time when *East Timor: Building Blocks for a Nation* was written – at the end of the first year of the UNTAET mission – the East Timor Development Agency (ETDA) had begun to build up a register of local human resources, which as of July 2000, listed only 7025 East Timorese, mainly from rural areas. The register for Dili where most skills were likely to be found had not yet been completed.

Through the second half of its first year, UNTAET was subjected to a rising chorus of criticism, including that from former UNTAET officials, over the slowness of its operations and its "failed Timorisation" (see Chopra 2000). At the Lisbon Donors

meeting in June 2000, de Mello, expressed his own frustration at the Mission's inability to achieve its intended goals:

“There are several problems intrinsic to a UN mission operating as a civilian administration, including: the staff profile of a UN mission of this kind, their understanding of the local culture and their ability to perform sectoral governmental functions; our recruitment processes, and UN procurement rules and regulations...At UNTAET we are very much aware of the frustration of the East Timorese people and others at the slow progress in reconstruction and development” (de Mello, Statement 2000, 5-6).

In response, de Mello had appointed a number of Timorese leaders to a cabinet and established a National Council of East Timorese in June 2000. Recruitment of East Timorese to the administration, however, proceeded at a slow pace and so, by the time of the December Donors' meeting in Brussels, when the targets for recruitment and training set in Brussels had not been met, the chorus of criticism directed at UNTAET only increased.

Following the Brussels Donors' Meeting, earlier policies were adjusted, extra resources were allocated to the recruitment of East Timorese, and further pressures were placed on internationally-staffed ETTA departments to train as well as to recruit more local staff. The rhetoric about East Timorese incapacities was toned down.

By the end of May 2001, prior to the Donors' Meeting in Canberra in June, UNTAET was able to report that 86% (8600+) of a planned civil service of approximately 10,500 had been recruited and that this number included 51% of senior civil servants (“Background Paper for Donors' Meeting”, Canberra 2001: 13-16).

By the end of June, all 13 districts were headed by an East Timorese District Administrator. A Civil Service Academy had been established and was already involved in training; and a Public Service Commission had been established to develop policies and guidelines for the civil service (de Mello, “Presentation” 2001:17).

The problem that bedeviled UNTAET operations from the beginning, coloured its perceptions, affected its recruitment efforts, and will continue to frustrate the development of administrative capacities is the problem of language. The language of the UN's transitional administration is English. From the outset of the Mission, too few UNTAET staff members had the language background, particularly in Indonesian, for intelligible and productive communication. Without this capacity, UNTAET staff were hardly in a position to assess the capabilities of local Timorese or to work effectively with them.

In the UNTAET/World Bank “Background Paper” for the Donors Meeting in Canberra, this problem was clearly highlighted in relation to UNTAET's administrative handover: “almost all the documentation produced by the transitional administration – major reports, policy papers, Cabinet submissions and decisions, directives, procedures, manuals and forms – is available only in English. In the short term, this means that the

core material of government is unintelligible to the East Timorese who should be able to understand and act on it, seriously impeding the transfer of authority to them. In the medium term, the archival legacy left for an independent East Timorese administration will be meaningless to most civil servants. The barrier is no less with oral communication as most international staff do not speak a language of East Timor. This limits the participation by East Timorese in day-to-day activities such as meetings, planning discussions and general supervision, hampering the capacity development efforts” (“Background Paper” 2001:15-16). This reliance on English has in no way facilitated East Timorese leaders who have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to the use of Portuguese as the official language of the new nation of Timor Lorosa’e.

During its first year, the operations of the UN in East Timor were filled with frustration. The UN agreements of the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1999 regarding the vote on autonomy called for a continuing UN presence whatever the outcome of the vote. No serious contingency planning, however, appears to have been undertaken during the intervening four months. In any case, the extraordinary destructive events in East Timor during September 1999 required a scale of planning by the UN that would probably have been outside the scope of any contingency planning had it occurred.

This resulted in an internal tug-of-war within the UN on responsibilities for the Mission and a large-scale, hastily organized UN-World Bank Joint Assessment Mission that tried to set some of the initial parameters for reconstruction and development. The UN Special Representative was indeed given unprecedented authority but the structures for UN operations and the mechanisms for resource mobilization for the Mission seem to have followed established bureaucratic procedures. The mobilization of efforts was slow, often reactive and frequently ineffective because of the struggle over procedures between the Mission in the field and the UN officials in the Headquarters in New York. In particular, the selection of personnel for the Mission adhered to routine requirements.

Astri Suhrke has argued convincingly that much of the initial lack of progress in the Timorisation of the UNTAET’s Mission was the result of the framework set by the United Nations’ constitutive rules and the logic of consensus politics in the UN itself (“Reason and Reconstruction”, 2001). From this perspective, the Special Representative’s ability to move efforts forward in spite of these rules, politics and procedures could perhaps be seen as heroic.

In retrospective, one can conceive of alternative ways of proceeding. A Mission with fewer, but better selected, international civil personnel – one that relied upon and, as quickly as possible, engaged local East Timorese – would have been far less costly. Such a Mission would not have gone through the disruptive process of rapid mobilization and equally rapid demobilization, which now seems to be the pattern of most UN missions. Over a longer period, such a Mission could have become involved in addressing major capacity building problems within the country.

### **Major Capacity Problems: Challenges for the Future**

For the United Nations, building capacities in East Timor should have involved more than just creating an administrative system and staffing it with capable personnel. It should also have involved the formulation and initiation of effective local policies that would allow East Timor the possibility of a sustainable future. Certainly the United Nations, through the international banks and the international community, has laid the foundations for an open free market economy based on a respect for the rule of law, good governance and fiscal responsibility. More specifically, however, there remains the need for development policies that will address some of the chief problems that will face the new nation. These are problems that are grounded in the nature of the territory itself and its history and will affect its future economic prospects.

The nexus of these problems centres on the present imbalance between a rural sector that employs 60-70% of the less educated population on the basis of low production, near-subsistence agriculture and an urban sector whose better-educated younger population remains largely unemployed. While this constitutes the nexus of the problem, its ramifications are far more extensive. Some of the related aspects of this problem in full context may simply be listed as follows:

- Prospects of increasing budgetary expenditures
- Limited government revenue generating capacities
- No immediate likelihood of substantial income from the Timor Gap resource
- Overwhelming dependence on international assistance
- Virtually no viable local industries
- Significantly diminished trade, including local cross-border trade
- Limited international investment and investment opportunities
- A lack of legal security in property rights and uncertainty over land law
- A local education system still turning out graduates with limited technical skills
- A continuing flow of youth with rising expectations to urban centres
- A small civil service that can employ only a fraction of new graduates

The *East Timor Consolidated Budget* for 2000-01 was a constrained budget that set recurrent spending at \$ US 43.63 million and capital spending at \$ US 15.60 million. The largest proportion of this budget – approximately 37% -- was allocated to health, education and social affairs with an additional 17% allocated to activities and training related to law and order (Fox 2000b: 44-46). Despite the assertion in the budget that East Timor's economy is "predominantly agricultural with around 90 per cent of the population living in rural areas and dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and employment" (*East Timor Consolidated Budget* 2000-01: 25), only about 1% of the budget was allocated to agriculture.

East Timor's Projected Budget expenditures for 2001-02 were set at 65 million with forward projections to increase to 80.2 million in 2002-03, 99.8 million in 2003-04 and 103.3 million in 2004-05. In the 2001-02 budget, expenditure on health, education and social affairs was maintained, accounting for 38% of the budget. Justice, police and

emergency services plus new expenditures on defence accounted for another 17% of the budget. Agriculture, on the other hand, was included as part of “Economic Affairs”. This portfolio was allocated roughly 2.5% of the total budget, equal to the allocation to the Central Fiscal Authority responsible for drawing up the budget (see Annex 1, “Background Paper”, 2001).

Certainly during its Mission, UNTAET did little to address any of the major problems of agriculture in East Timor. Since these problems are at the core of future development for the new nation, it is difficult to support the view that the UN has satisfactorily developed the necessary capacities for a sustainable future. In its approach, the UN has explicitly adopted the currently fashionable emphasis on “encouraging private initiatives” that has been strongly promoted by the World Bank. Hence in its first budget, UNTAET explained that “for the longer term, it is envisaged that the Department [of Agriculture] will generally take a non-interventionist approach to agricultural development” (*East Timor Consolidated Budget 2000-01:25.*) This means, for example, in practical terms that no agricultural extension service has been planned for East Timor despite lack of education among farmers; no provision has been made for the import of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizer, despite the low nutrient levels of Timor’s soils; and no plans, as yet, have been formulated for local seed production facilities in the territory.

For the past three years, Timor has experienced some of the highest rainfall for over a century. Three consecutive “La Niña” years have greatly benefited farmers after nearly a decade of prolonged drought. Basking in its non-intervention policies, UNTAET has taken full credit for these conditions by claiming that even without the rehabilitation of many of East Timor’s most important irrigation systems, rice production has reached 80% of its pre-ballot level and that despite the large number of displaced farmers (in West Timor in particular) maize production has reached 100% of this 1998 level (“Background Paper”, p. 20, 2001). Since UNTAET maintains no agricultural monitoring capacity and has made no provision for the establishment for an agricultural survey bureau for assessing production, it can be confident that its claims can not be seriously challenged by evidence to the contrary.

It is disheartening to realize the UNTAET’s Mission will come to an end just as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation cycle shifts back toward drought conditions. The opportunities of the last two years will have been squandered and East Timor may soon have to face an El Niño drought without policies or provisions for reliable food security.

Certainly agriculture is likely to be a sector where considerable reformulation will occur when the East Timorese have a greater say in planning their own development (da Costa 2001:141). Already the newly appointed transitional cabinet includes a Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. The new minister, Estanislau da Silva, was a member of the agricultural team of the Joint Assessment Mission that initially gave a high priority to development of East Timor’s agricultural sector.

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