

*Speech by Finn Reske-Nielsen
Inauguration Ceremony for the Dili Port Urgent Rehabilitation Project
Dili, 20 November 2001*

Good morning Special Representative of the Secretary General Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Minister for Transport and Communications, Mr Ovidio J. Amaral, Director of South East Asia Division for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Masafumi Ishii, Head of the Japanese Mission in East Timor, Mr. Hiroshi Matsuura, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

The rebuilding of Dili port represents more than physical inputs. It represents the rebuilding of industry, tourism and trade in East Timor; and ultimately the sustainable development of this new nation.

The restored navigational aids will allow 24 hour, all year round safe passage for trading vessels and cargo ships sailing through the dangerous reef entrance. The new rubber and timber fender system protect the concrete wharf and also ships from damage when they berth to load and unload their cargo. Efficiency and the cargo-handling capacity of the Dili Port will increase and accordingly shipping costs will decrease. With a fully functioning, cheaper and safer Port, foreign investment will be promoted, while prices of goods could drop. These things combined have the potential

to help kick-start the economy and create more economic opportunities for East Timorese. In addition, the new navigational aids will help prevent shipping accidents, which may cause damage to the environment.

In fact, many people may not be aware, but the Port now has some innovative features aimed at ensuring that this public facility has as little impact on the environment as possible. Some of these innovative features include, the use of East Timor's abundant solar power to work the red and green entry beacons, also the leading light tower and the lighthouse.

Most importantly, an integral part of this initiative was capacity building. During the past 11 months, a number of East Timorese engineers and technicians were given on-the-job training. During the course of this project, the rehabilitation works relied on more than 50 East Timorese.

UNDP thanks the Government of Japan, which has generously contributed the urgently needed funds for this project, which total US\$ 2.65 million. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our management partner, the UN Office of Project Services (UNOPS). Also, the two contractors, Wakachiku Constructions and Nittodaito and the consulting engineers, Nippon Koei for their professional approach in getting the job completed.

I trust the rehabilitated Dili Port will support sustainable development in East Timor, creating more social and economic opportunities while ensuring the protection of the environment. Thank you.