

*Talking Points for The UN Development Programme Representative,*

*Mr. Finn Reske-Nielsen*

*Signing ceremony and launch of UNDP's project of assistance to the elections.*

*(Thursday, 10 May 2001)*

Good afternoon distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

The immediate goal of the initiative we are launching today is to support the electoral process in East Timor. UNDP looks to achieve this goal through the 10 distinct but related components that make up the design of this project. Broadly speaking UNDP will coordinate national and international observer groups. We will also support voter and civic education and, importantly, promote public participation in the constitutional debate.

However this initiative also reaches beyond the elections and the adoption of a constitution.

Integral to this initiative is training. Throughout the project period core staff, including a number of experts, will provide financial and training support to 234 East Timorese participating in the electoral process including sub-district officers, civic education facilitators and local election observers.

Following the election these people will have the skills and experience to organize future elections. It is supporting the creation of this type of self-reliance that all UNDP projects are aimed at.

While we are officially launching this project today, work has already begun. Last week UNDP and the Department of Political Affairs began training 60 civic Education Facilitators who will be deployed to the field shortly. Also, in close coordination with IEC, voter education has started. Earlier this week our project coordinator, Bill Clive, joined us. It is an asset for us and East Timor to have Bill onboard. He brings with him a wealth of knowledge, having worked as Deputy Director of the Electoral component under UNTAC in Cambodia, also as Chief of the Joint UN Operations unit in South Africa, and most recently as Chief of Technical Services under the UNMIB in Sarajevo.

However, a great deal of work remains to be done and we have little time to spare. I would like to reiterate Sergio's appeal to donors that now is indeed the time to firm up your commitments to support the electoral process in East Timor.

Thank you.