

PRESS RELEASE



Timor-Leste

UNTL AND UNDP LAUNCH TRAINING FOR TRANSLATORS

Dili /04 October, 2004

On October, 4th at 9.00 am, courses in legal translation and conference interpreting will officially open at the *Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e*. The courses are a joint venture between Timor-Leste's Ministry for Justice and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Pilot Project "Capacity Development for Translators and Interpreters in Timor-Leste".

In a country like Timor-Leste, with such linguistic diversity, the training of skilled translators and interpreters is essential. The Constitution defines two official languages, Tetun and Portuguese and, temporarily, two additional working languages, English and Malay-Indonesian.

In promoting this pilot initiative aimed specifically at the Justice sector, the Government of Timor-Leste and UNDP are acknowledging that access to Justice and the empowerment of citizens cannot be achieved without adequate numbers of properly trained translators.

The Pilot Project "Capacity Development for Translators and Interpreters in Timor-Leste" has three main goals. Firstly, it aims to create a pool of qualified translators and interpreters for the Justice sector with a view to extending the project to the whole of the Public Administration. Secondly it aims to set professional standards for translators and interpreters to ensure their services are rendered in a professional manner. Lastly, the project also aims to contribute to the development of Official Tetun as a modern language that can be used in all fields of life in Timor-Leste.

To achieve these goals, the project has established a partnership with the university's *Instituto Nacional de Linguística* (INL), the designated authority for Tetun and the other national languages.

Selection tests were held and 20 candidates were selected from over 150 applicants. The training programme is composed of courses in translation and interpreting techniques, and in professional ethics. It will also include a course on Tetun as a language of the Law, to be provided by the INL, and an introductory law course, which is possible through collaboration with the World Bank's Distance Learning Centre and Portugal's *Instituto Nacional de Administração*.

The Pilot Project is being supported through generous contributions from Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden and the United States. Portugal and the United Kingdom have also donated excellent collections of dictionaries and other reference material.

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