



PRESIDENTE DA REPÚBLICA

Dili, July 06, 2009

To Whom It May Concern,

Since 1999 the United Nations and the international community has been operating in Timor-Leste. Initially when I was Foreign Minister, and now as President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the matter of how the international community uses the funds which they allocate for post conflict states has been a concern for me for at least a decade. Of the billions spent "on" Timor-Leste very little has been spent "in" Timor-Leste.

Peace Dividend Trust (PDT)'s Marketplace Project and its Buy Local, Build Timor-Leste campaign designed to encourage local procurement and support domestic business has helped to spark interest in the private sector in ways which are extremely welcome. Timor-Leste has come a long way since the dark days of 1999. I have heard from many quarters the sentiment that an organisation like PDT was needed in Timor-Leste during the UNTAET period in 1999-2002. A similar focus on buying locally by international aid and peacekeeping budgets in order to build the private sector and create jobs might have helped Timor-Leste avoid the crisis of 2006.

However, since 2007 PDT's work has helped to change the way that the international community operates in Timor-Leste. The way that international agencies spend their money is now an issue square in the middle of the debate. I would assert that PDT was directly responsible for changing the way the international agencies looked at local procurement, and for increasing the amount of money being spent "in" the country, as opposed to just "on" Timor-Leste. This is important as it builds capacity in the private sector, creates wealth, and most importantly generates employment.

Perhaps the greatest compliment I can pay to PDT is that my office uses its services. Additionally, I will act as Patron to the Tour de Timor ([www.tourdetimor.com](http://www.tourdetimor.com)) and PDT will act as local industry coordinator for Timor-Leste's first international sporting event.

Finally I would like to say that PDT is a unique International NGO. It is quite unlike any other organisation I have come across. It is service oriented, in areas which were previously neglected, and are highly valued by my fellow Timorese.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. José Ramos-Horta  
The President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste