

Municipal Roads Ground Breaking in Aipelu-Liquiça

Liquiça, 11 October 2018

- *Excellency Members of the Government of Timor-Leste,*
- *Excellency Members of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste,*
- *Excellency Ambassador of European Union, Mr. Alexandre Leitão*
- *Distinguished Country Representative of ADB, Mr. Paolo Spantigati,*
- *Excellency Ambassadors & Distinguished Representatives of All development partners,*
- *Director Generals, National Directors, Local Authorities, Veterans,*
- *Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning,*

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I would like to express our earnest gratitude to the European Union for the grant to fund the rehabilitation of two municipal road sections specifically 11.8 km road from Ermera to Fatubessi and 13.5 km road from Aipelu to Bazartete in the municipalities of Ermera and Liquica, and the Asian Development Bank for doing the administration of this grant funds.

As you may be aware of, the Eighth Government Constitutional of Timor-Leste through its National Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 envisions to continue invest on infrastructure projects for the social and economic development of the country, and one of them is construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of national, municipal and rural road networks. For this, the European Union (EU) has delegated the administration of a grant of US\$ 22.62 millions to the ADB for the purpose of rehabilitating certain municipal roads in Timor-Leste.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a result of its implementation, we believe these two specific road network projects will greatly enhance our national connectivity and that in turn, will stimulate economic and social development activities in local areas and the country as a whole. In addition, improved access to markets and various economic services will provide and increase the economic value of communities' agricultural products such as coffee, vegetables, fruits, livestock and so on and which will motivate an increase in the production of these commodities. It will also generate potential activities in tourism through religious, historical, agricultural touristic sites.

Furthermore, an increase in economic activities is also going to create employment opportunities for local communities. Around **8,630** households living in these areas and adjacent villages will directly and indirectly be benefitted from these road-upgrading projects. And It is expected in a long run will reduce the substantial number of economically inactive population in local areas that is now at **37,449** people according to Timor-Leste's household census in 2015. That is why these projects become very important and a high priority for the Government of Timor-Leste.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Through this opportunity, I would also like to request to all of us in the Government to work closely with one another to ensure a quality and rapid process implementation of these projects to achieving the best outcome as desired. And, for all local authorities and members of the communities, please take the ownership of these projects by contributing to ensure a continuous progress of these projects to their completion without any delays for the development of your communities.

Lastly, once again, I want to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the European Union on the strong commitment and the generosity it has shown to the people of Timor-Leste and therefore, we foresee only a stronger and more flourish relationship between the European Union and Timor-Leste.

Thank you and have a good day.

Arc. Salvador Eugénio Soares dos Reis Pires

Minister of Public Works

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