



Local Governance Monthly Bulletin

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Local Government as the Key to Development

Devolution or Delegation: Eight Ministries Discuss how to Transfer Functions to Municipalities

During March the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) continued to prepare to establish Municipalities through a technical mission with four advisers that came to assist the process. The objective of this technical mission was to begin the discussion with the eight Ministerial Technical Working Groups (MTWG) and their members about what functions the Ministries intend to give to the municipalities and plan for the required municipal budget needed to execute these functions.

Mr. Miguel de Carvalho, the Director for the National Directorate of Local Development and Territorial Management, said that this mission was the first step for these Ministries to prepare for subsidiary laws that will be needed to define the role of the future municipalities. "Now these Ministries have begun to engage with the question of what functions will be given to the municipal level in the future, the Ministries are beginning to understand that there are three options for how the Municipalities can work at the local level. One option is devolution – or handing over the responsibility and decision-making ability for this particular work to the municipalities. Another option is delegation – which keeps the decision-making power at the central level, but hands over to the municipalities the authority to execute service delivery at the local level through representatives of the central government stationed at the local level – like a deconcentrated system. And the third option is to continue working at the central level," said Director Carvalho.

Based on the MSATM plan, municipal elections will begin before the end of 2009 in four districts: Bobonaro, Baucau, Dili and Oecusse, which will begin working for their communities by 2010. The work which municipalities will undertake will start in a phased manner, but

will slowly receive responsibility for service delivery in local areas. However, in order to prepare for this process, all Ministries will need a plan for the work they will hand over to municipalities and determine a budget for the municipalities to conduct this work.

The subsidiary laws are being prepared before the legislation on local governance is approved by National Parliament because the Ministry is aware that this process requires excellent preparation before municipalities can be established. This mission is the first step in the process to prepare these subsidiary laws, and will be followed by the Ministries continuing their discussion and preparing for the next mission which will happen in May or June.



Ministerial Technical Working Groups share experience with the Technical Advisers during a meeting held at the MSATM Office on the 19th of March 2009



Mr. Jose A. da Costa Braz

Name and Quotation - District Development Official of Manufahi, Mr. Jose A. da Costa Braz

Question: What is your hope for the Municipalities?

"In the administration, we would like to say that we are ready to receive the responsibilities that will be given to us, because the work at the local level is really for our communities and to serve the people here at the local level. Currently, the local level cannot respond to anything. We can't respond directly when the community is requesting help or wants something – and sometimes they are facing disasters or they face serious problems – but we at the local level, we can't do anything.

"Because of this, I believe the decision to establish Municipalities quickly is something good – not to receive all responsibility, but if they hand over little by little so that we can respond to what the people need."



Workshop with Civil Society on Decentralization

The Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management (MSATM) has taken the initiative to increase public outreach on the decentralization process through community workshops held in conjunction with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) from February 24 to March 4. Workshops were facilitated by the National Directorate of Local Development and Territorial Management (DNDLOT) and organized by CRS in Bobonaro, Baucau, Liquiçá and Viqueque as a method to share information with local citizens and increase participation in the process.

about the government's plan and work, so that people can contribute to the process," said Mr. Jesus. He hopes that when local government is established and decentralization already implemented, everyone will learn from the work done by the Municipalities.

During the meeting, the team from DNDLOT also explained about the function of the Ministry both during and after the decentralization process. When the Municipalities are already established, they explained, MSATM will not just leave the Municipalities to their own devices. MSATM will continue to provide support through increasing capacities through training and advising of municipal authorities, to ensure that municipalities function according to the established legal framework, effectively manage their own budget and develop their municipality.

Workshops were conducted with the theme, 'What is the Function of Local Leaders, Community Leaders and Civil Society in the Decentralization Process' and covered information about government plans and current activities to establish local government.

Mr. Gaspar H. da Silva, a Department Head in DNDLOT, represented the Government in the meetings. "The objectives of these workshops were to share information about the decentralization process, and describe to civic society and leaders of political parties their role both before and after the Municipalities are established to help them better contribute to development in their district," said Mr. da Silva.

In the Liquiçá District, a local political party representative, Mr. Cesar Valente de Jesus, said the workshop was important for him to gain perspective about decentralization. "This workshop is a good way to explain to people and increase understanding



Mr. Gaspar da Silva discusses with participants during a workshop in the District of Liquiçá on 2/2/2009

In Brief

In April

- LDP: Assisting in the Pre-Tenderization Meetings for 2009
- Socialization of the Community Contract Manual
- Assisting in the Meeting of the DDOs and DFOs

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Learning from Experience: Training on Finance and Procurement

The government is committed to increasing the capacity of local authorities, so that they can execute their budgets and better serve their communities. In this aim, the National Directorate for Local Development and Territorial Management (DNDLOT), through the Local Development Programme (LDP) held a three-day training, from 2-5 March at Canossa Manleu, to review the financial and procurement systems for the implementation of budgets in the eight districts participating in the LDP pilot.

"The objective of this training was to refresh the assembly member's understanding of finance and procurement procedures to help them reduce problems that they have had over the past year and ensure that Assemblies perform their functions well based on the existing regulations," said Mr. Jose Pereira, the Head of the LDP Department in DNDLOT.

Mr. Renato Pereira, the District Financial Officer for the Manufahi District, participated in the training and said that, "This training is important for the civil servants in the districts in order to increase our understanding and capacity and fulfill our functions correctly. From the material that we received, we

can compare this to what we did over the part year and see what we have done correctly or what we need to fix based on the regulations."

The training was divided into two phases. The first phase was with the four newest LDP districts—Ainaro, Baucau, Manufahi and Covalima – which was held in Dili from the 9-11 of March. The second phase was held from the 12-19 with the older LDP districts of Aileu, Lautem, Manatuto and Bobonaro.



Mr. Domingos Soares, the Political and Legislation Official and trainer for this program, in Meeting Room of Canossa Manleu on the 9th until the 11th of February 2009