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Consultation Meeting on the Future of Human Rights Education in Timor Leste



A high-level stakeholder meeting on the future of human rights education and research at the National University of Timor Leste (UNTL) took place on March 4th at the **Delegation of the European Union in**

Dili. Convened by Timor Leste, H.E. Andrew Jacobs, this consultation provided an opportunity to gain insight into the mid-term results of the 23-month project *"Development of Human Rights Education and Research at the UNTL"*, funded by the EU and implemented since January 2019 by the Global Campus of Human Rights together with the GC Asia-Pacific Programme based at Mahidol University (Thailand). Most importantly, this was an occasion to examine in depth the future of this endeavour upon the completion of the Project and, in particular, the prospects of the recently established **UNTL Human Rights Centre** (whose premises were inaugurated on August 27th 2019), as a new Timorese educational institution, following its official handover to the UNTL in November 2020.

The paramount importance of securing academic, administrative and financial sustainability for this new institution was demonstrated by the attendance of key stakeholders. The UNTL, as the final beneficiary of the Project was represented by the Rector, Prof. Francisco Miguel Martins, the Prorector for Academic Affairs, Prof. Miguel Maia dos Santos, the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Bernardo Leto, the Legal Advisor, Dr. Marianna Chaves, the Director of the Peace Centre Prof. Antero Benideto da Silva and the Project focal point, Prof. Dulce Martins da Silva. The consultation was also greatly enriched by the expertise of the representatives of key international and local stakeholders in the field of human rights and development cooperation such as H. E. the Ambassador of Portugal José Pedro Machado Vieira, Mr. Roy Trivedy, the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Jesuina M. Ferreira Gomes, Provedora for Human Rights and Justice and the Executive Director of the Centro Nacional CHEGA!, Mr. Hugo M. Fernandez.

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Jacobs, who expressed great satisfaction with the implementation of the Project, and announced the interest by the EU to keep supporting it beyond 2020. Then the representative of the Global Campus, Mr. Adriano Remiddi (Project Manager), presented the project mid-term results. Mr. Remiddi pointed out the establishment of the premises of the Human Rights Centre, and the parallel launch of a structural capacity building "Human Rights Studies & Training Programmes" with 27 scholarships for its future resource persons as the two core achievements. Academically, the final result of the action will be the mainstreaming of human rights education at UNTL starting with the academic year 2021 through a new transversal course taught in all Faculties by the lecturers successfully trained during the course of the Project.

During the second part of the meeting, the **vision for the future sustainability and development of the Centre** was discussed in depth, as well as its stable integration into international and regional academic networks after the completion of the Project. The need for a transitional period that allows a gradual and effective handover of the Centre was unanimously acknowledged by the Global Campus representative and the UNTL Rector, as well as the mutual readiness to keep cooperating on furthering human rights education, including specific curricular subjects and new degree programmes. This may comprise also a multi-year strategy aimed at creating the conditions to develop postgraduate education in the macro area of human rights and democratization, social and development studies, peace and good governance, through further capacity building both at individual and institutional level.

All stakeholders acknowledged the social relevance of this initiative for Timor-Leste, and expressed their full endorsement, hence stressing the need to guarantee its future sustainability and development, also presenting constructive suggestions and concrete ideas for multilateral cooperation.

For more information about the UNTL Human Rights Centre project, contact adriano.remiddi@gchumanrights.org , visit the web site www.gchumanrights.org/hrc-untl or the Facebook page www.facebook.com/UNTL.HumanRightsCentre .

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