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MEDIA RELEASE

12 August, 2014
Dili, Timor-Leste

Pilot Census prepares the way for the National Census of 2015

The General Directorate of Statistics is making preparations to conduct a General Census of Timor-Leste's Population and Housing in 2015. Last month a Pilot Census was conducted in selected areas of 8 of Timor-Leste's 13 districts. One hundred people were involved in conducting interviews in approximately 10,000 households to test materials and techniques for data collection.

When the data collection phase of the 2015 Census begins next year over 5,200 personnel will be involved going from door to door to gather information from each and every household in Timor-Leste. The General Director for Statistics, António Freitas noted that "those who have the opportunity to participate in this project will be given three weeks of training to provide new skills followed by temporary employment which may lead to an opportunity of permanent work in the future due to the experience they will acquire."

The Census provides important information to guide policy formation and assists measurement and evaluation of progress against the national goals of the Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030 and international goals such as the MDGs. Data collected in the Census is vital to making informed decisions about the location and provision of services such as health and education and the location and development of appropriate infrastructure such as roads and bridges.

Since the restoration of Timor-Leste's independence in 2002 a National Census has been conducted in twice, in 2004 and 2010. In 2010 the Census information was shared with the people of Timor-Leste in an innovative program called "Sensus Fo Fila Fali" [Giving Back the Census]. Reports were distributed and workshops conducted in each of Timor-Leste 442 Sucos, with information shared on population size, education, health, the labor market, agriculture, water and sanitation, electricity, mortality rates and poverty levels. The 2010 Census recorded the population of Timor-Leste as 1,066,409.

The Government has recognized that in the short term holding a Census every five years is important to track the dynamics of the nation. A Demographic Health Survey is also planned for 2015.

Further information on the Census is available at the website "Statistics Timor-Leste" www.statistics.gov.tl

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