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MEDIA RELEASE

2 May, 2015
Díli, Timor-Leste

Bobby Boye pleads guilty to defrauding Timor-Leste, restitution to be made to the State

Former legal advisor to the Government of Timor-Leste, Mr. Bobby Boye has admitted in open court his guilt in defrauding the State of Timor-Leste of \$3.51 million dollars. Boye made his guilty plea before a U.S. District Judge in Trenton Federal Court, New Jersey on Tuesday. Timor-Leste's Ambassador to the United States, Domingos Sarmento Alves, was present at the hearing to witness Boye's admissions.

In June 2014 Boye was arrested at Newark International Airport and charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] began to investigate the activities of Mr. Boye after authorities in Timor-Leste alerted U.S counterparts. Cooperation between the FBI and Timor-Leste has been ongoing.

Boye created a sham New York law and accounting firm called Opus & Best Law Services LLC (Opus & Best), a firm that Timor-Leste did not know was secretly controlled by Boye and then used his position of influence to recommend Opus & Best receive contracts from the Government of Timor-Leste.

In the hearing Mr. Boye agreed that he had abused a position of trust and that he acted "knowingly, willfully and with the intent to defraud." He admitted to the court that he had failed to disclose to Timor-Leste his affiliation with the company Opus & Best.

Boye's sentencing hearing is scheduled for the 13th of August 2015, when it is anticipated that he will be sentenced to between 4 to 6 years in prison without parole. As a part of his guilty plea Boye is to make full restitution to the State of Timor-Leste in the amount of \$3.51 million dollars. At this stage his assets have been forfeited to the court including banks accounts, four pieces of real estate, three vehicles and two high-end watches. These assets will be sold to compensate Timor-Leste for the losses caused by the fraud he perpetrated.

In early 2010 Mr. Bobby Boye, a US Citizen, was recruited by the Norwegian Ministry of Finance to work in Timor-Leste as part of the Norwegian Petroleum Assistance Project [NPAP]. He began working in Timor-Leste as a Petroleum Tax Advisor beginning June 2010. Officials in Norway have expressed regret that their recruitment process did not pick up evidence of previous cases of fraud perpetrated by Mr. Boye.

Spokesperson for the Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted "Unfortunately all new states are



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targets for criminals who aim to take advantage of our nascent systems and capacity. Bobby Boye was welcomed into our country as part of the good work of the NPAP team. That he went on to abuse our trust and perpetrate fraud on the State is deeply distressing. However, with his arrest, guilty plea, impending jail term and agreement to compensate the State, in our case it seems justice will be served.”**ENDS**



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