

**The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and  
Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste  
Ágio Pereira**



**November 30, 2009  
Dili, Timor-Leste**

**Renewable Energy: Xanana Gusmão's Government builds on a strong beginning.**

Since 2007 the IV Constitutional Government has placed a priority on developing the use of renewable energy in Timor-Leste. The Secretariat of State for Energy Policy has gathered detailed information on the potential of a variety of environmentally friendly energy sources available to the Nation. This data is being incorporated into a comprehensive National Energy Policy. At the same time the Secretariat has been facilitating many projects that are complete and already successfully providing communities with energy from renewable sources.

An in depth study by experts Martifer was commenced in 2008 to collect data about the existing potential of renewable energy. The initial report made by the contractor notes that Timor-Leste has great potential in the areas of bio-energy (Water, Wind, Biomass, Geothermal, Photovoltaic, Biogas and Renewable Fuel). The final report will be delivered in May 2010.

A Plan for Rural Electrification already developed by the Secretariat has focused on using existing renewable sources to supply the energy needs of communities living in remote and rural areas of the country. Consequently Action Programs have been developed to use Biogas, Micro Hydro, Solar Units and Crops (Agro) These Action Programs are operating with the direct involvement of local authorities and communities currently benefiting over 3,000 households.

The Program of Action Biogas has seen six gas holding units of 10-20m<sup>3</sup>, one unit of 75m<sup>3</sup> and one of 142 m<sup>3</sup> built, cumulatively covering 219 families;

The Program of Action of Micro-hydro has seen the building of a micro-hydropower facility in Loihuno capable of supplying 50-100 families, to be finished before the end of the year.

In the Program of Action for Solar Energy 2,143 solar units were installed (for lighting the same number of families) with capacity between 40 and 50 watts for 5 hours a night. Three were installed to run Satellite TV in villages to provide information resources.

The Program of Agro energy has involved a cultivation and installation component for distilleries for the processing of bio fuel. The organizational modules for the cultivation and production have involved co-operative groups. 43 Co-operative groups have been established thus far with 1,125 community family beneficiaries. A distillery with 1,500 litres capacity has started production.

Secretary of State Ágio Pereira noted "The biggest fallacy has been that the Xanana Gusmão Government is not committed to alternative energies because we have commenced with the power plants to serve the immediate needs of the country. We have always been committed to alternative energies as a long term prospect, but it is costly and the people of Timor-Leste need solutions now; however, doubling the funding for renewable energy in the 2010 budget demonstrates our continued commitment to exploring and supplying renewable energy resources, especially in remote rural areas."

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During budget debates Fretilin tabled a proposal to reduce the amount spent on research by half and shift the funds to biodiversity programs. It was then explained that the options for energy sources were being identified, but further research was necessary to define which energy source was most feasible per area. The proposal was not approved by the plenary. **ENDS**

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