

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 12 February 2004.

Tasi Tolu Peace Park project kicks off with tree planting ceremony

The Tasi Tolu Peace Park project was launched this morning with the planting of 200 trees in Tasi Tolu [outskirts of Dili] by RDTL President Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and other officials.

Xanana Gusmão stressed the special significance of the area chosen for the reforestation project. He said that many people were killed in the Tasi Tolu area during the struggle for independence, and that Tasi Tolu was also the site of both the Independence celebration in May 2002 and Pope John Paul II's historic mass. The President added that the planting of trees illustrated the government's concern with the environmental issues faced by Timor-Leste.

Tasi Tolu villagers and schoolchildren also took part in the ceremony, and the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Timor-Leste, Sukehiro Hasegawa, urged the community to ensure the conservation of the trees.

The US\$ 150,000 "Tasi Tolu Peace Park Project: Phase One – Reforestation" covers 40 hectares and is being funded by RESPECT [Reintegration, Employment and Stability Programme for Ex-Combatants and Communities in Timor-Leste] in partnership with the Department of Forestry in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Some 120 vulnerable community members, including ex-combatants, unemployed youth and widows will be employed in the labour-intensive project that is scheduled for completion in April next year.



UNITED NATIONS MISSION OF SUPPORT IN EAST TIMOR (UNMISSET)
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (OSRSG)
Not an official document. For information purposes only.