

## *Ambassador of Japan to Timor-Leste, Mr. Eiji Yamamoto's message*

First of all, let me congratulate the government and people of the Timor-Leste for the fresh start of the 6<sup>th</sup> Government of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. I am honored to have witnessed this historical transition, and I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the most recent situation in Japan, and our bilateral relations.

Last December, Japan had a general election and the ruling coalition parties won the election, enabling Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to continue tackling his agenda. One of the continued top priority is **revitalization of Japanese economy**, with emphasis on local economy. The government of Japan is working on robust policies to support efforts to improve profitability and productivity of enterprises, and increase employment and wages. Thanks to the strong leadership of the government, over **13 million foreigners, the biggest number of visitors ever, visited Japan** last year. These tourists contributed to generate consumption as much as twenty billion US dollars! Since **Japan will host Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020**, Tokyo is getting ready to welcome even more foreign guests and tourists, and so as regional cities. We have started to build the new super-fast maglev train system (even faster than Japanese famous high-speed train *Shinkansen*). This will enable the travel from Tokyo to Osaka in one hour with the speed of 500km/h. This is equivalent to traveling from Dili to Lospalos, Viqueque, Manufahi, Suai and back to Maliana in one hour!!

Another important agenda for Japan is “**Proactive Contribution to Peace.**” This year marks the milestone of the 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration since the end of World War II. While remaining to be peace-loving nation, Japan is further determined to proactively contribute to peace and stability of the region and the world, based on the principle of international cooperation. This includes our proactive contribution to the United Nations Peace Keeping Operation(PKO), leading efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation, and prompting international cooperation against terrorism.

In the context of Timor-Leste, Japan has participated in the UN PKO mission since 1999, and has conducted various capacity building projects. Instructors from Japanese Ground Self Defense Force's Ordnance School conducted training courses on vehicle maintenance to F-FDTL for the last three years.

Regarding international cooperation against terrorism, recently our nationals were taken as hostages and believed that they were murdered. We would like to convey our deepest condolences to the victims of the acts of terrorism, not only those two Japanese nationals, but also those from other countries, and appreciate the solidarity shown by the international community. Japan will never give in to terrorism, and steadfastly fulfill its responsibility in the international community combating terrorism.

We, as an equal partner, will spare no efforts to support Timor-Leste's own efforts toward accelerating its development process. We have implemented projects like, "Oecusse Port Urgent Rehabilitation Project," "Irrigation Projects" in Manatuto and Maliana, and dispatched specialists at Ministries and UNTL. These are only a few examples. As a single country, **Japan ranks No.3 in the amount of ODA to Timor-Leste**, after Australia and Portugal.

The Embassy of Japan also implements various grass root grant aid projects across the country. Private sector also plays an important role in the development of Timor-Leste. I have been explaining business opportunities in Timor-Leste to Japanese business people, and will continue to facilitate **further business interaction** between our two countries.

Japan has always put a paramount importance on people to people's exchange, and so far, we have invited 500 young Timorese students to Japan under the exchange programs, including **JENESYS program**. We also offer Japanese government scholarship to Timorese students for graduate study and teacher training. Additionally, we have 28 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers working at Ministries and institutions in Timor-Leste and those young Japanese volunteers are not just in Dili, but also in Aileu and Baucau. These young people are undoubtedly important assets for our bilateral relationship.

In closing, I would like to inform you that the Embassy of Japan in Timor-Leste now has a Facebook page! Please follow us for updates on our activities as well as news from Japan.