

DSRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa Met Former Civil Servants

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNDP Resident Representative, Sukehiro Hasegawa, met today with envoys of a coalition of groups representing former civil servants in Timor-Leste. The coalition of groups was participating in a demonstration to voice concerns about the process of pension and other payments to former civil servants in Timor-Leste, in addition to the Special Fund payments.

Mr. Hasegawa addressed the demonstration for approximately 15 minutes this morning, before meeting with a delegation comprising envoys of groups representing former Portuguese civil servants and the Orgão dos Direitos Comunidade Vítimas de Timor-Leste (ODCVTL).

Mr. Hasegawa explained that UNDP is responsible for the implementation of the Special Fund only. UNDP is not in any way involved in the Indonesian pension payments, Tabungan Hari Tua payments or Tabungan Perumahan payments currently being administered by the Public Service Department of the Government of Timor-Leste. He stressed that the Special Fund is not linked to any of these payments, and has no relationship with the Government of Indonesia's obligations to its former employees in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Hasegawa said that payments to Special Fund beneficiaries would resume on 8 March, and that approximately 8,000 people would receive lump sum payments in March and April. Payments will be made in all 13 Districts, with UNMISSET providing logistical support, including helicopter transportation. In total, 22,009 potential beneficiaries registered with the Public Service Department in 2001 and 2002. Over 2,000 people received Special Fund payments in November 2002 and January 2003. The remaining 12,000 beneficiaries will receive Special Fund payments later this year, after the Governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste certify the beneficiaries' registrations.

Mr. Hasegawa agreed to convey the delegation's request to meet with members of the National Parliament to Mr. Francisco Guterres, the President of the National Parliament.

UNDP officials met with Committee F of the National Parliament in late December 2002 to respond to questions and concerns regarding the Special Fund. Following this meeting, the Committee's chair, Mr. Antonio Ximenes, thanked the UNDP delegation for their visit and for providing satisfactory explanations to the Committee's queries. Mr. Hasegawa re-emphasized today that UNDP is willing to meet with the national Parliament at any time to discuss the Special Fund.