

# **Post–Conflict Land Administration; a Facilitator of the Post–Conflict State Building in the Case of Timor–Leste**

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**Key words:** Cadastre; Land management; conflict; post-conflict; land administration; state building; Timor-Leste

## **SUMMARY**

There is a growing recognition that land administration has fundamental role to play in the post-conflict period. This paper observes specifically the role that land administration had within the overall process of the post-conflict state building in the case of Timor-Leste. The history of Timor-Leste witnesses the violence in the human rights through the period of 1974-1999. Estimated number of people that died as a direct consequence of the conflict, and conflict-related hunger and illnesses in this period is around 180,000 people. The violence was followed with displacement of population in several time periods, at the beginning of the violence in 1975, after the referendum in 1999 – over a half of its population was displaced, and also after the end of the conflict there was another wave of displacement, during the crises period in 2006. The country's two colonial administrations have been complicated by widespread illegal occupation as a result of the displacements. Further complicating issues were the destruction of the infrastructure and housing, majority of state archives and records were destroyed, and specifically the archives with land records were target of the Indonesian militia actions. The events from the two and a half decades of tensions, conflicts and displacement in reflection to land issues resulted in very complicated situation on the ground opening the opportunity for multiple layer of disputes and claims over the land. Tackling the housing, land and property (HLP) and land administration issues was very sensitive activity which could very easy be a cause of a new conflict. There was a challenging period ahead in respect to the developments in the fields of HLP and land administration in Timor-Leste. General characteristics of the war-torn societies: weak institutions, economic and social problems and low security were present in post-conflict Timor-Leste as well. This paper identifies that developments in the land sector helped strengthening the institutions and contributed to the economic and social development, specifically after the crises period in 2006. These arguments suggest that land administration could be seen as a facilitator of the overall process of post-conflict state-building in Timor-Leste.

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FIG Working Week 2015

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Sofia, Bulgaria, 17-21 May 2015