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PRESS RELEASE

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Fokupers and ACbit hold a bazaar with women survivors and victims of Gender Based Violence and past conflict with the support from the European Union

Dili, 4 December 2020

Forum Komunikasaun Ba Feto Timor Leste (Fokupers) and **Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita** (ACbit) are holding a bazaar in Dili on the 4th of December 2020 to support the economic activities of women survivors and victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and past conflict violence. This event is coordinated by Hivos with the support from the European Union (EU) as part of the 16 Days of Activism, started last November 25 for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and will conclude on 10 December 2020, which is International Human Rights Day.

Held in Fokupers office on Rua Direitos Humanos No. 04, in Farol, Dili, this event provides the opportunity for 23 women survivors and victims, representatives from 7 districts, namely Dili, Ainaro, Baucau, Ermera, Liquica, Manufahi, dan Oecusse, to showcase and sell their products. In addition to the exhibition, a seminar themed *“Ensuring A Sustainable Community-Based Economic Development”* will also be held with speakers from women survivors, representative of Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion, former Secretary of State for Youth and Labour (SEJT), Sr. Nivio Magalhães, the Ambassador of the European Union, and human rights activist and freedom fighter, Ir. Bella Galhos.

Maria José Guterres, the Executive Director of Fokupers, stated that, “The bazaar and seminar are needed to strengthen the economic development of women survivors and victims. The processes of creating and selling products are their primary means to provide for themselves and their children, but their income is inconsistent.”

In line with the statement, Manuela Leong Pereira, The Executive Director of ACbit, explained that, “In collaboration with Fokupers and Hivos, we had conducted a rapid assessment and market scan. The results showed that women survivors and victims only received somewhere between USD 1 and USD 10 every week from their trades. Their common challenges include the limited access in selling their product in the city, while the number of buyers within their communities are low.”

The assessment and market scan also showed that approximately 109 out of 123 survivors who participated in the survey would love to expand their businesses or start a new one. However, most could not afford to buy raw materials to increase their production. Therefore, this bazaar, that is held as part of the Reforsa Hamutuk project, aims to help promoting their products and provide access for the business expansion they are hoping to do.



Asosiasaun
Chega! Ba Ita



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In his opening speech for the event, Mr. Andrew Jacobs, the Ambassador of the European Union to Timor-Leste, stated that, “The EU is firmly committed to strengthen its efforts in order to make gender-based violence a problem of the past. Women survivors and victims of violence are productive members of the community that deserve equal access to social services and opportunities for employment. We have important roles in creating the enabling environment and supporting women survivors to access those services and seize the employment opportunities.”

“Reforsa Hamutuk” — Stronger Together is a 30-month project financed through a European Union contribution of 550,000 USD (500,000 EUR), and implemented by Hivos in collaboration with Fokupers and ACbit, to promote social inclusion and economic development of women survivors and victims of violence in Timor-Leste.

About the European Union

The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union between 27 Member States. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. The EU is the largest trade block in the world; as well as the world's largest source and destination of foreign direct investment. Collectively, the EU and its Member States are the largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA), providing more than half of ODA globally.

About the Reforsa Hamutuk Project implementing organizations:

Hivos is an international development organization that seeks new solutions to persistent global issues. Founded in 1968 and inspired by humanist values, Hivos works in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East at a local, regional and global level, together with local civil society organizations in developing countries to contribute to a free, fair and sustainable world. Through smart projects in the right places, Hivos opposes discrimination, inequality, abuse of power and the unsustainable use of resources. For more information, visit: <https://sea.hivos.org/>

Forum Komunikaun ba Feto Timor-Leste (Fokupers) is a non-governmental organization in Dili, Timor-Leste focusing on women’s right. It was established in 1997 to address GBV and human rights violations against women and children, particularly those committed at the time of the Indonesian occupation. Their current works include victim services; non-gender based early childhood education, advocacy, and women empowerment—both in the community and in Timor-Leste as a nation. For more information, visit: <https://fokupers.org/>



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Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita (ACbit) is a non-governmental organization that aims to promote the values and principles underpinning the work of the CAVR—human rights, justice and reconciliation. Established in 2010 in Dili, Timor-Leste, ACbit focuses on advocacy for victims’ rights. ACbit provides training, technical assistance, support groups, and trauma healing for women victims of past conflict and their families, and creating networks of past and current victims of GBV to break the chains of impunity. For more information, visit: <https://chegabaita.org/>

To know more about the event and the Reforsa Hamutuk Project, please contact:

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