COUNTRY BRIEF

Fact Sheet

The Timor Island (19,000km²) is the eastern most of the Lesser of Sunda islands. To the north lies the Savu Sea and the strait of Wetar, to the south is the Australian continent.

Timor was a colony of the Portuguese until 1975, and made a Province of Indonesia after a brief civil war on the island. The armed resistance against Indonesia ended in 1999, when the UN sponsored public consultation resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of Independence of the country.

Timor relief is broadly characterized by a core of rugged hills and mountains where approximately 40% of the island has a slope of about 44%. The highest point of the country is Mount Tatamailau at 3,000m above sea level. The climate is hot, with an average temperature of 21°C and 80% humidity. The rainfall ranges from 500mm to more than 2000mm on the southern cost.

The population of the country is estimated at approximately 800,000 people, of which 76% live in rural areas. The GDP per capita in 2001 is estimated at about US$478, and at least 41% of the population live below the national poverty line, set at US$0.55/day. The economy of the country is, at present, heavily reliant on agriculture, but rich oil and gas resources both on shore and off shore might change the picture in the coming years. The main export commodity of the country is coffee.