



www.tourdetimor.com

“Peace begins with me”

Official Press Release for 2011 Tour de Timor

dated 15 March 2011

Now in its third year, the Tour de Timor has taken its rightful place in the annual sporting calendar for adventure cyclists in the southern hemisphere. The hybrid mountain bike race with a road bike format has just opened registrations for the 2011 race and limited spots are going fast. The Tour de Timor is a very unique event for peace hosted by President José Ramos-Horta and the Government of Timor-Leste and its gaining world acclaim and a great amount of interest.

In Dili today the President was pleased to introduce the race as registrations have opened online for the 2011 event. *“The 2011 Tour de Timor is an auspicious occasion for this young nation. With the enormous success of the first and second iterations, it is fair to say that the Tour de Timor has become a memorable annual event on the calendar for both professional cyclists and tourists alike. Your presence in our country is eagerly awaited. The Tour de Timor is the most participated event of the year with thousands of Timorese in the cities, towns and most remote villages turning out daily on the streets to welcome you to their neighbourhoods and cheer on their riders. The standard of local riders is certainly rising every year; we were very proud of all 75 Timorese riders in 2010 especially the Da Costa brothers who regularly finished in the top ten. The 2011 Tour de Timor will display their hard work over the past 12 months and hopefully see our first podium finish. This year you will visit my childhood mountain village of Laclubar as well as the spectacular far East of the country. I am once again delighted to invite riders from around the world to join us, to experience the toughest mountain bike race in Asia, and to join us in celebrating peace for Timor-Leste. I wish you all the best of luck in training and throughout the race and hope that you embrace the motto for this years race “peace begins with me”. God bless you.”* Dr José Ramos-Horta, President of the Republic of Timor-Leste.

“Peace begins with me” is this year’s theme for the major event which forms part of the President’s Dili ‘City of Peace’ campaign. And indeed that continues to be the focus of all of the Presidential City of Peace Events. During the national running selections at the past weekend President Ramos-Horta noted “in 2012 there will be many big events including the anniversary of the Restoration of Independence and the London Olympic Games. And my plan after talking with the Prime Minister [Xanana Gusmão] is to organise even more international events in Timor-Leste.”

President Ramos-Horta initiated the Tour de Timor in 2009 to assist in consolidating peace and national unity in Timor-Leste. “I launched the Dili ‘City of Peace’ Programme to cultivate peace in the country. The Tour de Timor is a multi-day event that crosses the rivers, the mountains, and the jungles taking in much of the interior. It is unique also because you are crossing through a country that witnessed so much violence and devastation and today is at peace, evidence that when human beings have dreams and wish to work towards obtaining those dreams, we can”.

Timor-Leste was in desperate need for some good news stories: both for international audiences and to boost local spirit. The virtues of sport as a tool to leverage strong and peaceful society have been a

fantastic success in Timor-Leste. In September 2009 following the successful completion of the inaugural event, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade dropped its travel warning for East Timor from the second highest travel warning “Reconsider your need to travel” to the next level down, putting it on par with countries such as Brazil, India and the Philippines.

What has been attracting the riders to Timor – apart from the tremendous good will and smiling faces of Timorese children supporting the race right along the route – is the high level of professionalism in the race. From start to finish the riders are tested with several kilometres worth of mountain climb as they cross the 2500-3000m peaks over the spine of the country. They are treated to views of seas on both the North and South coasts of the country, views of rainforests and rice paddies, mountain villages and rural children. They are pushed to compete across conditions ranging from extreme heat and dryness to constant rainfall. And after all this they are given good hot meals, a place to camp and opportunity to explore the local village they’ve arrived in. For the true competitors there is also the matter of the prize money, which this year will be in excess of \$100,000 USD.

As the Tour de Timor enters its third year there are set to be more challenges, more technical cycling stages (incl. a team time trial on day 4), more opportunity to see the positive benefits that the race is having on the local communities visited and one more day!

The Tour this year will take place over six days rather than the normal five. This is because the Tour will be heading across over 500km of assorted roads and tracks to get all the way to the Eastern-most district of Lautem. The 2011 Tour will leave behind last year’s mountainous terrain to instead take in the gorgeous beaches and coastal landscapes of the East. The race will run from Sunday 11 September to Friday 16 September with rider’s registration on Saturday 10 September 2011. Rider packs in 2011 will include a special edition of the 2011 Lonely Planet Guide to Timor-Leste, a pair of customised TDT knicks and various different Timorese gifts.

Registration is now open. Rider numbers will be limited to 350 participants, which will include 80 Timorese representative riders from each district, as well as teams from the national police, firemen and army teams. The Tour is open to all levels of riders, with professional riders vying for the cash prizes, and tourist riders vying to keep ahead of the sweeper truck! Professional riders from around the world are strongly encouraged to take part in the race – individual prizes for first male and first female is an amazing \$15,000 USD each. There are also age category, GC, KOM, team and daily stage cash prizes.

For more information contact info@tourdetimor.com or visit www.tourdetimor.com

Authority: Mr Richard Bell, Media Liaison Officer, Tour de Timor, +670 723 7643313



END PRESS RELEASE