

**ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF DEVASTATED AREAS**

**WORKING GROUP FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST**

Background material prepared in the United Nations Secretariat for submission to the Working Group for Asia and the Far East of the Temporary Sub-Commission on Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas at its meeting at Lake Success on 14 February 1947.

**PART I**

**COUNTRY STUDIES**

**N. PORTUGUESE TIMOR**

## PORTUGUESE TIMOR

### I. IMPACT OF WAR AND EXTENT OF RECOVERY

#### 1. Introduction

Portuguese Timor consists of the eastern portion of the Island of that name in the Malay Archipelago, with the territory of Amberro and the neighbouring islands of Pulo Cambing and Pulo Jako.

The western part of the territory is a Dutch colony and a boundary between the two was established by international arbitration in 1914. The total area of the Portuguese territory is 7,330 square miles.

#### 2. Living Conditions of the People and Manpower

The population of Portuguese Timor in 1936 was 453,706 including 2,000 Chinese shop-keepers. There were in 1938 one secondary school and 25 primary schools.

#### 3. Transport and Communications

The road system covers 677 miles. There are 1656 miles of telephone line and a wireless station at Dilly, the capital.

#### 4. Foreign Trade

In 1939, 197 ships of 91,215 tons entered and cleared the ports of the colony. Export trade was directed mostly to the Netherlands East Indies and a small portion to Australia and Portugal; coffee represented three-fourths of the total exports, the others being sandal-wood, copra, beeswax and rubber.

#### 5. Finance

The estimated public revenue and expenditure for 1943 were balanced at 9,429,000 escudos (1 escudo = US\$0.04). The public debt on December 1942 was 31,279,164 escudos.

### II. PRESENT DIFFICULTIES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Island was severely devastated as a result of Japanese rule and fighting. Dilly, the capital, was almost completely destroyed. Plantations are neglected and livestock practically non-existent. The Portuguese

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Government has restored civil administration with food production having priority in the reconstruction plans. Power plants, machinery for road making, motors and cattle have been purchased and shipped from Australia. Cocoa, vanilla, quinine, beeswax and cinnamon which accumulated during the war are now being exported.

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