Driven by the concern to find a solution to the long-standing conflict in East Timor, a small group of East Timorese intellectuals took the initiative to create the East Timor Study Group (ETSG). Support for the Group has come from a wide range of institutions and individuals, especially those who are involved in peace and conflict resolutions programmes, such as the Peace and Conflict Resolution Programme, American University, Washington DC; the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden; the Research Institute for Democracy and Peace (RIDEp), Jakarta; and The Australian National University through the Centre for Democratic Institutions, the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, and the Faculty of Asian Studies. Additional support has come from individuals concerned with the issue of East Timor, especially East Timorese community leaders who have participated in the workshops.

**Objectives**
The objective of the ETSG is to provide a space for discussion and analysis of the problems faced by East Timorese society, including promoting democratic principles and human rights and resolving the conflict in East Timor.

**Activities**
The activities of the group consist mainly of workshops and seminars complemented by research and field trips to relevant places for comparative studies. The outcomes of these activities will be submitted as proposals to policy makers and disseminated to the public in the form of publications. Because the ETSG is independent and academic in orientation it provides space for the discussion necessary to promote a plurality of ideas and a tradition of agreeing to disagree, including in the domain of political discourse.

The ETSG has jointly organised workshops on East Timor with the Peace and Conflict Resolution Programme, American University, Washington DC; the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden; the Research Institute for Democracy and Peace
The current Canberra workshop, which is the fifth workshop in the series is entitled "Managing Transition in East Timor". Among the topics discussed are current developments in East Timor and Indonesia and at the United Nations; reconciliation; disarmament in Cambodia and Bougainville; United Nations experiences in transition processes and lessons for East Timor; managing international economic assistance; promoting democratic processes in East Timor; economic viability; language policy; and planning for information and communications systems in East Timor.

The participants include East Timorese of different political views from around the world, non-East Timorese Indonesians, international experts, and representatives of the United Nations. The participants are invited in their private capacity and the workshop is not a substitute for any formal negotiation process.

Like previous workshops, the Canberra workshop was intended to be low key so as to allow participants to exchange their views freely and openly, but unfortunately news of the workshop got into the public domain.

As the joint organiser of the workshop, the ETSG has taken note of, and expresses it appreciation for, the concerns expressed by the East Timorese community in Australia on the first day of the workshop during a direct exchange of views between the community members and ETSG members, as well as workshop participants from the Resistance Movement (in their private capacity) who came from Dili.

Organisational capacity and resources permitting, the Canberra workshop will be followed by further workshops.

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