Staff Perspective
Claudio Providas,
Timor-Leste Country Director

“We’ve come a long way since the days when development organizations, including UNDP, were more shielded and just focused on results; when there was far less awareness and also less propensity to attack or challenge development interventions on issues like environment, labor, human rights, land tenure, consultation. People were not connected on social media. They didn’t raise complaints because they didn’t think it would matter or didn’t see the leverage potential.

Times have changed, and today our organizations are fair game and subject to constant scrutiny. People have complaints that are often justified, and we need tools to address and manage them. That’s why we need standards like the SES, and mechanisms to implement them.

Some see the SES as a ‘compliance exercise’, and the accountability mechanism as something to dread. But I think it’s very important to view the safeguards as a ‘risk management and planning tool’.

More and more governments have the operational and legal frameworks to implement these projects themselves. So when they seek UNDP involvement, they’re often requesting support that is highly complex or politically sensitive. Rather than becoming more risk-averse, we need to take these issues on. The safeguards are an integral framework to help us do this. SES is a tool that will support our current efforts and partnerships, including resource mobilization and engagement with the IFIs, and better align our services.”