



STATEMENT BY MR. A. GOPINAHTAN, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SITUATION IN TIMOR-LESTE AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 15, 2003

Mr. President,

We congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. This has been, and will undoubtedly be, a month of major activity for the Council. We are confident that the conclusion of your Presidency at the end of the month will record forward movement on many important issues currently under consideration.

Mr. President,

It has been almost 17 months since the establishment of UNMISET pursuant to resolution 1480 of the Security Council. It is a rare but happy occasion when we are able to review what the Secretary General has described as "significant progress" in the major milestones identified in the mandate of a Mission's implementation plan. It is gratifying to learn that since its independence, Timor-Leste has made significant progress in promoting its social and economic development, and that its political institutions have continued to develop as have its relations with countries in and beyond the region.

I wish to briefly comment on the following highlights of the Secretary General's report on developments in Timor-Leste;

- The successful phased withdrawal of UNMISET's military component as per the revised downsizing schedule authorised in resolution 1473, with plans to bring down its numbers to 1,750 by the end of 2003. We note that this downsizing has gone hand-in-hand with the development of Timorese armed forces.
- Relative calm in the internal situation that has allowed 12 districts to be handed over by UNMISET to the National Police of Timor-Leste (PTNL), with the 13th district ready for handing over;

- The progress achieved by UNMISET in preparing Timor-Leste to gradually take over its civil administration. The Secretary General has acknowledged this by referring to Timor-Leste's "remarkable progress in laying the foundations for a functioning civil service and police force";
- The success of the Government of Timor-Leste in generating revenues worth \$ 44.1 million, including \$ 26.7 million from Timor Sea revenues during the current year, as an indication of the increasing ability of the State to mobilise its own resources;
- The establishment of strong relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia by way of exchange of high-level visits and conclusion of a joint statement reaffirming the intention of the two countries to address together a number of important bilateral issues.

Mr. President,

The developments outlined above illustrate the progress achieved during the period of the Secretary General's report. Recognising that nation-building is a long-term process, the Secretary General has highlighted the continued indispensability of international assistance. He has projected that Timor-Leste will continue to need international guidance and advice in the areas of civil administration, justice and policing, human rights training and, possibly, security. We look forward to hearing further from the Secretary General on his recommendations in this regard.

The progress achieved since the independence of the Timor-Leste has to be attributed to the country's enlightened and forward looking leadership. Special recognition has to be accorded here to Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Mari B. Alkatiri, who only recently addressed the United Nations General Assembly. The contributions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Kamallesh Sharma and the civilian, military and police components of UNMISET, including the United Nations Volunteers, in the successful evolution of Timor-Leste from a nascent State to a confident member of the United Nations fraternity, also deserve our recognition.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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