



Malaysia

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Permanent Mission to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY

AMBASSADOR RASTAM MOHD ISA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

THE SITUATION IN TIMOR-LESTE

AT

THE SECURITY COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2004

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I offer my sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for this month and to the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for his stewardship of the Council last month.

2. My delegation is pleased to address the Security Council on the situation in Timor-Leste six months after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1543 (2004). We express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his progress report on the activities of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, for his clear and comprehensive presentation of the report. We commend the Special Representative and members of the civilian, military and police components of UNMISET, for their dedication and invaluable contribution to the process of nation building in Timor-Leste.

Mr. President,

3. Malaysia is pleased to recognise UNMISET continues to play an important role in Timor-Leste, providing security and facilitating the country's advancement towards progress and development. The Mission has assisted in nurturing the development of political, economic, social, legal and judicial institutions. We note in particular that, since the inception of the UNMISET consolidation phase in May 2004, Timor-Leste has made further progress in developing key state institutions and security agencies, which includes the adoption of a number of important pieces of legislation. Voter registration has been completed in preparation for the local elections to be conducted before July 2005. These advances could not have been achieved without the full commitment, determination and strong resolve of the country's leadership and the support of the Timorese in general, coupled with sustained assistance and cooperation from the international community.

4. We recall that in his previous report, the Secretary-General had outlined that the progress achieved in Timor-Leste had permitted a downsizing in the international presence on the ground. However, in his report before the Council today, the Secretary-General has emphasized that the situation on the ground does not warrant any modification of UNMISET's tasks as mandated by resolution 1543 (2004). We note his assessment that any change of the composition or size of UNMISET, including those of the police and military components, could compromise the ability of the Mission to carry out its responsibility. At the same time we also take note of the Secretary-General's recommendation of retaining UNMISET with its current tasks, configuration and size until its mandate expires on 20 May 2005.

5. We agree that the coming final period of six months would allow key tasks of UNMISET to be completed and gains made thus far consolidated. It is essential that

the transition from the phase of peacekeeping operations for resolution of conflict to the next phase of development activities be conducted with the cooperation and contribution of all bilateral and multilateral partners. In this regard, Malaysia will do its utmost within its capacity, to contribute towards assisting further Timor-Leste in fulfilling its nation-building endeavour, including through the continuation of bilateral technical assistance.

6. My delegation notes that during the next six months UNMISET will also be focusing on its exit strategy, as it completes its mandate in Timor-Leste. This is a crucial period for UNMISET in ensuring that the country continues to function without any significant impact from the Mission's withdrawal. It is thus important for a thorough and comprehensive assessment be made whether Timor-Leste has largely achieved self-reliance before UNMISET's responsibilities are handed over to the Timorese. In this regard, we believe that UNMISET needs to redouble its effort to encourage the involvement and ownership of the Timorese in the Mission's three programme areas and to identify bilateral and multilateral partners who could help move the process.

7. Malaysia has taken note of the donor's conference scheduled to be held in March next year. We hope that the United Nations system and other partners that have complemented the role of UNMISET in assisting the institution-building process would continue to support and facilitate the smooth transition from a peacekeeping operation to a sustainable development assistance framework. My delegation joins the Secretary-General in appealing to all bilateral and multilateral partners of Timor-Leste to enhance their cooperation with UNMISET for a successful transition process.

Mr. President,

8. It is encouraging to note the growing relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia, as manifested in the recent visit of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri to Jakarta in October and the participation of Foreign Minister Ramos Horta in Indonesia's independence celebration in Kupang in August. The strengthening of relations between the two neighbouring countries augurs well for them, including in their continued efforts to delineate the land borders between them. We are confident that both countries will continue to be able to resolve their pending bilateral issues in the spirit of friendship and cooperation.

9. With regard to the ongoing investigations by the Serious Crimes Unit to bring the perpetrators of serious crimes committed in 1999 in East Timor to justice, my delegation is of the view that the issue is best dealt with bilaterally between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Undue external pressure from the international community and especially from the United Nations may not be the right approach in dealing with the issue.

10. My delegation notes in the Secretary-General's report that maritime boundary negotiations with Australia have been conducted recently in September and October, but a mutually beneficial arrangement has yet to be concluded. Malaysia continues to express its hope for a mutually beneficial arrangement that permits the successful exploitation of petroleum and natural gas, which could provide badly needed financial resources for Timor-Leste.

Mr. President,

11. My delegation has noted the conclusions and observations of the integrated technical assessment mission during its recent visit to Timor-Leste to review the situation on the ground as mandated by resolution 1543 (2004), with a view to determining the feasibility of modifying UNMISSET's size, composition and tasks, including the configuration of its police and military components. My delegation is concerned that despite the notable progress achieved during UNMISSET's consolidation phase, the mission has concluded that Timor-Leste has yet to reach the critical threshold of self-sufficiency, in particular in the areas of professional skills and values, policing experience, necessary equipment and infrastructure, and management and coordination capabilities. In this regard, Malaysia continues to offer assistance in training and development for senior and middle management of the Timorese police force, apart from assistance given in the training of trainers at the Police College and to the newly formed Police Reserve Unit and the Rapid Intervention Unit.

I thank you, Mr. President