



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

THE SITUATION IN TIMOR-LESTE

AT

THE PUBLIC MEETING OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

TUESDAY, 24 AUGUST 2004

Mr. President,

My delegation joins others in congratulating you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Romania, for his stewardship of the Council last month.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Council, for convening this timely public debate, three months after the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1543 (2004), as required by the resolution. I also wish to express my 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 Under Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, for his clear and comprehensive presentation of the report. I would also like to pay tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on East Timor, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, to the former Special Representative, Mr. Kamallesh Sharma, together with 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,

I am pleased to note UNMISET's activities in Timor-Leste have provided a window of opportunity for progress. By playing a key role in providing security, by facilitating the country's emergence from conflict and its political development, and by supporting the State's development, the international community has made a crucial contribution. The progress has permitted a downsizing in the international presence on the ground, and has left no doubt as to the momentum of transfer of responsibility to Timor-Leste. In this regard, it is encouraging to note the important steps taken by the Timorese Government towards reaching self-sufficiency. This was clearly reflected when Timor-Leste formally assuming responsibility for internal and external security on 20 May 2004.

I am further encouraged by the Timorese government in the adoption of important legislations in establishing legal and institutional frameworks. There were also continued efforts in promoting a culture of free political dialogue and resolution of bilateral issues. I believe this advances could not be achieved without the full commitment, determination and strong resolve of the country's leadership and the support of the Timorese in general.

While the progress made is commendable, my delegation notes with concern the observation made the by Secretary-General that much remains to be accomplished during the remaining months of UNMISET's mandate. In this respect, it is still essential for continued and enhanced cooperation between the Timorese Government, UNMISET and the wider United Nations system of agencies, funds and programmes and the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as other bilateral actors and civil society. In essence, Timor-Leste will continue to be dependent on international assistance in the development of sustainable national institutions, especially the civil service. In ensuring effective implementation of the laws promulgated for the establishment of the national security institutions for instance, it is noted that there is still significant requirement for financial and human resources. This would also include provisions for training and development of law-enforcement agencies. It is thus essential for the international community to allow sufficient time for the East Timorese people to acquire the necessary skills and experience, especially in the core functions in which local expertise is still lacking so as to ensure effective and functioning governmental machinery in the post UN period.

Mr. President,

Significant progress has been made in laying the legislative framework of the Timorese state's institutions. The Timorese Government is aware of the continued need to enhance the effectiveness of these institutions in order to sustain stability and improve socio-economic conditions. My delegation is encouraged that the next round of negotiations between Timor-Leste and Australia on the sharing of petroleum and natural gas resources in the region will be held in September 2004, after the first round in Dili on 22 April 2004, to resolve a dispute over their maritime border in the Timor Sea. The talks were also on the allocation of the large petroleum and gas reserves in the seabed that the border would cross. The petroleum and gas revenues are crucial for Timor-Leste economic future. In this regard, my delegation calls on both parties to come a rapid conclusion to the permanent border negotiations. A speedy and a win-win conclusion would be beneficial for the Timorese Government in the exploitation of valuable resources that could be use for nation building, while it would also allow Australia to regain much of the goodwill it earned with the international community for its intervention in support of Timor-Leste independence.

My delegation is also encouraged on the continued effort to delineate the land border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. We warmly welcome the cordial and constructive contacts and friendly bilateral arrangements between Timor-Leste and its most immediate and important neighbor Indonesia. We believe this will augur well with Timor-Leste in its desire to play a useful role in the region.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General in his report has brought our attention to the in depth analysis and assessments on the state of progress and the challenges on each of UNMISSET three programme areas.