

Statement by Amb. Koonjul on the situation in East Timor-
26 April 2002

Let me start by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his briefing on the situation in East Timor and for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the important statement he made earlier this morning.

We are very pleased to welcome once again Mr. Xanana Gusmão - this time as the first President-elect of East Timor - and Chief Minister Mari Alkatari to the Security Council. We thank them for their statements outlining the policies that they will be following to address the immediate needs of their country.

Let me also seize this opportunity to congratulate them on their election and to express our best wishes to them and to the entire population that they are going to be leading. The election held this month shows once again the political maturity of the people, their love of peace and democracy and their undivided commitment to East Timor's future.

We are very happy to see the positive developments in almost all sectors in East Timor. This is a sure and steady path in the process to independence. The success registered so far in the making of East Timor as a nation State is the outcome of the indomitable and undying spirit of sacrifice and dedication of its people and that of the international community, particularly the Security Council, which has engaged itself fully in the whole process from the very beginning.

The progress achieved should now be consolidated and the international community should continue to accompany East Timor in its efforts. East Timor will require a sustained and high level of development assistance, as mentioned in paragraph 100 of the Secretary-General's report. Top priority should be given to external security, law and order and the establishment of a solid and

representative administrative service. We must therefore ensure that the needed help is given, especially in order to maintain the high level of security and to build a sustainable administrative and economic base.

In this context, we fully support the proposal of the Secretary-General on the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET), with the responsibilities outlined in paragraph 64 of the report. We particularly appreciate the idea of a gradual devolution of responsibilities and powers to the people of East Timor in all sectors. This is the most pragmatic and realizable objective in the particular situation.

The significant role played by Indonesia in the peace process and its continued support for all United Nations activities in East Timor must be highly commended. We are confident that both Indonesia and East Timor will continue to consult each other in addressing the outstanding issues. We encourage both countries to develop close, friendly and goodneighbourly relations that will permit regional stability and the optimal utilization of resources for the benefit of their respective peoples.

We look forward to East Timor's joining the family of the United Nations after acceding to formal independence on 20 May, a celebration which the whole world will be watching with great interest, joy and emotion. Let me say that Mauritius will be represented at that special and historic event.

Before I conclude, allow me to express my appreciation to Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, who is not among us today, for the outstanding work accomplished by him in East Timor as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the Transitional Administration. His contribution in bringing peace to East Timor will become part of the history of the country. He and the entire staff of UNTAET deserve our heartiest appreciation for their laudable work in East Timor. We wish him plenty of success in his future undertakings.

I also take this opportunity to convey my congratulations to Mr. Kamallesh Sharma, Permanent Representative of India, who will now head UNMISSET and who, no doubt, has a gigantic task ahead. We

are confident, however, that, with his experience and great leadership qualities, he will be able to meet the challenges. Mauritius, as ever, will continue to lend its support to him and to the people of East Timor in building a viable and peace-loving State.