



Timor-Leste Development Partners' Meeting 2009

3 April 2009

Statement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste Dr. Atul Khare

Your Excellency President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,
Dr. José Ramos-Horta,
Your Excellency Prime Minister, Mr. Xanana Gusmão,
Your Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa,
Your Excellency Minister of Finance, Ms. Emilia Pires,
Excellencies the Ministers and representatives of the Government of Timor-Leste,
Members of the National Parliament;
Excellencies, Heads of Delegations and representatives of the international community,
and colleagues from UN regional HQs,
Distinguished Country Director of the World Bank, Mr. Nigel Roberts,
Deputy SRSGs for Timor-Leste, Mr. Finn Reske-Nielsen and Mr. Takahisa Kawakami,
Dear Colleagues and friends,

I am greatly honored to address this very important meeting, the second such gathering hosted by Timor Leste since the 2006 crisis. This year also marks the 10th Anniversary of the Popular Consultation that led to the restoration of the independence of Timor-Leste. The large number of donor delegations gathered here today demonstrates the strong commitment of the international community in supporting the Government and the people of Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste is now at peace and security has been re-established. 2008 turned out to be a good year for Timor-Leste, despite the deplorable events of February. Significant progress was made in IDP returns and reintegration and the Petitioners have re-entered the mainstream of society. There is a growing climate of trust in state institutions, including the security sector. The commencement of resumption of primary policing responsibility by PNTL is imminent in one district, Lautem, which fulfills mutually agreed readiness criteria. The challenge is now to ensure the long-term sustainability of the progress recorded in the restoration of peace and security. In this process, it is indeed time to focus on a shift from immediate post-conflict recovery and emergency stabilization to a development agenda. As the Secretary-General noted in his address to the Security Council on 19 February, and I quote “We begin 2009 with a clear horizon. The county can finally devote its undivided attention to the essential task of building the strong and durable foundations that are crucial for long-term stability and prosperity”, end of quote.

The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), with the support of the international security forces, has played and will continue to play, a significant role in assisting Timor-Leste to maintain a stable security situation and will also continue its work in all its other mandated areas of responsibility. The United Nations Security Council has welcomed the Medium-Term Strategy 2009- 2013 with its goals, benchmarks and milestones. This common framework, developed after wide consultations with Timorese stakeholders and international partners, provides a basis for our joint efforts to promote lasting and sustainable peace.

The medium-term strategy, which fully incorporates the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) perspective, covers four strategic objectives, namely:

- 1) Security Sector Institutions, that are sufficiently effective, professional and resilient, and respect and protect Human Rights;
- 2) Justice Institutions, as part of an effective, accessible and credible judicial and penal system, respecting the rule of law, and an independent judiciary;
- 3) Sustainable Democratic Governance, through institutions of state and society which keep strengthening an institutional culture of dialogue; and
- 4) Economic and Social Development, through a healthy, inclusive and sustainable economy practicing social solidarity.

Many of these fundamental priorities will require sustained long-term attention well beyond UNMIT's lifespan. Some root causes and significant consequences of the 2006 crisis persist. For instance, despite the successes with IDP returns, there is a need to continue to focus on recovery in receiving communities to prevent renewed tensions. In this regard, the United Nations welcomes the budget increases for the Provedor's Office, as a national institution to promote the rule of law and accountability for past and more recent human rights abuses.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Timor-Leste is blessed with significant natural resources. In some ways it is a reasonably prosperous country, but with many poor people. Therein lies the dilemma, natural resources tend to diminish over time with their exploitation and use, whereas the needs and expectations of the people for development obviously continue to increase. Hence, responsible financial policies need to be accompanied by a well-balanced public investment programme which can help generate economic growth and promote human development whilst ensuring the longer-term viability of the Petroleum Fund. The Fund continues to be Timor-Leste's only major source of income and must continue to be managed in accordance with the law to ensure predictable returns from oil and gas revenues in the longer term.

Equitable management of the national wealth, with due consideration to the needs of vulnerable communities and women, is also crucial. Some progress towards gender equality has been recorded, but gaps exist in the protection of victims of sexual and gender-based violence, which constitutes nearly a quarter of the crimes committed in the country. The draft Law Against Domestic Violence is currently before Parliament, and I look forward to its adoption and implementation. It might also be useful to track aid flows for their impact on gender equality goals and women's empowerment, in order to integrate a gender perspective more fully into development financing. Youth employment and

participation programmes are equally a wise investment in Timor-Leste's future. I would like to stress the importance of strengthening the education and training sector in this regard.

Timor-Leste's development needs are still massive and continued outside assistance is required for several years. The global financial crisis can magnify the impact of any decline in ODA commitments to Timor-Leste, particularly during the sensitive phase, which we are about to enter and in which we must ensure sustainability of the stability. I therefore encourage all donors to continue their assistance to Timor-Leste in a predictable manner. In this regard, we must move forward on enhanced coordination amongst development partners, under the leadership of national authorities of Timor-Leste, and align development assistance with national priorities and processes in order to achieve maximum impact. Both President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão have consistently sounded the theme of greater donor alignment and transparency in international aid flows to deliver better effects on the ground and make real progress in fighting poverty, and I trust that we will heed their call.

The hard work of tackling the challenges ahead is just beginning. This meeting serves as a perfect starting point to respond collectively. Let us therefore rise to the occasion and banish, once and for all, the spectre of instability from Timor-Leste and bring lasting change to the lives of all Timorese people to fulfill the vision of a peaceful, prosperous, stable and democratic Timor-Leste, securely anchored in the respect for human rights and the rule of law.

I thank you and wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful meeting.