

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MANJEEV SINGH PURI, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE, ON THE SITUATIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE AT THE UNITED
NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, ON FEBRUARY 22, 2012

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. I would like to extend a warm welcome to H.E. Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste, in the Security Council and thank him for his statement. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Ms. Ameerah Haq, for her comprehensive briefing.

2. The Secretary General's latest report has provided us an opportunity to reflect on the latest developments as the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) prepares to drawdown by the end of this year.

3. Mr. President, it is a matter of great satisfaction that the overall situation in Timor Leste remains calm and stable and the country is firmly on path to long-term peace, stability and development. We are encouraged by President Horta's assessment of the progress achieved so far.

4. This year would be an important milestone for the consolidation of democratic transition in Timor-Leste. As the country marks the tenth anniversary of restoration of its independence, presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled later this year. The continued and active engagement of all political parties in the democratic processes and the forthcoming elections are an encouraging indicator of Timor-Leste's abiding commitment to democracy.

5. We are happy to note that there has been a steady progress towards organizing these elections and an enabling legislative framework has already been put in place. We are appreciative of the technical and logistical support extended by the UN and the international community towards holding these elections.

6. We compliment the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) for its efforts towards institutional development and capacity building. The PNTL has successfully assumed the responsibility for the conduct, command and control of all police operations in the country. Forthcoming elections would be the final litmus test of

its preparedness to maintain law and order in the country. As the transition progresses, it is important that UNMIT remains steadfast in its support to the PNTL in accordance with the wishes of the government.

7. Moving ahead, it is critical that there must be necessary legislative and operational framework in place for a clear delineation of authority between the military and the police so that they can effectively discharge their responsibilities under the overall command and control of civilian government.

8. We support the efforts of the government for enhanced regional engagement and for addressing developmental challenges confronting the country. We have noted with satisfaction that the overall economic growth, including proceeds from the oil and gas sector, continues to remain robust. Government's continuing focus on infrastructure and capital development would certainly be helpful in ushering rapid socio-economic transition in the country.

9. As UNMIT moves towards a drawdown by end 2012 and the government assumes full responsibility for various processes, the UN system and agencies present in the field must work in a coherent manner. All critical aspects related to transition - downsizing of UNMIT's police component post-elections, implementation of the Joint Transition Plan and contours of future UN engagement - must be decided in close consultation with the government. It is important that the transition must be guided and have the ownership of the Timorese government. We look forward to the UNSG's report after the elections.

10. Mr. President, India attaches great importance to its relations with Timor-Leste and we have sought to contribute to the country's development by providing expertise and training in areas of our competence and where we see complementarities in their application. India has extended its support to the Government of Timor Leste, including through assistance for purchase of equipment and materials related to socio-economic development and in human resources development sector. We are also partnering with the Government of Timor-Leste under the IBSA framework.

11. The progress achieved so far gives us confidence that we are moving in the right direction and UNMIT is well on path to become a success story. We appreciate the efforts by UNMIT, the international community and bilateral partners towards peace, stability and development in the country. We support the

Secretary General's recommendation for extension of UNMIT's mandate till end December 2012 at the current authorized levels.

12. Before I conclude, Mr. President, I would like to express our deep appreciation for the leadership of SRSG Ms. Haq and the dedication and hard work of her team in supporting the government and people of Timor Leste.

Thank you.

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