

**Briefing to the Security Council by
Ms. Ameerah Haq
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23 February 2010**

Mr. President,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2020/85), my first appearance before the Security Council as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste. A substantial portion of the report is dedicated to the findings and recommendations of the Technical Assessment Mission which visited Timor-Leste from 10 to 17 January and which worked jointly with myself and other members of the UNMIT leadership as well as the United Nations country team. The Assessment Mission also engaged in extensive consultations with the Timor-Leste authorities and other stakeholders across the political spectrum, including the opposition and civil society. I am pleased to acknowledge the presence today of the Deputy Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, His Excellency José Luís Guterres. I would also like to express my appreciation to President José Ramos-Horta, President of the National Parliament Fernando “La Sama” de Araújo, Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and the leader of the Fretilin opposition Mari Alkatiri, for their warm reception and agreement to continue regular discussions with me on a weekly basis. I have also received warm welcomes from the Council of Ministers and various segments of Timor-Leste’s population, including from civil society and representatives of the Church and local communities in the districts of Dili, Lautém, Baucau and Oecussi which I have visited over the past weeks.
2. Although I have been the Special Representative for only about six weeks, it is evident that there has been remarkable progress since the events of 2006 which led to the establishment of UNMIT. There is a vibrant civic life with active commercial areas in Dili and other urban centers. Crime rates remain low and have shown a decreasing trend over the past year, with an average of 87 security incidents reported weekly to police during the period from 24 September 2009 to 20 January 2010, down from an average of 118 incidents reported weekly to police in the period from 9 July 2008 to 20 January 2009. Timor-Leste has reached a new stage, where there is an intensified focus on measures needed to sustain stability, deepen democracy and the rule of law, reduce poverty and strengthen institutions. Timor-Leste, under the stewardship of its national leaders, is now working to consolidate the gains of the past and to ensure a smooth transition to the recovery and development phase. This will require continued efforts on the part of the Timorese as well as the continued support of the international community. The problems arising from the 2006 crisis were considerable, but the long-term challenges ahead may prove to be even more difficult to address.
3. It is important to note that many State institutions have demonstrated increasing capacity, which has been bolstered by better security and stability, the assistance of the

United Nations and other members of the international community, and, most importantly, the commitment of the staff of those institutions. These include, among many others, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, electoral management bodies, and the Banking and Payments Authority. This demonstrates that, given such commitment and with continued stability as well as targeted and coordinated international assistance, other institutions can also overcome the fragilities and challenges mentioned in the Secretary-General's report.

4. Democratic processes are maturing. Needless to say, political parties have their differences, as they do in any multi-party democracy. However, events over the reporting period demonstrate renewed commitment to expressing these views in a manner that does not undermine the process of interactive dialogue which is essential to proceed with recovery from the 2006 crisis. Political leaders have shown real willingness to work across party lines to address issues of national importance. For example, on 1 February, after several months of stalemate, Parliament was able to select the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, who was sworn-in on 22 February. This was possible in large part because of the leadership of Prime Minister Gusmão and all political parties represented in Parliament who demonstrated their willingness to move forward on a priority national issue. Now that the leadership has shown the political commitment necessary to allow the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission to move forward, it is essential to focus on the building of that institution – as well as many others – to increase accountability, transparency and good governance. Another major governance initiative is the possible formation of municipalities, and we await clarification by the Timorese authorities of their plans for municipal elections. While all political leaders with whom I have interacted expect that these elections will be highly contested, it is hoped that they will be conducted in the same peaceful manner as the suco elections.

5. President Ramos-Horta continued his important efforts to facilitate and encourage mutual engagement amongst leaders on issues of national importance. He has informed me that his joint meetings with the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of Fretilin will be held regularly. The efforts of the President also extend down to the community, as he meets regularly with people at the grassroots level in Dili and the districts. The various initiatives that support his “Dili, City of Peace” campaign are an admirable reflection of his proactive efforts to establish a stable and peaceful democracy. It is also encouraging that recent statements by Fretilin have committed the party to ensuring peace and stability.

6. Long-term security and stability depend on development of a national police force that is professional and impartial and operates with due respect for the rule of law and human rights. The jointly-owned process of resumption of primary policing responsibilities by the Timorese national police (PNTL) will require continued concentrated efforts to ensure that it provides the necessary foundation for longer-term institution-building efforts. The need for such a foundation informed the development of the mutually agreed criteria for resumption. I have just received assessment reports on the districts of Dili and Ermera and the Special Police Unit from the joint technical team

7. I am determined to move this resumption process forward in close cooperation with the Government of Timor-Leste, including in the context of the team that will be planning the downsizing of UNMIT during the period through 2012. Reconfiguring and reorienting the UNMIT police component towards post-resumption challenges will be one of my main priorities. This includes supporting further skills development for the PNTL in crucial areas such as the appropriate use of force, community policing and criminal investigations. PNTL accountability mechanisms must also continue to be improved to avoid impunity for acts of misconduct. Appropriate disciplinary and criminal investigations have been initiated in recent incidents of alleged abuse by the PNTL in Dili. Encouragingly, the Timorese leadership, as well as the President of Parliament, has expressed concern and specifically asked for reinforced UNMIT support to the PNTL Justice Department, which is the unit responsible for disciplinary investigations.

8. As the resumption process progresses and UNMIT police increasingly need to focus on institutional development of the PNTL, the difficulties springing from the lack of sufficient numbers of specialized police trainers and advisers are likely to become even more acute. In this connection, I appeal to police-contributing countries to consider this carefully and make every effort to provide police officers with the necessary technical skills and competencies as well as the training background required for effective skills transfer. This will be a major area of focus for UNMIT but will need to be a collective undertaking for the United Nations and contributors alike. As recommended by the Technical Assessment Mission and stressed by the Secretary-General in the report, where specialized police personnel cannot be provided by police-contributing countries or where continuity in functions is particularly important, consideration should be given to seeking additional civilian personnel with required expertise to assist.

9. Regarding the overall security sector, clear definition and delineation of roles and responsibilities of the PNTL and the Timorese armed forces (F-FDTL), and the strengthening of civilian oversight and management capacities, are particularly critical

10. Perhaps the greatest long-term challenges for Timor-Leste will be socio-economic. I am pleased to note that the Government demonstrated its renewed commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and coherent, transparent, coordinated and truly Timorese-owned planning processes. On 26 January, the National MDG Steering Committee held its first meeting, chaired by the Minister of Finance. The Prime Minister is currently leading preparation of the medium to long-term National Strategic Development Plan. I look forward to early consultation by the Government with relevant stakeholders on the proposed Plan and its finalization, as it will be critically important for there to be alignment between the Plan and national budget allocations as well as for assistance strategies of international partners to take it into account.

11. In my visits outside the capital, local community members expressed their desire that development efforts should more effectively reach rural areas. Timorese leaders themselves have expressed similar concerns, and it is essential that the Government redouble its effort to ensure that development benefits are felt equally in rural and urban areas. This will entail appropriate budgetary allocations to the social services sectors and strengthening and decentralisation of line ministries. Also, significant efforts by Government and Parliament in areas such as gender responsive budgeting will require continued and intensified commitment in order to ensure the empowerment and meaningful participation of women in all sectors of society. I also note that more than 60 percent of the population is under the age of 25 (and 48 per cent is below the age of 17). This is a potential asset for the future of the country. However, with an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 new entries in the labour market every year, and with the current unemployment rate of 18.4 per cent among youth nationwide, the lack of employment opportunities is also a serious challenge to sustaining economic growth and human development, and, I might caution, with serious security consequences if not adequately addressed.

12. Rule of law with due respect for human rights requires commitment to accountability and judicial independence. On 15 February, two additional defendants charged in relation to violence that occurred during the 2006 crisis were found guilty of violence against persons and property and illegal use of firearms, ammunition and explosives. One was sentenced to imprisonment for eight years and the other to six years and six months. This is another step forward in judicial processes towards fulfilment of the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry. In my meetings with Timorese authorities, I continue to reiterate the United Nations position that there can be no amnesty or impunity for serious crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Although the President acted within his constitutional prerogatives, I discussed with him concerns that the pardons issued on 25 December 2009 could exacerbate perceptions of impunity. I would also like to reiterate that the four F-FDTL convicted of manslaughter in the shooting deaths of eight PNTL in 2006, one of

Mr. President,

13. I would like to recall that the report of the Secretary-General and the Technical Assessment Mission highlighted the broad desire of the Timorese leaders and other national stakeholders across the board for a continued UNMIT presence, concentrating on the four mandated priority areas, through the crucial period up to 2012. Keeping in mind the priorities identified by the assessment mission for the 2010-12 period in each of UNMIT's mandated priority areas, adjustments and refinements to the United Nations approach will inevitably need to be made in order to take into account changing and evolving conditions on the ground. In the coming days and weeks, I will work closely with the Government and other relevant national stakeholders, the United Nations Country Team and international partners to develop proposals for the reconfiguration of the mission through 2012, subject, of course, to the Security Council's agreement that such a presence is necessary. This will include a gradual drawdown of UNMIT police, which, as the report notes, should be approached cautiously and be subject to an assessment in late 2010.

14. Before I conclude, let me thank the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Finn Reske-Nielsen and Takahisa Kawakami, as well as all the staff of UNMIT and the United Nations Country Team who have been so steadfast in their support of efforts to assist Timor-Leste. I also wish to express my admiration for the determination and will of the Timorese people who continue to strive for a peaceful and better future for their country. I look forward to receiving the guidance of the Security Council and hope that it will renew its commitment to the people of Timor-Leste.

Thank you.