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United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

## UNMISSET PRESS RELEASE

### ***DSRSG: ‘SUCCESS OF F-FDTL IN ERMERA SHOWS HOW F-FDTL AND PKF CAN WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT PEOPLE’***

(Dili, 1 February) – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Timor-Leste, Mr Sukehiro Hasegawa, said today that “the successful outcome of F-FDTL’s engagement in the Ermera District demonstrates the confidence and trust it has earned within a short period of time among people and how F-FDTL can work together with PKF in protecting people in remote areas against possible external threats.” Mr Hasegawa was speaking at a ceremony in Los Palos to mark the second anniversary of the establishment of the F-FDTL. The DSRSG represented UNMISSET at the ceremony presided over by RDTL President Xanana Gusmão and attended by the Speaker of the National Parliament Mr Lu O’lo Guterres, Prime-Minister Mari Alkatiri, Justice Minister Ana Pessoa, Secretary of State for Defence Rocque Rodrigues and several other ministers and dignitaries.

The DSRSG said that since independence last May, thanks to the special efforts made by President Gusmão and the government led by Prime-Minister Alkatiri, a cordial relationship between the governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia has been maintained. Overall external security and border control have remained stable until recently. But he added that “the recent militia attacks in the Ermera district caused the death of several innocent people and made us realise the urgent need to re-assess the security situation and to re-think strategically the external security measures that employ the strength of the national military forces”.

Following the attacks in Atsabe and Hatolia [sub-districts of Ermera], the RDTL government and UNMISSET agreed a temporary hand-over of defence responsibility in order to control militia activities in Ermera, in recognition of the F-FDTL's better understanding of local people, areas and situations. Mr Hasegawa added that increased joint operations can enable the RDTL government and UNMISSET to make use of the best of both forces. “The F-FDTL has certainly better access to a wider range of information pertinent to the local security situation, while PKF is better equipped and has higher mobility and communications assets”, said the DSRSG. In addition, further collaboration between the F-FDTL and PKF would promote the transfer of

knowledge and skills from PKF to the F-FDTL. One option being considered is the stationing of F-FDTL personnel at PKF's Headquarters: this would help the F-FDTL acquire headquarter organisation and control of operations skills.

The DSRSG reminded those present that Timor-Leste's progress will depend on continued stability and on the successful development and gradual deployment of the F-FDTL in all the districts. He congratulated the F-FDTL on the progress already made, and said that he looked forward to seeing further fruitful collaboration between the F-FDTL and PKF.

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