

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 04 November 2002

SEMINAR LOOKS AT ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ADVISORS

A workshop was held at the Timor Hotel today to examine the roles and functions of the 100 international "stability" advisors provided by UNMISSET and the 200-plus development advisors channelled through UNDP to the Timor-Leste Public Administration.

Jointly organised by the Government of Timor-Leste, UNDP and UNMISSET, the all-day session was designed to provide a frank exchange concerning the experiences and contributions of the advisors and to strategise regarding future arrangements for meeting technical and managerial requirements in the Public Administration post-UNMISSET

Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri opened the workshop by saying the "primary objective of the advisors has shifted to the transfer of skills". He described their role as that of "mentors". The true measure of their success, he said, will be that "you make your roles redundant by 2004", the end of the UNMISSET mandate.

Mr. Akatiri stressed that the "government, and only the government, has the ultimate responsibility". He urged his ministers and the leaders of government "to get the most from your advisors".

In addressing the workshop the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Kamallesh Sharma praised UNMISSET's civilian support programme of advisors as "one of the most crucial because it creates the foundation for a broad-based, self-sustaining and self-reliant administration of Timor Leste".

"The challenge is enormous, given local conditions, the state of skills and capacity and communications challenges", he said. Nonetheless, he called himself an optimist.

Mr. Sharma urged seminar participants to consider several points: One is that Timorese counterparts need to be in place to work with the advisors. Periodic assessments should be undertaken by the advisors and their Timorese counterparts to insure knowledge is being successfully imparted.

Mr. Sharma also suggested that thought be given to ways in which the training and experience being imparted can be converted into a permanent record by developing 'training manuals' and audio/video resources.

The SRSG suggested as well that given the "rich pool of diverse expertise" of the civilian advisors, it might be worth exploring "more extensive in-country training programmes for public servants at the Civil Service Academy."



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Mr. Sharma urged the seminar's participants to do some strategising as to the role and function of advisors after the end of the UNMISSET mission in 2004. International advisers should assist to insure that the capacity building initiated now can be maintained by Timorese nationals and their institutions with minimal external support.

A detailed report of the workshop's finding will be available in the next few days, but Sukehiro Hasegawa, the Deputy SRSG and Resident Representative of UNDP, remarked that many participants pointed to the need for better communication between the advisors and their counterparts and suggested "greater interchange must take place." He said that independence is more important than dependence but interdependence has higher value than independence.

JAPANESE GENERAL VISITS TIMOR-LESTE

The Commanding General of the Japanese Self Defense Force's Northeastern Army, Mitsuo Nonaka, began today a four-day visit in Timor-Leste.

The PKF's Japanese Engineering Group (JEG) is composed of personnel who come from the Northeastern Army.

General Nonaka will receive briefings at PKF Headquarters in Dili and visit JEG troops and civil engineering projects in Dili, Oecussi, Maliana and Suai.

In a related story, the new Lospalos Bridge in Lautém District was officially opened for traffic at a 01 November ceremony attended by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and other Timor-Leste Ministers, Sukehiro Hasegawa, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) and Maj. General Tan Huck Gim, the PKF Force Commander.

The original bridge collapsed in heavy rains during 2001. The Japanese Engineering Battalion began construction of the Bailey bridge in early October of this year and completed work on 29 October. JEP troops are calling the span the "Obrigadu Bridge".

BALIBO GRENADE INCIDENT NOT A PLANNED ATTACK

UNPOL officials announced today that the explosion at the Balibo market area which injured six West Timorese on 25 October, was not a planned bombing as initial reports indicated.

Based on its investigation, UNPOL says that a grenade had been thrown under a vehicle following a misunderstanding between illegal fuel traders.

UNPOL says there is absolutely no evidence that this grenade incident was any kind of terrorist attack.



MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

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The Balibo market area has long been known to be hazardous. According to UNPOL, several previous incidents of violence, including assaults and stone-throwings, having occurred there between traders from Timor-Leste and those from West Timor.

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