

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 18 November 2002

SPECIAL MISSION ASSESSES NEEDS OF TIMOR LESTE POLICE

A 10-day mission composed of representatives of the Timor Leste Government, UNMISSET, UNDP and the international donor community began today an assessment of the short, medium and long-term needs of the Timor-Leste Police Service.

The mission was formally launched in Dili at a ceremony held by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) Sukehiro Hasegawa, the Commissioner of the Timor-Leste Police Service (TLPS) Paulo Martins and the UN Police (UNPOL) Commissioner Peter Miller.

Prime Minister Alkatiri stressed that an efficient and professional police force “is vital to the security of the state.” He cited in particular the need for additional capacity building and training. He noted that it was a positive sign for the nation that since 27 May 2000, some 2,287 police officers had been trained and the TLPS had taken over control from UNPOL of four districts – Manatuto, Aileu, Ainaro and Manufahi.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that “the TLPS was working under tremendous resource constraints” and he asked for the continued support of the United Nations and the donor community for assistance in strengthening capacity and managerial skills and in training and logistical support.

TLPS Commissioner Paulo Martins made a special point of thanking the donor community -- including the Portuguese, United States, Japan, England, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia -- for the support that has brought the police service so far. He stressed to the assessment group the critical need for logistical and communication support to improve the overall effectiveness of the TLPS.



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UNPOL Commissioner Peter Miller praised the TLPS saying, "It's not even three years old yet. It's young, and it makes mistakes, but it's a good force." He cited the fact that the force was composed of 20 per cent women, a high percentage for any country.

Commissioner Miller said that the needs assessment mission will look at the lessons to be learned from the Aileu, Ainaro Manatuto and Manufahi experiences where TLPS has now assumed control in order to fine-tune the turn-over process in the nine remaining districts. He said he was hopeful that the needs assessment mission would develop clear short, medium and long term plan for training, capacity building and the improvement of logistical and communication support.

Over the next ten days, the assessment mission will meet make a number of visits to the districts and meet with Ambassadors, Mission Representatives and international institutions and make a number of trips to the districts to observe police operations and training. The assessment team will make a presentation of its conclusions at a meeting with Government officials, UNMISSET, UNDP and the donor community on 29 November.

