

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

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UN OFFICIALS PRAISE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

A wide range of Government and UN officials, civil society groups and journalists gathered in Dili today to participate in a briefing on "The Protection of East Timorese Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child."

Mehr Kahn, the Director of UNICEF's Southeast Asia regional office, opened the briefing by congratulating East Timor's government for moving quickly since the country's independence to bring about improvements and take many new and important initiatives.

Khan also said she was "very encouraged to learn that when East Timor takes its place in the United Nations General Assembly in September, the Government hopes to be able to accede to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as other human rights instruments."

She also said she was pleased to see that East Timor's recently adopted Constitution explicitly recognizes many of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri attended the briefing and said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is currently being considered by Parliament, which he expects will soon endorse East Timor's adoption of the measure.

The Prime Minister also said he hoped that the current generation of East Timor's children that have been raised in a climate of violence will now be able to enjoy the country's newly achieved stability.

FALINTIL-FDTL RECRUITS TO COMPLETE BASIC TRAINING COURSE

Two hundred and sixty young men and women have completed their basic training and will tomorrow graduate from the East Timor Defence Force's (FALINTIL-FDTL) training center near Dili.

Tomorrow's graduates – of whom 30 are female – were selected in January from a pool of 428 candidates and have since been undergoing basic training at a purpose-built training base at Metinaro, near Dili.

East Timor Defense Force Commander Brigadier-General Taur Matan Ruak, Deputy SRSR Sukehiro Hasegawa and PKF Commander Lt.-Gen. Winai Phattiyakul are among those scheduled to attend the event, along with members of the government, Members of Parliament, and the families of many of the new defence force members.

