

## **By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office**

**Dili, 22 July 2002**

### **SRSG CONTINUES DISTRICT VISITS, PREPARES FOR OVERSEAS TRIP**

SRSG Kamallesh Sharma on Saturday returned from a visit to the districts of Manatuto, Baucau and Lautem, during which he held meetings with a wide range of senior district officials and representatives of civil society.

The journey by road was a continuation of a series of familiarization trips by the SRSG throughout East Timor and served as an opportunity for him to explain UNMISSET's mandate and discuss means of fostering economic and social development.

The SRSG is tomorrow morning scheduled to return to Lautem district to attend a ceremony at which the East Timor Defence Force (FALINTIL-FDTL) takes over defence responsibility for the district from the UN's peacekeeping force.

East Timor President Xanana Gusmao, FALINTIL-FDTL Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and UNMISSET peacekeeping force Commander Lieutenant General Winai Phattiyakul are among those also scheduled to attend the handover ceremony.

Upon his return from Lautem, the SRSG will tomorrow afternoon leave for Jakarta for a five-day visit during which he is scheduled to meet with diplomats and senior Indonesian government officials.

The aim of the SRSG's first overseas visit is familiarize himself with common issues relating to East Timor and Indonesia, and to continue building cooperation between UNMISSET and the Indonesian government.

### **FDTL GRADUATES PRAISED AT METINARO SWEARING IN EVENT**

Two hundred and sixty young men and women on Saturday were officially sworn in as members of the FALINTIL-FDTL defence force after completing a four-month basic training course at the Metinaro base near Dili.

Deputy SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa attended the event and noted that the young graduates – all aged between 18 and 20 – represent the future of East Timor's military.

“What is special for this course is that whereas the first two courses consisted of ex-FALINTIL members, the recruits we see in front of us today are all younger recruits who thereby represent the future of the East Timor Defence Force,” the Deputy SRSG said.

The graduates, including 30 women, were trained by members of the Australian, Republic of Korea, Portuguese and New Zealand contingents and are the first component of the second FALINTIL-FDTL battalion. The FALINTIL-FDTL will eventually consist of a light infantry force of 1,500 regulars who are being recruited and trained over a three-year period.

