

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

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Dili 23, August 2002

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VISITS EAST TIMOR

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson arrived in Dili today for a 3-days official visit.

The High Commissioner began her official visit with a meeting with families of the Disappeared following by a meeting with the Advisor for the Prime Minister on Human Rights, Ms. Isabel Ferreira.

The High Commissioner also held different meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Dr. José Ramos-Horta, President Xanana Gusmão and the President of the National Parliament, Mr. Francisco Guterres "Lu'olo".

Ms Robinson delivered a speech to the parliament where she congratulated the members for their efforts to make laws on behalf of the people and said that she understand that the Government is considering acceding to the core international human rights treaties and may present the instruments of accession on 27th of September when the country becomes a member of the United Nations. Ms. Robinson stressed that " this momentous initiative will undoubtedly reinforce the rebuilding process of East Timor and facilitate the incorporation of human rights into the foundation of the country's development."

Before ending her speech the High Commissioner for Human Rights stated, " I am pleased to inform you that preparations are well advanced for the launching of a new two-year programme of human rights technical coordination and cooperation with the Government."

Members of Parliament from each political party were given the time to put their views to the UN High Commissioner. The majority of the members stressed concern with Jakarta ad'hoc tribunal process and appealed to Mary Robinson to continue to be active on human rights after her mandate.

In response Mary Robinson said, " East Timor was always close to my heart and will always be. I will convey to my successor, Sergio Vieira de Mello whom you all know very well about your concerns."

JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST TIMOR

On the occasion of the visit to the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights a joint communiqué on human rights was signed by the Senior Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Dr. José Ramos-Horta, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson and the Chairperson of the NGO Forum, Mr. Cecilio Caminha Freitas.



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SRSR CONGRATULES THE GOVERNMENT OF EAST TIMOR

Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Kamallesh Sharma today warmly congratulated the Government of the Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste on its continued commitment to promote respect for human rights. He was speaking after the signature of the Joint Communiqué on Human Rights in Timor-Leste. The Communiqué was signed by H.E. Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation, Ms. Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights and the representative of the NGO Forum of Timor-Leste.

SRSR particularly praised the commitment of the Government of Timor-Leste to accede to core international human rights and to honour its related treaty-based obligations. He noted the solemn commitment made by the political parties of Timor-Leste and civil society organisations, and by the signatories to the communiqué, to participate in the development of a national action plan for human rights to promote the concrete implementation of human rights in Timor-Leste. SRSR also welcomed the commitments of the Government of Timor-Leste on the establishment of a national human rights institution and to building institutions of judiciary that would uphold the principles of rule of law, access to justice and a strong and independent judicial system.

SRSR was happy to note that the community of non-governmental human rights organisations proposed to continue to work in a coordinated and cooperative manner with the Government, which, in turn, would facilitate the strengthening of the non-Governmental sector.

SRSR Mr. Kamallesh Sharma reaffirmed UNMISSET's preparedness to facilitate the implementation of these objectives within the framework of its mandate.

