

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 26 July 2002

SRSR MEETS INDONESIAN PRESIDENT MEGAWATI SUKARNOPUTRI

SRSR Kamallesh Sharma today called on Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri in Jakarta for a meeting that focused on a wide-range of issues relating to East Timor, UNMISSET and Indonesia.

At the onset of the meeting the SRSR thanked the President for receiving him despite other preoccupations, especially the ongoing meeting of the Indonesian Parliament (MPR) and expressed his gratitude for the other meetings that had been arranged for him, especially with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the meeting to be held later today with the Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs.

The SRSR informed the President that the objective of his visit was to understand and appreciate the perspectives of the Government of Indonesia on the large number of transitional issues that will be taken up – primarily through the Joint Commission, but also through bodies such as the Joint Border Committee – in order to further develop and intensify the relationship between East Timor and Indonesia.

The SRSR also indicated that his visit to Indonesia was his first visit abroad as SRSR of UNMISSET and had provided an opportunity to take a *tour de horizon* of residual and transitional issues and to introduce himself to the leadership of Indonesia.

The Indonesian President welcomed the SRSR to Indonesia, congratulated him on his appointment to his present position, and requested him to convey her regards to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. She said she regretted not having had the opportunity to discuss several issues with the UN Secretary-General when he transited through Indonesia en route to East Timor in May this year due to the short time Annan was in Indonesia.

During the call on the President, the SRSR had a general discussion on the role and function of the Joint Commission; the importance of early delineation and eventual demarcation of the border between East Timor and Indonesia; the issue of refugees and their repatriation or resettlement; and the importance of effectively dealing with the Serious Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity committed in East Timor.

As far as the issue of settlement of border issues was concerned, President Megawati agreed with the SRSR that these issues should be settled as early as possible. Discussions were also held on a border arrangement that would have to be put in place so as to meet the requirements of a soft border involving the movement of people and goods, regulated markets, customs, immigration, visa or travel arrangements, and also to work jointly to curb all types of criminal activity along the border areas.

The Indonesian President indicated that Indonesia is awaiting response from East Timor on the composition of the Joint Commission and that an early meeting of the Joint Commission is being envisaged. She also indicated a wish to see the refugee issue settled as early as possible. The SRSR expressed appreciation of the work undertaken by Indonesia to accelerate refugee repatriation.



MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

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Minister of Foreign Affairs Hassan Wirajuda also attended the meeting.

Later in the day the SRSG met with the Ambassadors of Canada, China, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United States and with representatives of the embassies of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom at a lunch hosted in his honor by the Ambassador of Portugal.

Discussions at the lunch focused on the mandate of UNMISSET, the operation of the Special Fund, refugee repatriation, border-related issues and issues related to the Serious Crimes perpetrated in East Timor.

The SRSG is expected to meet with Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs Bambang Yudhoyono this evening before leaving Jakarta tomorrow and returning to Dili on Sunday.

UNMISSET POLICE, GENDER GROUP IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCHEME

UNMISSET's Police and Gender Awareness components have joined forces to combat the high prevalence of domestic violence in East Timor with a pilot project in Ainaro district aimed at involving village chiefs, or *Chefes de Suco*, in eradicating the problem.

Following an invitation from Ainaro's District Administrator to address the issue, UN Police Commissioner Peter Miller and UNMISSET's Gender Focal Point Fernanda Tavares traveled to the district on Wednesday for a meeting with 21 *Chefes de Suco* and 50 sub-district coordinators and representatives of political parties, church and women's groups. The East Timorese government's Advisor for the Promotion of Equality, Maria Domingas Fernandes, also attended and addressed the meeting.

The main discussion focused on the causes and consequences of domestic violence and how the traditional-community based mechanisms used to mediate and settle domestic disputes are ineffective.

Participants agreed that the main strategy of the pilot project would be to encourage *Chefes de Suco* to use their influence in the community to raise awareness on domestic violence as a crime.

A group of community based representatives from Ainaro is currently attending a UNFPA-funded training of trainers workshop in Dili that will enable them to work closely with the East Timor Police Service and the *Chefes de Suco* to tackle the problem.

Domestic Violence is endemic in East Timor. In May it was the second most frequently reported crime after general violence and assault. Since the beginning of this year more than 280 cases of domestic violence have been reported in Dili alone.

