

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 30 November 2002

POLICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION ISSUES REPORT

The preliminary findings of an 11-day Timor-Leste Police Needs Assessment Mission were released today at a meeting in UN House in Dili with Timor-Leste Acting-Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Dr. Ana Pessoa, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Kamallesh Sharma, other Timor Leste Public Administration, UNMISSET and UN Agency representatives and members of diplomatic missions and the donor community.

The Needs Assessment Mission, which examined Timor-Leste's Police Service (TPLS), operations, training, resource and general capabilities from 18 to 29 November, was a joint effort of the Timor-Leste Government, UNMISSET, UNDP, and members of the donor community.

Amongst the Needs Assessment Mission's preliminary conclusions were that a long-term operation plan and plan for capacity development needed to be developed under the leadership of the Timor-Leste government for the TLPS. It also called for a fair and transparent recruitment and promotion process and for more uniform and standardized procedures and reporting. It called for more extensive training, including additional human rights training, for recruits, and suggested that officers should be continually informed of new legislation and regulations. The mission urged the creation of a police manual to delineate functions and procedures, and the development of a Code of Conduct. The report also cited the need for stronger community-police relations and closer coordination between TLPS and the Judiciary and Prosecutors. (A full summary of the missions preliminary conclusions is at the end of this note). The Missions final report is expected to be completed in the next few weeks.



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The Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Justice Ana Pessoa told the gathering that “the establishment and development of the Police Force is a priority of the government. It was this priority that triggered this assessment mission.” She said “the conclusions of the mission are something we expected . . . but it is good to have a group of professionals confirm it.”

Minister Pessoa expressed some disappointment that “police issues unlike other areas do not get immediate support. Some donors are reluctant to provide support to police and defense.” She noted, in this light, that it was important to see these areas in the context of the overall government planning and the implementation of the rule of law. Mrs. Pessoa also urged the assessment mission to take into consideration in its final report on policing, the valuable role of the immigration and forestry police, as well as those of police guarding the prisons.

Mr. Sharma praised the assessment team for its contribution saying, “The development of the TLPS as a capable, independent and sustainable institution delivering a service which meets the needs of the community is keenly felt by the people of this country. It is also a major objective of the international community.”

He commended the mission for citing the need for additional training, saying that “further integration of human rights into all training also needs particular attention.” He also noted the mission’s concern regarding some TLPS equipment that was inadequate and incompatible, saying, “a poorly equipped and under-resourced police force cannot enjoy the confidence of the community it serves.” Mr. Sharma also noted that “Provision of equipment to ensure effective communication between headquarters and districts, and within districts, is a priority. Similarly, the need for smart uniforms and for appropriate modes of transport has to be urgently addressed.”

The SRSO praised the effort and the preliminary conclusions of the mission and said he awaited the final report with its substantive recommendations for action.

Addressing the agencies, mission representatives and donor community, he said “I hope that all partners will take the mission assessment as a guidance for building sustainable police services in Timor-Leste and I would like to seek your strong support to this endeavor.”



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UNPOL Commissioner Peter Miller echoed this hope saying he believed “this mission report will set benchmarks for TLPS even after UNPOL leaves. It will also put new emphasis on improving the transition process,” in which policing authority is passed from UNPOL to TLPS.

TLPS Commissioner Paulo Martins in addressing the session noted the difficult and ever-continuing process of creating a police force. He proposed the creation of one or more working groups, coordinated by Timorese authorities and with TLPS and international advisors, to address the urgent needs of the force and develop a five-year plan and to coordinate international aid that is provided.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) and UN Resident Coordinator, Sukehiro Hasegawa, in summing up today's discussion regarding the findings of the Needs Assessment Mission, made note of a consensus. A long-term plan needs to address sustainability,” he said. “Sustainability of the TLPS will not be secure without sufficient resources available, particularly after the UN withdrawal.”

He also cited the importance of creating a development plan for the long-term which is credible and to which people are committed. He made special note of the support donors and other partners at the meeting showed to the report's findings particularly to “a holistic plan and with the need to coordinate the long-term TLPS plan with the National Development Plan and through the Ministry of Planning and Finance.”

A summary of the report findings:

In its preliminary report the team took note of the difficult environment in which the TLPS operates with its lack of infrastructure including electrical problems and poor roads which hamper delivery of services; its having to operate in an economy that is



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weak and still under redevelopment. It also acknowledged that the TLPS is made up of a diversity of social groups with infrastructural and material constraints, ad hoc management policies and which must function under a hybrid legal arrangement of Indonesian laws and UNTAET-created regulations.

The mission reported that the handover process of policing authority from UNPOL to TLPS was “broadly progressing on schedule,” with TLPS now assuming authority for all routine policing matters in four districts. It noted that “continued positive progress will require effective coordination both within, and between, the UN Mission and Government to ensure minimum standards of service delivery.

The mission cited a number of lessons learned in these first handover processes:

It reported that “Difficult choices must be made regarding appropriate and affordable equipment that can ensure that essential police services continue in keeping with fundamental rights. It also noted that language limitations and lack of cultural understanding by some UNPOL staff has limited the ultimate effectiveness of some technical assistance. In this light the preliminary report recommended the recruitment of UNPOL Technical Advisers with experience in and understanding of the social and political context in which they are working. The team also called for the need for more standardized national records management and field training programmes.

The mission drew special attention to the need to strengthen TLPS-community relations and for the greater understanding of the interaction of local custom and routine policing operations in order to ensure that the fundamental rights of both communities and individuals are protected.

Regarding the timeline for full hand over of police functions from UNPOL to TLPS, the mission suggested that it merited further consideration on account of current TLPS skill levels and political considerations.

The mission, in its discussions with stakeholders, identified a number of needs and strategies to development the TLPS as a professional and independent agency. The chief amongst them is the need for the formulation of a comprehensive vision and policy framework which can only be developed by the Government of Timor-Leste itself.



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On the capacity of TLPS personnel, the mission suggested that the twelve weeks of basic training that all recruits receive, in addition to field training is widely acknowledged as insufficient and that further training is required to strengthen basic policing skills.

The mission also concluded that existing curricula could be improved and that they found some evidence that some TLPS members have limited understanding of existing procedures. The mission said that it is critical that the Police Academy has at its disposal standardised procedures and that they are fully assimilated during basic training.

Mission members were reminded by stakeholders that TLPS officers are very much the public face of a new democratic institution and they play a fundamental role in the development of democratic governance and respect for human rights. In this light it was stressed that human rights principles be effectively incorporated in all TLPS training. It was also suggested that a TLPS Code of Conduct, and a standardized promotions and reward policy, be established to contribute to more effective personnel development.

In terms of material and infrastructure constraints, the mission reported that such material is currently being provided for the most part by UNPOL and it observed limitations in supply, as well as incompatibility in equipment. The mission cited, for example, a lack of helmets for motorbike patrols. It also cited one case in which four of the five TLPS vehicles for a district were out of service for mechanical problems.

The mission also cited its concern that after the handover in some districts, the withdrawal of UNPOL equipment left TLPS without the minimum requirements. It urged a comprehensive review of TLPS material needs in headquarters and in the districts with the goal of strengthening sustainability and contributing to effective resource planning.

The mission also expressed its concern about the lack of a standardized information management system that can guarantee the rights enshrined in the Constitution of



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Timor-Leste. Currently, great variation in quality and consistency exists, according to the preliminary needs assessment report. Budget planning according to the mission is another area in which more effective coordination between relevant ministries can enhance institutional integrity and transparency.

The mission also noted the importance of greater inter-institutional relations for the TLPS, particularly with the Judiciary and Prosecutions and suggests further dialogue to create consistent and uniform case management procedures and expectations. The mission also noted that TLPS officers, particularly during this period of rapidly evolving and complex legislative development, need concise and up-to-date information on criminal law and procedures.

The mission identified the standardisation of procedures and forms as a high priority so as to improve information gathering and analytical capability and strengthen the TLPS as an institution. It also urged the development of a police manual that would explain functions and procedures and strengthen respect for the chain of command.

The mission suggested that the establishment of an external oversight body, while also formalising internal oversight and review procedures, would enhance the accountability and institutional integrity of the TLPS. It also stressed that the TLPS is accountable to the community and that the relationship between police and the community could be strengthened through establishment of formal mechanisms for police-community consultation and public outreach.

The mission stressed the importance of the development of a comprehensive plan for capacity building within the TLPS and that it should be informed by the mission's findings. It also suggested a TLPS Working Group should be established to work on long term policy development and planning needs with consideration be given to including representatives from the judicial system as well as relevant Timor-Leste Government Departments such as the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Such a Working Group could provide a means of strengthening the linkages of the TLPS with its partners in the criminal justice system.

End



MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

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