

**Festive Season 2002 Message**  
**from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)**  
**Mr. Kamalesh Sharma**

The festive season is a time for joy and celebration and spiritual renewal. It is also an occasion to reflect on the gains of the past year and look to the future. This year has been a particularly significant one for the people of Timor-Leste: for the first time they will be celebrating this season as a free and truly independent nation. I congratulate them all and assure them of the partnership and solidarity of UNMISET and the UN funds, programmes and agencies in their national endeavour to create a democratic, stable, progressive and prosperous nation.

Independence is a first step on the long and arduous journey towards peace and prosperity. Trials and tribulations lie ahead and challenges must be overcome. I am convinced that under the wise guidance of the leadership of Timor-Leste and with the continued support of the international community, the people of Timor-Leste will build for themselves the compassionate society, based on the rule of law and on the promotion and protection of human rights, devoted to social progress and prosperity, that they seek. I am confident of their success in their endeavours.

UNMISET has been in existence for seven months now and many positive achievements have been made during this period. We should now attempt to consolidate and build upon those positive steps as we move into the next phase of the mission. I thank the entire team of UNMISET for the sterling support they have given to the mission and the valiant and courageous people of Timor-Leste for their cooperation and assistance to all of us.

I am particularly grateful for the cooperation of the Government of Timor-Leste and the access which they have given to me at all times and particularly to the Prime Minister whom I meet on a regular basis with his agreement and which has made all the difference to the quality of cooperation between the Government of Timor-Leste and the United Nations.

I extend to you all my warmest wishes for the festive season, and a fulfilling and prosperous 2003.

May the Lord be with you.

**Kamalesh Sharma**  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)  
Dili, Timor Leste