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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Burian	(Slovakia)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Indonesia	Mr. Jenie
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2007/50)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of February, I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute on behalf of the Council to Mr. Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of January 2007. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing my deep appreciation to Ambassador Churkin for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2007/50)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore and Timor-Leste, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security

Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Khare to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/50, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Khare: This is my first appearance before the Security Council as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, and it is a great pleasure for me to introduce today the first report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), contained in document S/2007/50 and covering the period until 26 January 2007.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the presence amongst us of Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. I would like to thank the leadership of Timor-Leste for the warmth, graciousness and cooperation that I have received from all of them. The Government, organs of sovereignty, other relevant institutions of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and UNMIT are working well together to fulfil the mandate given by the Council in its resolution 1704 (2006). The Committee on High-level Coordination, foreseen in operative paragraph 8 of the resolution, held its first two fortnightly meetings in January. In addition, Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta and I have established a regular pattern of weekly meetings which are, of course, supplemented by additional meetings during the course of the week, depending upon situational requirements. Regular dialogue is also being

maintained with President Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, President of the National Parliament Francisco “Lu-Olo” Guterres, leaders of political parties and civil society organizations, as well as diplomatic missions represented in Timor-Leste.

These are important times for the young nation of Timor-Leste as it prepares for its first national elections since the restoration of its independence. The first round of presidential elections is scheduled to be held on 9 April, and the date for the parliamentary election will be announced thereafter. The authorities of Timor-Leste and its people are working to ensure elections that are credible, free and fair, organized in a transparent manner under the supervision of the independent National Commission on Elections, without violence or even intimidation, in conformity with international standards and with results that are broadly acceptable to all, so that the elections have a restorative and unifying impact on the body politic and on society. Codes of conduct for the political parties and their agents, as well as for the media and electoral observers, are being considered. A political declaration or pact concluded by all political parties is also being actively debated.

These will be the first national elections to be organized by the authorities of Timor-Leste, who, with the assistance of the international community, are grappling with several challenges that lie ahead. The challenges include the delayed onset of the rainy season, transportation difficulties associated with the difficult terrain and the state of the infrastructure, the need for better dissemination of information regarding the elections, as well as voter and civic education, in order to ensure the full involvement of the general public in the electoral process.

Security is clearly seen by all stakeholders as a critical element for the success of the electoral processes. The situation is demonstrating some signs of improvement, but remains fragile. The efforts of leaders of Timor-Leste to search for solutions to contain the criminal elements in the martial arts groups deserve praise. The progress in the deployment of UNMIT police into communities throughout all districts of the country has also proved useful in reducing response time and enhancing our ability to contain such incidents. However, although there are longer periods of calm and fewer outbreaks of violence, the situation is still volatile and spikes in violence still occur — most recently two weeks ago,

when four murders were recorded in Dili within a span of only two days.

UNMIT police and officers of the Timorese National Police (PNTL) deployed with them are working with dedication to maintain law and order. As an example of their good work, a large-scale operation was carried out on 31 January in two neighbourhoods of Dili, during which 48 people were arrested and a large number of lethal traditional weapons, as well as a few home-made firearms and improvised explosive devices, were seized. UNMIT police and the PNTL will continue to stand firm against those who engage in violence.

The screening of PNTL officers is progressing steadily. To date, 409 of the 1,098 registered PNTL officers in Dili have successfully undergone the screening process and refresher or reintegration courses, and are now working with UNMIT police. Another 64 are currently under training and 131 are waiting to participate in the provisional certification course. Two hundred and twenty-six PNTL officers are undergoing the screening process, while 315 have been identified as requiring further investigation. Following a request from the Government of Timor-Leste, priority is being accorded to the screening and retraining of PNTL members of the Rapid Intervention Unit. A graduation ceremony for the first 38 retrained officers of that Unit was held on 29 January.

However, it is clear that the process of screening, evaluation and retraining needs to be considerably expedited without affecting its integrity, particularly as quite a few PNTL officers in Dili have been found to merit further investigation. UNMIT will of course ensure that, as the Security Council has endorsed, PNTL officers are fully involved in the security-related preparations for the forthcoming elections.

Nevertheless, I believe that the deployment of an additional formed police unit, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2007/50), is essential for the pre- and immediate post-electoral period. That unit would be based in Dili but would also cover also the adjacent districts of Ermera, Aileu, Ainaro, Liquica and Manufahi. The additional unit would strengthen UNMIT’s capacity to address security challenges, and thereby contribute to the holding of peaceful elections.

The conclusion of the trilateral memorandum of understanding between the Government of the

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the Government of Australia — as the lead nation of the international security forces — and the United Nations on 26 January was an important development that will enhance coordination of all security-related activities in Timor-Leste. Two operational-level meetings of the secretariat of the Trilateral Coordination Forum have already been held. Simultaneously, the conclusion of the technical arrangement between Australia and the United Nations has provided a formal basis for the provision of two dedicated armed companies, with necessary support elements, to ensure adequate protection for United Nations premises and property as well as a rapid response capacity for the UNMIT police. I must place on record my sincere appreciation to the international security forces, which have always responded positively to requests from UNMIT, even prior to the conclusion of the technical arrangement.

I am happy that the Government has taken steps to initiate the comprehensive review of the security sector. Terms of reference for the review have been drafted by the working-level committee co-chaired by Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Eric Tan Huck Gim, which has senior representation from the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, as well as from the PNTL and the Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL). UNMIT will continue to play a strong supporting role in this review, which provides a vital opportunity to address the shortcomings observed during the recent crisis in both entities.

I strongly believe that justice is a precondition for national reconciliation. I am delighted that this view is shared by all leaders of Timor-Leste, who have repeatedly reassured me that impunity will not be permitted to prevail in Timor-Leste. I am encouraged that all organs of sovereignty have taken some positive steps towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry. The ad hoc parliamentary commission established to study the report accepted all its recommendations and recommended additional measures of accountability, while also calling for further investigations and judicial proceedings in some cases. The recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, as well as the additional recommendations made by the ad hoc parliamentary commission, were approved by the national parliament in a resolution adopted on

9 January. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers approved a resolution regarding measures for assistance and reparations to the victims. Those are important initial steps, but efforts must continue in order to ensure that all the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry are implemented and any perceptions of impunity strongly refuted.

A number of outstanding issues require further attention. Fugitive Major Reinado, who escaped from Becora Prison together with 56 other detainees on 30 August, remains at large and is a serious threat to security. Efforts are being made to ensure that Reinado submits to the judicial process in a peaceful manner.

It is absolutely essential that international assistance is provided to the justice sector to meet the growing demands placed on it to follow up on the cases related to the events of April and May 2006. Furthermore, the development of capacities in, and the institutional strengthening of, the justice sector also require international support. The justice sector support programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the proposed comprehensive review of justice sector needs, to be led by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and supported by UNMIT, deserve special attention.

In consultation with UNMIT, the United Nations family, donors and the diplomatic community, the Government has made significant progress in the establishment of an international compact. The first meeting of the “compact” partners took place on 6 February. At that meeting, the Government announced that it had identified public safety and security; elections; public sector strengthening, including, inter alia, stronger budget execution; youth employment and skills development; strengthening of the justice system; and social reinsertion as the key areas to be addressed over the next two years. The first high-level meeting of the compact is tentatively scheduled for next April.

Let me now turn briefly to socio-economic issues. The Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta, is working hard to restore, and indeed enhance, efforts to promote development of the country. Already, there are visible signs of progress in Dili, such as road repairs, improved street lighting, installation of traffic lights and beautification of parks. Significant efforts are also under way to fast-track

employment initiatives. The Minister of Labour and Community Reinsertion is preparing a national employment plan and a youth employment plan to address the challenge of unemployment.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, I must commend the Government of Timor-Leste for the tremendous efforts it has made in strengthening coordination, adopting a number of policies and initiating concerted action towards enabling dialogue and national reconciliation between fractured communities, thus facilitating the return and relocation of internally displaced populations. I should also like to commend the humanitarian agencies that continue to work tirelessly to help resolve the crisis of internally displaced persons.

However, internal displacement, food insecurity and disruption of basic social services are likely to persist beyond the elections. Significant improvements in the current situation will depend not only on the progress made in increasing the sense of security and safety of the population as well as the level of confidence in the judicial system, but also on the ability to stabilize the socio-economic situation.

In order to address the basic needs of internally displaced populations and other vulnerable groups, and to support their return, relocation and social reintegration, as well as to address the issues of emergency preparedness and transition to rehabilitation, an inter-agency Consolidated Appeal for Timor-Leste in the amount of \$16.6 million was prepared and launched in January 2007 in Dili by Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta. Its successful implementation will depend on timely and generous contributions by the international community.

Timor-Leste continues to strengthen its cooperation with other countries and regional organizations. On 13 January, the Prime Minister signed the Treaty on Amity and Cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is a first step towards future membership of that organization. A conference on regional economic cooperation is being organized by the Government in Dili on 19 to 21 February to further develop measures in that direction.

The emergence of the crisis in Timor-Leste in April and May 2006 is a reminder of the need for the international community's long-term commitment to the new nation. Development and strengthening of

democratic institutions is a long-drawn process and requires continued support. The people of Timor-Leste, who are desirous of peace and stability in a climate of democratic, responsive and accountable governance, need the support of the international community in the months to come. The Secretary-General therefore recommends that the mandate of UNMIT be extended by an additional 12 months.

Before I conclude, permit me to thank the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Eric Tan Huck Gim and Finn Reske-Nielsen, and all the members of UNMIT, whose assistance has been invaluable to our efforts to achieve the tasks mandated by the Council. Their dedication and commitment, particularly under challenging circumstances, is a matter of great pride and satisfaction.

I greatly value this opportunity to address the Security Council on the report of the Secretary-General and look forward to receiving the Council's guidance.

The President: I thank Mr. Khare for his briefing. I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to thank you for giving me an opportunity to address the Council today. I would like to commend the Secretary-General for the report before the Council (S/2007/50), and for the statement just delivered by his Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare. I generally concur with its observations and recommendations. On behalf of the Timorese people, I thank the Secretary-General for having appointed such distinguished diplomats as Mr. Atul Khare and his team. I thank them for their enormous efforts and good work in my country.

Before I continue, I have to apologize; I may have to leave before the end of this meeting for a meeting with the Secretary-General. I apologize if I have to step out before the meeting concludes, but members of my staff will stay behind.

I would like first to address the question of the security sector. In May 2006, when Portuguese, Australian, New Zealand and Malaysian forces readily came to our assistance, there was a different situation: they saw a different Dili compared to the relative state of calm and order that we have returned to today. Then,

in May 2006, the Timorese national police, our police service, had disintegrated in the capital, and our defence forces were besieged.

Since then, the security arrangements established on the ground have been working. They provide an indispensable mechanism for coordination and cooperation in the security sector and thereby make an essential contribution to preserving the integrity, national reconciliation and development of the country.

In the police sector, the arrangement between the United Nations and my Government on the restoration and maintenance of public security in Timor-Leste is addressing both policy and operational issues of police reform. Because the Special Representative has touched upon details of the training and reintegration of our police force, and for the sake of saving time for the Security Council, I will skip some of my prepared remarks in that regard.

Under the United Nations Police Commissioner, Rodolfo Tor, the policing operations are starting to have an impact on returning law and order to the streets of Dili. I thank Mr. Atul Khare for his leadership and Police Commissioner Rodolfo Tor for his efforts. I also wish to express our sincere appreciation for the previous acting United Nations Police Commissioner, Mr. Antero Lopes, for his leadership in undertaking a planning and operational assignment and bringing it to a successful conclusion despite scant resources.

In view of the still-fragile and precarious conditions in my country, the President of the Republic, the President of the National Parliament and I believe it prudent to request the Council to consider the deployment of an additional formed police unit to be provided by Portugal. The Portuguese authorities stand ready to provide such a force in the lead-up to elections. As the past six months have shown, the Portuguese National Republican Guard (GNR) is a very effective force that served very well in Timor-Leste in 2001 to 2003 and has done so again more recently. It is for that reason that we have specifically requested that the GNR send us an additional unit to our country. We know that the Portuguese side is ready to deploy such a force, if requested by the United Nations.

External support cannot be the solution in the long run. Therefore, my Government, supported by the United Nations, has made it an urgent priority to

review and reform the entire security sector: the police and armed forces, including their management and overall governance structure.

“Forca 2020” is a comprehensive study, just issued by the Ministry of Defence, that defines the objectives of the armed forces for the next 15 years and provides an assessment of what is needed to face the challenges ahead. That includes the creation of a military academy to improve training and doctrine, the deployment of military personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions and the use of engineering units for civil protection tasks in the event of natural disaster.

To that end, new legislation has been adopted promulgating the regime for military promotions, the code of military discipline, the organic law of the Ministry of Defence, amendments to the organic law of the defence forces and a draft law on conscription into military service that has just been adopted by the parliament.

With regard to reconciliation, allow me to say a few words on the status of our armed forces, the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL). As members know, I am Minister of Defence, which is a role that I had not envisaged. When I accepted the responsibility of that role in the midst of the crisis, I stated to the parliament and to our people that I viewed it more as that of a chaplain and moderator, building bridges among the forces and with the communities. Both President Xanana Gusmão and I have put a lot of effort into healing the wounds between the police force and the F-FDTL. A number of joint initiatives are under way to facilitate that.

I can say proudly that our armed forces have demonstrated remarkable discipline since the tragic events of 25 May 2006. When they were ordered back to their barracks — having been called in at the end of the end of April to carry out law-and-order duties, which was not their responsibility — they complied. My recent decision to deploy them to guard the Government palace has not been challenged by the public.

Our defence force was the subject of malicious rumours that proved to be unfounded. In its report, the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry found no basis for the allegation that the defence force had been involved in massacres. The pride of the force was wounded, but the combined effect of being cleared of

the rumours of mass killings and resuming some regular activities is assisting them in healing that wounded pride.

Regarding the issue of the so-called petitioners, we have made some progress. On 27 April 2006, at the beginning of the crisis, the then-Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri, alongside President Xanana Gusmão, announced the establishment of a Commission of Notables to look into the allegations contained in the petition signed by 594 former members of the defence force. The report of the Commission is ready and will be released very soon, in the next few days.

With regard to the issue of national reconciliation more generally, I wish to place on record our appreciation to all our political, community and church leaders for their efforts. I thank the Government of Norway for engaging Gunnar Stålsett, retired Lutheran Bishop of Oslo and a former member of the Nobel Committee, as its special envoy to assist us in the dialogue process. I wish also to thank the European Commission, through the Club of Madrid, which has also assisted us in the dialogue process. In particular, I would like to highlight the event of 10 December 2006, led by President Xanana Gusmão, which brought the national leadership together in a traditional peace ceremony during which Timorese leaders publicly acknowledged collective responsibility for the crisis.

President Gusmão has also set up a commission involving our youth, who are among the most disadvantaged and disaffected groups in our society. They have not yet earned the dividend of our hard-won freedom, which we and they so eagerly expected and fought for. We must pay attention to them. They need to build a stronger sense of identity through stronger participation in our nation-building and community relations efforts.

The combined efforts of President Xanana Gusmão's national reconciliation programme, the Government's "Simu Malu" initiative, my personal engagement and United Nations police security measures are starting to bring under control criminal gangs and martial arts groups, recruited primarily from among the jobless youth.

The Government's "Simu Malu" policy initiative was born of the need to address the problem of the 150,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) at that time. "Simu Malu" — which, in our native Tetum language, means "to receive each other" — means that

IDPs are being received back into their communities, in line with the internationally accepted principle of voluntary return in safety and dignity. The programme has been successful to an extent. Still, 25,000 to 29,000 IDPs continue to live in camps in and around Dili.

Efforts are being made to access the real damage that we suffered during the crisis, through the development of an emergency reconstruction plan that includes a survey in the field that will enable us to plan for the relocation of families. At the same time, the Government has made land available for the building of new housing, which, although it will not cover all needs, will be a first step in providing support to displaced families, especially those at greater risk.

With the help of development partners, temporary houses have been built in several areas of Dili to provide shelter for IDPs, who are at risk owing to the rainy season. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those agencies and the donor community for their immense efforts and for responding generously to the United Nations appeals, as well as for their bilateral and local contributions.

The violence of last year led to the destruction of an estimated 2,500 houses, most of which were burned. The often violent manner in which many people were forced to flee their homes — some under severe and imminent threat to their lives, others intimidated by the throwing of stones onto the roofs of their houses — has brought to light a serious strain on our young country: the violence of today is part of a collective trauma caused by the violence of our past. Overcoming it constitutes one of the greatest challenges for our generation. We must learn to settle our disputes peacefully and to enjoy our individual freedoms responsibly.

We remain committed to achieving our long-term vision for the justice sector: an accessible system capable of delivering equal and efficient justice, upholding the rule of law and protecting the democratic system of the State, with the ultimate goal of sustainable growth for the benefit of our people. From a difficult starting point in 2000, we have come a long way in constructing our legal and judicial system with clear priorities: developing the legal framework for the country and institutional and human resources capacity, together with increased legal awareness among the general population. With the support of like-minded partners and through the United Nations

Development Programme, we are slowly but steadily progressing. Since mid-2006, as a result of focused, systematic capacity-building strategies and coherent in-country training programmes, we have had a small but qualified cadre of Timorese court actors working alongside and under the mentorship of more than 15 international judicial practitioners.

However, the 2006 crisis has had an enormous impact on our nascent judicial system, which was created to deal with a normal development scenario. The system is determined to provide justice for the people and to help restore social peace. Clear steps have been taken in that regard, with several sensitive cases having been investigated and already being tried. However, owing to the additional burden and complexity of the caseload resulting from the events of April and May 2006, the system is overstretched and not prepared to deal with this post-crisis scenario.

The State is united and determined to see justice done. The principal framework of assistance that the United Nations is providing to the sector must be enhanced, so that we can respond to the immediate need for justice delivery without losing sight of our long-term goal: developing the capacity of our institutions and human resources.

We are facing a twofold battle: the delivery of quick, efficient and impartial justice, as recommended by the Special Commission of Inquiry, alongside the long-term endeavour of forming — not reforming — a judicial system from scratch, knowing that the evidence indicates that the judicial reform process in any country needs 10 to 15 years to bear fruit. High, unrealistic expectations without adequate support to fulfil them can create unnecessary anxiety and lead to failure in both battles.

Notwithstanding our national reconciliation policy, we cannot accept impunity. Several cases currently on trial, including that of the former Interior Minister and cases relating to F-FDTL soldiers, demonstrate our commitment to equal and efficient justice.

In the case of Major Alfredo Reinado and of others implicated in the violence of May 2006, my Government, with United Nations support, has opted for dialogue — a prudent approach aimed at ensuring that justice can prevail without the use of force.

Another critical milestone on Timor-Leste's path to restoring stability will be this year's presidential and parliamentary elections. Parliament has recently adopted electoral laws governing both elections which provide a legal framework for a parliamentary, multiparty, party-list system, with a 25 per cent female representation quota, and for the establishment of an independent electoral commission. The United Nations Independent Electoral Certification Team has provided constructive feedback in the three reports it has submitted to date. They are being considered in the framework of the regulations to be submitted for approval by the National Elections Commission and in discussions on an interpretative law.

The President has set 9 April 2007 as the date of the presidential elections and will announce the date of parliamentary elections immediately following the presidential ones. According to Timor-Leste's electoral law, parliamentary elections must be held within 80 days of the announcement.

We are confident that, with extensive support from UNMIT, the presence of international observers and with an internationally supervised body of laws and processes in place, we can organize and conduct peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections.

Another cornerstone of Timor-Leste's development is economic stability, in particular the further exploitation of its petroleum reserves. Timor-Leste is blessed with significant natural resources that, if well managed, may guarantee our economic future.

The petroleum fund, which was established to guarantee transparency in managing Timor-Leste's petroleum income and to ensure that future generations benefit from our resources, entered into effect only two years ago and has already accumulated \$1 billion.

The National Parliament will soon ratify two additional agreements with Australia related to the exploration of oil and gas in the Timor Sea, in particular in the area called Greater Sunrise. We expect, following ratification by the two sides and the exchange of notes, that the parties involved in the Timor Sea will immediately begin additional investments that will bring significant new revenues to Timor-Leste within a few years.

In that context, I would like to commend my predecessor, Mr. Mari Alkatiri, for his able and pragmatic leadership in the context of the negotiation

of all petroleum treaties and concerning our maritime boundary treaty with Australia. I wish also to commend and thank Australian Prime Minister John Howard and Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer for their equally pragmatic and sensitive approach to the negotiations in regard to the three treaties.

In my inaugural speech as Prime Minister of Timor-Leste in July, I emphasized the fact that I would govern as an advocate for the poor. Poverty eradication, progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals, and the establishment of conditions for good governance will thus continue to be the guiding principles of my Government.

We have already increased the number of “cash for work” programmes; we have expedited rural development programmes across all villages; we have ensured that local leaders such as the *Chefes de Suco* have better and greater resources to do their jobs; we have increased scholarships for the young; we have provided financial support to widows, including those affected by last year's events; we have undertaken a radical review of our tax system, with the support of the International Monetary Fund; and we have streamlined the business development process, including legislative changes aimed at ensuring that doing business and creating jobs in Timor-Leste becomes more an attractive proposition.

However, building a State almost from scratch is a Herculean task. That is why, at this critical juncture, we need the continuing assistance and sustained commitment of the United Nations to successfully carry out this lengthy and arduous task.

When we look at our own region and at the success stories of Singapore, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and others, we are reminded that success did not come to them overnight. It was the result of decades of dedicated and disciplined institution-building, socio-economic development, massive investment in vocational training and education, and the ability to convert setbacks into opportunities for the future.

Having said this, we do not wish to make excuses for our own shortcomings in the area of governance. But we believe that all of us have a better understanding of the challenges facing us than we did six years ago. I therefore plead with the United Nations to stay the course with us, so that Timor-Leste can eventually become a lasting success story. The

extension of UNMIT's mandate for another 12 months would be a first step in that regard.

We know that Timor-Leste is not the centre of our universe, and that, tragically, Timor-Leste is but one of many of the conflict situations of which the United Nations is seized and that requires its attention. However, the international community has made significant investments in our country since 1999. It has been labeled a success story, and rightly so. Some in the past have been overly optimistic, but that can lead people to lose perspective, to lose sight of reality, and turn pessimistic at the first sign of trouble. One day they label East Timor a success story, the next day they call it a failure.

We are not a failing State. We are a State that has existed for only five years, and what we have achieved so far — thanks not only to our own people and our own leadership but to the generous commitment of the international community — has been impressive. The crisis of April-May and of the following weeks is the type of crisis that many developing countries face at the beginning of their history and that some still face many decades after their independence.

The important thing that we have learned in the case of Timor-Leste and of other post-conflict situations is that the international community, bilaterally or through the United Nations, must remain committed and steady for the medium and long term. There are no quick fixes.

Again, I emphasize that we are conscious of the fact that we are not the centre of the universe, and that, unfortunately, there are many other conflict situations that require the attention of the United Nations. But an extra effort and investment in our country would go a long way towards consolidating peace and security there. Therefore, the extension of UNMIT for another 12 months is absolutely necessary.

I would like to be frank — allow me the frankness of someone who basically grew up with the United Nations. I began lobbying this very body — the Security Council — for the first time in December 1975, and that allows me some liberty to be frank with the United Nations. I am sure that members would agree that it would be unrealistic to expect even a simple take-away food restaurant in Manhattan to require less than one or two years of investment to achieve profitable and sustained management.

Therefore, it might require a bit more time — more than a year or two — to build a nation-State.

We believe, therefore, that — whether in Timor-Leste or in any post-conflict situation — there has to be long-term commitment. In the case of Timor-Leste, we are talking about a six-month mandate — in this particular case, six months after the establishment of UNMIT by the Council in August. UNMIT has not completely recruited the required personnel as set out in the submission by the Secretary-General to the Council. A six-month mandate creates instability for those who are recruited and sent on mission. People are individuals, with family commitments. They need certainty before they are sent off to Timor-Leste, or Afghanistan or the Congo. And when they have committed to a mission for six months, before the end of the mission — three months before — they begin to search the Internet looking for other jobs. Their attention begins to focus on job possibilities on the Internet, rather than on the job on the ground. It is with such frankness that I am asking the Council to seriously consider extending the Mission for 12 months.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): As I am taking the floor for the first time this month in a public meeting, I would like to wish you, Sir, every success in discharging your responsibilities as President of the Security Council. At the same time, I fully support your comments about and share your feelings towards your predecessor, Ambassador Churkin, regarding his effective conduct of the Council's work during the month of January.

This is also the first opportunity that I have had to congratulate Mr. Khare on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste. I thank him for his enlightening briefing and his able leadership of the United Nations Mission in a challenging environment. We have heard a lot of good things about him here in New York.

This long list of greetings would be incomplete without a salute to Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, who honours us with his presence today. His wisdom and vision have guided the young country through its first years of existence, and are still needed in order to hold the course. His statement was, on the whole, encouraging, and offers to members of the Security

Council a very useful and — I would say — fresh take on the situation. It was challenging because it was very frank; we appreciate that.

Italy fully aligns itself with and supports the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union. My remarks are meant to complement those of the European Union.

The international community, and the Security Council in particular, has a record in Timor-Leste that is positive but not flawless. The tragic events of last spring showed that the United Nations presence in the country may have been downsized prematurely. Now it is time to show commitment and generosity in order to make up lost ground. The picture remains mixed at best, as clearly illustrated in the Secretary-General's most recent report, in Mr. Khare's briefing and in the statement by the Prime Minister.

The situation is encouraging, but certainly fragile. The security situation is, indeed, fragile and precarious, as the Prime Minister said, owing to persistent outbreaks of violence between youth gangs and martial arts groups. The provision of protection and assistance to the tens of thousands of internally displaced persons will remain an issue for some time. The electoral process is particularly complex, in terms of both organizational requirements and security.

Against this background, the role of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is vital, as is cooperation with the international security forces. We welcome the formalization of that cooperation by means of a technical arrangement, and pay tribute to the efforts of the four countries contributing to the international security forces. Now the Security Council needs to respond promptly to recommendations to prolong and strengthen the mandate of the Mission. Too much is at stake. The political and economic investments made by the international community since 1999 could be gradually lost if we do not sustain them now and in the future.

The events of the past 12 months have shown that if we do not continue to make progress, we risk rolling back. Stalemate is not an option. One year ago, as Prime Minister Ramos-Horta recalled, Timor-Leste was considered a success story for the United Nations and the international community. I hope that in a few months we will be able to confirm that, indeed, we

have a success story. We are not going to be pessimistic.

Only free, fair and undisputed elections can truly re-establish mutual respect and genuine dialogue among the various political constituencies, building on the encouraging steps already taken under UNMIT's guidance. So important is this aspect that we hope that the European Union will be able to overcome any logistical difficulties and send an observation mission, at least for the parliamentary elections. The United Nations, for its part, will have to support the Timorese authorities until the end of this process and beyond, since — as we have learned from the report of the Secretary-General before us — it could take up to five years to rebuild the Timorese national police.

Those immediate needs should not divert our attention from the long-term challenges that must be addressed to ensure the sustainability of the stabilization process. I have in mind the long-standing issue of accountability for past and recent human rights violations. I am also thinking of the broader challenges of reform of the justice corrections sector.

We warmly welcome and are encouraged by what the Special Representative, Mr. Khare, and the Prime Minister have told us about the justice sector, impunity and the security sector. We fully share the Special Representative's view that "special attention" should be paid to the strengthening of the justice sector; it is a key sector. Unfortunately that sector and those who are connected with it are once again lagging behind others in a post-conflict scenario. The findings of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry are candid in that respect. It will be worthwhile to reflect carefully on these lessons when we hold the thematic debate on Security sector reform a few days from now in the Council on the initiative of the presidency of Slovakia.

Last but not least, we cannot overlook the fundamental importance of boosting social and economic development. It is always difficult to pursue long-term development objectives while political tensions and humanitarian emergencies are unfolding. But we have no other choice: long-term stability can be achieved only in an environment that is economically sound and investment-friendly. As both the Special Representative and the Prime Minister have said, development is a crucial need for Timor-Leste, and it must benefit the entire population. We praise the steps taken through the mechanism of the "compact"

between Timor-Leste and the international community to reinvigorate international efforts and coordinate them with the policies and aspirations of the Timorese authorities. Nor should we underestimate the role that can be played by regional partners and organizations: their contribution has increasingly proved to be positive and constructive.

As my Foreign Minister had the opportunity to indicate to Prime Minister Ramos-Horta during a very successful visit last October, Italy stands ready, both bilaterally and in the context of the European Union, to continue to assist the people of Timor-Leste in their quest to consolidate peace, democracy and development.

Mr. Brencick (United States of America): The United States welcomes Prime Minister Ramos-Horta to the Council today, and we take positive note of his remarks this morning, including on the need for sustained engagement with and support for his country. We also thank Mr. Khare, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his balanced and detailed briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste, and we welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/50).

The United States strongly supports and encourages the efforts made by the Government and political leaders in Timor-Leste to reach a political accommodation and reconciliation. We call on them to build on their recent efforts to regain the trust of the public. The United States urges all parties to act on the findings of the United Nations Independent Electoral Certification Team in order that free, fair and transparent elections may be held. We call on all participants to avoid violence and fully to respect legal processes in conducting the presidential and parliamentary elections this year.

We reaffirm the continuing need for accountability and justice in Timor-Leste and support effective and timely implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry. The United States also urges that the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) take action as soon as possible to provide an expert investigation team to complete the outstanding investigations by the Serious Crimes Unit of the offences committed in 1999. Justice too long delayed can become justice denied.

With due recognition of the legitimate role of the army, the United States nonetheless expresses its concern that the presence of armed soldiers of the Timorese armed forces — Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) — has served to heighten the sense of insecurity among the Timorese people. We urge the Government to ensure that the Timorese military assumes an appropriate profile and note that the United Nations police continue to have the Security Council's mandate to provide interim law enforcement and public security in East Timor.

Finally, we commend the efforts that UNMIT is making to reconstitute the Timorese police as an effective police force, and we support the Secretary-General's recommendation for the strengthening of the Timorese judiciary. The establishment of the rule of law is a cornerstone in the building of a strong and secure nation.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, I wish to join previous speakers in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and to express my delegation's appreciation for his statement. Let me also congratulate Mr. Atul Khare on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and thank him for his in-depth assessment of the situation in that country. I assure the Special Representative of Ghana's full support in the discharge of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and wish him great success in his very challenging role.

I take this opportunity further to extend our goodwill and best wishes to our South African colleagues as they assume the role of lead country on Timor-Leste. We look forward to working closely with them in the interest of the people of Timor-Leste.

Ghana has always followed with keen interest the peace and reconstruction efforts in Timor-Leste. We welcome all the positive developments that have occurred in the country since the destabilizing events of April and May 2006 and commend the entire leadership for their foresight and courage. We believe their experience offers vital lessons to developing countries, such as ours, that are equally engaged in the arduous task of nation-building.

In the course of 50 years of national independence, Ghana has suffered many setbacks and has learned that there is no surer path to national unity

and stability than through good governance, the rule of law and a vibrant economy. We are therefore pleased to see highlighted in today's discussion the determined efforts being made by the Government and the people of Timor-Leste to reconcile their nation and redirect their energies towards the vital tasks of consolidating democracy and the rule of law and building a sound economy.

By drawing on their time-honoured traditions in peacemaking to resolve their differences, the Timorese people have demonstrated their resilience and resourcefulness. We encourage them to employ the same wisdom and resolve in meeting the many difficult challenges that lie ahead. These include, among other challenges, tackling delicate security issues, reintegrating the internally displaced persons, holding national elections — which will be the first since independence in May 2002 — and, above all, implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, especially those aspects relating to political accountability and justice for the events of April and May 2006. As has been rightly observed in the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/50), justice is an essential precondition for sustainable national reconciliation.

In that connection, we remain concerned about the fate of the 594 dismissed soldiers who are still living on a stipend paid by the Government. It is our hope that the Commission of Notables that is addressing the petitions of those affected will conclude its work in due course, so that the issue can be settled once and for all.

On the other hand, impunity must not be condoned and we trust that those fugitives who escaped from Becora Prison will be accorded due process and dealt with, as appropriate, under the law. We believe the overriding consideration must be equal treatment of all citizens before the law. The various mechanisms that have been set up to handle these delicate matters must be given the necessary support in order to complete their tasks in a responsive and impartial manner. In particular, they must be encouraged to take on board the reservations expressed by opposition groups, such as Fretilin, about the report of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry.

Even though, in the final analysis, the primary responsibility for their country's future lies in the

hands of the people of Timor-Leste, they deserve all the support that the international community can extend to them. So far, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste has distinguished itself as a reliable partner, and we commend its leadership and staff on the breadth and depth of their endeavours. The activities of UNMIT reflect the interconnected nature of the problems of security, human rights, displaced persons, gender mainstreaming and poverty alleviation faced by Timor-Leste. They are all as vital as the need to ensure that next year's elections meet international standards, not least regarding the active involvement of women in the political process.

I wish to commend the Prime Minister for his eloquent, frank and passionate appeal for the continued engagement of the international community in Timor-Leste. We share his assessment that building a nation almost from scratch is a tall order. The international community should not leave Timor-Leste in the lurch. We are therefore sympathetic to the request for an extension of UNMIT's mandate for another year. We also support the request for the deployment of an additional formed police unit, which, we are informed, Portugal is ready to provide if requested, to strengthen security for the critical electoral process.

We are confident that the Government and the people of Timor-Leste will work with UNMIT in laying the foundation for realizing the modern, independent and prosperous democratic State for which many Timorese citizens laid down their lives.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I am confident that your skill and experience will be of considerable help as we carry out the work of the Council.

I wish also to thank Ambassador Churkin and the members of the Russian Federation mission for their wonderful work in January.

I welcome first the presence of the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and his participation in our meeting today. I wish also to thank Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his briefing and to wish him every success in the discharge of his new mission.

The year 2006 was a time of turmoil and conflict in various parts of the world. On its stage, there was ample space for the regrettable acts of violence that broke out last April and May in Timor-Leste. It is true that the situation is currently under control; however, the crisis in that country cannot be resolved overnight. It will require the long-term efforts of the people and Government of Timor-Leste, and support from the international community.

The solution to the crisis and the establishment of the sustainable stability to which the Timorese people aspire can be attained only if the Timorese pursue the path of national dialogue and political reconciliation. My delegation therefore welcomes the establishment by President Gusmão of the Dialogue Commission and the role it has played in promoting national reconciliation. We sincerely hope that the Commission will lead the country out of the impasse that plagued it last year, accomplish the mission for which it was established, and promote inclusive political dialogue with a view to restoring a cooperative relationship that will guarantee the achievement of national objectives. It is also our hope that the Dialogue Commission will assist the Timorese in regaining their confidence in their various national institutions.

Resolving the crisis will also require accommodating demands for political accountability and justice for the events of 2006. In that regard, the work of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry is of extreme importance. Overall, strengthening the Timorese judiciary is an essential condition for the establishment of the rule of law.

The crisis of internally displaced persons was one of the unfortunate outcomes of the violence that broke out last year. It remains a major problem, since there are about 150,000 internally displaced persons who need to be urgently resettled.

The security situation in Timor-Leste in general, and in Dili in particular, calls for an effective security sector. The Timorese national police needs to be fully reconstituted and developed. In the meantime, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) continues to play an indispensable role in supporting the security sector and promoting the rule of law in Timor-Leste. It is therefore essential to maintain sufficient numbers of UNMIT police.

Last year's events almost jeopardized the presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-

Leste. Given their continued importance, the elections must remain a priority of the current year. The adoption by the Timorese Parliament of the laws on the National Commission on Elections is an important first step in that process. The United Nations can undoubtedly provide indispensable assistance in support of the electoral process. In his statement, the Prime Minister expressed the need for sufficient security forces in the lead-up to the elections. We share that view.

Good-neighbourly relationships among countries are the pillars of constructive regional cooperation. We therefore welcome the strengthening of friendly relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia, as well as the steps taken by the two countries to promote such relations through the exchange of high-level visits.

In conclusion, we take this opportunity to urge the people and Government of Timor-Leste to demonstrate the necessary discretion in addressing the crisis that has plagued their country and to give precedence to their national interests so that their new country may continue to progress on the path of building peace and promoting development and prosperity. We support the extension of UNMIT's mandate by an additional year.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Let me start by congratulating you, Sir, on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month. We look forward to working under your guidance this month.

We also thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for having guided us last month.

We welcome Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta to the Security Council. We thank the Secretary-General for his report and extend our appreciation to Mr. Atul Khare, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, the entire United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) team, and the United Nations country team for their efforts in assisting Timor-Leste.

We are indeed honoured and humbled to be selected as the lead country in the Security Council on the issue of Timor-Leste, and wish to express our appreciation to the delegation of Japan for the excellent manner in which it performed that role last year.

The people of Timor-Leste expect and deserve the support of the international community. For its part, the Security Council adopted resolution 1704 (2006),

which established UNMIT. The resolution remains an important framework through which the international community has expressed its commitment to the people of Timor-Leste.

However, the regrettable incidents of April through May 2006, which led to violence and political instability, demonstrated how fragile the situation remains. Thankfully, the Government and the people of Timor-Leste have taken significant strides in the political and economic spheres since then.

Now it is up to the international community to demonstrate a long-term commitment to assisting Timor-Leste in strengthening its institutions and deepening its young democracy. The world cannot afford to lose sight of the challenges still facing that country.

The United Nations must continue to consult with the Timorese Government about its role and involvement. Already, UNMIT has proven to be capable in carrying out its tasks in a responsible, effective and efficient manner. We believe that UNMIT needs to be strengthened and given an extension of its mandate. That extension will allow UNMIT a reasonable period to develop a framework for long-term stability and development.

The Government and the people of Timor-Leste have agreed to both the presidential and the parliamentary elections, to be held in April and June, respectively. These will be the first-ever elections conducted by the Timorese people themselves, with the support of the international community. The elections will provide Timor-Leste with yet another positive milestone in the country's efforts to consolidate its democracy. The fact that the election law requires that one of every four candidates be a woman will address the gender balance in the new Timor-Leste Government right from the start.

But the holding of elections is not in itself a complete answer to all of Timor-Leste's problems. We wish also to urge all the political parties in Timor-Leste to adhere to the principles of non-violence and to utilize the democratic and legal process in preparation for the upcoming elections, so as to ensure that those elections are declared free and fair.

For its part, UNMIT will be expected to provide support and assistance to the Timorese authorities as they conduct their first election. In particular, the

electoral process will require skills and expertise of an administrative, technical and logistical nature that may not be easily available within Timor-Leste. The Secretary-General has already made a request, which is fully supported by my delegation, calling for an increase in the United Nations police contingent to help strengthen UNMIT's capacity to address security challenges during the electoral and immediate post-electoral period. We were pleased to learn from the Prime Minister that Portugal is ready to assist with that request.

Furthermore, the people and the Government of Timor-Leste need firm assurances that the international community is committed to staying with them beyond the last election to be held. Once again, the Secretary-General has recommended in his report (S/2007/50) that the mandate of UNMIT be extended for 12 months, and my delegation fully supports that recommendation. The Prime Minister has called that recommendation and its implementation a first instalment towards lasting success for a State that is only five years old. We could not agree more.

The overall situation in Timor-Leste has improved, even though security conditions remain volatile. The Government and the people of Timor-Leste must redouble their efforts aimed at promoting and consolidating stability in their country. South Africa supports any steps towards consolidating stability, promoting democratic governance and political dialogue and fostering social cohesion. The Dialogue Commission, launched last November by President Gusmão, has helped to introduce a spirit of reconciliation in the country. But, as I said, the challenges facing Timor-Leste extend beyond political and security factors.

The country of Timor-Leste continues to be mired in poverty and underdevelopment. One in five people in Timor-Leste live on less than one dollar a day. The majority of the Timorese population, especially the young people, face unemployment and a general lack of opportunities. Thousands of people remain internally displaced and live in camps, following the political crisis of the past year. The Government of Timor-Leste has instituted a number of programmes to address those challenges, including public works projects in different parts of the country of Timor-Leste. However, those projects have not been enough by themselves to address the deeper needs of the country.

Several neighbouring countries — such as Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand and the members of the group of small islands of the Pacific — continue to provide the necessary assistance for Timor-Leste's long-term development. The decision by the Government of Indonesia to promote and support Timor-Leste for membership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the signing by Timor-Leste of the initial accession memorandum are critical for the strengthening of relations between those two friendly nations. An official visit to Indonesia last December by President Gusmão not only strengthened cross-border cooperation between the two countries; it also helped attract Indonesian business investments to Timor-Leste. In addition, a Consolidated Appeal project for Timor-Leste was launched on 17 January 2007 to respond to remaining humanitarian needs for a period of six months. The Government of Timor-Leste presented donors with a "compact" that set priorities and refocused the national development plan to address the eradication of poverty and related socio-economic needs. The compact also places focus on the security challenges facing the country. We would hope that the international donor community will continue to contribute generously to the development programmes presented by the Government of Timor-Leste. Any signs of a better life for the people of Timor-Leste will help to create a better security and political environment, which is necessary for the holding of the important upcoming elections.

We welcome the signing, on 26 January 2007, of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Timor-Leste, the United Nations and the Government of Australia, which established a Trilateral Coordination Forum to enhance security activities. We are optimistic that such a forum will add value to the role played by the international community in assisting Timor-Leste to achieve long-term peace and stability, including the much-needed security-sector reform and the strengthening of the justice system.

In conclusion, we reiterate our position that the long-term commitment of the international community to Timor-Leste remains essential. UNMIT and the country team continue to work in a complementary manner, with UNMIT focusing on the immediate security needs and the United Nations country team addressing medium- and long-term development needs, including addressing the humanitarian situation. My

delegation has no doubt that the Security Council will continue to have great confidence in, and attach high priority to, the people of Timor-Leste. The Prime Minister has said that Timor-Leste is not the centre of the universe. But it is a centre of our best efforts in helping the Timorese people achieve the better life they deserve. Let me assure the Prime Minister that, as far as we in South Africa are concerned, Timor-Leste is indeed the centre of the world.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Let me begin by welcoming His Excellency Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste to the Chamber. His statement provided us with an insightful account of the situation in his country and of the wishes and expectations of the Government and its people.

My delegation appreciates the report of the Secretary-General and wishes to warmly congratulate Mr. Atul Khare for his appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Timor-Leste and head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). We thank him for his informative presentation.

As Timor-Leste's closest neighbour, Indonesia continues to enjoy an excellent level of bilateral relations with that country. We follow closely the developments there and hold regular consultations with our Timorese counterparts at various levels. These include the meeting between President Xanana Gusmão and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Jakarta on 18 December 2006, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report.

We commend the efforts made by the leaders of Timor-Leste in promoting political and communal reconciliation with a view to addressing the underlying causes of the political crisis of April and May last year. It is our hope that political and other leaders of Timor-Leste put their national interests first and engage in good-faith dialogue, setting aside their differences and promoting common goals in order to create favourable conditions for the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.

We welcome the significant improvement of the security situation in the country, as attested to in the report before us, which observes that although the overall security situation has tended to remain volatile, there have been longer periods of calm and fewer outbreaks of violence.

Indonesia continues to deepen and expand its bilateral cooperation with Timor-Leste. In addition to our bilateral joint commission meetings, which take place on regular basis, Indonesia, together with Australia and Timor-Leste, has also established a regular trilateral ministerial meeting as an avenue through which we can explore meaningful cooperation in supporting development in Timor-Leste. The last meeting was held in Dili on 4 September 2006, and we agreed to embark on various undertakings.

In the regional context, it is worth noting that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), at its summit in Cebu last month, decided to include Timor-Leste in the functional cooperation of ASEAN. In a spirit of partnership, Indonesia has expressed its readiness to assist. We are pleased to announce the appointment of an experienced Indonesian ambassador as senior adviser to facilitate Timor-Leste's participation in ASEAN activities. Upon the invitation of Timor-Leste, he will hold consultations with the Government of Timor-Leste this month.

The process of nation-building and reconciliation is a highly complex and sensitive matter. Therefore the United Nations and the international community should continue to play a constructive and nurturing role in assisting Timor-Leste to navigate its way through this important challenge. With particular reference to UNMIT, my delegation is of the view that one of its priorities should be to assist with and ensure the credibility of the forthcoming elections in Timor-Leste. The Mission should devote adequate resources to help in every aspect of the preparation for and conduct of the elections and to ensure they will take place in a democratic and peaceful manner.

We agree that successful elections are only one element of building a democratic State. In the context of the complex and delicate situation in Timor-Leste, the achievement of the forthcoming elections should go far beyond the election of the President and members of parliament; they should provide momentum for the return of this new nation to the path of stability and development. Durable peace and stability in Timor-Leste will be achieved only when the country's development challenges are addressed comprehensively. It is the responsibility of the international community to help ensure that this opportunity does not slip by.

In this regard, we note with interest the “compact” process between Timor-Leste and the international community, which entails a reorientation of the existing national development plan and external financing, as required, to deal with the 2006 crisis in the country and its causes. We support the integrated approach that UNMIT has embarked upon, and its collaboration and facilitation role with agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations towards focusing on the compact priorities. We are confident of the strong and dynamic leadership of the Secretary-General’s new Special Representative in conveying a sense of vision and dynamism to all the stakeholders in Timor-Leste and the international community.

Finally, we believe that the policy lines followed by the Security Council in the past few years should continue, namely to promote as much as possible the self-reliance and ownership of the Government and people of Timor-Leste and encourage broad-based partnership with various actors for sustainable development. It is in this regard that we support the extension of UNMIT’s mandate as recommended by the Secretary-General. We also support the Timorese Government’s request that an additional formed police unit be deployed to strengthen security for the critical electoral process.

Indonesia, for its part, will continue to assist Timor-Leste in addressing the challenges it is facing on the basis of shared principles of peaceful co-existence and forward-looking, reconciliatory and mutually beneficial relations.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Mission of the Republic of Panama is grateful for the singular opportunity of addressing the Council in the presence of Mr. José Ramos Horta, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, since it gives us an opportunity to welcome him and express our respect for his dedication and resolute commitment to the welfare of the people of Timor-Leste. It is not very often that the Council has the honour of welcoming a Nobel Peace Prize winner who also plays an outstanding political role in a conflict situation in a country to which the Security Council and the United Nations have dedicated particular attention.

Along with earlier speakers, I am grateful for the detailed and comprehensive report from the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, who is also the head of the United Nations

Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). We also wish to congratulate him on his appointment.

The delegation of Panama has listened carefully to the report on the progress achieved and the difficulties encountered by Timor-Leste in its effort to carry out the first elections since independence. We have also taken note of comments on the particular support by UNMIT to promote favourable conditions for the holding of fair, credible elections that are in keeping with international standards.

However, as we have had opportunity to say in the Council in the past, transparent and credible elections are important, but they are merely one step in the complex process of consolidating a stable, just and representative democracy. This is the process that will give the people the confidence that the Government is able to secure social peace and sustainable development within the fair and inclusive rule of law. But none of this can be achieved without genuine commitment of national actors. It is in this context that we appreciate the efforts undertaken by President Xanana Gusmão’s Dialogue Commission, which has been welcomed by Timorese leaders at all the nation’s political and social levels. We are convinced that UNMIT has a crucial part to play in this process, as shown by, inter alia, the legal and standard-setting advice that is being implemented and by the integrated coordination mechanism set up among the various actors associated with the United Nations to arrive at a single criterion.

Many difficulties have to be overcome in order to create conditions propitious to the holding of national elections. We urge the Timorese Government to redouble its efforts to consolidate the necessary institutions and mechanisms in Dili and elsewhere to make sure that the elections can be held within an atmosphere of transparency and peace.

On earlier occasions, Panama has stated in this Council that efforts in favour of peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be coordinated in a comprehensive and consistent manner, so as to ensure that countries that put an end to hostilities have programmes, institutions and capacities enabling them to implement the measures necessary to the achievement of development that is both economically sustainable and socially responsible.

That is how the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is carrying out its functions. In the Secretary-General's own words,

“UNMIT functions as an integrated Mission, which aims to bring together the peacekeeping, peacebuilding, humanitarian and development actors of the United Nations system”. (S/2007/50, paragraph 2)

Consequently the Government of Panama energetically supports the Secretary-General's proposal to extend UNMIT's mandate for a 12 month period, to signal the Security Council's commitment to the people and Government of Timor-Leste. Because of the priority that should be attached to deploying police and personnel for electoral assistance from UNMIT in districts outside Dili to prepare support for the elections, we also support deployment of an additional police unit.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, and to other colleagues for the kind words addressed to Ambassador Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, and to the Russian delegation on its presidency of the Security Council in January. We would also like to wish you success, Sir, in your important post as President. You can rest assured of the support and cooperation of the Russian delegation.

We are also very pleased to welcome to this meeting today the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta. We listened carefully to his analysis and assessment of the situation in the country in the context of the ongoing peacebuilding processes. We are also grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Khare, for his briefing and for presenting the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

The Russian Federation commends the efforts of the leadership of Timor-Leste in promoting national dialogue and reconciliation, reforming the security sector and the justice system, combating impunity and ensuring the return of temporarily displaced persons to their homes.

Although the situation in Timor-Leste has recently stabilized, it continues to be precarious. That was stressed today by Mr. Ramos-Horta, Mr. Khare and

other speakers. The flare-up in violence that took place in the capital in January and that, unfortunately, led to the loss of human life shows the need to continue to provide Timor-Leste with integrated international support in order to strengthen State institutions and carry out socio-economic reforms. We hope that, with the support of UNMIT and other international structures and regional partners, the Government of Timor-Leste will be able to successfully address the problems facing the country.

On the eve of next April's planned presidential elections, it is particularly important to ensure security in the country. We support the efforts of UNMIT aimed at providing multifaceted assistance to the Timorese authorities in preparing and organizing those elections, as well as ensuring the necessary security in the country. We have taken note of the request of the Timorese leadership to dispatch an additional police unit in order to beef up security during the preparation period for the elections and during the post-election period.

In general, we suggest that it is important to take account of the preferences of the Timorese side with regard to the future activities of UNMIT while taking account, of course, of how the situation in Timor-Leste evolves.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would first like to thank the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, for his presentation as well as Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his statement. We welcome the role they play in stabilizing the situation in Timor-Leste.

In a few minutes, the Permanent Representative of Germany will speak on behalf of the European Union and my delegation fully subscribes to that statement. I shall confine myself to the following comments.

The combined activity of the local Timorese forces, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the international security force has made it possible to somewhat improve the security situation in the country, but the stabilization is still incomplete and fragile, as we see from the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/50).

The presence of UNMIT and the international security force is therefore indispensable, as we see it,

in the medium term so long as the Timorese institutions are not yet in a position to take over. France is therefore in favour of an extension of UNMIT's mandate for a 12 month period.

I would also like to commend the regional States on their stabilizing role, and particularly the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as demonstrated by the strong participation of Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore in UNMIT, as well as the strengthening of relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. I would also like to commend the part played by Australia and New Zealand. The particular efforts of Portugal also deserve to be highlighted.

In the short term, the main challenge has to do with organizing elections under satisfactory conditions. The elections are an opportunity for genuine reconciliation among the Timorese, which is the only guarantee of long-term stability. It is therefore essential that the Timorese authorities implement the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry. We also support the proposal of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to expand UNMIT by adding an additional formed police unit to ensure security stability throughout the elections.

In addition, the international community must continue to support the reconstruction of Timorese institutions, in particular the reform of the civil and military security forces and of the judiciary. We are happy to note the good relations which have apparently been established between UNMIT, which is concentrating on the short-term situation, and the development agencies, which are acting primarily in the medium- and long-term ranges.

The implementation of the compact among the Timorese authorities and the international community is also a positive first step in a strategy of peacebuilding. We would be grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General if he would give us more detail about the functioning and prospects of that mechanism at a forthcoming meeting with the Security Council.

Reconciliation within Timorese society and between the Timorese and their neighbours must be based on a situation of transparency and justice. In that regard, combating impunity is a decisive aspect of such reconciliation. In that respect, we fully support the establishment by UNMIT of an independent Serious

Crimes Investigation Team to complete the work begun by the Serious Crimes Unit on the crimes committed in 1999. We also hope that Commission for Truth, Reception and Reconciliation will shed light on the past in order to better build the future.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): I, too, should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important debate on Timor-Leste at a time when that country is approaching a historic milestone: the holding of important elections in April. I should also like, on behalf of my delegation, to welcome Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta, whose presence among us clearly reflects the expectations of the people and the Government of Timor-Leste with regard to this Security Council meeting. In addition, we wish to thank Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for presenting his excellent report (S/2007/50), which shows the dedication with which he; his predecessor, Ambassador Hasegawa; and all United Nations personnel have worked to ensure the success of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Moreover, we wish to congratulate the people and all the authorities of Timor-Leste, without whose spirit of cooperation and responsibility peace would have been jeopardized for the long term after last year's incidents. Here, we should also thank once again the countries contributing international security forces for the resolute action and spirit of cooperation that they continue to demonstrate in their relations with the United Nations.

The Congo has always been among those that have emphasized the need for a long-term commitment to Timor-Leste, for reasons that touch on the principles of international law, international humanitarian law and solidarity aimed at preventing any threat to international peace and security. Therefore, my delegation would like to make several observations in that regard.

First, the Congo welcomes the gradual completion of the entire legal and organizational framework related to the forthcoming elections. We call for the establishment of a national electoral commission, with the agreement of all parties involved who are seriously committed to respecting the code of conduct and all rules of the electoral process. With respect to the holding of the elections, we also support

the inclusive participation of all actors in national life, at all levels, in the positive steps being taken under the auspices of the Dialogue Commission, and we encourage the role of UNMIT in carrying out the national reconciliation process.

Similarly, we urge the “Commission of Notables” to find a satisfactory solution to meet the claims on the table before the elections. The role of that structure is both novel and well-adapted to the complex situation in Timor-Leste. It will provide useful assistance to the Government, which must urgently make every effort to finalize the subsidy programme for former soldiers, on the one hand, and ensure dialogue with the fugitive former members of the military police, on the other.

However, it is clear that there is also a need to appropriately build the confidence of the Timorese in their judicial system. The joint implementation by UNMIT and the Timorese Government of an overarching strategic plan to rehabilitate the judicial sector, as envisaged, should enable that sector to restore its reputation by showing its readiness to combat impunity and to interpret the law with an abiding concern for justice for all.

While we note the importance of the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, we also believe that no obstacle must be allowed to prevent their implementation or that of the plan to reform, restructure and rebuild the security sector envisaged by the Government, with UNMIT’s assistance.

Those are just a few of the important steps that must be taken to complete the progress made in the security sector and to lead the people of Timor-Leste — with full confidence and diversity of opinions, but also in unity — towards the elections, which are likely to ensure a stable and peaceful atmosphere for the country.

Thus, while reaffirming our total faith in the political maturity of the people of Timor-Leste, my delegation believes that we must continue to assure them of the support of UNMIT, whose mandate should be extended for 12 months to build on the actions undertaken, on the basis of the specific recommendations made by the Secretary-General.

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, if we are not careful, the upcoming elections could pose a real challenge to national unity in Timor-Leste. That is

why my delegation supports strengthening the police, as recommended by the Secretary-General, in order to ensure security during the elections, even if it means withdrawing a significant number of those elements after the elections.

Finally, my delegation would like to emphasize once again the need, after the elections, to persist in the fight against the factors that are exacerbating the crisis, such as unemployment and poverty. The implementation of the compact between Timor-Leste and the international community — with the support of most of the international development agencies — which we called for at the meeting held on 27 October 2006, will be a test for Timor-Leste, which has all the assets it needs to develop and to acquire a status within its reach: that of a democratic and prosperous nation.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Permit me at the outset to welcome the presence of Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta and to congratulate him on a strong and courageous statement. His presence among us today is tangible proof of the spirit of cooperation that inspires relations between the United Nations and the Timorese Government.

Like preceding speakers, I also wish to thank Mr. Atul Khare for his excellent briefing on the situation in Timor-Leste.

I fully subscribe to the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Germany in his capacity as President of the European Union. I shall thus limit myself to making a few additional remarks, which are based on three points: the elections, the national reconciliation process, and the role and mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

We know that the year ahead will be essential for the future of Timor-Leste. First, it is an election year with two important events: the presidential elections of 9 April and the legislative elections. On those occasions, it will be important to ensure that order is maintained in keeping with the law.

We are confident that, at all levels, the candidates will demonstrate a sense of responsibility and seek to overcome the divisions that appeared during the events of 2006. They must avoid reopening past wounds and reviving old hatreds, and instead look to the future.

I note that the most recent election certification mission made a number of recommendations that have

yet to be implemented. Accordingly, I would emphasize the importance of a transparent and legitimate electoral process.

However, 2007 will also be essential for healing wounds, both those that were the cause and those that were the consequence of the crisis of last April and May. Belgium wishes to recall the need to implement the 21 recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, whose endorsement by the parliament we welcome.

As the Commission itself has rightly stressed, justice, peace and democracy are mutually reinforcing. In order to achieve peace and democracy, justice must be effective and visible. We must at all costs avoid giving the population the impression that impunity continues to exist, as that could lead to further instability. The demonstrations and the fighting that took place last week are evidence of that risk.

Political leaders in Timor-Leste have in recent weeks taken some important steps aimed at making clear to the people the efforts at dialogue and reconciliation that are being undertaken. Belgium welcomes those gestures and expresses the hope that that spirit of dialogue will be maintained.

Thirdly, let me touch on the role and mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). I should like to congratulate UNMIT on the work it has accomplished. The signing of a trilateral agreement among the Government of Timor-Leste, UNMIT and the international security forces is commendable. The measures taken against gangs earlier this month are clear evidence of the fruitful collaboration between the international forces and UNMIT.

UNMIT can now increasingly work hand in hand with the Timorese police force. However, much remains to be done. That is why Belgium supports the extension of its mandate for a period of 12 months, in line with the recommendations of Secretary-General. We support the addition of a supplemental integrated police unit for the electoral period, as requested of the Security Council in a joint letter from the President of the State, the Prime Minister and the President of the Parliament.

The people of Timor-Leste aspire to peace and stability. Our responsibility is to provide a context for those legitimate aspirations to be realized. It is in that

spirit that Belgium will contribute to the negotiations on mandate extension.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to welcome the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and to express our appreciation for his comprehensive and candid statement. We would like also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, for his briefing and to commend him for his work in the context of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

Peru would like to express its strong support for the people and the Government of Timor-Leste in their quest to ensure that their State is peaceful and sustainable in the long term. We would like also to highlight the measures that have been adopted with a view to striking up a national dialogue and achieving political reconciliation, as well as the activities being carried out in the context of a community-level dialogue designed to bring about the reintegration of internally displaced persons and to tackle the issue of social fragmentation.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Timor-Leste for the period August 2006 to January 2007. We support his recommendations aimed at supporting the country in the areas of reconciliation and long-term development. In that context, we support the extension of UNMIT's mandate for a 12-month period. We agree with the Secretary-General that such a decision will send an important signal of the Security Council's commitment to Timor-Leste, which is vital in the light of the upcoming electoral process.

We would like to highlight the establishment of a compact between Timor-Leste and the international community aimed at the promotion of economic development in the country. We believe that, in the long term, Timor-Leste's success will depend to a considerable extent on its success in terms of economic and social development. We are pleased to hear that the Government has already taken measures to identify the most urgent priorities, which include national reconciliation, elections, security, justice, employment for young people, as well as the provision of basic services to the most needy.

We also believe that UNMIT must continue to attach priority to providing assistance to the security and justice sectors. We welcome the start of

substantive follow-up to the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, which, we believe, will help to strengthen the rule of law and combat impunity.

Along those same lines, we are pleased to see that the friendly relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia continue to strengthen, which will make it possible for the work of the Commission for Truth and Friendship between the two countries to continue.

The issue of security in Timor-Leste, in terms of the police and the army, must be tackled on two fronts: on the one hand, by addressing the issue of a shortfall in units, and, on the other, by seeking to bring about reconciliation between the two institutions. The security situation in Dili and in other principal cities could lead to difficulties in the holding of the general elections.

In that context, we would like to support Timor-Leste's request, made in its letter dated 7 December, that UNMIT be strengthened through the addition of a supplementary integrated police unit, so as to be able to handle any security issues that might arise during and after the elections. We also believe that any decision on the gradual drawdown of UNMIT police units following the elections should be considered very carefully, bearing in mind developments in the security situation in the field and in view of the fragility of the national police itself.

In conclusion, I should like to call on the international donor community and United Nations entities to support the consolidated appeal of 17 January focusing on the most pressing humanitarian requirements and on the protection of internally displaced persons.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom): May I begin my saying that the United Kingdom delegation aligns itself with the statement which will be made later by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting of the Security Council on Timor-Leste. We also appreciate both the presence and the presentations of the Prime Minister and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

This debate underlines the international community's interest in and commitment to Timor-Leste. The United Nations Mission and the bilateral

support that Timor-Leste is receiving from a number of countries are further evidence of this. Building sustainable stability in Timor-Leste is therefore our shared objective, and, in that context, the successful conduct of elections in the course of this year is a priority goal for all of us.

My delegation believes that free and fair elections will help to consolidate the progress already being made towards establishing a pluralistic political system and the norms of democratic governance in Timor-Leste. Therefore legislative, technical and logistical preparations all need to be made, and we should be ready to help with this.

But it is also important that the political leaders themselves work together to create an atmosphere conducive to the proper conduct of elections, so that, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said in his statement, elections can have a unifying character.

We believe that there needs to be early agreement on the dates of those elections and on the processes to be followed. International norms should be the norm, including in terms of electoral campaigning and in the necessary separation of delivery of public services from the political process of seeking to influence the voting intentions of citizens.

The United Nations Mission has a key role to play in public education, in the facilitation of political dialogue and in assistance with electoral organization. Transparency in all of this must be a key criterion, and the Mission should therefore be ready to make clear to the Council and to the Government of Timor-Leste when it considers that the letter or the spirit of the electoral provisions have been violated.

Given the tense security situation in Dili, it is also important that progress be made on security sector reform, and we welcome the emphasis that the Prime Minister placed on that in his statement today. Reform of the judicial sector is also crucial. In both cases, the goal is to ensure that the elections take place within a framework that provides for long-term stability. We recognize the tension that the Prime Minister described in that area between seeking to deliver short-term results and the time needed to realize long-term investments, but early progress — not least in the context of the electoral preparations — is very important.

Further work also needs to be done — as others have recognized today — in reforming the police, the army and other relevant ministries, including to ensure that the security forces do not act politically, especially during the campaigning and the elections, as well as during the post-election period.

Progress also needs to be made in the areas of human rights and judicial capacity, in parallel with other efforts, in order to avoid creating potential difficulties once the security sector is functioning normally again.

In all of those efforts, the United Kingdom remains committed to assisting the Government and the people of Timor-Leste and to supporting the work of the United Nations Mission in this critical year and beyond as we face all of these challenges together.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like, first of all, to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting. The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence of the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, His Excellency Mr. Ramos-Horta. We would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, for his briefing. We would also like to express our satisfaction with the work undertaken by the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) during the past few months.

Over the past six months, Timor-Leste has made good progress in terms of national recovery and reconstruction. The political leaders have taken encouraging and important steps in conducting political dialogue and promoting national reconciliation. China appreciates those developments. We hope that the various parties in Timor-Leste will put national stability and peace for the general population above all else, and that, with the assistance of the United Nations and the international community, they will maintain the momentum of the dialogue, consolidate the results of reconciliation, resolve existing problems within a constitutional and democratic framework, and rekindle the Timorese people's hopes and confidence in the future of their country.

The elections that are to be held within the next few months will be a major milestone in the political process in Timor-Leste. They will also be a test to see whether or not Timor-Leste will move towards unity and harmony. We have noted that, under the leadership

of the Timorese Government, preparations for the elections are under way. But, of course, time is pressing. UNMIT should, on the basis of the Security Council's mandate, do its best to provide assistance to Timor-Leste. The Security Council should also fully consider and meet the legitimate requests of the Timorese Government.

The elections are neither the beginning nor the end of the political process. It must be borne in mind that there are many major issues that need to be addressed. Efforts must be intensified to build the national machinery, including the police, the judiciary and educational institutions. More important, the majority of Timorese are still suffering from poverty and want. Helping Timor-Leste to attract investment, develop its economy, expand employment and join the regional integration process will provide a fundamental guarantee for lasting peace in Timor-Leste. That calls for joint efforts and a sustained commitment on the part of the United Nations, countries of the region and other stakeholders.

Timor-Leste is a new member of the Asian family, as well as of the United Nations family. The international community has a joint responsibility to help Timor-Leste to overcome its difficulties and make the success story a lasting one. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the international community to sustain its interest in and support for Timor-Leste. China will continue to contribute towards peace and development in Timor-Leste.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Slovakia.

I wish to thank Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta for his candid evaluation of the situation in Timor-Leste. His statement clearly set out both the magnitude of the challenges and the promise of the opportunities in Timor-Leste. We fully agree that building a State from almost zero is a Herculean task, but we believe that Timor-Leste is on the right path to being a lasting success story of post-conflict peacebuilding. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, for his briefing, his valuable observations and his recommendations.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore limit my statement to a few additional remarks.

We are pleased that the situation in Timor-Leste has stabilized in the past six months. At the same time, it is obvious — as the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/50) and the briefings today indicate — that there are many challenges and problems which, if not addressed properly, might cause a relapse into conflict and violence. In that regard, we believe that the international community must sustain its commitment to peacebuilding in Timor-Leste and continue its support and assistance to the people of Timor-Leste at this crucial moment. We therefore support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) be extended for a further period of 12 months.

There are many important tasks and challenges ahead in Timor-Leste, and UNMIT must have an adequate long-term perspective and proper technical and human resources to enable it to cope with the complex challenges on the ground. In that regard, we would like to ask Mr. Atul Khare about the current situation regarding the recruitment of UNMIT personnel. As we heard from Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, there are some problems, but we hope that, if the mandate of UNMIT is extended for 12 months, that might help the recruitment process.

First of all, over the next few months it will be crucial, in our view, to prepare the proper conditions for the holding of elections in Timor-Leste. We thank the Prime Minister for his update on preparations for the elections and welcome the progress made in that respect. The forthcoming elections will be a vital step on the path towards peace and stability in Timor-Leste. The United Nations and the international community are there to support the Timorese in organizing and conducting a credible process that will guarantee that its results will be accepted and respected by all stakeholders.

Overall security and stability in the country are basic preconditions for a free and fair electoral process. In that connection, we welcome the recent signing of a security agreement by UNMIT, the Timorese authorities and Australia's Government to maximize coordination in all areas of security. We also note with great concern that there are still a lot of illegal weapons in the hands of civilians. Increased efforts must be made to collect them in the months before the elections. The national police of Timor-Leste must

work very closely with the United Nations police to that end.

Secondly, it is of the utmost importance to define efficient ways to ensure sustainable social and economic development. In that regard, we welcome the Government programmes aimed at poverty reduction and job creation. For the time being, however, the challenges still exceed the Government's capacity. It is essential, therefore, that the United Nations and the international community remain actively involved in supporting social and economic development in Timor-Leste. In that respect it is, in our view, necessary to intensify efforts to marshal increased donor support and assistance.

Thirdly, it is widely recognized that military and police forces and security and law enforcement institutions in general play a crucial role in the long-term success of political and economic rebuilding efforts in post-conflict societies. The international community has been playing an active role in meeting the challenges of sustainable post-conflict security sector reform in many countries around the world. We strongly support UNMIT's continued role in assisting the Timorese authorities in the critical areas of police and military reform, including effective institutional capacity-building in the local security sector.

Fourthly, the political and civil unrest in Timor-Leste since April 2006 has led to the displacement of an estimated 150,000 Timorese, and the majority of the displaced have been unable to return to their homes to this day. We are greatly concerned about the situation of the internally displaced persons and welcome the Timorese Government's initiatives aimed at ensuring their return and reintegration into their home communities.

Finally, we would also like to reiterate our support for the process of national reconciliation and building the system of unity and trust that the country needs for its stabilization. That should not in any way mean, however, impunity for perpetrators of serious crimes and violations of human rights. To that end, we welcome and support all relevant efforts to promote justice and reconciliation in the country and between Timor-Leste and neighbouring Indonesia.

In conclusion, we believe that, after long years of suffering and grievance, the people of Timor-Leste deserve and have the right to life in peace and dignity. In that regard, I want to assure Prime Minister Ramos-

Horta of the continued support of my country for the Timorese people in their efforts to achieve lasting peace and prosperity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Hill (Australia): We welcome the opportunity to again address the Security Council on the important issues of Timor-Leste, and thank the Council for giving those matters its attention.

We appreciate the fact that Prime Minister Ramos-Horta has been able to be with us today and to contribute to our deliberations. His considered and balanced report of the circumstances in Timor-Leste was, I think, a demonstration of what a great asset he is to his nation. The fact that he is prepared to accept the baton of leadership in such difficult circumstances is highly commendable.

Timor-Leste continues to need the sustained attention and support of United Nations Member States, and the international community willingly and generously supported Timor-Leste as it addressed the setbacks that occurred last year on its path towards successful nationhood. We welcome the ongoing and broad-ranging work of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) to address those challenges. We congratulate Mr. Atul Khare on his appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and on the way in which he is carrying out the job. We thank all those who are serving in the Mission in Timor-Leste and those here at Headquarters who are giving them such professional and capable support.

We agree with the Secretary-General's comments in his most recent report that the long-term commitment of the international community to Timor-Leste remains critical to enabling Timor-Leste to return as a nation to the path of stability and development in a climate of democratic, accountable and responsive governance. We therefore strongly support the renewal of UNMIT's mandate for a further 12 months.

Australia is prepared to remain at the forefront of the efforts of the international community to assist Timor-Leste. We are currently providing some 810 troops as part of the international security force, which of course is supporting UNMIT police and United Nations personnel in maintaining law and order and

security. Australia has increased contributions to address humanitarian aspects of the crisis to some \$A10 million.

In the lead up to presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste, we welcome UNMIT's support for political and community reconciliation. We consider that Timor-Leste's political future is ultimately a matter for the Timorese people. Timor-Leste's political leaders must, of course, take responsibility for resolving their differences constitutionally and peacefully. This year's presidential and parliamentary elections will be the first national elections to be managed by the Timorese people themselves. The conduct of free, fair and transparent elections will be a critical test of the robustness of Timor-Leste's new democracy, but it will also require the support of the international community.

We welcome the United Nations provision of technical and logistical assistance to East Timor for those elections and the three-person independent electoral certification team that is monitoring the election process. We would encourage that the certification team's useful reports be acknowledged and its constructive recommendations implemented. Australia has provided \$A1.3 million to support a United Nations Development Programme project aimed at strengthening electoral institutions and processes.

UNMIT police and the international security force continue to maintain stability in Timor-Leste, which will be an especially important role in the lead-up to national elections. Whilst the overall situation has improved, obviously, since May last year, I agree with others that it continues to remain fragile.

The recent signing of two security-related arrangements — the technical arrangement covering the parameters of the international security force deployment and the memorandum of understanding establishing the Trilateral Coordination Forum — demonstrates to the Timorese people the shared commitment of the United Nations, Australia and Timor-Leste to ensuring stability and security. Those arrangements formalize the close working relationship that has developed between the United Nations, the international security force and the Timor-Leste Government.

Australia emphasizes the need to build a sustainable Timorese police force that will have the confidence and culture to be able to deal with any

future crisis of law and order in a fair and just way. We are willing to offer significant assistance to such a force. We also emphasize the need for a comprehensive and timely security sector review to address the future direction and shape of the Timor-Leste defence force. Australia stands ready again to assist in that process.

The international community has again come to the assistance of Timor-Leste. UNMIT represents an important opportunity to repair and rebuild the developing institutions that were damaged or destroyed last year and to further strengthen those institutions that did show resilience through the crisis. The international security force provides an important support function to ensure that UNMIT is able to focus on those important activities. We now encourage the people of Timor-Leste to take responsibility for their own affairs, and especially look forward to the conduct of peaceful and trouble-free elections.

The President: I call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I would like to thank you, Sir, for your initiative to have this debate with the participation of Prime Minister Ramos-Horta. I take this opportunity to express our high respect to Prime Minister Ramos-Horta for his untiring efforts to address many difficult issues facing his country, including particularly for national reconciliation.

I wish also to commend Special Representative of the Secretary-General Atul Khare and his team for their dedication and excellent professional work on the ground.

This debate provides a welcome opportunity for us Member States to express our continued support for peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste, as the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is to expire at the end of this month. Timor-Leste will hold important national elections later this year — the second elections since its independence. At such a critical juncture, it is clear that the country needs strong continued support from the international community, of which UNMIT constitutes the main, indispensable component. Japan therefore supports and expects that the Security Council will take a decision to extend the mandate of UNMIT for 12 months.

The Government and people of Timor-Leste took a significant step forward at the end of last year when

their legislature adopted the election law. In accordance with that law, the presidential election is now set for April. We hope that it will be followed by national elections, with the date to be decided by consensus among the parties concerned.

For the successful conduct of the upcoming elections in a free and fair atmosphere, maintaining security and public order in the capital and throughout the country is of the utmost importance. The UNMIT police component and the international security forces must ensure such an environment in the country. In that context, we are particularly appreciative of Australia's and New Zealand's continuing contribution to the international security forces and to security sector reform in Timor-Leste. I am pleased to mention here that Japan dispatched police personnel to UNMIT this month.

We welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Timor-Leste, the United Nations and Australia, as well as the technical arrangement agreed between the United Nations and the international security forces. Those two agreements complete the security arrangements between the Secretary-General and the international security forces called for in Security Council resolution 1704 (2006). They form the basis for closer cooperation between Timor-Leste, the United Nations and Australia in preparing for the elections.

We take note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/50), which points to the possibility of a gradual drawdown of some 600 police force contingents following an assessment of the situation after the upcoming elections. Bearing that in mind, we support his recommendation that UNMIT be reinforced with a formed police unit to ensure the success of the elections.

Another point to be emphasized is the need for close cooperation and the forging of a partnership among the political leaders of the country if peace and stability in Timor-Leste are to sustain themselves. From that point of view, we regard it as a welcome, positive step that the Government of Timor-Leste and UNMIT last month held the first meeting of the Committee on High-level Coordination provided for in resolution 1704 (2006) in order to ensure effective mutual cooperation.

Japan has been a consistent and strong supporter of Timor-Leste in recent years, in particular since that

country's independence. Last year, we were privileged to lead this forum to adopt the resolution to establish UNMIT. We intend to continue our active participation as a member of the core group on Timor-Leste.

Before concluding, I would like reiterate Japan's continued commitment to support all efforts towards sustainable peace and development beyond the peacekeeping stage. The successful conduct of the upcoming elections will be an important milestone in Timor-Leste's endeavours in the area of peacebuilding. To that end, I am pleased to announce that my Government will be organizing a peacebuilding seminar on Timor-Leste in Tokyo this March, as a case study in the context of the future work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We hope that exercise will contribute to enriching our discussion and accumulating good practices on peacebuilding.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his detailed report (S/2007/50) on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). I would also like to thank Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his comprehensive briefing to the Security Council a short while ago. Like others, I would also like to thank Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, for his statement.

The role of the United Nations in Timor-Leste has been of great interest to my delegation. We have supported United Nations operations in Timor-Leste in various forms since the days of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, in 1999. A Singaporean is currently one of the Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in UNMIT, and we have 23 police and military officers on the ground.

It is clear from the report that UNMIT has been working hard in multiple areas. That includes the key issues of security sector reform and support for Timor-Leste's electoral process. Much ground has been covered and all the pieces are in place for a successful election. However, there are still many challenges that the country has to grapple with. In our opinion, three of those areas stand out as warranting priority attention.

First, priority must be placed on maintaining law and order. We have seen how quickly gangs of young people sprouted following the breakdown of law and order last year. Fuelled by the easy availability of illegal weapons and unemployed young people, those gangs have been responsible for much of the violence that has rocked Dili. If unchecked, they could seriously undermine the electoral process and set back all the important work that has been accomplished thus far. To ensure a smooth election and expeditious reconstruction after the election, no effort must be spared in reining in and disarming those gangs, while at the same time tackling the problem of unemployment among young people.

Secondly, there must be no let up in security sector reforms to integrate and strengthen the Timorese police, the military and the Ministries of the Interior and Defence. Every effort must be made to resolve the mistrust and rivalry between those institutions. Resources must be made available for reconstituting and normalizing the forces of the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste and the Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste, as well as to build up their capacity to maintain law and order.

Thirdly, we need to work on upholding the rule of law. Strengthening the country's fledgling judicial system, in terms of both capacity and capability, is vital. That is one of the most daunting tasks that confront new nations, and Timor-Leste is no exception. We are therefore pleased to note that UNMIT and the United Nations Development Programme are working hand-in-hand with national and international partners to secure the necessary resources and expertise for that purpose. We are also pleased to note that, while the Timorese Parliament has set up its own commission to determine the causes of last year's crisis, it has committed to implementing the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry in its fight against impunity. That is an important undertaking, as it brings proper closure to the reconciliation process. It also signifies the Government's resolve to uphold the rule of law and sends a powerful message of deterrence to would-be trouble makers.

Following full independence, in 2002, and the three-year mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, which ended in May 2005, we may have been too quick in pronouncing success in Timor-Leste. We were soon reminded of how delicate

nation-building can be. What we have now is a second chance to get it right. UNMIT is a good start. It is a question of commitment. We can help by giving UNMIT strong support to fulfil its mandate.

Timor-Leste is at a critical juncture of its development as a young nation. There is still much work to be done, and the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend UNMIT's mandate by 12 months is reasonable. UNMIT must stay the course and complete the tasks. We would even venture to say that UNMIT should stay for as long as it is needed to do so. To roll back prematurely will be to repeat history.

We also support the Timorese Government's request for an additional formed police unit at a time when maintaining law and order is so crucial. We caution against that unit pulling out too soon after the election. There is much that additional United Nations police can contribute in the post-election environment, especially in maintaining peace and assisting in the police sector reforms.

Finally, we urge the United Nations to expedite the staffing of UNMIT personnel supporting security and judicial sector reforms. The present shortfalls in staffing and expertise in some of those areas is a concern, as they mean that more transgressors get away unpunished.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association countries of Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

Let me, first of all, express my gratitude for Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta's impressive statement to us today. On behalf of the European Union, I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2007/50) on the situation in Timor-Leste. I think it is a good basis for further discussion of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

The European Union acknowledges the important work done by the Special Representative for Timor-Leste, Mr. Atul Khare, and by the staff of UNMIT on the ground, as well as the efforts of the Timorese people, to build a viable, just and democratic State.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, the overall situation in Timor-Leste has improved over the six months since UNMIT was established. However, the security situation remains volatile. Gang activity continues and there is increasing discontent among internally displaced Timorese.

One of the key elements in the peace process is the necessity of rebuilding confidence among the various actors. That is an essential step towards national reconciliation. UNMIT has begun to assist the Timorese people in this delicate task by supporting meetings, public events and dialogue programmes, which include addressing the events of the past. It is important that the forthcoming elections unite the Timorese people and not create additional divisions. All Timorese should be aware of their own responsibility to promote national reconciliation, not only in abstract, but also in concrete, terms. The forthcoming presidential and legislative elections should contribute to national unity and democratic stability in Timor-Leste. The EU endorses the recommendations of the Independent Electoral Certification Team to the Timorese authorities in order to implement key measures to ensure the full credibility of the electoral process.

It is important to note that reconciliation and viable peace can be achieved only in a secure environment. In this context, the EU Union welcomes the signing of a security agreement on 26 January by the United Nations, Timor-Leste and Australia. The agreement sets up a Trilateral Coordination Forum that will allow better coordination on security issues. This will be a particularly important element in the lead-up to the elections.

Last month, the European Commission sent an election exploratory mission to Timor-Leste. The mission will shortly submit its conclusions with a view to a likely European Union election observation mission.

The European Union also welcomes the initiative to support the electoral process with the deployment of an additional United Nations police unit in support of the Timorese national police. UNMIT's established

police units have, under adverse circumstances, helped to restore and maintain public order. That is a prerequisite if we are to implement other important elements of the mandate. Capacity-building and reform of the Timorese national police remain essential to creating an effective police force capable of addressing the security challenges. UNMIT will have an important role to play in this process. Nonetheless, screening for readmission of Timorese national police officers will need to accelerate in order to meet security needs during the elections.

As we all know, justice and accountability remain key factors for lasting peace. The EU remains concerned about the lack of progress in the judicial system and the fight against impunity. The overall capacity of the judicial system to deal with the number of arrests is still inadequate. Reports of intimidation of witnesses damage confidence in the rule of law amongst the Timorese people.

Earlier this month, the Chairman of the Commission for Truth and Friendship announced that the Commission was ready to commence the truth-seeking phase of its investigations. Seventy people suspected of human rights violations during the 1999 independence referendum events will be invited to share information from February to June 2007. We hope the Commission will prove to be an effective mechanism for dealing with the past and for building bridges to the future.

The EU supports the Secretary-General's recommendation for the extension of the UNMIT mandate for 12 months with a particular focus on maintaining public security before, during and after the elections.

Much has been achieved; much remains to be done. Most important, the Timorese themselves have to campaign for national reconciliation. This responsibility unites all political parties, the Catholic Church and civil society. It is an essential task for the Timorese people to undertake. The international community can only encourage and support this process.

The European Union and its member States have for years been major development partners with Timor-Leste. Since 1999, the EU member States and the European Community have disbursed more than €600 million to the population of Timor-Leste. European Community support amounting to €12 million so far

currently focuses on making an urgent response to humanitarian and peacebuilding needs, notably to support inclusive political dialogue and quick-impact youth employment schemes, as well as on longer-term needs such as institution-building and rural development. This assistance will take on a long-term perspective now that Timor-Leste benefits from the European Development Fund. The nomination of a special envoy and the upgrading of the European Community office in Dili into a full-fledged delegation further demonstrate the EU's willingness to strengthen its cooperation with Timor-Leste.

I would like to conclude by expressing our appreciation for the efforts of the Government of Timor-Leste and the determination of the Timorese people to build a viable, just and democratic State. The European Union is committed to remaining a reliable partner in assisting Timorese efforts to achieve long-term stability and sustainable economic development, in close coordination with other bilateral and multilateral donors.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): I would like to extend to His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, a very cordial and warm greeting. The Prime Minister's presence at this debate reflects the great significance that the Government of Timor-Leste attaches to the role that the United Nations has played in his country.

I also take this opportunity to commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, and all the staff of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), for their commitment and excellent work in Timor-Leste.

Portugal concurs with the statement that the representative of Germany just made on behalf of the European Union. But in my national capacity, I would like to say the following.

Portugal agrees with the Secretary-General's analysis that the overall situation in Timor-Leste has improved, although the security situation remains volatile and the political climate fluid.

From our perspective, the continued commitment of the international community and, in particular, of this Council, remains critical to securing lasting peace

and democratic stability in Timor-Leste. We must assure the Timorese people that the United Nations will support them for as long as necessary. Next week, the Security Council will have the opportunity to send that message if the Council wishes to endorse the extension of UNMIT's mandate for an additional period of 12 months, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

In the past months, the Timorese leadership has undertaken commendable efforts towards national dialogue and political reconciliation. Many challenges remain to be faced as the country prepares itself for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.

As there cannot be true reconciliation without justice and accountability for crimes, security and justice are essential to ensure that the elections are held in a peaceful and stable climate, so that the results are democratically accepted by all political actors in Timor-Leste. UNMIT's assistance and good offices throughout the electoral process are needed and encouraged. In that regard, allow me to refer to the recommendations of the Independent Electoral Certification Team.

The Portuguese Government also supports the strengthening of UNMIT with an additional operational police capacity of two operational platoons, consisting of 72 elements, to address security challenges during the electoral and immediate post-electoral periods. We are ready and willing to contribute to that endeavour.

Healing the wounds of the past within Timorese society is another challenge. Helping the Timorese Government to restore people's confidence in the judicial system and in the national defence and security institutions and promoting human rights is of fundamental importance. Outstanding grievances — in particular within the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) — can be overcome by the Timorese authorities with UNMIT's help and in close collaboration with international partners. The signature of a trilateral memorandum of understanding among the Timorese Government, the United Nations and Australia on the provision of assistance to Timor-Leste — which establishes a Trilateral Cooperation Forum — and the signature of a military technical arrangement between the United Nations and Australia are good examples of such collaboration. We hope that they will achieve the desired results.

The situation of internally displaced persons and their security in the areas of return are also of particular concern. In our opinion, it is essential to create the conditions for their return and for their resettlement in their local communities.

Portugal has always maintained that the Timorese should be the masters of their choices regarding their collective future as a nation. Whereas there continues to be a clear need for multilateral and bilateral assistance and support, the international community must be careful to provide them in a manner consistent with the sovereign options and cultural identity of Timor-Leste. As underlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/50), our common efforts can be successful only if they enjoy full ownership and acceptance on the part of the Timorese stakeholders.

Portugal will remain committed to the consolidation of peace, democracy, full independence and development in Timor-Leste. We are fully confident that the Timorese people, through their efforts and determination, will be able to unite in a collective effort towards those goals.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): I congratulate the Slovak presidency on the convening of this open debate on Timor-Leste. We thank Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta for honouring the Council with his presence today, and we thank him for his comprehensive briefing. We also thank Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

The improvement in the overall situation in Timor-Leste since the crisis in May last year is a welcome development. We laud the national leadership and other actors for the steps that they have taken to rebuild cooperative relations among stakeholders. The establishment of UNMIT and the continued presence of international forces have also contributed positively to the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in Timor-Leste. The general positive outlook of the international community provides the necessary momentum to enable the country to recover from what we see as a momentary bump on the road towards stable nationhood.

Institutionalization of the political process is necessary to achieve national reconciliation and political stability. We support the efforts to ensure that the first post-independence general election, to be held in April this year, will be peaceful and orderly. We believe that effort should also be made to establish a sustainable socio-economic development framework for Timor-Leste. We are glad to note the assistance being provided by bilateral and multilateral partners to build the capacities of the Government of Timor-Leste.

At the Twelfth Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, held in Cebu early this year, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta was able to have a meaningful exchange of views with the leaders of the region on possible assistance to Timor-Leste. The Philippines is assisting the country, particularly in the area of human resources development. The Philippines, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, is currently working on several projects for Timor-Leste involving training courses in the fields of education and food processing. The transfer of human resources development expertise in the areas of local governance, rural development, community development and national budgeting is also being explored.

In addition, the Philippines is working with Timor-Leste in facilitating the admission of Timorese students to Philippine colleges and universities, as well as in providing vocational training. We hope that those efforts will aid in strengthening Timor-Leste's human resources to meet the growing requirements and challenges of regionalism, globalization and technological progress.

The Philippine commitment to Timor-Leste's nation-building is also shown through our deployment of police personnel to UNMIT. We have successively participated in the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) and the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL). To date, the Philippines is the fourth largest contingent of UNMIT, composed largely of police. Almost half of the Philippines' contribution of police personnel to United Nations missions is in UNMIT. We are also pleased to note that the United Nations Police Commissioner is Rodolfo Tor, Director of the Philippine National Police.

To ensure that the momentum is maintained in bringing Timor-Leste back, continued engagement by the international community, particularly the United Nations, is required. UNMIT has thus far made substantial progress in implementing its mandate, particularly in the areas of transitional law enforcement, police reform, elections, good offices and cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners. We should continue to give full support to UNMIT.

It is in that regard that the Philippines supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that UNMIT's mandate be extended for a period of 12 months as an important signal of the sustained commitment of the United Nations to Timor-Leste. Given the security requirements for the elections, we also support the request by the Government of Timor-Leste for the deployment of an additional formed police unit to UNMIT.

Timor-Leste is a good example of a successful international enterprise in nation-building, engineered through the combined cooperative efforts of the United Nations, regional players and partners. When the success story of Timor-Leste is written, it will be a tale of the courage of the country's people and its leaders, the generosity of the United Nations and the international community, and the triumph of their coordinated efforts to assist a country in distress. Timor-Leste could very well be a model of best practices and lessons for countries in conflict, and we should support it.

The President: I now call on the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): First, I should like to thank Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta and Special Representative Atul Khare for their presentations. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Timor-Leste (S/2007/50) and note our appreciation for the valuable contribution that Mr. Khare has made in the short time that he has held his position.

New Zealand acknowledges the many efforts that have been made over the past year by the Timorese people, their leaders and the international community to return Timor-Leste to a more secure and stable path. New Zealand has participated actively in those efforts through its contributions to the international security forces and to the United Nations Mission and through bilateral channels. New Zealand's contribution to the

international security forces currently consists of a light infantry company numbering 142 personnel, involved in patrol and security operations in and about Dili. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that while the overall situation has improved, the security situation remains volatile. We consider that the functions being provided by the international security forces remain essential, and that coordination and cooperation between those forces and UNMIT is working well.

New Zealand strongly supports extending UNMIT's mandate for 12 months. It is important to signal an intention to sustain the commitment of the United Nations to Timor-Leste over the long term, both for practical reasons and for the reassuring message that would give to the people of Timor-Leste, a commitment that Prime Minister Ramos-Horta has asked the United Nations to make. The bulk of the work required to implement the mandate set out in Security Council resolution 1704 (2006) still lies ahead. UNMIT needs to be able to make progress in those elements of its mandate that have a longer time-frame. We are also concerned that over two thirds of UNMIT civilian staff positions have not been filled, and we believe that the initial six-month mandate was a contributing factor.

Looking ahead, New Zealand supports the Secretary-General's intention to report back to the Security Council following the elections, with possible adjustments to UNMIT's mandate and strength.

The forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections are an immediate focus. All parties in Timor-Leste should ensure that the electoral processes and framework meet international standards of credibility. UNMIT and the wider international community have an important guiding and supporting role to play. New Zealand is assisting in a variety of ways, including through the provision of voter education and media training assistance from the New Zealand Electoral Commission and through the United Nations Development Programme's multi-donor support programme.

New Zealand urges UNMIT and the Government of Timor-Leste to progress the comprehensive review of the security sector as a high priority. Security sector reform is an integral part of strengthening Timor-Leste's State and Government institutions and would help to improve the maintenance of stability and law

and order, as well as restore public and international confidence. We believe that, in order to succeed, the process needs to be inclusive and involve all actors, especially civil society. The review must encompass all aspects of the Timorese security sector: the Falintil-Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL), the Ministry of Defence, the Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the Ministry of the Interior. The basic roles and functions of all those bodies must be questioned and evaluated to ensure that Timor-Leste's security needs can be met now and in the future.

Similarly, addressing the significant challenges in the justice sector is another high priority. New Zealand supports the Secretary-General's proposed comprehensive judicial review. Every effort needs to be made to counter perceptions of impunity. That applies also to the events of the past year, and the follow-up to the Commission of Inquiry report.

I offer our encouragement to Prime Minister Ramos-Horta and to the Government and the people of Timor-Leste. Our friends in Timor-Leste, especially the leaders and parliamentarians, have the primary responsibility for taking the country forward in a way that promotes trust and respect. Mr. Khare and UNMIT have a crucial and supporting role, and we call for every effort to be made to provide UNMIT with the staff and tools needed to do the job.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Brazil, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the Slovakian delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of February as well as for presiding over this debate on Timor-Leste.

We are pleased to have Prime-Minister José Ramos-Horta here in the Council. I wish to thank him for his very informative statement on the situation in Timor-Leste. My delegation is also grateful to Mr. Atul Khare for his presentation and for the dedicated efforts he and his United Nations team, under his leadership, have made towards the success of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in such a short time span.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste is a source of both hope and concern. On one hand, it describes a series of relevant and

innovative reconciliation initiatives, which, together with the reduction in violent episodes, unveils possible scenarios of stability and sustainable development. On the other hand, the report warns that the real causes of the conflict have not been dissipated — far from it — as the public security situation remains dangerously volatile.

For Brazil, Timor-Leste constitutes an important issue on the agenda of the Security Council. Our commitment to our sister Portuguese-speaking nation has been unwavering. This is illustrated by cooperation projects we are developing with the Timorese authorities in key sectors, such as defence, education and justice. We would do more were it not for our budgetary constraints. Also, the Brazilian contribution to UNMIT, as to all previous missions, testifies to our engagement in assisting Timor-Leste to achieve political stability and a sustainable path to development, together with democracy, justice and good governance.

The multidimensional nature of UNMIT's mandate augurs well for the country. The Timorese situation requires a mission that is able to perform the tasks of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as fostering development. As my delegation has stated on many occasions, peacekeeping and peacebuilding should not be seen as successive steps, but rather as basic pillars of the same endeavour.

Brazil is pleased with the recent reconciliation initiatives carried out in the country. We believe that the Timorese people will find a lasting and sustainable solution to their problems that can ensure the sovereignty of the State and the right to the social and economic development of its people.

Nevertheless, all must be aware that national reconciliation is an arduous and slow process that will require strong and continuous support from the international community in the coming years. In this process, the restructuring of the security and defence sectors and the strengthening of the justice system remain both urgent and indispensable.

In that regard, Brazil pledges to continue its support for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) programme for the consolidation of a justice system as defined by the Constitution: a civil-law matrix that employs both official languages, Tetun and Portuguese.

The task of rebuilding the national police, which is being carried out by the United Nations police, deserves careful attention. We must avoid any recurrence of the mistakes that allowed the disintegration of the police force in the wake of the turmoil of last April and May. The process of screening police personnel must be closely monitored, and the ensuing training at the police academy must be rigorous and professional.

In that respect, the Brazilian delegation endorses the request of the Secretary-General for the deployment of an additional formed police unit.

However, we are concerned at the limited number of military liaison officers. There are only 33 officers to liaise on security issues with the international security forces and the UNMIT police — including during the electoral period — and to provide the much-needed capacity to set in motion the Trilateral Coordination Forum and the military technical arrangement.

Brazil would like to acknowledge with satisfaction the conclusion of the trilateral agreement between the United Nations, the Timorese Government and the international security forces, as well as the agreement between the United Nations and Australia. Those are certainly further steps towards ensuring stability in the country.

Nonetheless, we continue to believe that the original option of a small military contingent under United Nations command and control would be the most suitable solution, as suggested in paragraph 117 of document S/2006/628.

We hope that all interested stakeholders will stand in support of another vital institution of the Timorese State — the armed forces — in a way that will prevent duplication of functions and ensure close and productive cooperation. Consistent, professional training is required, and UNMIT could play an important role in coordinating such a task.

We welcome the actions led by various institutions of the Timorese State with a view to investigating and bringing to justice all those responsible for the criminal acts perpetrated in April and May 2006. Brazil's stance is to support the decision of the Timorese institutions to apply the law without impunity.

General elections are in the offing. All parties concerned must strive for free, fair and transparent elections. Precautions must be taken to ensure the safety and security of the Timorese voters and the personnel involved in the process. The international community should support the elections within the boundaries and institutions established by the Government. Brazil is willing to shoulder its share.

In paragraph 57 of his report (S/2007/50), the Secretary-General correctly stresses that “the underlying causes of the crisis can be fully addressed in the longer term”. Structural poverty and associated deprivations, including urban unemployment, must be tackled with long-term investments in infrastructure and capacity-building. Investments could bear fruit if it can be ensured that the revenues stemming from oil and gas resources are put to good use, in accordance with the needs and development priorities of the Timorese people.

The Brazilian delegation encourages the adoption of the “compact” between Timor-Leste and the international community for coordinating Government, United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral contributors to priority programmes, as set out in resolution 1704 (2006).

Brazil believes that the presence of the United Nations in Timor-Leste is essential to address the central challenges of the present crisis in its political, institutional and security dimensions.

The international community should pay heed to the social, political and economic reintegration of displaced people. Endowing those Timorese with the necessary means to regain their normal lives is an essential part of ensuring Timor-Leste’s future stability.

In view of the continued need of Timor-Leste to count on the cooperation of the international community, in particular the United Nations system, at this early stage of its nation-building process, Brazil strongly supports the proposals of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of UNMIT for 12 months and to reinforce it during the electoral period.

National reconciliation, humanitarian assistance, the rule of law and the development of human resources are key priorities for Timor-Leste as it paves the way towards greater stability, sovereignty, sustainable development and democracy.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Mr. Khare to respond to the comments made and questions raised.

Mr. Khare: I would like to thank all speakers. I am particularly grateful for the kind words addressed to me and my team. I am also grateful for the suggestions that have been made to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our interventions in Timor-Leste with a view to ensuring the success of the operations of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). These include a continuing focus on the forthcoming elections, with the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Electoral Certification Team; justice and accountability, particularly the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry; improving security and expediting the reconstitution of the Timorese national police; and making progress on the comprehensive review of the security sector. We will, of course, continue to work on those issues as our highest priority.

A few questions were raised regarding the compact. The compact in Timor-Leste is seen as a resource coordination tool, rather than as one for resource mobilization. As a first step, now that the priorities for the next two years have been identified by the Government, an operational framework will be developed in consultation with the line ministries and partners. The intention is to ensure that the operationalization of the compact builds on existing mechanisms, so as to ensure effectiveness and avoid duplication.

It is, indeed, true that UNMIT is currently operating with a fairly high civilian vacancy rate owing to a variety of factors, including the specialized job profiles required for many posts. I have made recruitment one of my personal priorities. I am delighted that, as a special case, some areas of responsibility have been delegated to UNMIT by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in order to expedite recruitment. However, I believe that the extension of the mandate for a further 12 months will be critical to our efforts to address the challenge of high civilian vacancy rates, as was, indeed, pointed out by His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

I will return to Timor-Leste tomorrow, confident of the support of the Council. In turn, I would like to assure the Council that we will do our very best so that Timor-Leste can be assisted to become a shining example of long-lasting success. I am certainly not a pessimist. But neither should we be overly optimistic, as we were a few years ago when considering the downsizing of previous operations in Timor-Leste. I believe that what is required is a sense of cautious optimism — a confidence that the leaders and the people of Timor-Leste are committed to peace, stability

and development. But converting their commitment into real, concrete outcomes will require the continued engagement of the Council and the international community.

The President: I thank Mr. Khare for his additional comments and the clarifications he provided.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.