



IRELAND

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. Mr. Paul Kavanagh
Permanent Representative

AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON
“THE SITUATION IN TIMOR-LESTE”

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Check against delivery

PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
885 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017 TELEPHONE 212 421-6934 FAX 212 752-4726
ireland@un.int

Mr President,

First I wish to associate Ireland with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland welcomes this opportunity to address the Security Council during this open debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. We endorse the Secretary-General's acknowledgment in his comprehensive report of the remarkable progress made by the leaders and people of Timor-Leste since 2006.

As a country which has also struggled with the challenges which face a small newly-independent nation, Ireland recognises the magnitude of Timor-Leste's accomplishments, and we commend it for its many achievements. I am delighted to acknowledge the presence here of President Ramos-Horta. His recovery from the attack of February 2008 and his subsequent leadership have played no small part in the maintenance of peace and stability in Timor-Leste. I would like to acknowledge the role of Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão and leader of the Opposition Mari Alkatiri who have displayed true leadership and patriotism during many challenging times.

Ireland has actively supported the people of Timor-Leste during their struggle and through the process of transition to independence. We continue to be actively engaged there. Following the vote independence in 1999, the focus of our support was through the deployment of Irish troops serving as members of three successive UN

missions, INTERFET, UNTAET and UNMISSET. Alongside this, Ireland participated in UN and EU observation missions of the referendum in 1999 and the elections in 2001 and 2002.

Ireland's multi-year priority development programme in Timor-Leste, managed through our Mission in Dili, has focused on efforts to promote post-conflict reconstruction through good governance, strengthening democracy and the justice sector, public sector development, promoting human rights and gender equality, as well as supporting the development of a strong civil society.

Under Ireland's new Conflict Resolution Initiative, we have added a further dimension to our support with the full agreement and encouragement of the Government of Timor-Leste. The purpose of this new engagement is to assist Timor-Leste in its transition from conflict to peace, with a particular focus on peacemaking, peace-building and lesson sharing.

This initiative is being led by our first Roving Ambassador for Conflict Resolution and Special Envoy to Timor-Leste, Dame Nuala O'Loan. I am delighted to acknowledge her presence here today for this important discussion.

Ireland's Conflict Resolution engagement in Timor-Leste, in close cooperation with Irish Aid's development programme there, is designed to address key issues directly related to sources of fragility. Initiatives taken so far include support for structured high level dialogue amongst Timor's leaders, a programme on Peace, Remembrance and Reconciliation and advice on security sector reform. The need to address security

sector reform, and the respective roles and responsibilities of the F-FDTL and PNTL, have rightly been acknowledged in this and earlier reports by the Secretary General as absolutely crucial to peace and stability. We also plan to launch an early warning and response system based in civil society.

I am pleased to report that our Special Envoy has had many very constructive discussions with the leaders of Timor-Leste. These discussions have demonstrated the shared desire to avoid further upheaval and to build on the progress made. I would like also to note our appreciation for the advice and support for Dame Nuala O'Loan's engagement offered by Special Representative Atul Khare and the UNMIT team who continue to do an outstanding job there.

My Government's Conflict Resolution Initiative has a specific focus on lesson-sharing from experiences garnered from the Northern Ireland Peace Process. The experiences and insights brought to bear by Special Envoy O'Loan, drawn from her former role as Northern Ireland's first Police Ombudsman during a critical transition period, are a particularly valuable asset regarding the current issues to be addressed in Timor-Leste's own transition to the full resumption of policing powers by the PNTL and the eventual withdrawal of UNPOL. We fully endorse the views of the Secretary General that this process must be undertaken with great care and prudence, carefully assessing the fulfilment of all the critical benchmarks. The role of the SSR experts within UNMIT, which Ireland is supporting directly, and the support of the SSR unit in DPKO will be vitally important in this process. We, of course, welcome the Secretary General's latest Report to the Council and look forward to early action by the Council in response to it.

Mr President,

Ireland has also launched a lesson-sharing process between organisations working on gender issues in Northern Ireland, Liberia and Timor-Leste. The cross-learning process on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on ‘Women, Peace and Security’ is designed to facilitate the sharing of experiences with a view to encouraging best practice and to act as a catalyst for discussions on effective implementation. In addition to a meeting of representatives from these areas held in Dublin last November, a Conflict Resolution Unit project team recently carried out missions to Monrovia and Dili. The outcome of this process will also feed into the development of Ireland’s own National Action Plan on Resolution 1325.

Mr President,

Ireland is encouraged by the progress made by Timor-Leste towards overcoming the obstacles and issues that the country has faced in recent years. We are committed to ongoing engagement in Timor-Leste, with the Government of Timor-Leste, with civil society, and with the UN and EU, in support of the positive efforts being made by the Timorese people to build this young State in a way that will enable it to realize its full potential.

In this context, Mr President, I commend the Council’s continuing attention to this urgent and vital issue. Thank you.