

27 September 2002

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
on the Admission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
as a new Member State of the United Nations**

It is my great honour and privilege to welcome, on behalf of the General Assembly, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as a new member of the United Nations.

Only a few months ago we congratulated the historically first elected president of Timor-Leste - H. E. Xanana Gusmao and participated in the celebration of the Independence of Timor-Leste on May 20, 2002. I was happy to attend the Independence Ceremony personally and appreciated the opportunity of a short conversation with H. E. Minister of Foreign Affairs Jose Ramos-Horta. As a former human rights activist and a fighter for the independence of my own country I bow in respect and I salute the courage and determination of the President, Minister of Foreign Affairs and other East-Timorese whose struggle brought about the success we can celebrate today.

Timor-Leste has been the first independent state and nation that emerged in the 21st Century. We all have watched with admiration how the people of Timor-Leste progressed towards their independence.

We all remember the developments that led to the country's independence. It was not an easy way, but the country and its people succeeded. I am very proud and happy that the United Nations was an integral part of this whole process.

United Nations peace-building mission to East Timor (UNAMET) and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), despite numerous difficulties and barriers, confirmed the right way of the United Nations participation in helping a smooth transition to the status of an independent, sovereign state.

The peaceful transition process in Timor-Leste was a prime example of the Security Council and the United Nations ability to respond promptly and decisively to pressing issues.

Timor Leste's independence, however, does not mark the end of the United Nations involvement. To the contrary, it is a signal of the beginning of an important, new phase to consolidate the achievements and to build on them. The establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) is one of the examples of such engagement.

The United Nations and its Member States should be prepared to strengthen their support to the region and to the Government of Timor-Leste in addressing the many remaining issues that need

to be resolved. Timor-Leste would, for example, need a fully functioning infrastructure to enable it to earn itself sufficient revenue not to need to rely on continuous aid.

We wish the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and its people, peace, prosperity and every success in their future and warmly welcome Timor-Leste to the United Nations Organization.