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4114th Meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in East Timor.

The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Expression of welcome to the new Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

The President: I should like, at the outset of the meeting, to extend, on behalf of the Council, a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Mr. Jean-David Levitte. We look forward to cooperating with him in the Council's work and to his contribution to our work.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in East Timor

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Indonesia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, 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.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Thayeb (Indonesia) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

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

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

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I give him the floor.

Mr. Annabi: This briefing will cover the period since the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, briefed the Council on 3 February. I will cover, successively, the economic and social situation, the maintenance of law and order and the security situation, as well as the situation of refugees in West Timor.

Since Mr. Vieira de Mello's briefing on 3 February, there have been important developments, including the signing, on 21 February, of an agreement between the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the World Bank concerning a large community empowerment project. Other developments have been, of course, the formal hand-over of responsibility from the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) to the military component of UNTAET on 23 February and the visit by President Wahid of Indonesia on 29 February. The Secretary-General has already briefed the Council, on 29 February, on his own visit to East Timor in the middle of February. There have been other high-level visitors to East Timor, including the President of Portugal and the Prime Minister of Ireland.

Economic and social conditions in East Timor remain the main and primary concern. Very high unemployment and high prices continue to pose a threat to social peace. The situation is reflected in the very large number of applicants who respond to UNTAET's recruitment efforts.

A number of efforts are under way to create employment opportunities. These efforts include 18 quick-impact projects undertaken by UNTAET for the repair of local infrastructure in advance of the World Bank's much larger community empowerment project, under which the communities will manage their own rehabilitation projects. Additional projects are being undertaken by bilateral donors. At the end of February, UNTAET was providing stipends or salaries to more than 2,500 civil servants, a number that will grow quickly as a result of the recruitment of new personnel. A fast-track programme in education has also grown rapidly and now involves some 7,000 teachers, reaching over 130,000 schoolchildren.

At present, cash contributions to the UNTAET Trust Fund amount to a little over \$23 million, out of an

estimated total of \$43 million that will be needed for the East Timorese administration during the year 2000.

The community empowerment project is of particular interest. While it deals essentially with the rehabilitation of infrastructure and support for income-generating activities, it provides at the same time for the strengthening of the capacity of subdistricts and villages, through elected representatives, to determine their priorities and to manage the implementation of the projects they decide on.

During the very important visit of President Wahid of Indonesia to East Timor, it was agreed that the Government of Indonesia would work together with UNTAET to facilitate the rebuilding of public records and archives, the return of cultural artifacts and the reopening of cross-border trade. President Wahid also agreed to the establishment of a land corridor linking the Oecussi enclave to the main part of East Timor. On 4 March, the Indonesian air carrier Merpati resumed commercial flights between Indonesia and East Timor. An Australian regional airline has also been operating flights between Dili and Darwin since the beginning of the year. President Wahid also confirmed his Government's agreement to the establishment by UNTAET of a liaison office in Kupang, West Timor — an office which actually opened today.

Since the Secretary-General's report to the Council at the end of January, UNTAET has passed legislation approved by the National Consultative Council on a number of important matters. Customs and immigration arrangements have been put in place and a border service established to administer those arrangements. A provisional tax regime has been established, with taxes and duties levied on imports, exports and the domestic production of goods. Collection of import duties commenced yesterday, 20 March. Regulations on the licensing and supervision of banks, on public procurement and on the organization of the courts have also been issued.

Turning to the law and order situation, the number of major incidents inside East Timor has recently declined. Law enforcement, however, is still weak, and Timorese communities and groups have in some cases attempted to enforce law and order directly. UNTAET has cooperated with some of these groups informally, so long as they act within the law; however, I must report that there have been some abuses. UNTAET's civilian police is still building up its strength; as of today, it has a strength of 933, which will grow to close to 1,000 by the end of this week, out of an authorized strength of 1,640. Yesterday, the first 50 Timorese were recruited to the newly established Police

Assistance Group. The creation of the Police Assistance Group is an interim measure pending the development of an indigenous police force. The Group comprises former local police personnel, who will assist the United Nations police but who will have no executive powers, which will continue to be exercised by UNTAET. As for the new East Timor police, I am happy to report that the first group of recruits will begin a four-month training course next Monday, on 27 March.

UNTAET has issued a regulation establishing a panel of Timorese and foreign judges to try war crimes and crimes against humanity. Close to 300 murder cases, involving 627 victims, are currently under investigation. Most of these relate to the period between late April and September last year. UNTAET is currently negotiating with the Indonesian Government an agreement on cooperation in such cases, including the exchange of evidence and access to witnesses.

Turning to the security situation, the handover from INTERFET to UNTAET's military component at the end of February went very smoothly. However, within a week of the handover the military component of UNTAET was tested, as had in fact been widely expected. The test came through increased incursions of pro-autonomy militia members from West Timor. In one such incident, on 5 March, a villager was killed and another was wounded. UNTAET troops searched the area and on the following day, 6 March, found a group of five armed men in a house. Four of them managed to escape after an exchange of fire; one was captured and interrogated. There have also been a number of cases in which weapons were found on refugees returning from West Timor. UNTAET has therefore instituted stricter controls in that regard.

UNTAET has reported that, according to information available to it, elements of the Indonesian armed forces continued to tolerate and even support the militias in West Timor. On 9 and 10 March, the Force Commander of UNTAET together with the Political Director of the mission visited Jakarta to discuss these incursions from West Timor with the Indonesian authorities. They received firm assurances that stern action would be taken against militia activity, including as regards military training in and outside the refugee settlements in West Timor.

As of yesterday, a total of 7,310 United Nations troops were deployed in East Timor. The remaining troops are scheduled to arrive by the end of this month, which will bring the total strength of the military

component of UNTAET to 8,600. In addition, UNTAET's military component includes 200 military observers, 198 of whom are now present in the territory.

Turning to the refugee situation, a little more than 153,000 refugees have by now returned to East Timor, most of them returning from West Timor. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that approximately 50,000 more would wish to return. The total remaining refugee population in West Timor is currently estimated at approximately 100,000 people. The Government of Indonesia and the High Commissioner for Refugees are conducting a census to obtain a more exact number. Primary and secondary movements of returnees are managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) from the refugee camps through points of entry to final destination in East Timor. While there have been incidents of violence against returnees, for the most part the return has been effected with minimal incident, and the reintegration of refugees into their original communities has been generally smooth.

It is worth noting that persons who supported autonomy have also been among those who returned. Under arrangements made by UNTAET, Mr. Joanico Belo, a senior militia leader, visited Baucau and Los Palos from 9 to 12 March to see for himself the conditions awaiting returning refugees. He was well received wherever he went and held meetings with local leaders, who assured him that refugees returning to these areas would be safe, while those accused of crimes would be dealt with in accordance with fair and transparent procedures.

In a similar development, six former Timorese members of the Indonesian armed forces visited Aileu last weekend to discuss the return of 59 former soldiers and their families. They received assurances from the local leaders that they were welcome, so long as they were returning not as soldiers but as East Timorese willing to participate and assist in the reconstruction of the country.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, supported by UNTAET, has asked Indonesia to adopt a comprehensive strategy and to allow the refugees to decide whether to return to East Timor or to be resettled in Indonesia. To encourage returns, UNTAET has suggested that Indonesia should publicly commit itself to paying the pensions and benefits accrued by those East Timorese who had worked for the Indonesian civil service, even if they return to East Timor.

Mr. Vieira de Mello is scheduled to visit Jakarta again next week to follow up on some of these issues with the authorities in Jakarta, including of course regarding the security situation at the border with West Timor.

UNTAET has been giving thought to what would be the most appropriate sequence of steps as East Timor moves towards independence. Rather than trying to establish a fixed timetable, Mr. Vieira de Mello is focusing, as requested by the Secretary-General, on objective benchmarks that will have to be achieved in this process leading towards independence. This is of course a complex and politically sensitive undertaking, which will involve close consultation with the East Timorese. Mr. Vieira de Mello has reported that this consultative process has in fact begun in an informal manner. We will of course keep the Security Council informed as this process unfolds.

The President: I thank Mr. Annabi for his useful briefing, and now I will give the floor to the members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I warmly thank Mr. Annabi for the update he has provided us this morning. I think we will all want to pay tribute to what Special Representative Vieira de Mello has achieved so far in East Timor and to commend the whole team of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) for what they are achieving there.

I think it is a sign of our confidence in that team and that leadership that we assume that, in spite of the difficulties in East Timor, things are going steadily and inexorably in the right direction towards a stable independence. But the briefing we have had this morning and news we have had over the last couple of weeks, I think, remind us that there are still some problems, some quite serious problems in East Timor. I just want to cover briefly three of them.

The first is the increasing criminality in East Timor. We are all aware of it. It stems from an anarchical situation in the recent past. The United Kingdom hopes that the deployment of the rapid-reaction unit will help with that particular difficulty. We pay tribute to Portugal for leading on this front, and we welcome the stricter controls in the whole area of police activity that Mr. Annabi spoke about this morning. We also welcome the opening of the East Timorese police training school and the establishment of the Police Assistance Group,

which are both steps in the right direction. We hope that these moves will help UNTAET bring unofficial security groups, as they are called, under its control.

But my second point, I think, is even more serious. This is the continued reports of militia activity in East Timor. The recent outbreaks of violence actually sound like the worst we have had since the deployment of the International Force in East Timor last autumn. There have been press reports — perhaps assumptions, maybe evidence — that the Indonesian armed forces (TNI) have been to some extent involved in these outbreaks of violence. The Assistant Secretary-General said to us this morning that it seems that elements of the TNI continue to tolerate or even support militia activity in East Timor.

It is very good to hear that UNTAET has pressed this issue vigorously in Jakarta. The Indonesian Government are clearly aware of some of what is going on. They have made it clear that they do not support and will not countenance continued or residual complicity between the TNI and the militia, but we must make sure that they follow up on their promises.

I think the Council this morning should make it clear that we find continued militia activity and any residual complicity with it on the part of the TNI completely unacceptable. UNTAET must be allowed to do its job and bring this province through to independence without the unwelcome attentions of those in West Timor who still feel that they can affect the situation, or who indeed oppose the Jakarta Government's interest in creating stability in East Timor.

My third point is about the disbursement of funds. We are a little concerned at the slow rate of disbursements from the United Nations trust fund. In stark contrast with this is the availability of funds from assessed contributions for the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. We would be grateful if the Secretariat could shed some light on the reasons for this delay in disbursements from the United Nations trust fund.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): I want to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his very sobering briefing. It is a reminder to all of us that even though East Timor is not on the front pages, as it was last summer, I think it continues to be a very difficult mission, and I think Mr. Annabi's briefing underscores the need to remind ourselves of the difficult job we have given the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and of the need to commend the members of

UNTAET, and in particular Special Representative Vieira de Mello for his leadership and his determination to ensure that UNTAET is successful. It is obviously a very difficult situation and needs the continued involvement of this body and the Security Council. So I commend the President for holding this open meeting. I think it is important to shine light repeatedly and openly on the problems that are occurring in East Timor and to continually discuss how we as the body that has given UNTAET the job that it is struggling to do can assist UNTAET in this effort.

We are certainly deeply disturbed by the reports that we have heard this morning, as well as others, of the Indonesian military's continued support for the militias operating in West Timor refugee camps and along the East-West border. I think we have to realize that the Indonesian military as an institution has done little to address the recent militia attacks against United Nations personnel and East Timorese civilians. We understand that there is evidence that elements of the Indonesian armed forces (TNI) may be supplying arms and equipment to the militias as well.

I think this is obviously of deep concern to Council members. It is obviously unacceptable. It should be strongly condemned. I think that it would be useful for the Council to address this particular issue in another session in the very near future and see what steps we could take to try to address this very serious situation.

We, the United States, and, obviously, other members of the Council have repeatedly urged the Indonesian Government to disarm and disband the militia groups. We have been given assurances that these steps would be taken; yet we have yet to see decisive action. We are deeply disturbed by the increase in militia attacks against United Nations peacekeepers.

We call on the Indonesian Government to fulfil its responsibility and put an end to all militia activity along the East Timor border. In order to resolve the refugee problem once and for all and to put a stop to incursions across the border, Indonesia must disarm and disband the hard-core militias and move them, especially their leaders, away from Timor. The Government must also reassign remaining East Timorese members of the TNI to other parts of Indonesia and end any TNI collaboration with the militias.

These are not new ideas. Ambassador Holbrooke made these very points upon returning from Indonesia in

November of last year and repeated them during the 3 February briefing to the Council by the Special Representative, Mr. Vieira de Mello. More than enough time has elapsed for the Council to see concrete action.

There is some positive news. We welcome the recent rise in return numbers. But we also urge Indonesia to meet its stated deadlines for ending support to the East Timorese refugees currently in West Timor and for closing the camps by the end of June.

The United States has done its part in trying to help East Timor. We have provided contributions for a wide range of needs, including humanitarian needs and the needs of displaced persons. This has been our first priority. We spent over \$20 million in 1999 on relevant humanitarian assistance. This year, we expect an additional \$49 million in multilateral and bilateral humanitarian assistance, including aid to East Timorese refugees still in the camps in East Timor. I think we all need to heed the calls we heard this morning to provide adequately for refugees, and I would encourage all Member States to do their fair share, as well.

The United States is supporting the multilateral effort in East Timor, with contributions to the UNTAET Trust Fund and to the World Bank reconstruction trust fund totalling \$4.5 million. We believe that the UNTAET Trust Fund is vital to ensuring that basic public services are fully restored in East Timor and that the East Timorese develop the skills to provide those services on a continuing basis. We also believe that the World Bank, with its trust fund and its coordinating role, will play a vital part in building East Timor's long-term, self-sustaining economy.

The United States will also spend about \$20 million this fiscal year in expanding United States Agency for International Development projects in East Timor. These include coffee-growing projects and a variety of quick-impact projects that we believe will help generate significant employment opportunities. These and other programmes will help address East Timor's urgent needs for forensic human rights training, private sector projects and those programmes that will focus on civil society and the institutions critical to democratic government.

As we heard today, internal security is another immediate priority in East Timor, and the United States will increase its civil contingent in support of UNTAET and, consistent with our laws and regulations, help establish local police capabilities.

In closing, I would note that the UNTAET Trust Fund currently has only a small portion of the money pledged to it in Tokyo and that donor pledges are only slowly being converted into real assistance to address East Timor's burning needs. We would certainly echo the call of the Secretary-General upon his return from East Timor in urging donors to get aid into East Timor quickly. The United Nations has put an enormous amount of resources into trying to help the people of East Timor, and unless we give the international community the resources to complete that job and provide the resources to the people of East Timor, we will not be able to meet the expectations that we in this body have created.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to say, Sir, how deeply touched I was by your words of welcome. I sincerely thank you. It is a pleasure for me to join the United Nations family again, for the third time in my career, and it is an honour for me to sit beside ambassadors who, on a daily basis, contribute their wisdom and experience to this Organization. Like my outstanding predecessor and friend, Alain Dejammet, I shall listen to everyone, pay attention to the concerns of all and remain ready to enter into discussion and dialogue.

It is good that our Council is again addressing the question of the situation in East Timor. This is a particularly difficult situation, but for the United Nations it is a mission that could become a model. We have read the report of the Secretary-General and listened attentively to the information provided by Mr. Hédi Annabi, whom I should like to thank. In the spirit of this interactive briefing, I should like, with your permission, Sir, to ask him a few questions relating to three issues.

The first point that concerns us is the situation with regard to the return of refugees from West Timor. If I understood Mr. Annabi correctly, there are still about 100,000 of them, and the problem therefore remains one of the major concerns of our Council. The Indonesian authorities and the army high command have affirmed their willingness to work to put an end to the activities of the pro-integrationist militias. But are the Indonesian authorities really in a position to implement those commitments on the ground and strictly to monitor the local echelons of the militia hierarchy? Here, I should like to associate myself with the comments of previous speakers; we are deeply concerned about what has been said in this regard. Has the rate of return increased in recent weeks? Furthermore, we have heard that former members of the pro-integrationist militias now seem to be

returning to East Timor. If that is the case, how are they being welcomed, what treatment are they receiving from the local population and what role is the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) playing in this regard?

My second question relates to the National Consultative Council. Of course, France welcomes the fact that it was set up on 2 December; it will make it possible for all Timorese to express their views. Has a preliminary assessment been made of the activities of the National Consultative Council? Does it meet on a regular basis? Is it dealing effectively with all important issues? Has the Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice, the only pro-autonomy group that had not joined the Council by the end of January, done so yet?

Finally, I would like to ask a more future-oriented question. UNTAET is, of course, doing excellent work and enjoys our total and unqualified support. I would like in particular to pay tribute to the outstanding work being carried out by Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. But East Timor must, of course, have a future beyond the United Nations presence. In that context, are there any expectations that local resources will expand? We noted with much interest that just yesterday the first tax was levied in East Timor, in the form of a 5 per cent customs duty. We would be interested to hear Mr. Annabi's views on the long-term prospects for East Timor.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): Let me begin, Mr. President, by associating myself with your warm welcome to Ambassador Levitte. I certainly look forward very much to working closely with him over the months ahead. It is a pleasure to hear him remember his predecessor with such kind words. I know we share those sentiments. Mr. Levitte's reputation precedes him to this body. I know he will bring an enormous accumulation of wisdom and experience to our deliberations.

Let me also join Ambassador Greenstock in extending warm congratulations, through Mr. Annabi, to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and, in particular, to Sergio Vieira de Mello, for what we Canadians consider to be the very significant successes that they have achieved. Through him, we thank the UNTAET staff for the high level of professionalism with which they have prosecuted the difficult mandate that we assigned them.

We welcome the signature of a joint communiqué between UNTAET and the Indonesian authorities at the end

of February — one which agreed to the free passage of goods and people between East Timor and Indonesia, and which allowed the unimpeded access between East Timor and the Oecussi enclave in West Timor.

Canada remains concerned over the continuing incidence of border skirmishes involving militias operating out of West Timor and the personnel of UNTAET. UNTAET troops came under fire three times on 1 and 2 March in the border areas in south-west East Timor — and of course Mr. Annabi referred this morning to other incidents of exchanges of fire, which are clearly unsettling. Civilians have been targeted, as he mentioned. Such acts clearly undermine President Wahid's welcome policy of reconciliation. We are encouraged by reports that the Indonesian Government will indeed redouble its efforts, as is clearly necessary, to bring such acts of violence to an end.

We are also encouraged by the Indonesian decision to sign a memorandum of understanding with UNTAET on cooperation in legal, judicial and human rights matters, including the investigation of human rights abuses. This accords, of course, with the Secretary-General's call for cooperation between Indonesia and UNTAET in carrying out further investigations of such abuses.

The recent report of the Indonesian Human Rights Commission on violations in East Timor was a courageous first step in bringing to account those responsible for atrocities in East Timor. This issue is central to progress towards reconciliation between Indonesia and East Timor, and to the process of peace-building. In this context, Indonesia's announced intention to prosecute those responsible for atrocities in East Timor is welcome, as is UNTAET's decision to investigate allegations and establish an East Timorese court system to try offenders.

We are encouraged to see that refugees continue to register to return to East Timor. Some 1,500 returned during the week of 6 March alone. The return process is accelerating despite the ongoing campaign of militia harassment and misinformation in the camps in West Timor and the frailty of essential services and infrastructure in returnee communities. As the 31 March deadline set by Indonesia for refugees to decide whether to return to East Timor or relocate within Indonesia approaches, we would be very interested if Mr. Annabi could indicate what degree of confidence we have that the bulk of those willing to return will have done so by that date and whether, in his view, there is some flexibility

with respect to that deadline — that is, do we believe that after the deadline at the end of this month, refugees will still be free to return.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too would like to associate ourselves with the words of welcome addressed to Ambassador Jean-David Levitte. We know him as one of the most prominent and talented diplomats of France and as a well-known jurist and orientalist. We are convinced that Ambassador Levitte, like his predecessor, Ambassador Dejammet, will make an extremely important contribution to the work of the Security Council.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Assistant Secretary-General Hédi Annabi for his briefing. We believe that the information given in the briefing on the current situation in East Timor provides sufficient grounds for an optimistic evaluation of the situation, despite certain contradictions. Of course, only the first stage has been accomplished in the difficult matter of establishing independence in the territory, creating democratic institutions and stabilizing the political and economic situation, although it was an extremely important stage.

However, one can say even now that the positive trends that characterize today's situation in East Timor — primarily in the area of security — are definitely gaining ground. To a significant extent that has been possible thanks to the forthright efforts of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), under the able guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. At the same time, like other members of the Security Council who have spoken before us, we cannot fail to be concerned over reports of a resurgence in the activities of the pro-integration militia, which is trying to impede the return of refugees to East Timor.

In general, from our standpoint, the speedy and effective resolution of the problem of refugees and the facilitation of their safe return will, to a large extent, determine the successful handling of tasks in the area of the rehabilitation and development of East Timor. Other conditions are just as important for the further normalization of the situation in East Timor — namely, the revival of a functioning economy and the establishment of effective governance. We, like our colleagues in the Security Council, are convinced that the Council must continue to carefully and regularly follow developments in the situation in East Timor.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first of all like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for the complete and useful information he has given us.

I would also like to thank the delegation of Bangladesh for its excellent initiative to hold an open briefing on the question of East Timor. My delegation has always said that it is necessary for there to be greater transparency in the work of the Council through the holding of meetings in which non-members of the Council can participate.

There can be no doubt that the United Nations has carried out a task of great magnitude during these first months of the territory's transitional period towards independence. Up to now, it has been possible to make progress in the setting up of civil administration and judicial structures, and the tremendous work to rebuild the infrastructure and educational and health system of the territory has commenced. It is very positive that the entire effort has been carried out in close consultation and cooperation with the Timorese people, as represented in the National Consultative Council.

We would like to congratulate in particular the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Vieira de Mello, for his efforts and for the successes he has had to date.

Nevertheless, we cannot fail to mention our concern about two issues that, despite the passage of time, have not yet been satisfactorily resolved. The first of those concerns has to do with the problem of refugees, especially in West Timor. The second has to do with the illegal activities being carried out on the land border of East Timor.

As far as refugees are concerned, although tremendous efforts have been made in order to allow the return of over 153,000 persons to East Timor, there are still at least 50,000 other Timorese who are prepared to return. The other aspect of this problem involves individuals who wish to remain in Indonesia and who have to be reintegrated economically and socially into that country. We think that the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the specialized agencies should give the highest priority to resolving these issues in close cooperation with the Indonesian authorities.

With regard to border incidents, we cannot fail to express our concern about increased tension along the land border of East Timor as a result of the actions of some militia elements. In this regard, we would like to express our support for UNTAET's response, which enhanced security in those regions and responded energetically to the attacks. We believe that response shows militia members that the United Nations stands ready to preserve the integrity and stability of East Timor and the lives of all Timorese by using all the means provided for in Security Council resolution 1272 (1999).

I should like to reiterate once again the need for those militias to be completely unarmed and for increased monitoring of the border areas.

Finally, we would like to express our satisfaction at the visit of President Wahid of Indonesia to East Timor. I believe that the exchange of bilateral visits will foster genuine reconciliation between the peoples and the authorities of both countries and make it possible to resolve the refugee problem as well as problems related to the borders between East and West Timor.

The Indonesian military authorities have proposed that General de los Santos set up joint monitoring posts along the borders. In this respect, I should like to hear what UNTAET's reaction has been to that proposal and what additional measures are being considered to put an end to the border incidents.

Mr. Hamer (Netherlands): I would like at the outset to thank Mr. Annabi for his very comprehensive briefing on the situation in East Timor. While the problems remain enormous, we welcome the positive development and join those who have paid tribute to Mr. Vieira de Mello for his contribution to that end.

The visit of President Wahid to East Timor on 29 February was an important step towards normalization of the relations between Jakarta and Dili. Not only did the President's visit send an important political signal, it led also to concrete results such as the establishment of an Indonesian consulate and the opening of the air route to Kupang, as well as to measures to activate cross-border trade.

At the same time, major worries remain. The situation of the internally displaced persons in West Timor remains critical, and their safe and voluntary return is still insufficiently guaranteed. Intimidation and disinformation by militia members are still occurring. Under these

circumstances, it is uncertain whether refugees will truly be in a position to decide, before the 10 April deadline, on whether and when to return to East Timor. It is clear that the Indonesian authorities' responsibility for their continued well-being and rights will not end as of that date.

But in East Timor itself there are serious security concerns as well. In the absence of a legal system, there are reports of vigilante justice spreading. Particularly serious is the increasing number of border incidents. We expect from the Government of Indonesia more determined efforts to bring the militias operating from West Timor, often with the connivance of the Indonesian armed forces (TNI), under its control.

With respect to the general issue of security, I was wondering if Mr. Annabi could tell us what has become of FALINTIL and what the current thinking is regarding the need, or the absence of the need, for future armed forces in East Timor.

In his briefing on 29 February, the Secretary-General stressed the need for greater momentum in the reconstruction efforts by the international community to avoid dependency and social unrest. In a situation where all institutions need building or rebuilding, it will not be easy to instil in the East Timorese a sense of ownership. We hope that the community empowerment projects being developed by the World Bank and others will succeed in including the East Timorese and convincing them that the ownership is theirs.

On this point, I have some further questions of Mr. Annabi. I was wondering if Mr. Annabi could tell us more about efforts to attract members of the East Timor diaspora to lend their skills and support to the reconstruction of their country, as referred to by the Secretary-General. What can be done to develop a private sector, alongside the setting up of a civil service to which Mr. Annabi referred? I would also be interested to know if Mr. Annabi can tell us a little more about the interlocutors of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and about the leadership that East Timor must develop to guide it through the enormous challenges on its path.

Finally, we are encouraged by the agreement between UNTAET and the Indonesian authorities on the exchange of information for the purposes of criminal investigation. The investigation into the murder of Dutch journalist Sander Thoenes has shown just how important

such international cooperation is, in particular in the area of human rights abuses.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Annabi for his briefing.

There have been some recent positive developments in East Timor. The transition from the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) has been smooth. At the end of last month, President Wahid paid a visit to East Timor. Progress has been made in the relations between East Timor and Indonesia as well as other countries of the region. It should be noted that the situation in East Timor as a whole remains stable and that reconstruction, in all its varied aspects, has begun.

We would like also to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Vieira de Mello, and to all of the staff of UNTAET for their effective work.

Difficulties persist with respect to reconstruction and to the maintenance of the current stable situation. Problems include sabotage activities, the resettlement of returning refugees, the rehabilitation of the infrastructure, the restoration of the rule of law and the lack of resources.

It is our hope that all of the parties in East Timor will maintain a spirit of cooperation and reconciliation so as to build on the good start they have made with respect to preserving stability in East Timor. We hope that, with the support and the assistance of the international community, the people of East Timor will be able to overcome their difficulties and reconstruct their homeland. It is also our hope that all of the parties in East Timor will enhance their close cooperation with the United Nations so as to ensure the success of the United Nations peacekeeping operations there.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Mr. President, I would also like to associate myself fully with the warm words of welcome you extended to the representative of France to the Council, Mr. Jean-David Levitte, with whom I look forward to renewing warm personal and professional relations, both within the Council as well as outside of it.

I would also like to thank Mr. Annabi for his briefing on the situation in East Timor. We are pleased to see that following the smooth transfer of peacekeeping duties from the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) to the

command of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) last month, the security situation has generally continued to improve throughout East Timor.

We are concerned, however, at the recent increase in the number of cross-border incidents along the border with West Timor. This problem should be addressed in the most effective way so as to ensure that it does not deteriorate into a prolonged or recurring security issue between East Timor and Indonesia which might complicate the efforts being made at forging a diplomatic relationship between the two.

Needless to say, East Timor needs to be free from security problems so that it can concentrate on the process of nation-building. The people of East Timor have high expectations from the United Nations presence there, hence the importance for the international community to assist UNTAET in its efforts at rebuilding East Timorese society and rehabilitating the economy and administration, which will require enormous amounts of financial resources.

As a close and concerned neighbour, Malaysia is prepared to assist East Timor in various fields, within its capacity to do so, and is in the process of following up on the understandings reached during the recent successful visit to Malaysia by Mr. Xanana Gusmão.

We continue to be concerned about the presence of refugees in camps, whose dire plight must be addressed as soon as possible so that they can return to their homes and rebuild their shattered lives.

There should be an early reintegration of ex-combatants into society so as to facilitate their contribution to the reconstruction of East Timor. In this regard, the sensitive issue of Falintil will have to be handled with great care. Equally important is the need to intensify efforts at reconciliation among the people of East Timor, which alone can guarantee the peace and stability of East Timor in the long term. East Timor cannot afford to be saddled with security problems indefinitely into the future.

We note that the issue of the timetable for independence is beginning to be addressed by UNTAET, in full consultation with East Timorese leaders. It is important that this issue be handled carefully so as to ensure that independence, when it comes, will come neither too late nor too early, when the people of East

Timor and their leadership are not quite ready to assume the burdens and responsibilities of independence. Learning from the lessons of the decolonization experiences of the past, the important thing for us is to fully and adequately prepare the people and leadership of East Timor for that final stage in the process. In this regard, we wish to stress the paramount importance of building strong democratic structures for the future independent nation of East Timor.

Finally, like others, we would like to commend UNTAET and its head, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, for the outstanding work they have done thus far.

Mr. Ward (Jamaica): My delegation, too, wishes to associate itself with the warm welcome extended to Ambassador Levitte and we look forward to continued good relations with his delegation.

We also wish to thank Mr. Annabi for bringing us up to date on the situation in East Timor. Over the past few months since the adoption of resolution 1272 (1999), the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) have worked tirelessly in the face of numerous challenges and extremely high expectations to ensure the implementation of resolution 1272 (1999) and to lay the foundation for East Timor's eventual transition into the international community as a viable, democratic and independent country. My delegation wishes to reiterate its full support for the work of UNTAET and we attach particular importance to the full implementation of resolution 1272 (1999). We wish to commend UNTAET for its work as it seeks, in collaboration with the East Timorese people, to lay the foundation for the transition to independence.

At the last briefing, we were informed by Mr. Vieira de Mello that, by the end of February, the transfer of the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) to the United Nations Transitional Administration would be completed. This was on target. INTERFET and UNTAET must be commended for this smooth transition and we are confident that UNTAET will carry forward INTERFET's work in a manner which will continue to focus on the entrenchment of law and order and the restoration of peace and stability in East Timor.

Several positive developments have indeed occurred since we were last briefed. We have noted the establishment of the East Timor postal service in collaboration with the Portuguese postal service and the Universal Postal Union; the approval of regulations for a

new border regime; and the approval of regulations for the organization of the courts and public procurement for civil administration. These regulations, we understand, will provide the framework for the future development of East Timor. We would be interested in hearing about continued progress in this regard.

The signing of the agreement with the World Bank is a significant and welcome development. Early implementation of these initiatives and the requisite disbursement of funds are crucial to the process of rebuilding and reconstruction, particularly at the community level. The recent visits of the Secretary-General and President Wahid of Indonesia were also positive developments.

We remain concerned, however, about the pervasive unemployment and the generally precarious economic and social situation in East Timor, which seem to be contributing to some criminal activity. Of grave concern to us also are the reports of recent incursions, particularly by the militia. These incidents can only serve to undermine the generally stable situation. UNTAET must continue to maintain a firm security presence throughout East Timor. We note the efforts of UNTAET, in collaboration with the Indonesian authorities, in dealing with this matter. In no way must these incursions or incidents of violence be allowed to derail the process in East Timor. We hope that the steadily increasing numbers of civilian police and the strengthening of the rapid-reaction unit will greatly assist in addressing situations such as these and, in general, the maintenance of law and order.

The rate of refugee return has been encouraging. As reported, the rate now stands at over 153,000, with another 50,000 indicating their desire to return. This indicates that there is a greater level of confidence among the East Timorese people regarding the situation there. We are concerned, however, about the continued activities of militia groups aimed at frustrating the process and we urge the Indonesian Government to take whatever action is necessary to remedy this situation. We also strongly urge flexibility to the Government of Indonesia with regard to the deadline for the return of the refugees.

The long-term sustainable development of East Timor must continue to be given priority attention. In this regard, the international community must continue to focus its attention on capacity- and institution-building. It is critical that efficient systems of governance and public administration be established, which would allow for a

smooth and eventual transition from UNTAET to local governance. Although it is early in the process, we believe that attention must be given to this from the very outset. In this regard, we note UNTAET's close involvement with the National Consultative Council (NCC). We realize that this has set the stage for the broad-based participation of various groups in East Timor. It is encouraging that the NCC has been promoting transparency and visibility in its work. This is evidenced by the recent participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society in the 8th meeting of the NCC. This, we are confident, will create a sense of ownership and a spirit of reconciliation among the East Timorese people. My delegation firmly believes that if a spirit of confidence, reconciliation and cooperation is fostered among the East Timorese, significant progress will continue to be made.

Finally, we are fully cognizant of the will of the Government of Indonesia to bring to justice the perpetrators of gross human rights violations in East Timor. In this regard, we note the invitation to three respected Indonesian human rights groups to join investigators in probing the violations in East Timor. It is our hope that the ultimate aim of meting out justice to those responsible for these violations will be achieved.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): When you, Sir, welcomed the new Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador Levitte, to the United Nations, I know that you did so on our behalf. However, Ambassador Levitte having served on the Contact Group for Namibia during those years which many members remember — a Group which has worked very hard for the implementation of resolution 435 (1978) — and today being the tenth anniversary of Namibia's independence, I just thought that I should take a moment to welcome Ambassador Levitte wholeheartedly to the United Nations and to say that we in the Namibian delegation look forward to continuing to work with him and his entire delegation at this level.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Annabi for the update he has given us on the situation in East Timor, and to commend Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and his team for the good work they are doing.

We are satisfied with the progress in the deployment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), although, as previous speakers have noted, there clearly remain certain areas of concern, such as the availability of civilian police. In this regard, we call for generous contributions to the Trust Fund, and would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have already

contributed. The slow pace at which funds for reconstruction and development are becoming available is also of concern to our delegation. We trust that these matters will gradually be addressed soon so as to ensure that the socio-economic situation in East Timor does not deteriorate further.

We welcome the recent visit of President Wahid to East Timor. We believe that his visit as well as the apology to East Timor for the violence during Indonesia's occupation are significant acts to enhance reconciliation between the two countries. In our view, this remains one of the most crucial elements for good future cooperation between the two States. Similarly, the continuing meetings between East Timorese and militia leaders serve as a vital mechanism for confidence-building and reconciliation among East Timorese themselves.

We remain concerned about the rising incidence of cross-border attacks by militias against East Timorese and against United Nations personnel. These acts seriously compromise the security of East Timor and we think that they need to be addressed soon. We welcome, however, the undertaking by the Indonesian Government to clamp down on militia activities in West Timor, and we urge them to continue to do so.

Finally, my delegation notes that the repatriation of refugees from camps in West Timor continues, and we hope that the pace of repatriation will pick up further.

The President: On behalf of the Council, let me take this opportunity to convey to the representative of Namibia our greetings and congratulations on the tenth anniversary of Namibia's independence.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I wish first to associate myself with the words of welcome addressed to Ambassador Levitte; my delegation and I look forward to cooperating with him in continuing the excellent relationship between our two Missions, which mirrors that between our two countries.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this briefing. My thanks go also to Mr. Annabi for the information he has provided, enabling us to make an up-to-date assessment of the situation in East Timor. I have a few comments to make on key issues about which Mr. Annabi spoke.

On the security situation, we are pleased at the notable progress that Mr. Annabi described. Yet is there

not a problem with the staffing of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)? Could Mr. Annabi address this question, and tell us whether the personnel may be too numerous given the present situation?

I believe that the return of refugees is the most important of the political and practical issues on the ground. In our view, the United Nations and the international community should continue to make this a priority. We reaffirm our support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and for other organizations working in the field to help the refugees return in safety and dignity. Mr. Annabi noted that some 100,000 people remain in West Timor. We would be glad to hear some further information about the activities of the joint border commission.

On the reconciliation process, let me recall that such a process is fundamental to the creation of the stability required for sustainable development. That is why we welcomed the establishment of the National Consultative Council, which we see as an essential instrument for true participation by the people of East Timor in decision-making and in strengthening the independence process. We would be very interested to hear from Mr. Annabi an initial assessment of the roundtables intended to promote national reconciliation.

Turning to reconstruction, the Tokyo donors conference was an important event in that sphere. We welcome the substantial pledges that were announced, and — along with Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, who addressed the Council some weeks ago — we hope that they will be fulfilled as soon as possible. I mention this also to show that the example of East Timor has shown that the search for solutions to issues of reconstruction can be based on close coordinated cooperation among financial institutions, the United Nations and the people concerned, in this instance the people of East Timor. This is something we welcome.

Let me conclude by thanking the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, as well as all the others who are participating in the restoration of peace and in post-conflict reconstruction in East Timor.

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

I shall raise six points for Mr. Annabi. The first relates to the deployment of the civilian police. We are very happy that the deployment has picked up; we now have 933 civilian police deployed there. That is an improvement, and we welcome the faster deployment. But we believe that we should also try to look into the deployment process and see how best we can effect a speedier deployment of the civilian police. I say this also in a general context, because we face the same situation in Kosovo.

The second point relates to the violence led by militias. As many members of the Council have mentioned, we are seriously concerned about that, and we believe in this regard that proactive efforts should be made to stop such militia activities. I think that the closing down of camps in those areas is a good way to start.

The third point relates to the development scenario. This is an area of close interest to Bangladesh. We believe that some positive measures are being taken in this regard. We were very happy to hear about the community empowerment projects of the World Bank, about which Mr. Annabi reported to us. We believe that we will have an opportunity to assess their impact on the local population. The Quick Impact Projects, which have been funded by the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, bear promise, and we believe that they need to be encouraged by our side. We also believe that the revenue situation is likely to improve with the setting up of the customs and taxation system. Perhaps on a future occasion the Council will have a report on this aspect from the Secretariat.

Another matter related to the development projects is, as many have mentioned, the slow disbursement of funds. As we mentioned last time, we believe that given the size of the commitment that has been made to development in Timor, it would be a pity to see the effort there faltering because of the slow disbursement of funds.

The fourth point relates to the health and education situation in Timor. We believe that these two areas need special attention. With regard to education, on an earlier occasion we mentioned the need for focusing on the education of girls in the programmes in Timor. We believe this is an important area. We had also recommended that to make the development sustainable in Timor we should focus on the grassroots level through

poverty-eradication programmes such as microcredit programmes.

The fifth issue that I would like to raise is the question of national unity and reconciliation. We believe that these are also priority areas in East Timor in the context of the paradigm of nation-building. The recent visit by President Wahid and the militia leaders to East Timor augurs well for the achievement of these objectives. Gradual improvement in the economic and political situation should help in the process.

Finally, with regard to the future political process, we agree that, rather than setting up a time-frame without specific achievements on the ground, it would be better to identify the specific benchmarks to chart the path to independence and then set a time-frame on that basis.

I will stop here and resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Annabi to respond to the comments and to the questions that have been raised.

Mr. Annabi: I think that the first question that was also asked by other Council members related to the slow disbursement of funds from the trust fund. I think that we all agree that the disbursement is much slower than we would all like it to be. The Special Representative has himself voiced his frustration about this and even mentioned to the press that he wished he had a magic wand for turning donor pledges into instant public-works projects. But you need partners, and these things we know take time. You, Sir, mentioned the community-empowerment project of the World Bank. The agreement for this project was only signed at the end of February. So we hope that it will now be implemented promptly. But all of these things we know take time.

The other aspect that is important to keep in mind is that — in view of the level and extent of destruction in the country; in view of the fact that a great number, if not the vast majority, of skilled workers left following the tragic events of last year — rehabilitation, reconstruction and capacity-building is going to be a rather difficult process, certainly one that will be slower than we would all like it to be.

Finally, the UNTAET trust fund is itself of course dedicated to paying mainly — not only, but in large part — for recurrent costs; in other words, for East Timorese civil servants, who are now being recruited. As I mentioned, a

total of 2,500 of them are now working and being paid. That number should grow to 7,000 in the course of this year. And as the civil service grows, that will help to accelerate the disbursement of funds in that regard.

I have also mentioned the start of Quick Impact Projects. Again, partners are being identified to develop additional Quick Impact Projects, and as those come on line, I hope that the disbursement process will accelerate. I must mention in this regard that the Controller has been supportive in terms of facilitating the utilization of the funds. As projects are identified and can be initiated, the funds will be disbursed.

There were several questions regarding the return of refugees. The rough estimate at this time is that there are about 100,000 left. UNHCR is currently carrying out a census, which is almost complete. I expect, from what my UNHCR colleagues tell me, that the census will confirm that about half of these 100,000 — namely about 50,000 — wish to return to East Timor.

UNHCR and UNTAET also believe that of course there will have to be flexibility regarding these end-of-March deadlines. There will have to be flexibility for those who will need to go back to East Timor. The recent flow has not been very strong because there are a number of concerns which are still out there among those who may wish to return. These include concerns about possible pensions, which are being discussed by UNTAET with the authorities in Jakarta, and perhaps potential returnees have apprehensions as to how they might be treated. I think that some of the cross-border visits that have taken place will facilitate this process. But there will also have to be flexibility, I think, regarding the resettlement of those who do not wish to come back to East Timor and will have to be resettled either in West Timor or in other parts of Indonesia. The focus, we feel, should of course be on giving an opportunity to all of these people to determine freely where they want to go and settle and rebuild their lives.

Questions have been raised regarding the commitment of the Indonesian authorities to facilitating the return of the refugees. I think it is very clear in UNTAET's mind and in our mind that the Government of President Wahid is genuine in its assurances and in its desire to cooperate to resolve these problems. There are, however, as I indicated, elements of the Indonesia armed forces (TNI) on the ground who continue to stand in the way of the implementation of these assurances and who may have their own agenda or may be attempting to

embarrass or create difficulties for the President. But we have no doubt that the President of Indonesia and the Government of Indonesia are determined to cooperate in resolving this problem. It is a question of translating these commitments into action on the ground and convincing those on the ground who are still opposed to the resolution of this problem to cooperate or, somehow, having them removed.

Did the returns accelerate? I think the answer is that they have not accelerated recently. There is a continuing trickle, but we have not seen any recent acceleration.

There was a question about the National Consultative Council — whether it meets regularly and how it functions. I think it has been a very useful mechanism for the Special Representative, enabling him to consult the East Timorese — not only the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), which is itself an umbrella organization and includes a number of different parties, but also some of the pro-autonomy groups that have joined the National Consultative Council.

The Council meets on a regular basis and it is consulted systematically by the Special Representative on all the regulations and all the important initiatives that UNTAET takes. It is consulted on the recruitment of civil servants. Mr. Vieira de Mello has rightly made it clear from the outset that our mandate is to set up an interim administration, but that this must be done for the Timorese and in cooperation with them, since our mandate is to help them prepare for and achieve independence. So the mechanism of the National Consultative Council has been extremely useful in maintaining close consultation and cooperation with all the Timorese.

As I said, two of the three pro-autonomy groups have joined the National Consultative Council. One of them still has not. It has agreed to do so in principle, but that raises some sensitive issues, which are still being discussed, as to who the actual representatives might be.

What are the prospects for income generation and the long-term development prospects for East Timor? I think we have to admit that it is a little early in this exercise to be able to make precise forecasts. It is going to be a slow and difficult process — let us not hide from that reality. The level of destruction has been such that reconstruction, both physically and in terms of capacity-building and the training of cadres and competent civil servants, will be a long-term process. It is not something that UNTAET as such has the resources or capacity to resolve. It requires the

long-term, continuing commitment of the international community, which is, of course, investing a lot in UNTAET, but which must sustain that investment to enable East Timor to become independent and engage in a self-sustaining development process in the long term.

On the issue of joint observation at the border, a mechanism is, in fact, in place. I observed it myself, when I was there at the end of last year. We have military liaison officers who are located on the other side of the border, in West Timor, with their counterparts from the various TNI units, to facilitate liaison and cooperation between them and UNTAET and to avoid incidents or resolve incidents where they occur. There are, of course, continuing meetings between the Force Commander and his staff and General Syahnakri, who is the Indonesian Major-General in charge of that area. The last such meeting was held on 15 March, at which they discussed the possible updating of the memorandum on border cooperation arrangements to help resolve some of the problems there.

As regards the future of the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (Falintil), this is again a rather sensitive issue for the Timorese, and for the Falintil members themselves, who have certain views about what they believe they have done on behalf of East Timor. Consultations have begun between the Special Representative and the CNRT on this. As the Council knows, their numbers are not all that big — there are somewhere between 800 and 1,000 of them. Some of them, we are quite sure, will want to return to civilian life; others could possibly join the future police or security forces. These are some of the issues that are being discussed. We have all said that we hope that East Timor will decide not to have an army, but, in addition to a police force, it may need a gendarmerie-type security force, or some other force of that kind, to ensure security in the territory.

How can we convince the diaspora to return and join the rehabilitation and reconstruction process in East Timor? This is an issue that is also being discussed with the East Timorese, to encourage them to return. This was raised in Jakarta by the Special Representative, and he has received assurances that some of the East Timorese who have been studying at Indonesian universities would be allowed or encouraged to come back if they so wished, to join in the development process. I understand, too, that the International Organization for Migration is implementing a programme to encourage the return of possibly up to 300 East Timorese from the diaspora, who

would take up professional positions in East Timor. Of course, we must also remember that those who have been living abroad may be living comfortably and may not be entirely happy with the level of remuneration that can be offered under present conditions in East Timor. This is certainly an issue on which we should all try to move forward.

What efforts can be made to create a private sector? Again, I think this is something that will take time. It is linked to the overall process of reconstruction, which, as I said, is starting from a very low point, since just about everything has been destroyed — it is amazing to see. This will involve generating a capacity and the development of private entrepreneurs. It, too, is something that will take time and is linked to the overall reconstruction process.

What has the attitude of the East Timorese leadership been? I think that I can say, on behalf of the Special Representative, that he is very gratified by the cooperation that has been extended by the East Timorese leadership. He has made a point of working very closely with them, and I think that the level of cooperation has been very good, even if there is frustration, in the sense that they would like the daily lives of their fellow citizens in East Timor to improve more quickly than is actually possible. But I think that generally the cooperation has been very good.

There are a few more questions to answer. Is the force strength of UNTAET too strong? Does UNTAET have too many troops? I do not think so at this point. As I said, we have 7,300 troops deployed right now. In fact, UNTAET would like to receive the additional assets that are missing, especially in view of the concerns that have developed recently in the light of some of the border

incidents. But I can assure members of the Council that once UNTAET is fully deployed, and once the security situation improves, the Secretary-General will not wait very long before he comes back to the Council and suggests a reduction in troop strength as soon as it is doable or feasible from a security point of view.

On the round-table on national reconciliation, yes, there was recently a meeting in Singapore that I think made a good, but perhaps slow, beginning at national reconciliation between various East Timorese groups. This is an ongoing process that can also be encouraged by some of the cross-border visits that are taking place.

Can we speed up the deployment of police? I think it has picked up quite well recently. We will have close to 1,000 by the end of this week, out of a total authorized strength of 1,640. We have more offers than we actually need. In other words, we have over 1,640 offers. We have identified the second special police unit, so it is a question of actually making the arrangements and getting the signal from the countries concerned that these troops have been trained and are ready to move and, of course, ensuring that they can be accommodated properly when they arrive and that they have the wherewithal to function. But we expect that within the next two months we will be fairly close to the full deployment of the police component.

I think that just about covers it.

The President: I thank Mr. Annabi for responding to the questions and for advising us of the additional information he could share on the various issues raised here.

There are no further speakers inscribed 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 1.05 p.m.