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QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

Progress report of the Secretary-General

1. Since the resumption of talks between Indonesia and Portugal on the question of East Timor in 1992, I have held, in the context of my good offices, six rounds of discussions with the Foreign Ministers of the two countries aimed at finding a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. I have reported to the Assembly annually on the progress of these efforts. The last two rounds of talks were held since I submitted my last progress report (A/49/391), and I will highlight here the salient points that emerged from those discussions (see press releases SG/SM/5519 and SG/T/1974).

2. The fifth round of talks with the Foreign Ministers of the two Governments was held at Geneva on 9 January 1995. At that round, the Ministers, inter alia, noted positively my intention to facilitate and offer the necessary arrangements for the convening of an all-inclusive intra-East-Timorese dialogue. The objective of the dialogue was to provide a forum for continuing the free and informal exchange of views, to explore ideas of a practical nature that might have a positive impact on the situation in East Timor and assist in the establishment of an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of a solution to the question of East Timor. It was understood that the East Timorese dialogue would not address the political status of East Timor and would not constitute a parallel negotiating track or be a substitute for the ministerial talks. In the interest of creating and maintaining a propitious climate for a fruitful dialogue, I issued an appeal to all East Timorese to exercise restraint and refrain from actions that could have a detrimental impact, prior to and during

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the course of the dialogue. I also expressed the need for the two Governments to cooperate with me in my initiative and to encourage all East Timorese to respond constructively to my initiative and appeal.

3. The Ministers further agreed to consider at the subsequent round of talks substantive issues identified by me regarding possible avenues towards a solution to the question of East Timor.

4. On human rights, the Ministers recalled the statement issued following the previous round of talks, in May 1994, in which they had concurred, inter alia, on the need to improve the human rights situation in East Timor, and the relevant Chairman's statements adopted by consensus by the Commission on Human Rights, in particular, with regard to access to East Timor, the early release of the East Timorese imprisoned and the full accounting for the persons dead or missing as a result of the violent incident at Dili on 12 November 1991. The meeting took note of the intention of the Government of Indonesia, in the terms conveyed at the meeting, to take further steps for the implementation of the undertakings contained therein.

5. The first meeting of the All-Inclusive Intra-East-Timorese Dialogue was held at Burg Schlaining, Austria, from 2 to 5 June 1995 and brought together 30 East Timorese of various shades of political opinion residing inside and outside East Timor. Two representatives of the United Nations attended the meeting without taking part in the discussions. The gathering, the first of its kind, was held in a positive and constructive atmosphere and adopted, by consensus, the Burg Schlaining Declaration, which inter alia, proposed to me that further meetings be held within the same framework; reaffirmed the need to implement the necessary measures in the field of human rights and other areas with a view to promoting peace, stability, justice and social harmony; reaffirmed the necessity for the social and cultural development of East Timor on the basis of the preservation of the cultural identity of the people, including tradition, religion, history and language, as well as the teaching of Tetun and Portuguese; and expressed the need to create the basis for the involvement of all East Timorese, without discrimination of any sort, in the development of East Timor in every sphere of human life in a climate of mutual understanding, tolerance and harmony.

6. The participants paid tribute to Rev. Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, the Apostolic Administrator of Dili, for his contribution to the debate, such as the proposals that were agreed upon with a view to improving the physical and spiritual conditions of the lives of the people of East Timor. They also expressed appreciation for the consultations undertaken by the United Nations with East Timorese of various shades of opinion, aiming at their gradual involvement, as well as the availability of the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia for direct dialogue with East Timorese personalities. I am encouraged by the result of this first meeting, and it is my intention, with the consent of the two Governments, to facilitate a further intra-East-Timorese meeting following the seventh round of ministerial talks on 16 January 1996.

7. I convened the sixth round of talks between the two Foreign Ministers, also at Geneva, on 8 July 1995, a few weeks later than the time originally envisaged,

in order to allow for the meeting of the All-Inclusive Intra-East-Timorese Dialogue to take place.

8. At that round, the Ministers discussed developments since the previous round in January, including the implementation of the Chairman's statement on the situation of human rights in East Timor, agreed upon by consensus by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session, the importance of which was stressed.

9. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the All-Inclusive Intra-East-Timorese Dialogue, which constituted a positive effort to help create an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of a solution to the question of East Timor. They also welcomed my view on the need for convening a further meeting or meetings of that Dialogue and my intention to pursue the matter with the two parties.

10. Also at the sixth round, the two sides, without prejudice to their respective positions of principle regarding the political status of East Timor, began discussions on the substantive issues identified by me regarding possible avenues for a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution. In that context, they discussed issues related to an eventual framework for the achievement of such a solution and other related issues, including the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity of the East Timorese people and bilateral relations between them. They agreed to continue to discuss these issues in conjunction with one another.

11. I will hold a seventh round of talks with the two Ministers on 16 January 1996 in London.
