

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Yoshitaka Hanada on the  
Occasion of the Reception Celebrating H.M. the Emperor  
of Japan's Birthday  
December 3, 2012  
Hotel Timor, Dili**

Good evening.

I am very grateful to you all for coming to Japan's national day reception celebrating the 79<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. I sincerely wish for His Majesty Emperor's continued good health and prosperity.

As you may all recognize, we are about to come to the end of the year. The year 2012 was indeed a crucial year for Timor-Leste when the country commemorated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of the independence as well as three rounds of national elections which took place in a democratic and peaceful manner, and the Fifth Constitutional Government was formed.

With the successful conduct of national elections and

the stable security environment maintained thereafter, it is in this positive atmosphere that UNMIT is completing its withdrawal by the end of this month. The end of peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste will be yet another landmark event of the year 2012.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the personnel of UNMIT for their huge contribution in supporting the people of Timor-Leste in advancing peace, stability and development.

As Timor-Leste fledges in their important journey of state-building, and focusing on implementation of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP), the Government of Japan will renew its commitment to assisting Timor-Leste in a wide range of its state-building endeavors, especially in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, and human resource development.

In order to accelerate Timor-Leste's economic development, accession to ASEAN is vital. I would like to reiterate that the Government of Japan will continue to cooperate with Timor-Leste in order to realize its

accession at the earliest possible stage. We have been providing various technical assistance especially in the capacity development area. Since 2011, about 40 Timorese government officials participated in the series of training courses on trade and commerce which was held in Jakarta and Singapore. We have also dispatched a trade and commerce expert to the ASEAN National Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, two times in 2010 and 2011.

The year 2012 also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations between Japan and Timor-Leste. To further enhance the momentum for our bilateral relationship, we celebrated the year with high-level visits, starting from the former President Dr. Ramos Horta's official visit to Japan in January, and Prime Minister Mr. Xanana Gusmão's visit in March. From Japanese side, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan Mr. Nakano visited Timor-Leste in May to attend the swearing in ceremony of the new president and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony for Timor-Leste's restoration of independence.

Under the theme of "*the Year of Friendship and Peace*

*between Japan and Timor-Leste*", youth exchange programs and a variety of cultural events took place. In regard to youth exchange programs, the Government of Japan is going to invite 160 Timorese youths by the end of next March. I believe that these human-to-human interactions will further consolidate our ties and pave the way for another 10 years of friendship and peace.

In October, I had an opportunity to accompany President Ruak to visit Fohorem Sub-district in Covalima District, where the President held an intensive dialogue with the community people. I was deeply impressed with such dialogue and acknowledged that the principle of democracy lies in this direct dialogue between the leader and community people. I sincerely hope that democracy will further consolidate in Timor-Leste and the nation will stay on course for further development to bring prosperity to the people of Timor-Leste.

Thank you very much for your kind attention, and, finally, I would like to give my heartfelt gratitude to H.E. Mr. Taur Matan Ruak, who has kindly accepted

my invitation for this evening amidst very busy  
schedule. Now I would like to ask President Taur Matan  
Ruak for a few words.

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