

DELEGATE FROM EAST TIMOR

**STATEMENT TO THE TENTH PREP COM FOR THE ICC
JULY 12, 2002**

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

I would first like to thank the Plenary of the Tenth PrepCom for the International Criminal Court for recognising East Timor's new status as an independent country, and for allowing it to participate as such in the work towards the International Criminal Court.

With the help of No Peace Without Justice, East Timor has participated as an observer at the last two PrepComs.

The new government of East Timor regards the establishment of the International Criminal Court as fundamental in the struggle to end impunity and avoid future atrocities.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court will be in the first group of treaties acceded to by East Timor, and we confidently expect that it will be passed by the Legislative Assembly and promulgated by the President later this year.

In recent years East Timor has suffered its own tragic experience of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. It has made specific provision in its new constitution to punish these crimes through its courts. Its commitment to the International Criminal Court reflects its wish not only to protect the people of East Timor from being the victims of future crimes, but also to stand in solidarity with fellow human beings throughout the world who suffer similar atrocities to those of which the people of East Timor have such painful experience.

East Timor calls upon all states, and particularly all Asian states, to join in this initiative. In a statement made on 27 June this year, East Timor's Foreign Minister, Dr Jose Ramos Horta, said:

It is unthinkable to have an international criminal court without Asia in it, not only for geographical and demographical reasons, but for a region that has experienced so many violations of human rights, and continues to suffer as a result of such violations, we owe a great deal of justice to our people. A strong Asian voice is needed to end impunity in the region and to bring peace to our people. The ICC will benefit a lot from the Asian experience and long standing record of human rights work.

East Timor has achieved its long desired freedom as a result of the concerted and continuing efforts of the international community to safeguard the absolute right of every country to self-determination. It is our sincere hope that the international community, acting together in a similar manner, can ensure the success of a fair, independent and effective International Criminal Court.

Constancio Pinto
12 July 2002