



**The Election Observation Mission of the Government of Japan
to Timor-Leste**

**The Second Round of the Presidential Elections of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on May 9
Preliminary Assessment by the Election Observation Mission of the Government of Japan**

Dili, May 11, 2007

1. The Election Observation Mission of the Government of Japan was deployed to the electoral districts of Dili, Manatuto and Baucau from 7 to 10 May to observe the implementation of the election, including preparations for the polling day, the polling itself, and the counting and tabulating procedures. Our Mission submitted its suggestions ([see attached document](#)), based on its observations from the first round of elections in April, to the National Election Commission (CNE), Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE), and the UNMIT. On the polling day (May 9), our 8 observers visited a total of 105 times to polling and counting stations in 54 polling centers. In addition, H.E. Mr. Kenji Shimizu, the Japanese Ambassador to Timor-Leste, visited Viqueque on the polling day to observe the situation on the ground. Through these efforts the Mission endeavored to grasp the internal situation in Timor-Leste regarding the elections, in close cooperation with the Embassy of Japan in Dili.
2. The activities of the Mission to observe and acknowledge the fairness of the elections has the aim of assisting the people of Timor-Leste who wish to utilize the results of the elections as a basis for a new step forward. Although the Mission's activities were geographically limited and shortly timed, the Mission has gathered much information and exchanged views comprehensively with other international observation teams, UN officials and political leaders in Timor-Leste. The Mission found that although there were some minor technical problems, the preparation of the polling stations, polling and counting had been conducted in compliance with the election rules.
3. In this second round of elections, the Mission commends the fact that the voting was carried out in a peaceful manner with, indeed, improved electoral procedures. The procedures have become more standardized and more clear. Improvements were observed in practice for 1) checking the number of ballot papers received before the opening of the polling stations, 2) checking voters' fingers for ink marks before voting, 3) picture display of the correct way of marking/ punching the ballot paper, and 4) Mission believes that it was important to finalize the detailed procedures for polling and counting much earlier compared to the first round (Note: In the first round, the procedures were finalized 4 days prior to the polling day, but in the second round they were finalized 15 days prior to the polling day.) The Mission also notes that the incidents of lack of ballot papers in the polling stations decreased considerably, learning from the experience of the first round.
4. The Mission commends the tremendous efforts made by STAE and CNE to conduct successful elections with ownership, and expresses its appreciation of the monitoring activities conducted by the private sector such as KOMEK. It should not be forgotten that the international community strongly supported the process, rallying behind UNMIT. The fact that UNPOL, PNTL, and ISF made major efforts to maintain security should not be forgotten. It is through the accumulation of such efforts that the people of Timor-Leste are able to express their will for new nation-building by going to the ballot-box.
5. The presidential elections, together with the upcoming election for the national parliament, are the first national elections conducted by the Timorese government on the basis of electoral laws enacted by the Timorese people. The Mission believes that it is most important for the Timorese people and government to show real ownership of this process, so that successful elections lead to future nation building.
6. On the polling day, the Mission's observers witnessed that many voters waited silently in the queue before the opening of the polling stations, as was the case for the first round election in April. Also, it was observed that all parties concerned in the election, including the staff of the polling stations and STAE, representatives of the candidates, and national election observers, showed strong commitment to their work. The Mission is of the view that these are indications of growing ownership in Timor-Leste and that democracy is beginning to take roots. The policy of Japan is to respond to such ownership demonstrated by the Timorese people with "partnership."



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7. If there are claims of irregularity during the elections, they should be appealed and processed through the complaint procedures in accordance with the rule of law. The Mission strongly hopes that the will of the people expressed through elections will be accepted by everyone. The Mission expects that the national parliament elections to be held on June 30th will also be implemented in a free, fair and peaceful manner by the Timorese people and their government. The Mission expresses its strong wish that through the political process of presidential elections and elections of the national parliament, the people of Timor-Leste unite to move on to a new stage of nation building.

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