

**Message of  
H.E. Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta,  
President, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste  
To  
Peacebuilders Symposium, UN University, Tokyo  
24 March 2008**

It is with much regret that, for a circumstance beyond my control, I am not able to participate in the Tokyo Peacebuilders Symposium on “Peacebuilding Experience and Knowledge from Asia to the World” organized by the Government of Japan and the United Nations University in Tokyo. But, I am pleased to have this opportunity to forward my message to the participants.

It is one of the most challenging endeavors to build lasting peace in conflict prone countries and societies. Many countries emerge painfully from devastating conflicts only to relapse to violence. Timor-Leste has not been an exception. The principal objective of peacebuilding is to reinforce the capacity of societies to manage peacefully the conflict of interests and desires, and to lay the foundation for democratic governance and sustainable development so that the resumption of armed hostilities can be prevented.

The reconciliation process after the widespread atrocities requires that the national efforts for peacebuilding are carried out with appropriate international support in a systematic and integrated manner. It should include security sector reform, organization of free and fair elections, proper functioning of state institutions including the government, the parliament, the judiciary, as well as protection of the human rights.

I am pleased to learn that the Tokyo symposium will take stock of significant lessons learnt from the experiences of Timor-Leste as well as Cambodia. It is my hope that these lessons will be brought forward to the international community so that peacebuilding support activities will be enhanced further for the benefit of people in post-conflict and conflict prone countries.

I wish you much success in your deliberations in the symposium.

March 24, 2008

**Jose Ramos-Horta**