



**STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN OBSERVER MISSION ON THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE
11 April 2007**

The South African Government sent an observer mission to the presidential elections in Timor-Leste held on Monday, 09 April 2007. The four member team was led by the South African Ambassador to Indonesia, also accredited to Timor-Leste, His Excellency, Mr GM Memela.

Two members of the delegation arrived in Dili on Friday, 06 April and the rest joined the team on Sunday, 08 April. By the time the delegation arrived in Dili, election campaigns had been concluded and therefore could not observe pre-election processes such as voter education, public awareness campaigns, registration, etc. In this regard, the delegation relied on assessments by other observer missions and the media.

The observer mission believes, based on the reports received that the atmosphere was calm and campaigns were conducted in a peaceful manner and in compliance with electoral regulations.

In the voting stations visited by the South African delegation, the voting process was well organized, with electoral officers adhering to the operating schedule as prescribed in the election manual.

Despite earlier concerns about the possibility of resurgence of violence during the elections, the atmosphere at voting stations was calm and no incidents of harassment, violence and victimization were reported. Voters were generally well behaved, demonstrating maturity and readiness to exercise their choice, free from any undue influence.

Electoral officers and party officials were disciplined and vigilant throughout the process, creating an atmosphere that was conducive for voters to exercise their democratic rights to elect a candidate of their choice.

United Nations Police units were deployed at voting stations and the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) personnel were visible and patrolled the streets to ensure law and order without intimidating voters and interfering with the election process.

Based on the observations made in the foregoing, the observer mission concludes that the presidential elections held on 09 April 2007 were free and fair, and that the results will be a true reflection of the will of the people of Timor-Leste.

The South African observer mission would like to thank the Government of Timor-Leste for extending an invitation to the South African Government to send observers. The mission commends the National Election Commission, United Nations Mission in Timor- Leste (UNMIT) and the Timorese People for delivering a successful election process and wish Timor-Leste lasting peace and prosperity in building their democracy.