

Malaysians to help rebuild Timor Leste

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will send experts to help Timor Leste draw up a strategic plan to develop the conflict-ridden country.

Timor Leste president Jose Ramos-Horta said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, whom he met early yesterday morning, had responded immediately to his request for Malaysia's assistance in rebuilding the country.

"I am happy Abdullah agreed immediately; very soon we will have a multi-sector team from Malaysia helping to devise our strategic plan," he said.

"Malaysia will help us establish a strategic planning group comprising experts in economic, finance and other disciplines to advise my Government on immediate and long-term development," Ramos-Horta told reporters on the sidelines of the post-ministerial conferences at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

He said Timor Leste also required skills and experience



besides financial assistance.

Ramos-Horta said Malaysia's quick reaction to its request was significant as the host of the grouping and the Asean Regional Forum, as well as chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

"At the moment, troops and police from Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and Portugal are on the ground. I hope others like Thailand and the Philippines will also contribute to the next United Nations mission," he added.

Ramos-Horta said the UN Security Council would hold a meeting soon to review the report by the special envoy of



Ramos-Horta: 'Timor Leste needs a panel of experts to advise on economics, finance and other disciplines on immediate and long-term development'

the UN Secretary-General to Timor Leste, Ian Martin, in which Timor Leste asked for at least 800 international police personnel, apart from civilian advisers and peacekeepers.

"There is consensus in the Security Council to authorise the deployment of a strong police force as well as many

civilian advisers for a wide range of sectors. There is no agreement yet on deployment of peacekeepers," he said.

The country would push for a five-year mission to help stabilise and rebuild the country, he said, adding that it had been a mistake on the part of the Security Council to deploy a

two-year mission in 1999.

He also urged Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and Portugal not to be in haste to send their troops and police force home.

He said he hoped they would stay on until the Security Council agreed on a new mission.