



STATEMENT BY MR. HAMZAH THAYEB
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WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS
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Madam Chairperson,

My delegation would like to express its appreciation of the Working Group's efforts in the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous populations. While the commendable work of the Group is held in high esteem by all of us, my delegation is however, concerned that this forum is being misused once again, by certain NGO's in their political campaign to discredit Indonesia.

It is the view of my delegation that the repetition of their ill-founded allegations time and time again, is not only a time-wasting exercise which is completely irrelevant to the work of this Group but it also tends to give a certain air of credibility to entirely baseless allegations made by Indonesia's detractors concerning Maluku. Indeed, the picture of terror described by a representative of a certain NGO of mass arrest and intimidation which supposedly reigns in Maluku bears no resemblance whatsoever to the actual situation in the province.

It is indeed regrettable that the noble and genuine human rights organisations and NGOs are brought unnecessarily into disrepute by the political ambitions of misguided individuals who are intent on promoting their own political ambitions of a so-called independent homeland. Therefore, in order to avoid wasting any more of the Working Group's valuable time, we will simply reiterate that since 1945, the province of Maluku has been an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia. The so-called Republic of South Moluccas (RMS) connection with the province exists in name alone since a fanatical minority of mercenaries in the pay of the colonial power at the time of Indonesia's struggle for independence, refused then, as they continue to do so today, to take

account of the true situation prevailing and the will of the majority of the people of that province. Having failed to create disorder in Indonesia at that time, a number of these mercenaries left for the metropolitan country, where to this day, blinded by political ambition they contrive to manipulate any forum in their desperate attempt to discredit and slander my country.

Madam Chairperson,

It is not surprising that certain NGOs choose to ignore historical facts. My delegation regrets these unjustified attacks and we are distressed to see this Working Group being misused for political purposes which do not contribute to the objectives of the mandate of the Group.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.