

STATEMENT BY THE INDONESIAN DELEGATION
TO THE
WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

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Madam Chairman,

First of all my Delegation would like to congratulate you on your re-election to chair this important Working Group. As a country whose government has been comprised of indigenous people ever since its independence, Indonesia highly commends the Group for its efforts towards the betterment of indigenous populations and has followed with interest the progress made so far.

The Working Group's mandate given in ECOSOC Resolution 1982/34 is clear enough, that is, to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous populations and to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning those rights. My Delegation could not agree more with you, Madam Chairman, that the Working Group is not a forum for complaints. We regret, therefore, that certain groups have again misused this forum in order to discredit Indonesia by raising issues which are completely irrelevant to the mandate of the Working Group.

Madam Chairman,

Every year, these groups, claiming to represent the indigenous peoples of the Moluccas and Irian Jaya, manipulate this forum to advance their claims for self-determination. What has to be questioned here, however, is whether they truly represent the majority of the people of the two Provinces, which have been part of the Republic of Indonesia for 46 and 29 years respectively.

With regard to the first group, to what extent can these people who have abandoned their country of origin and, by their own free choice decided to join the colonial ^{master} ~~power~~ by emigrating to the Netherlands, speak for the rights of the indigenous people

of the Moluccas? Having lived overseas almost all of their lives and having obtained Dutch nationality, surely they cannot truly be considered as Moluccans.

The very same question can also be asked with regard to those who have spoken on behalf of the so called "Organisasi Papua Merdeka". Since decolonization is a non-issue in the case of Irian Jaya, members of this group can only be described as rebels who are trying to disintegrate the national unity and territorial integrity of Indonesia. Indonesia cannot make light of the activities of such a group and is justified in taking action in conformity with the law.

Madam Chairman,

As is known, Indonesia comprises more than 300 ethnic groups, indigenous to our various regions, the Moluccas and Irian Jaya being just two of them. Given this diversity, through its national policies Indonesia encourages the development of pluralistic communities guided by the deliberations of their representatives, in conformity with the national motto "Unity in Diversity". In addition to that, the promotion and protection of the cultural identity of all ethnic groups are guaranteed by the relevant articles of the State's Constitution. My Delegation, therefore, rejects all baseless allegations concerning the Moluccas and Irian Jaya.

Thank you