

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. WARDANA

VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

AT THE 19TH LEADERS' SUMMIT OF

THE MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP

Noumea, New Caledonia, 19/20/21 June 2013

Mr. Victor Tutugoro, Chairman of the Melanesian Spearhead Group,  
Honorable Leaders of the Melanesian Spearhead Group Countries,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct privilege for the Indonesian delegation, as observer to the MSG, to address this auspicious Summit.

Allow me, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Indonesia, to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Melanesian Spearhead Group on its 25th anniversary.

I would also like to congratulate the FLNKS on its assumption of the chair of the MSG for the 2013-2014 term.

Let me also express the sincere compliments of the Government of Indonesia to His Excellency Commodore Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, the outgoing Chairman of the MSG, on the success of his leadership of the Group during the past two years.

Mr. Chairman,

Because of Indonesia's multi-ethnic and pluralistic make-up, we are pleased to be a part of the Melanesian heritage. Five of Indonesia's thirty-four provinces are Melanesian. These provinces—Papua, West Papua, Maluku, North Maluku, and East Nusa Tenggara—occupy more than one-third of Indonesia's territory. We wish to further strengthen our exchanges in terms of cultures, traditions and values and will work to do so.

But Indonesia's relations with the MSG and MSG countries are also broad and needs to be strengthened. In 2012, trade between MSG countries and Indonesia amounted to 320 million US dollars. Trade has fluctuated, but it is on a clear upward trajectory. There is a great deal of room for growth, considering that Indonesia is a huge market of over 230 million people. Connectivity will be key, both in our respective countries as well as in the region.

The implementation of Indonesia's Master Plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Economic Development will advance connectivity within Indonesia and with its neighbors. In Indonesia's eastern regions, we are allocating 60 billion dollars for the development of the

*Papua-Maluku Islands Economic Corridor*

The Corridor will therefore be a channel for stronger economic relations between MSG countries and Indonesia.

Indonesia also supports the establishment of the MSG Regional Police Academy, as well as the participation of MSG personnel in international peacekeeping missions. We will consult with the MSG on how we can help in these endeavors.

To strengthen relations between the MSG and Indonesia, we are pleased to extend an invitation to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the MSG to visit Indonesia. We hope it would be an opportunity for us to share experience on how we address the common challenges that we share. An opportunity for MSG countries to view and better understand the developments in all parts of Indonesia, including in Papua and West Papua provinces. The details of the visit will be communicated in due course and I look forward to welcoming you to Indonesia.

On developments in our provinces of Papua and West Papua provinces, let me share with you some updates.

Like all other provinces of Indonesia, Papua and West Papua provinces are provided every opportunity and assistance for development. We are firmly committed to the enhancement of the welfare of our people in these provinces.

By according them special autonomy, we recognize that their cultures are distinct, unique and deserve to be cherished. The same is true with their history, traditions and the many languages they speak. We therefore give greater space for the residents of these two provinces to manage their own affairs. We do our best to attend to their needs and accommodate their aspirations.

The governance of these two provinces is given guidance at the highest level of government in Indonesia. To further expedite their socioeconomic development, a special unit in the Office of the President was established in 2011 to coordinate, facilitate and manage the implementation of development programs and projects in the two provinces.

Moreover, in accordance with President Yudhoyono's directives, the Government is preparing to give "special autonomy plus" status to Papua and West Papua provinces in the near future. This will further ensure the welfare and prosperity of the people there.

For that purpose, a state budget of 48 trillion Rupiah—or about 5.6 billion US dollars—have been allocated for Papua and West Papua provinces.

For perspective,

this is an increase of more than 25 percent

in the last two years

. Furthermore, as provided by the Special Autonomy Law, the two provinces retain 70 percent of their local revenues to finance programs and projects approved at the local level.

As a country that upholds equality among its citizens, Indonesia has seen to it that citizens of Papuan heritage serve in important government positions at the national level—as cabinet ministers, parliamentarians, ambassadors and military commanders.

To promote and protect the distinct Papuan identity, we have a regulation that only citizens of Papuan ethnicity can run for governor in the two provinces. This regulation does not apply to other provinces. Today 98 percent of government officials in Papua and West Papua provinces are native to the two provinces.

The Indonesian Government continues to ensure that the state of affairs in the two provinces are conducive to the welfare of their people, to empower human resources and preserve the socio-cultural identity of all Indonesians in Papua and West Papua provinces.

Indonesia is a democracy—the third largest democracy in the world—and we have established democratic mechanisms at home to deal with all of our domestic issues.

Not only are these mechanisms appropriate to deal with domestic issues, they represent the wish of all of our people

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

