

Nationaal Papoea Vereniging 95 West Nieuw Guinea

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Item5. Minority youth: agents of change for peace and stability

Dear distinguished delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to be here in Geneva.

I wish to highlight the issue of the Papuan youth. It is close to my heart. The young generation are the hope for the future. They will determine how, when and if, the age-old culture of Papua will survive. The Papuan youth suffer from several destructive policies.

According to the International Labour Organisation, Indonesia has the highest youth unemployment of all Southeast Asian countries. The youth unemployment rate in West Papua is very much higher than this. It is almost 60 percent. The poor level of education and economic discrimination are the main reason.

As a father I know the value of a good education for the youth. It provides people the skills to participate in society. Without these skills, people will remain poor and helpless. It should therefore be the duty of the State to make sure that all youth have the chance to become properly educated. Indonesia fails in this respect.

This education should not discriminate. There is very little, and often no, education offered in the local language. This puts Papuan children already at a disadvantage. When the youth later speak out for more cultural rights for Papuans, this causes serious problems for them to go into higher education.

The Indonesian government invests in educational resources, like schools and teachers, but these go to the few major cities in Papua. And in many of these cities a large group of migrants from parts of Indonesia live. The highlands and other remote places in Papua receive far less, while in fact they should get more, because it is much more difficult and expensive to have good schools and teachers in these areas. Because it is expensive for teachers to live and travel in the highlands and because there are few facilities, there are not many teachers who want to go there. This means that many Papuans do not get the chance to get a good education.

The education that is available to the Papuans is often not good enough to get a good job. An example of this is the low level of technical education. The International Labour Organisation advised the government to improve the quality of education and to raise the school leaving age to 18 and invest more in technical education. In most developing countries, the industrial sector is a reservoir for the least educated. But factory owners in Papua are complaining about the low level of their workers. In the gold mine of US company Freeport in Timika, which is about 300 kilometers from Wamena, you will find no Papuans in the highest paid jobs.

In order to provide a more inclusive society it is therefore important to make the educational system more inclusive as well. This means in practice that:

- 1. it should be allowed to have education in the local language and culture,**
- 2. more resources should be put in education outside the few major cities,**
- 3. more investment should be made in technical education for the Papuans.**