

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 7, 2009

The Honorable Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
President of the Republic of Indonesia
Istana Merdeka
Jakarta, Indonesia

Dear Mr. President:

We wish to congratulate you on your recent reelection as President. Your victory represents an extraordinary personal achievement. In addition, it demonstrates the Indonesian people's firm commitment to, and faith in, the democratic government they have worked so hard to achieve. Again, congratulations!

We also note with interest the dozens of prominent leaders and organizations in West Papua calling recently for an internationally-mediated commission to establish a dialogue between your government and leaders of West Papua. Those appeals have been supported by key Indonesian leaders and intellectuals. As a recent statement by the Indonesian National Academy of Sciences (LIPI) stressed, "The involvement of a well-respected third party as mediator from international circles would also help, as was shown in the successful Aceh dialogue." We respectfully urge your administration to seize the opportunity provided by these developments to establish a similar process for West Papua.

We believe that such a process would build on important steps Indonesia has taken in recent years, such as your government's accession to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In becoming a signatory to that agreement, Indonesia clearly expressed its commitment to establishing legal protections for indigenous citizens, including Papuans. We also recognize your administration's efforts to address the special circumstances of West Papua, including through the 2001 enactment of the "Special Autonomy" law.

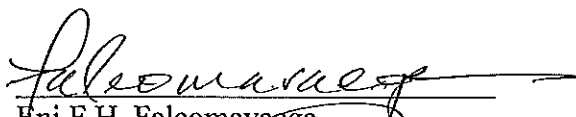
A national dialogue initiated by an internationally-mediated commission could work to improve enforcement of that law and better the daily lives of average Papuans by, for example, increasing the availability of electricity and fresh water, enhancing public health programs to prevent malaria and other treatable diseases, and upgrading the public education system to levels found in most of the rest of Indonesia.

A national dialogue would also present an opportunity to resolve other important issues in West Papua long viewed with concern by Members of Congress and the international

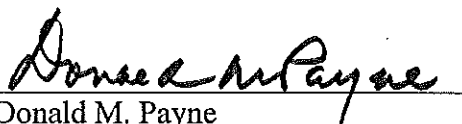
community. These include human rights abuses, demographic shifts leaving many Papuans as minorities in their own land, limits on freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, restrictions on the free movement of Papuans within Indonesia, and constraints on international journalists, researchers, and those in nongovernmental organizations seeking to visit or work in West Papua.

It is our sincere hope that you will establish an internationally-mediated commission to initiate a dialogue bringing together nationally-respected leaders of your government and of West Papua. We believe this is the moment to begin such a process. A serious national dialogue will enhance the welfare of the people of West Papua, demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to democracy and justice for all its citizens, and enhance your country's growing stature on the global stage.

Sincerely,



Eni F.H. Falcomayaega
Chairman
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific
and Global Environment
U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs



Donald M. Payne
Chairman
Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health
U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs