

In his State of the Nation address on Aug. 16, 2011, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono underlined the importance of addressing the complicated problems facing Papua.

He reiterated that the government had established its policy to ensure that development in the easternmost territory could really lead to just, secure, peaceful and prosperous lives for the people there.

In the political sphere, through special autonomy, the central government has given greater authority to the local government to carry out development according to its resources. During the last five years, the central government also went through substantial fiscal decentralization to directly support the acceleration of development in Papua. Papua is also one of the economic corridors in the Master Plan of Economic Development Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesia.

Papuan management with a heart is therefore the key to all the steps to achieve successful development of the eastern gate of Indonesia.

The President's remarks appear to be the mantra to addressing the complexity of socioeconomic and political problems in Papua.

Ironically, the last few weeks saw continuing social tensions prevail in Papua. The tension began after Aug. 2, 2011, when about 1,000 people in Jayapura took to the streets to show their support for a conference of International Lawyers for West Papua (ILWP) in London, who were pursuing a referendum for the independence in Papua.

The latest shock came when the third Papuan People's Congress was held in Abepura district in Jayapura on Oct. 17–19, 2011, which marked a start to a series of killings that claimed several lives.

The police broke up the congress after participants reportedly raised the outlawed Morning Star flag, a symbol of Papuan independence, and declared an independent West Papua state.

These events were indeed a display of local Papuans' disappointment with the implementation of the Law on Special Autonomy. After a decade of special autonomy, poverty, corruption, unemployment and poor infrastructure have remained unaddressed. The autonomy has greatly succeeded in changing the socioeconomic gap between Papuans and migrants to the disparity between indigenous Papuans.

In the past, migrant people held socioeconomic and political power. The picture has changed drastically since the inception of the special autonomy. Political, economic, social and cultural powers shifted to the hands of indigenous Papuans.

OPINION: Managing Papua with heart

Geschreven door Hafid Abbas, Jakarta
dinsdag 01 november 2011 01:00

As mandated by Article 12 of the law, the governor and deputy governor may only be indigenous Papuans. Similarly, all the members of the Papua People's Assembly (MRP) cultural body are exclusively indigenous Papuans. Article 28 states that indigenous Papuans can establish a political party.

Indeed, the law provides greater freedom and self-determination rights in all sectors to Papuan people within the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia.

The data in 2011 indicated that the state budget allocation for Papua reached Rp 28 trillion (US\$3.16 billion). Other provinces received smaller portions of the budget, with Gorontalo earning Rp 5.1 trillion, West Sumatra Rp 16.4 trillion, Banten Rp 13.5 trillion and oil-rich East Kalimantan — one of the largest provinces in Indonesia — Rp 7.46 trillion.

Using simple logic, if the Rp 28 trillion was distributed to each of the 2.8 million people in Papua, everybody would enjoy prosperity.

The question is why indigenous Papuans have remained so powerless and underdeveloped that some of them have taken to the extreme path of secessionism. There must be something wrong with the implementation of the special autonomy.

Nicolaas Jouwe, a self-exiled Papuan who fought for Papuan independence for 40 years, said upon receiving his Indonesian citizenship in May 2010 that Papua was an inseparable part of Indonesia, then a Dutch colony, since 1928, when the territory came under the auspices of Ternate Sultanate.

Therefore, even without the New York Agreement in 1962 and popular vote in 1969, Papua, as part of the former Dutch East Indies, has been integrated into the Republic of Indonesia since its birth on Aug. 17, 1945. From this perspective, Indonesia without Irian Jaya or Papua cannot be called a fully independent nation.

Jouwe further appealed to those who were struggling for independence to return to Papua and develop the province within a new Indonesia, which is more democratic, decentralized and appears to be one of the world's emerging economies. There is no reason for Papua to remain underdeveloped.

The key issue in Papua is how to strengthen social cohesion between Papuans and non-Papuans. Implementation of the special autonomy law needs changes to uphold human rights.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said, "We will not enjoy security without development; we will not enjoy development without security; and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights."

Therefore, these human rights parameters have to be incorporated in the special autonomy values, such as the rule of law, democracy, equal access and opportunity for all, efficiency and clean government and open society.

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This spirit may remind us of Martin Luther King Jr., who said, "Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love."

Hopefully by the adoption of those values to serve, Papuans in the framework of special autonomy will strengthen social cohesion within the unitary state of Indonesia.

The writer is a professor at the State University of Jakarta, former director general of Human Rights at the Law and Human Rights Ministry and former UNESCO consultant in Asia and the Pacific region.

Comments (5)

Kobe Oser | Tue, 01/11/2011 - 20:11pm

The 1945 Proklamasi Sukarno-Hatta from "A till A" (Atjeh till Ambon) did NOT include WP. Because on that same day WP tribal leaders led by Marcus Wonggor Kaisiëpo, issued a statement in Kota Nica to RADEN Col. AbdulKadir Widojojoatmodjo of the NICA (Neth-Indies Civil Administration) government with a simple message: "WP will determine its own future apart from Indonesia. From that moment on any historical claim of Indonesia on West Papua is not funded as the 1945 Kota Nica statement widely expressed the Will of the WP people. As a result the 1947 Canberra Agreement was signed, recognizing the WP Nation and its Melanesian territorial borders & creating the South Pacific Commission. So RI is living in denial by considering WP as an internal question within RI's territory, as RI is ILLEGALLY OCCUPYING WP. Let's re-carry out the 1962 NY-Agreement, as West Papua can easily finance this Roadmap.

H. Beras | Tue, 01/11/2011 - 16:11pm

This lengthy article by Hafid Abbas presents the unrest in Jayapura as legitimating the intervention of the police: "the third Papuan People's Congress marked a start to a series of killings that claimed several lives". Actually, the police killed West Papuans holding a peaceful gathering. And one should see that this terrible repression has been usual business in West Papua since the Indonesian military invaded that country in 1962. The article further states that "Papua [is] an inseparable part of Indonesia since 1928, when the

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territory came under the auspices of Ternate Sultanate” (a weak argument) but does not take into account the advice of West Papuans. A fair referendum has to be held first.

The problems that West Papuans have now faced for 50 years are very serious (some say genocide) and superficial statements like the ones conveyed in this paper do not help solving them.

rafli Hasan | Tue, 01/11/2011 - 15:11pm

“We will not enjoy security without development; we will not enjoy development without security; and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.”

How 'bout that?

H. Beras | Tue, 01/11/2011 - 14:11pm

This lengthy article signed Hafid Abbas presents the unrest in Jayapura as legitimate cause for the intervention of the police: “the third Papuan People’s Congress marked a start to a series of killings that claimed several lives”. Actually, only the police/TNI killed West Papuans holding a peaceful gathering. And one should ask that this terrible repression has been usual business in West Papua since the Indonesian military invaded that country in 1962.

The article further states that “Papua [is] an inseparable part of Indonesia since 1928, when the territory came under the auspices of Ternate Sultanate” (a weak argument) but does not take into account the advice of West Papuans. A fair referendum has to be held first.

The problem that West Papuans face for 50 years is very serious and superficial statements like the ones conveyed in this paper do not help solving it.

RAFLI HASAN | Tue, 01/11/2011 - 11:11am

Jouwe is part of Indonesia's history. He might have wrong at his past life in interpreting the

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meaning of freedom. But now He become one of Indonesia ambassador to spread "the understanding of real freedom" within Indonesia. He can live peacefully for the rest of his life.