



Jacob Rumbiak, Q&A

West Papua Open Day, FRWP Office-Docklands, 5 December 2021

CHRIS LYNCH: Jacob, I know that Raki Ap was at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow. What sort of response that there been to that presentation by the ULMWP?

JACOB: West Papua went to the meeting in UN Summit Glasgow with our Green State vision, and there were pro and contra responses. It looks like we offended big international capital interests. In West Papua we also have pro and contra. And there have also been some questions from outside experts. But we maintain that it depends on what sort of agreements can be reached.

I will give you an example. When someone wants to work with us, they ask ‘What about the gold and copper in Papua?’ ‘What about the gas and oil for petroleum?’ ‘How about the aerospace installation that Russia wants to build in Biak?’ And ‘what about China?’

We say that it depends on how we can negotiate. We will not cut out companies suddenly. So for example when someone wants to get Merbau timber in my home, I must tell them ‘Okay, you can get the old trees, but you must grow new ones’. But when it comes to something that will create changes for one or two-hundred years, then we must have the right policy. So we are not against those who want to work with us, but we must negotiate with them. And if we can’t come to agreement then all of us destroy the world. So it all depends on how much take and give there is.

PETER WOODS: We know that one of the root causes of the conflict in West Papua is the Freeport McMoran mine ... and we know the vast amount of gold and copper that has been taken out during the past fifty years, and also the pollution that it has caused. And we know that Indonesia now has 51% controlling interest in the mine, so it will be complex to disentangle West Papua from Indonesia’s involvement. I hear that some of the West Papuans want to shut the mine [inaudible] How do you see the future of this multi-national?

JACOB: Thank you Peter. In November 2018 I met two Trump Ambassadors at a seminar in Seoul in South Korea and they asked about the mining, and about China, because Indonesia had borrowed 3.8M from China to buy the 51% of the Freeport mine. Indonesia said it would give 10% to Papua, but the implementation of that agreement hasn’t worked. So when we talk with Indonesia about their interests in West Papua, we say that when Indonesia recognises our rights, then we will discuss percentages and so on, but of course subject to the impact on the health of the environment.

West Papuans are also looking at the alternative of going without mining. We believe that in fifteen years water will be very expensive. We have our policy to protect our forest, because our forest is enough to supply water and medicine around the world. But we won’t ignore the resources that we can use but only with the right policy ... for example, if we want to exploit the gold and copper, we must first account the impact: if there is a 40% negative impact and 60% positive, then we can do it. But when it’s bad for us, then we won’t enter into any agreements. The animals, the forests, and the water and air are very important for us. We will only extract resources that doesn’t involve destroying our land. This means that our links with big companies, including Indonesia, depends on whether they can, or can’t, accept our demands. When they offer something to us that does not guarantee our forest, and is not useful to our people, then we must say no.