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Office of Public Information  
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Press Release SG/1713  
14 September 1968

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR WEST IRIAN TOURS TERRITORY

Fernando Ortiz-Sanz, the United Nations Representative in West Irian for the Act of Free Choice, departed Djakarta, together with several members of his staff, on 22 August 1968 for the Territory where he arrived on 23 August to assume the duties assigned to him by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in accordance with the terms of the Agreement of 15 August 1962. The Agreement calls on the United Nations Representative to assist and advise the Indonesian Government and participate in the exercise of the Act of Free Choice by the people of West Irian which is to take place before the end of 1969.

Upon arrival in the Territory, the United Nations Representative paid courtesy calls on the Governor, Frans Kasiepo, the Commander of Indonesian armed forces in West Irian, Brigadier General Sarwo Edhie, and the Second Vice Chairman of the Provincial Council, D.S. Ajamiseba.

On 26 August, Mr. Ortiz-Sanz and his staff, accompanied by Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro, representing the Government of Indonesia in matters concerning West Irian, and several officials of the Government, began a tour of the Territory. The party visited by air Wamena, Bokondini, Manokwari, Sorong, Sorong Doom, Kebar, Enarotali, Kaimana, Nabire, Biak, Merauke and Tanahmerah -- an area where approximately 80 per cent of the population lives. The tour, which covered nearly 3,000 miles, ended on 3 September when the party returned to Sukarnapura.

In the course of the trip, the United Nations Representative met local officials and the people to explain briefly his mission in West Irian and to acquire a first-hand knowledge regarding the Territory. He was impressed by the rugged terrain and the impenetrable jungle which cause immense difficulties concerning transport and communications.

In the course of the tour, Mr. Ortiz-Sanz and his staff were cordially received by local officials, the representatives of the councils and the population. He was briefed on the progress achieved in the Territory since 1963 in the fields of education, construction, agriculture and others.

(more)

At the conclusion of the tour, Mr. Ortiz-Sanz returned to Sukarnapura and had some discussions with Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro on the future steps to be taken concerning the exercise of the Act of Free Choice.

On 13 September the United Nations Representative returned to Djakarta for a short stay, during which he would call on several high ranking officials of the Government of Indonesia. Upon arrival in Djakarta the United Nations Representative expressed his gratitude for the excellent arrangements which were made by the Government of Indonesia for what he considered to have been a successful tour and for the friendly reception accorded to him and his staff by officials at all levels and by the people of West Irian.

During the absence of the United Nations Representative from West Irian, A. Nekunam, the Senior Adviser, will be acting as his deputy in the Territory.

Mr. Ortiz-Sanz plans to return to West Irian in early October, accompanied by Mrs. Ortiz-Sanz and a few more members of his staff.

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