

Study Files of the Secretary-General: United Nations  
East African (West New Guinea) - Signing of Agreement

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15/08/1962 - 17/08/1962

UN ARCHIVES

SERIES	<u>0884</u>
BOX	<u>23</u>
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UNITED NATIONS

Press Services  
Office of Public Information  
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media -- not an official record)

Press Release SG/1291  
15 August 1962

STATEMENT BY ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL U THANT  
AT CEREMONY FOR SIGNING OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN  
REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA AND KINGDOM OF NETHERLANDS

On this eventful occasion, when the Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands in regard to the future of West New Guinea (West Irian) is about to be signed, I would like first of all to congratulate the two governments on their willingness to settle this question by peaceful negotiation, and also on their spirit of "give and take" which has made possible the conclusion of this Agreement.

I am sure I am right in saying that, as a result, there will be not only an easing of tension in the area, but also an increased feeling of mutual trust and confidence between the two governments. It is a good augury that, with the signing of this Agreement, diplomatic relations are to be resumed between the two countries, and I am sure that their future relations will be marked by the friendliness, understanding and cordiality that have prevailed during these negotiations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to place on record, publicly, my gratitude to Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker who has acted on my behalf during the preliminary negotiations between the two governments and whose patience, integrity and diplomatic skill have contributed so greatly to the successful conclusion of this Agreement.

There are several unique features about this Agreement. One is that, if the General Assembly endorses it, the United Nations would have temporary executive authority (established by and under the jurisdiction of the Secretary-General) over a vast territory for the first time in its history. Another is that the entire expenses to be incurred under the terms of this Agreement are to be shared by the two governments and will not impose a burden on any of the other member governments. Considerable executive responsibilities are placed on the Secretary-General and Secretariat of the United Nations, some of which have necessarily to be undertaken,

(more)

in the interests of peace and security, in anticipation of the approval of the General Assembly. It will be my endeavor and that of my colleagues to fulfil these tasks to the best of our capacity.

If these responsibilities are to be discharged to the satisfaction of all concerned, I shall need the willing cooperation of both governments, especially during the period of transition. I hope that my task will be facilitated by the scrupulous adherence on the part of both governments to the letter and spirit of this Agreement. Without it my task would become immensely difficult, and I earnestly appeal to both governments to make their cooperation available to me in the fullest measure.

Before closing, I would like to congratulate once again the representatives of the two governments on the imminent signature of this historic agreement which, in line with the principles of the Charter, has settled peacefully a long-standing problem, with benefit to all concerned.

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Press Release WNG/1  
15 August 1962

INDONESIA, NETHERLANDS SIGN AGREEMENT ON WEST NEW GUINEA (WEST IRIAN)

Acting Secretary-General Witnesses Signature; Period of UN Administration  
Planned, with Later Transfer to Indonesia and Eventual Self-Determination

Representatives of the Governments of Indonesia and the Netherlands today signed, in the presence of Acting Secretary-General U Thant, an agreement for the transfer of administration of West New Guinea (West Irian) and for the eventual self-determination of the people of the territory.

The agreement was signed by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Dr. Subandrio, and Ambassadors J.H. van Roijen and Carl W.A. Schurmann of the Netherlands.

It provides for the transfer of Netherlands administration to the United Nations for a period until at least 1 May 1963; transfer of United Nations administration to Indonesia any time after 1 May 1963; and the act of self-determination for the people to be completed before the end of 1969.

Annexes to the agreement provide, among other things, for a cessation of hostilities in the territory at 0001 Greenwich Mean Time on Saturday, 18 August, and the provision of UN personnel to see that the cessation of hostilities is carried out.

A memorandum also provides that a committee will be set up as soon as possible, consisting of representatives of the Secretary-General and of the two governments, concerning funds to be placed at the disposal of the United Nations Administrator by the Netherlands and Indonesia at the beginning of the period of UN administration.

Annexed letters provide for an exchange of diplomatic missions between Indonesia and the Netherlands after the signing of the agreement.

The agreement itself provides that after ratification Indonesia and the Netherlands will jointly sponsor a draft resolution in the General Assembly under which the Assembly would take note of the present agreement, acknowledge the role conferred upon the Secretary-General and authorize him to undertake the tasks entrusted to him by the agreement.

(The text of the agreement and annexes appears in Press Release PM/4164.)

Statements Made at Ceremony

Before the actual signing of the agreement, statements were made by Acting Secretary-General U Thant, Foreign Minister Subandrio and Ambassador van Roijen.

(more)

U Thant commented that the signature of the "historic agreement...", in line with the principles of the Charter, has settled peacefully a long-standing problem, with benefit to all concerned."

The agreement had "several unique features," the Acting Secretary-General observed. One was that, if endorsed by the Assembly, the United Nations would have "temporary executive authority...over a vast territory for the first time in its history." Another, he said, was that all expenses incurred under the agreement would be shared by the two governments and would not impose a burden on any of the other UN members.

He expressed hope that his task would be facilitated by scrupulous adherence on the part of both governments to the letter and spirit of the agreement.

Dr. Subandrio in his statement paid tribute to the "guidance, sincerity and wisdom" of the Acting Secretary-General which had brought about the agreement.

He emphasized that with the signing of the agreement "the Indonesian unity has been restored," and he hoped that now "the traditional friendship between Indonesia and the Netherlands could be restored."

Ambassador van Roijen also expressed hope that the agreement would lead to "a better understanding and ultimately a happier and fruitful relationship between our two countries and our two peoples."

The Netherlands representative said his country attached primary importance to the provisions for furthering the well-being of the Papuans and the guaranteeing, under active United Nations supervision, of "a genuine and valid exercise of freedom of choice with regard to their future."

#### Signing Ceremony Held

The statements were made, and the signing ceremony held, in the Security Council Chamber. Acting Secretary-General U Thant took his place at the head of the Council table shortly after 6 p.m., with Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, who had represented him in preliminary negotiations, sitting at his right.

The Indonesian delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Subandrio, was escorted into the Chamber by the UN Acting Chief of Protocol, Sinan Korle, and Dr. Subandrio was seated at the right of Ambassador Bunker.

The Netherlands delegation was then conducted into the Chamber. Dr. van Roijen and Mr. Schurmann were seated at the left of the Acting Secretary-General.

After the statements by U Thant, Dr. Subandrio and Dr. van Roijen, the signing of the agreements began. Three copies, in dark blue covers with the UN emblem in gold, were signed in turn by Dr. Subandrio and Ambassadors van Roijen and Schurmann.

(more)

One copy was given to each delegation and the third was retained by the United Nations. Some of the annexes and memoranda were signed by the Acting Secretary-General as well as by the representatives of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

Acting Secretary-General Lauds Cooperation of Two Governments

In his statement before the signing, the Acting Secretary-General congratulated Indonesia and the Netherlands "on their willingness to settle this question by peaceful negotiation" and on their spirit of "give and take." He was certain that the result would be not only an easing of tension in the area but also an increased feeling of mutual trust and confidence between the two governments.

It was "a good augury" that, with the signing of the agreement, diplomatic relations would be resumed between the two countries, he said.

U Thant appealed to Indonesia and the Netherlands to make their cooperation available "in the fullest measure," especially in the period of UN administration. He said the "willing cooperation" of both governments was necessary if the responsibilities undertaken by the agreement were to be discharged to the satisfaction of all concerned. Without "scrupulous adherence of both governments to the letter and spirit" of the agreement, U Thant said, his own task would become "immensely difficult."

The Acting Secretary-General expressed his gratitude to Ambassador Bunker who, he said, had acted on his behalf during the preliminary negotiations "and whose patience, integrity and diplomatic skill have contributed so greatly to the successful conclusion of this agreement."

Indonesian Foreign Minister Expresses Appreciation

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, thanked U Thant for his initiative and paid tribute to the "tireless efforts and patience" of Ambassador Bunker, without whose qualities it would have been "almost impossible to formulate an agreement within such a short period," he declared.

(more)

Dr. Subandrio then congratulated the Netherlands delegation and expressed "our deep appreciation for the consistent sincerity with which they have approached the problems we are dealing with."

He stated that the success of the agreement was also "a success of the United Nations," and he hoped it would lead to further achievements for the Organization in solving other problems with which it was engaged.

Netherlands Representative Pays Tribute to U Thant, Bunker

The Netherlands representative, Dr. van Roijen, commented that "the course of two nations may be taking a decisive turn." A dispute that "has lasted already far too long" was to be settled.

He thanked the Acting Secretary-General for his initiative and for the "invaluable part" he had played in "bringing about a solution to our problems." To Ambassador Bunker he expressed "sincere appreciation for his patient and tireless efforts" and for the "impartial way" he had presided over the preliminary negotiations.

Dr. van Roijen stated that it had proved "more than difficult" at times to bring the two delegations together. However, after meeting at the conference table, "we found the Indonesian delegation and ourselves were equally committed in all sincerity to arrive at a peaceful solution to our dispute."

He concluded by saying that the "touchstone" in the realization of the hoped-for better relations between the two countries "will be our mutual good faith and our consistent efforts in fulfilling the terms of the agreement."

(more)

Background up to the Negotiations at UN Headquarters

On 19 December 1961, Acting Secretary-General U Thant sent identical cables to the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Dr. Jan E. de Quay, and the President of Indonesia, Dr. Sukarno, stating his "deep concern" over the possibility of a "serious situation" arising between Indonesia and the Netherlands and expressing his "sincere hope" that the two parties might come together to seek a peaceful solution to the problem. He respectfully urged that steps be taken to bring this about.

The Acting Secretary-General followed up this cable with a further appeal to the two governments on 15 January 1962 and, after a naval clash off West New Guinea, he asked on 17 January that instructions be given to the Permanent Representatives of the two governments to the United Nations "to discuss with me the possibilities of a peaceful settlement of the whole question in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

Both governments then instructed their Permanent Representatives to consult with the Acting Secretary-General.

Following these consultations the Acting Secretary-General appealed to the Netherlands on 29 January to agree to the release of Indonesian prisoners "as a humanitarian gesture which might help in easing tensions all round..." and Dr. de Quay replied that this would be done "in the hope that this voluntary gesture may contribute to easing the present tension and thus to improve the climate for negotiations between the parties under your auspices."

U Thant then asked the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Leopold Boissier, to designate an official to make on-the-spot arrangements for the repatriation of the prisoners. Andre Durand (Switzerland) was designated, and the repatriation was completed on 11 March.

Meanwhile, the Acting Secretary-General continued his consultations with the Permanent Representatives of the two countries, and it was agreed that informal talks would take place between representatives of Indonesia and the Netherlands outside Washington with the Acting Secretary-General, represented by Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker.

Mr. Bunker eventually put forward proposals for negotiations between the Governments of Indonesia and the Netherlands and the Acting Secretary-General appealed to the two governments to resume negotiations on the basis of these proposals on 29 May.

(more)

Replies to this appeal were made by the Netherlands on 29 May and by Indonesia on 5 June. There were further exchanges of communications between Dr. Sukarno and the Acting Secretary-General on 7 June, 17 June, 20 June, 27 June and 28 June, and 3 July. Comments were also made by the Acting Secretary-General at his press conference of 5 June.

On 13 July the Acting Secretary-General announced that talks had resumed between the delegations of Indonesia and the Netherlands in the presence of Ambassador Bunker "on the basis of the principles of the Bunker Plan." Earlier, on 7 July, the Acting Secretary-General had made further comments on the question at his press conference in London, in Oslo on 11 July, and in Helsinki on 20 July.

The Acting Secretary-General announced on 31 July his gratification at the fact that "a preliminary agreement has been reached by the Indonesian and Netherlands representatives in regard to the modalities of the transfer of authority over West New Guinea" and stated that he was "optimistic" about the outcome of the "official negotiations" now to take place under his auspices.

At his press conference of 2 August the Acting Secretary-General stated that he expected that Indonesia and the Netherlands would table a joint resolution early in the next Assembly and that he would appoint a special representative for the territory immediately after adoption of the resolution.

\* \* \* \*

Note: Additional information appears in the following press releases issued beginning in December 1961 and listed chronologically:

SG/1098  
SG/1116  
SG/1118  
SG/1123  
SG/1128  
Note No. 2490  
SG/1150  
SG/1154  
Note No. 2548  
SG/1204  
SG/1205  
Note No. 2574  
SG/1209  
SG/1210  
Note No. 2600

SG/1212  
SG/1214  
SG/1215  
SG/1227  
SG/1228  
SG/1229  
SG/1233  
SG/1243  
Note No. 2603  
SG/1261  
Note No. 2616  
Note No. 2624  
Note No. 2627  
SG/1267  
SG/1280

Note No. 2635

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Note No. 2635

UNITED NATIONS

Press Services  
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United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media -- not an official record)

Press Release WNG/2  
15 August 1962

STATEMENT BY DR. J.H. VAN ROIJEN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS AT THE  
CEREMONY OF THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDONESIA AND THE NETHERLANDS

We are experiencing one of those rare moments in recorded time when the course of two nations may be taking a decisive turn. Upon the signing of the agreement lying before us the dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia concerning West New Guinea, a dispute which has already lasted far too long, will be settled.

During the long and sometimes difficult negotiations which have preceded the reaching of a meeting of minds between our two Governments, the Netherlands delegation has constantly been deeply conscious of the importance of the issues involved. Nothing, however, has weighed more heavily with us than the consideration that the outcome of our efforts would directly affect the fate of the 700,000 Papuans inhabiting West New Guinea.

The Netherlands Government has been, and is, most deeply concerned with the well-being of the Papuans. It is for that reason that the Netherlands has attached primary importance to the inclusion in the agreement of provisions safeguarding the further political, economic, cultural and educational development of the territory and its inhabitants, and guaranteeing for the Papuans, under active supervision of the United Nations, a genuine and valid exercise of freedom of choice with regard to their future.

We wish to thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for the initiative you have taken in bringing the parties together and for the invaluable part you have played in bringing about a solution of our problems. We hope that you will be good enough to transmit our thanks also to the members of your staff for their indispensable help and advice.

To Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, I wish to express our sincere appreciation for his patient and tireless efforts. I feel we owe him a debt of gratitude for the impartial way in which he presided over our informal preliminary talks at the Huntland Estate in Middleburg.

(more)

It has proved difficult, and perhaps, Mr. Secretary-General, I should even say at times more than difficult, to bring the Netherlands and Indonesian delegates together. But once we were gathered around the conference table we found that the Indonesian delegation and ourselves were equally committed in all sincerity to arrive at a peaceful solution of our dispute.

Mr. Secretary-General, we have now worked out a detailed settlement on paper. The judgment of history on what we have accomplished will ultimately depend on the manner in which the provisions of our agreement are carried out in practice. The whole world has been closely watching us; it will continue to do so.

The foundations have now been laid, we hope, for a better understanding and ultimately a happier and fruitful relationship between our two countries and our two peoples. For the possibility of achieving the realization of this hope, the touchstone will be our mutual good faith and our consistent efforts in fulfilling the terms of the agreement.

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15 August 1962

STATEMENT BY DR. J.H. VAN ROIJEN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS AT THE  
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During the long and sometimes difficult negotiations which have preceded the reaching of a meeting of minds between our two Governments, the Netherlands delegation has constantly been deeply conscious of the importance of the issues involved. Nothing, however, has weighed more heavily with us than the consideration that the outcome of our efforts would directly affect the fate of the 700,000 Papuans inhabiting West New Guinea.

The Netherlands Government has been, and is, most deeply concerned with the well-being of the Papuans. It is for that reason that the Netherlands has attached primary importance to the inclusion in the agreement of provisions safeguarding the further political, economic, cultural and educational development of the territory and its inhabitants, and guaranteeing for the Papuans, under active supervision of the United Nations, a genuine and valid exercise of freedom of choice with regard to their future.

We wish to thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for the initiative you have taken in bringing the parties together and for the invaluable part you have played in bringing about a solution of our problems. We hope that you will be good enough to transmit our thanks also to the members of your staff for their indispensable help and advice.

To Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, I wish to express our sincere appreciation for his patient and tireless efforts. I feel we owe him a debt of gratitude for the impartial way in which he presided over our informal preliminary talks at the Huntland Estate in Middleburg.

(more)

It has proved difficult, and perhaps, Mr. Secretary-General, I should even say at times more than difficult, to bring the Netherlands and Indonesian delegates together. But once we were gathered around the conference table we found that the Indonesian delegation and ourselves were equally committed in all sincerity to arrive at a peaceful solution of our dispute.

Mr. Secretary-General, we have now worked out a detailed settlement on paper. The judgment of history on what we have accomplished will ultimately depend on the manner in which the provisions of our agreement are carried out in practice. The whole world has been closely watching us; it will continue to do so.

The foundations have now been laid, we hope, for a better understanding and ultimately a happier and fruitful relationship between our two countries and our two peoples. For the possibility of achieving the realization of this hope, the touchstone will be our mutual good faith and our consistent efforts in fulfilling the terms of the agreement.

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U N I T E D     N A T I O N S

Press Services  
Office of Public Information  
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media -- not an official record)

Press Release WNG/3/Rev.1  
15 August 1962

TEXT OF STATEMENT BY DR. SUBANDRIO, MINISTER  
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF INDONESIA, AT THE CEREMONY  
OF SIGNING THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND INDONESIA

For the Indonesian people this very moment is regarded as a very important national occasion since with the signing of the agreement the Indonesian unity has been restored and therefore the basis for the struggle for independence completed is part and parcel of the Indonesian revolution.

It is therefore that we are most gratified, Mr. Secretary-General, that you took the initiative as early as in December for both parties to come together in order to solve this problem in a peaceful way.

Your guidance during the negotiations, based upon sincerity, wisdom and experience, has made us pass with success through all the intricacies of a negotiated settlement. For that the Indonesian Government and people will be always grateful.

The positive response from the Indonesian and Netherlands side towards your urgent appeal results in the agreement we have just signed.

On behalf of the Indonesian Government and people I want also to thank, sincerely, the tireless efforts and patience of Ambassador Bunker who never spared himself physically and mentally in order to overcome all the difficulties and obstacles which sometimes seem to flood the path towards this agreement.

To be frank, without the personal qualities inherent to Ambassador Bunker, it would be almost impossible to formulate an agreement within such a short period.

I also want to make use of this opportunity to congratulate Dr. van Roijen, Dr. Schurmann and all the members of his delegation for the success of this agreement, and on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I want to express our deep appreciation for the consistent sincerity with which they have approached the problems we are dealing with.

And last but not least, Mr. Secretary-General, our deepest appreciation to your devoted colleagues on the Secretariat for their unfailing assistance without which this success could not have been achieved.

(more)

The success of this agreement which is also a success of the United Nations I hope will lead to further achievements in solving problems with which the United Nations has been engaged.

Now that this agreement has been signed, now that the Indonesian unity is reaching its completion, I sincerely hope that the traditional friendship between Indonesia and the Netherlands could be restored.

Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

UNITED NATIONS

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United Nations, N.Y.

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Press Release PM/4164/Add.1  
16 August 1962

TEXTS OF AIDES-MEMOIRE FROM ACTING SECRETARY-GENERAL TO REPRESENTATIVES  
OF REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA, KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Following are the texts of two aides-memoire given by Acting Secretary-General U Thant to Foreign Minister Subandrio (Indonesia) and Ambassador J.H. van Roijen (Netherlands), respectively, in regard to the modalities of the transfer of authority over West New Guinea (West Irian).

AIDE-MEMOIRE

I

1. The authority of the Government of the Netherlands over the territory will be terminated when the Special Representative of the Secretary-General takes charge. On the same day the United Nations flag will be hoisted.
2. From the same date the withdrawal and repatriation of the armed forces of the Netherlands will begin under the supervision of the Secretary-General's Special Representative and will be concluded as soon as possible.
3. On 31 December 1962 the Netherlands flag will be struck, and the Indonesian flag will be hoisted side by side with the United Nations flag.
4. The transfer of authority to Indonesia will be effected as soon as possible after 1 May 1963.

AIDE-MEMOIRE

II

1. The authority of the Government of the Netherlands over the territory will be terminated when the Special Representative of the Secretary-General takes charge. On the same day the United Nations flag will be hoisted.
2. From the same date the withdrawal and repatriation of the armed forces of the Netherlands will begin under the supervision of the Secretary-General's Special Representative and will be concluded as soon as possible.

(more)

3. On the day of the transfer of territory to the United Nations, the Netherlands flag will be hoisted side by side with the United Nations flag, and it will fly until 31 December 1962.

4. The transfer of authority to Indonesia will be effected as soon as possible after 1 May 1963.

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UNITED NATIONS

Press Services  
Office of Public Information  
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media -- not an official record)

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UNITED NATIONS

Press Services  
Office of Public Information  
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media-- not an official record)

Press Release WNG/5  
17 August 1962

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE  
IN PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN NETHERLANDS  
AND INDONESIA, AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER

The Agreement signed on Wednesday, 15 August, by Indonesia and the Netherlands which settles their long-standing dispute over West New Guinea is a historic achievement, an achievement which reflects credit on the parties to the dispute and on the United Nations, under whose aegis the negotiations took place.

What was successfully attempted was an effort to resolve the issue before it had deteriorated into open warfare. The United Nations, instead of being called on to put out the fire after it had started, as has so often been the case, sought to prevent the conflagration from starting. That the effort has succeeded has been due in large measure to the sincerity and the skill of the negotiators and their obvious determination to reach a solution which would be fair and honorable to both sides and to the Papuan people.

In this they have made use of the good offices of the United Nations and have drawn on its experience to effect a peaceful and orderly transition from Netherlands to eventual Indonesian control. At the same time the Dutch commitment to the Papuans that they would be free to determine their future course through a valid exercise of self-determination has been safeguarded.

Through the application of patient and painstaking diplomacy and with the constant encouragement and wise guidance of the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, an agreement has been reached which may truly prove to be epoch-making in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

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