



**Foreign Minister Pato attends 47th ASEAN and 21st ASEAN
Regional Forum: Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 8-10 August, 2014**

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Foreign Affairs and Immigration Minister, Hon. Rimbink Pato LLB, OBE, MP, attended the 47th ASEAN and 21st ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial and Related Meetings in the new capital, Nay Pyi Taw, of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, from 8-11 August 2014.

Minister Pato said that PNG, being a Special Observer at ASEAN, and a full member of the ARF, has been attending this Premium Regional gathering of Foreign Ministers since 1981 with the ten member countries of ASEAN and the ARF as a full member since 1994.

Minister Pato called on H.E. U Thein Sein, the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and his Myanmar Counterpart Foreign Minister, H.E. U Wunna Maung Lwin, as well as having bilateral discussions with the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Malaysia and Cambodia.

During his discussions with the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Natalegawa, both Ministers agreed that Indonesia plays a bridging role for ASEAN to the Pacific, whilst PNG does the same for the Pacific to the ASEAN. Both leaders alluded that if and when PNG becomes a member of ASEAN, it would make the bridge even more strategically important.

Among the key issues discussed, included the visit of the Indonesian President to Papua New Guinea, Minister Pato said it was proposed that the visit be undertaken by the incoming President early next year.

Both Minister's also agreed that Papua New Guinea be represented at the Inauguration ceremony of the Indonesian President in early October, 2014. An outstanding invitation from the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to the Governor General of Papua New Guinea makes it an ideal opportunity for Papua New Guinea's Head of State to take up the invitation during the inauguration of the new Indonesian President.

The two Ministers reiterated the positive developments relating to air services, particularly the need to increase the number of flights to twice a week flight between Port Moresby and Bali to cater for the increasing traffic between these two capitals.



On visa arrangements, Minister Pato informed his Indonesian counterpart that "while the MOU on reciprocal visa arrangements was for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders, Papua New Guinea has gone one step further to issues visas on arrivals for all categories of passport holders including ordinary passport holders".

The Indonesian Foreign Minister also re-affirmed Indonesia's commitment and support to the Government of Papua New Guinea in hosting the APEC Summit in Port Moresby in 2018. He also extended his appreciation to the leadership of the Papua New Guinea Government not to support the application by the West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCL) to the MSG Secretariat for an observer status. Minister Pato also extended his appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for their continuous pledge of support to Papua New Guinea, not only in APEC 2018 but on other equally important matters affecting our relations.

Both Ministers reiterated that while bilateral relations have been exceptionally cordial, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia need to move forward on the implementation of the recently signed Agreements and MOU's in 2013, particularly in relation to border developments between PNG and Indonesia.

Minister Pato also attended the "South West Pacific Dialogue (SWPD)" between Foreign Ministers of member countries of Australia, NZ, Indonesia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. Minister Pato further stated that the SWPD has been useful for these countries to share and up-date each other of the developments in these countries and regions on issues of common interest to the South West Pacific Dialogue countries.

The next South West Pacific Dialogue will be chaired by Papua New Guinea at the margins of the 48th ASEAN and 22nd ARF Ministerial Meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The 47th ASEAN and 21st ARF Foreign Ministers Meetings was concluded on 10th August 2014.

Hon. Rimbink Pato, LLB, OBE, MP

Minister for Foreign Affairs & Immigration

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