

Editorial

International Conference on Social Science and Biodiversity of Papua and Papua New Guinea 2015

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Today, the Asia Pacific region is one among the fastest growing region in the world with strong economic growth. Due to globalization, world economy has undergone significant changes. While Europe's economic growth has been slowing down, Asia Pacific's consistently shows an impressive growth. In the next few years, the economic growth in the region will remain strong, in parallel with improving living standards in the region. With its huge population and strategic location, Asia Pacific offers many opportunities for countries outside the region to embark on collaboration and economic cooperation.

Papua and PNG are integral parts of Asia Pacific and play a strategic role in the region. Papua and PNG share commonalities in terms of economic development's approaches. Both regions rely on extractive economies which depend on the exploitation of natural resources. Papua and PNG possess enormous and extraordinary biodiversity, unique to the region. But natural resource-based development has not only threatened but also undermined any effort to protect region's diverse flora and fauna. With the emergence of Asia Pacific as a new economic powerhouse, the growth has transformed indigenous communities and their livelihood including their economic, cultural and social institutions as well as their relationship with their environment.

Moreover, although Papua and PNG are resource-rich regions, both have a substantial number of populations who live in poverty or extreme poverty. Income distribution in Papua and PNG demonstrates that there is a striking gap between the poor and the rich. On top of that, the provision of basic services such as education and healthcare is still unevenly distributed. While cities are generally well-served, some areas in the hinterland suffer from a lack of teachers and medical personnel. The fundamental challenges faced by Papua and PNG lie precisely in these aspects: economic, social, cultural and environmental.

Considering the importance of human development and biodiversity in Papua's and Papua New Guinea's contexts, efforts are needed to develop the region, while at the same time, to save and protect region's immense diversity by improving the quality of life, promoting sustainable development in all sectors, preserving natural resources, and improving community awareness. Furthermore, there is a need to conduct more research and studies related to above mentioned components in order to support better development efforts in the region.

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Papua and PNG have been collaborating in the education sector for a long period, which takes the form of research collaboration, student exchanges, seminars and symposia. This long standing collaboration has strengthened bilateral relations between Papua and PNG. This symposium has persisted this tradition as well as add a new tone in the framework of knowledge sharing between educators in Papua, PNG and abroad by bringing together some crucial issues in social sciences and biodiversity in Papua and PNG. Additionally, this symposium is also an important moment for Cenderawasih University as the symposium will be held to commemorate the university's 53rd anniversary and to celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations between Papua-Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Cenderawasih University was established on November 10th, 1962. Cenderawasih University is the oldest university in Papua and has committed to develop its human resources and determined to implement the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi or the Three Principles of Higher Education which focuses on education, research, and contribution to society. This momentum of holding International Conference on Social Sciences and Biodiversity of Papua and Papua New Guinea in Cenderawasih University was vital given that some distinguished experts are gathered from around the world presenting their finest research. We highly expect that this event had inspiring researchers who are interested in exploring further research on the social sciences and biodiversity around Papua and Papua New Guinea.