



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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PRIME MINISTER WELCOMES AGREEMENT WITH INDONESIA ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA BOUNDARIES

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, welcomed in Perth today the fact that an agreement has been drawn up and initialled in Canberra providing for the establishment of permanent and enduring boundaries between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. This followed negotiations in Canberra between an Indonesian and Australian delegation from 22 January to 26 January.

The negotiations, which dealt with the land boundary between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and the territorial sea and seabed boundary with Indonesia immediately south of Papua New Guinea, were a continuation of discussions held in Jakarta in October 1972.

The Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, Mr Suyitno Sukirno, was leader of the Indonesian delegation and Professor Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, deputy leader. The Solicitor-General, Mr R.J. Ellicott, Q.C., was leader of the Australian delegation, which included officials of the Papua New Guinea Government.

Mr Whitlam said that he was delighted that all matters under review had been amicably resolved. The Government of Papua New Guinea had concurred in the initialling of the Agreement which would now be submitted to the House of Assembly for approval.

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Both delegations had welcomed the Agreement as a tribute to the spirit of reason and good neighbourliness which had marked the negotiations.

The Agreement, when ratified, would conclude the delimitation of land, territorial sea and seabed boundaries between Indonesia on the one hand, and Australia and Papua New Guinea on the other.

Mr Whitlam added: "It is also a most important Agreement in the context of future relations between Indonesia and an independent Papua New Guinea."