Youth Issues in Papua

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Material: first session I second session II

1. Natural Resources Being Exploited

1. Papua's natural resources continue to be exploited under various pretexts of development, one of which is through the issue of oil palm plantations. In the name of investment and employment, customary forests, which have long been the community's living space, are slowly being transformed into monocultures. The land that once provided food, medicine, and cultural identity is now forced to submit to an industrial logic that prioritizes profit over the sustainability of Papuan lives.

2. Oil palm expansion not only damages the ecology but also shakes the social fabric of indigenous communities. Loss of forest means loss of food sources, destruction of rivers, and the severance of the sacred relationship between humans and nature. Ironically, local communities are often not meaningfully involved in decision-making. They are merely objects of administrative approval, not subjects with rights to their own land and future.

3. Amidst the rapid expansion of oil palm plantations, attention to the development of Papua's human resources is increasingly marginalized. Education, health, and economic empowerment based on local culture are not top priorities. If this pattern continues, Papua will lose its forests and the generations that should be the guardians of its land. Equitable development should stem from respect for the Papuan people, not from the sacrifice of nature and their dignity.

2. Papua's Human Resources Are Underappreciated

1. Human Resources in Papua are often considered weak, not because of the incompetence of the people, but because the established system does not provide room for growth. Many people prioritize position, power, and personal interests over strengthening community capacity. As a result, education, training, and mentoring for the common people remain mere slogans without concrete implementation.
2. When position becomes the primary goal, the poor are increasingly marginalized and trampled on in silence. Social assistance is poorly targeted, empowerment programs languish at the bureaucracy, and the voices of indigenous people are rarely heard. Those who should be served are instead left to struggle alone amidst an unfair system, while elites compete to strengthen their positions and influence.
3. This condition weakens Papua's human resources structurally and sustainably. Poverty is no longer simply an economic condition, but rather the result of willful neglect. If the leadership does not return to the values of justice and pro-people commitment, the gap in

inequality will widen, and Papua will continue to miss the opportunity to develop empowered people in its own land.

3. **Papua's gold has opened the eyes of the world and Jakarta.**

1. Papua's gold has opened the eyes of the world and Jakarta. The gleaming light of its wealth transcends national borders, attracting the attention of investors, rulers, and global interests. However, behind the glittering gold, the voices of indigenous Papuans are often drowned out, as if the value of human beings is less visible than the precious metal extracted from the bowels of Papua's earth.

2. For Jakarta and the world, Papua's gold is a symbol of wealth and economic progress. But for the Papuan people, that gold is often a source of pain, conflict, and injustice. Indigenous lands are mined, mountains are flattened, and sacred natural resources are sacrificed, while the well-being of communities surrounding the mines is not commensurate with the harvest from their own land.

3. Gold may open the eyes, but it should also open the conscience. Equitable development is not simply about calculating profits; it must also measure justice for the people and nature of Papua. If gold only benefits the world and Jakarta, while Papua remains left behind, then the gold's gleam actually reflects the face of real injustice.

4. **The Discourse on Developing Oil Palm Plantations**

1. The discourse on developing oil palm plantations in Papua has the potential to significantly harm indigenous people's customary lands and living spaces. Land that has long been a source of life, identity, and sacred values for indigenous peoples is at risk of being converted in the name of investment and development. Yet, customary lands are not merely economic resources, but rather ancestral heritage that binds people, nature, and history together in a unified life.

2. Oil palm expansion often brings serious ecological impacts, such as deforestation, river damage, and loss of biodiversity. For indigenous Papuans, environmental damage means the loss of food sources, traditional medicines, and cultural sustainability. Even more distressing, the permitting process is often carried out without the free and informed consent of customary land rights holders, leaving communities merely victims of policies they did not determine.

3. If the oil palm discourse continues to be enforced, structural injustice in Papua will deepen. Development should stem from respect for indigenous lands and the rights of indigenous peoples, not from their sacrifice. Without a commitment to social and ecological justice, palm oil in Papua is not a development solution, but rather a threat to the future of Papua's land and people.

5. Education, Health, and Security in Papua

1. The Papuan people do not need a free nutritious meal program (MBG), but free, equitable, and quality education. Education is the primary path to building awareness, independence, and a future for the Papuan generation. Without equitable access to education, the people will continue to be trapped in a cycle of underdevelopment, while the natural resources of their own land continue to be forcibly taken by this state.

2. In addition to education, the Papuan people need safe, humane, and reassuring health services. Hospitals, medical personnel, and health facilities must be spaces of recovery, not places that instill fear or discrimination. Health is not just about nutritious food, but about ensuring a decent, respected life for the Papuan people, so that they can feel secure in every aspect of their lives.

3. If the state truly wants to develop Papua, its priority must be people, not short-term projects. Free education and equitable healthcare would be far more meaningful than symbolic aid programs. Papua needs a state that treats people with respect, so that its people can live safely, peacefully, and with dignity in their own land.

6. Papuan society still does not live in peace.

1. Papuans live in a state far from safe and peaceful. Fear has become a part of daily life, not because of natural disasters, but because of the oppressive security situation. The presence of armed forces in people's living spaces creates anxiety, not a sense of protection. In their own land, people feel like strangers, their every move being monitored.
2. Papuans do not need additional TNI and Polri battalions that approach with violence and intimidation. They fear going to their gardens, to the forests, or to the rivers—living spaces that have long been sources of life. Every question, every inspection, makes them ask themselves: what kind of country is this? Why should living on their own land always be under suspicion?
3. What the Papuan people need are not weapons, but a sense of human security. The state should be present as a protector, not a threat. Torturing, oppressing, and intimidating indigenous peoples on their own land is a failure to understand justice and humanity. Papua does not need oppressive power, but the presence of a state that respects human dignity and the right to their ancestral lands.

7. Alcoholic beverages (MIRAS), marijuana.

1. Alcoholic beverages (miras), alcohol, and marijuana continue to spread widely across the land of Papua, as if they are problems allowed to grow without control. Their uncontrolled circulation not only damages the social order, but also slowly erodes the future of the younger generation. Many young people become trapped in this dark cycle—losing direction, neglecting their education, and seeing their potential, which should be Papua's hope, fade before it has the chance to grow.
2. Ironically, those who most often become victims are the very ones who should be protected and guided. Papuan youth are forced to face harsh realities: addiction, violence, and even criminal activity, often without proper support or real solutions from the authorities. If this situation continues, what will be destroyed is not only individuals, but the future of Papua itself—a land rich in resources, yet wounded by neglect and indifference.

8. The issue of the armed armed groups (KKB) between the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) and the West Papua National Liberation Organization (OPM).

1. The issue of KKB TPNPB-OPM is not a new one in the long journey of conflict in Papua. This problem has persisted for many years and continues to be discussed at both national and international levels. The situation does not only involve security concerns, but is also closely related to history, identity, politics, and the sense of justice felt by various parties on the ground.

2. Therefore, this issue cannot be viewed as a problem of a single region alone. Its impact extends to many aspects of life—civil society, education, the economy, and the sense of safety among the people. When conflict drags on, ordinary citizens bear the heaviest burden: those who simply wish to live peacefully, work, farm, and build a future for their children without fear.

3. Thus, this issue has become a matter of global concern because it touches on fundamental values of humanity and peace. A solution cannot rely solely on the use of force; it requires honest dialogue, fair policies, and a genuine commitment to the welfare of the people. Without collective efforts to seek a peaceful resolution, the conflict will continue to repeat itself, and once again, the younger generation will be the most affected.

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Material: current session III

1. How do climate disasters affect the poorest communities in our context?

Climate disasters such as floods, droughts, landslides, and extreme seasonal changes are felt most by the poorest communities. They live on lands rich in natural resources, yet those resources are extracted by those in power. When crops fail, fish stocks decline, or forests are destroyed, people immediately lose their sources of food and income. Unlike wealthier groups, they have no savings, insurance, or quick access to assistance.

In many regions—especially in Papua—these conditions disrupt weather patterns and make farming cycles unpredictable. As a result, food prices rise, child nutrition worsens, and

education is disrupted because families are forced to focus solely on survival. In this sense, the climate crisis is not only an environmental issue, but one that deepens structural poverty.

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2. What forms of ecological injustice do we see in our communities?

Ecological injustice is evident when natural wealth is taken from local communities, yet the benefits do not return to them. Forests are cleared, rivers polluted, and customary lands damaged, while nearby communities continue to live without clean water, adequate healthcare, or proper education.

Often, those who contribute the least to environmental destruction are the ones who suffer the greatest consequences—pollution, flooding, land loss, and social conflict. This shows that the environmental crisis is not only about nature, but also about social justice and human dignity.

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3. How can our church move from charity to justice?

Charity is important—providing emergency aid, distributing food, and helping disaster victims. However, the church is called to go further toward justice by addressing the root causes of suffering. This means the church should not only give fish, but also help ensure that communities have access to the "pond" and the right to manage their own resources.

The church can play a role through ecological education, advocacy for marginalized communities, legal accompaniment, and by encouraging policies that protect the environment and the rights of Indigenous peoples. This is a shift from compassion to solidarity, from merely helping to actively struggling for systemic change.

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4. What concrete roles can young people take starting now?

Papuan youth and students possess energy, creativity, and courage to initiate real change. They can begin with simple actions: tree-planting movements, protecting rivers, reducing plastic use, and educating children about caring for nature. Small but consistent actions can create a new culture within the community.

In addition, Papuan students are actively involved in public discussions, social media, church communities, and local organizations to voice ecological justice. Youth are not only the future generation—they are agents of change today. When young people move, public awareness often rises with them.

Another reality faced by Papuan students is their constant involvement in demonstrations and advocacy for local communities. However, the most difficult challenge they face on their own land is when they attempt to express their aspirations to the government. Instead of being heard, roads are blocked by the military and police, and students are met with violence. They are attacked not only with tear gas, but also with live ammunition, with the intention to

kill students who protest. This situation forces communities to live in deep and multidimensional poverty, further oppressing the already marginalized.