



Indonesia signals more cooperation with Pacific region

By Online Editor

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A senior official with Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Budiardman Bahar (left), who led Jakarta's delegation at this week's Melanesian Spearhead Group Leaders Summit in Fiji

Indonesia says it wants greater co-operation with Pacific island countries because no country should stay isolated in the age of globalisation.

The comment comes from a senior official with Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Budiardman Bahar, who led Jakarta's delegation at this week's Melanesian Spearhead Group Leaders Summit in Fiji.

This year, for the first time, Indonesia has been granted observer status at the MSG.

The move has met with disapproval by many West Papuans, the indigenous Melanesians of Indonesia's Papua region who have been asking for years for observer status at the MSG but are yet to receive it.

Budiarman said Indonesia's involvement with the MSG will enable closer dialogue with Melanesia over the Papua issue.

"Because we feel that we belong to the Pacific region and secondly because there is no other issue now that can be handled alone."

SOURCE: RNZI/PACNEWS