

King Forever, New Commitment to Protect Raja Ampat

Sorong, Southwest Papua — After more than two decades as one of the best models of marine conservation area management in Indonesia, Raja Ampat is entering a new chapter. The Southwest Papua Provincial Government, the Raja Ampat Regency Government, indigenous communities, academics, and development partners launched the Raja Selamanya Initiative, a collaborative movement to ensure the sustainability of this area, known as the heart of the World's Coral Triangle, while providing ongoing benefits to the community. The launch of this initiative was marked by a Multi-Stakeholder Workshop "Building a Joint Commitment to Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Raja Ampat" at the Vega Hotel, Sorong, on June 30, 2026. This forum brought together partners to strengthen their collaborative commitment to supporting conservation area management and sustainable development in Raja Ampat. For more than 20 years, Raja Ampat has proven that conservation can go hand in hand with improving community welfare. Various innovations have emerged from this area, from the establishment of a network of Marine Protected Areas (KKP), the establishment of a Shark Sanctuary, the implementation of Environmental Services Tariffs for Conservation Areas, to area management through the Regional Public Service Agency (BLUD) mechanism. These various efforts have led Raja Ampat to various national and international recognitions. The Raja Ampat Marine Protected Area (KKP) received the highest management rating based on the Evaluation of Conservation Area Management Effectiveness (EVIKA) from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. Internationally, Raja Ampat has also received recognition as a Blue Park Gold Award, a UNESCO Global Geopark, and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. However, this success now faces new challenges. Increasing pressure on the ecosystem due to increasingly massive tourism activities, issues of waste and waste management, and the threat of unsustainable resource utilization require stronger commitment and collaboration from all stakeholders. The Governor of Southwest Papua, Elisa Kambu, emphasized that the Provincial Government is committed to continuing to strengthen conservation area governance through the BLUD UPTD Management of the Raja Ampat KKP. "The provincial government, which is mandated to manage the Raja Ampat Marine Protected Area (KKP), through the Raja Ampat KKP Regional Public Service Agency (BLUD UPTD), is committed to strengthening adaptive, transparent, and sustainable regional governance. Twenty years of conservation experience demonstrates that collaboration is the foundation of success. Through the Raja Forever Initiative, we invite all stakeholders to strengthen synergy so that Raja Ampat remains a world-class marine conservation area that benefits nature and the community," explained Elisa.

Meanwhile, the Regent of Raja Ampat, Mr. Oridek Burdam, emphasized that the success of conservation has contributed to the development of Raja Ampat Regency. "For the Raja Ampat Government, conservation is not only about protecting the sea, but also about safeguarding the future. Over the past two decades, we have seen how healthy seas can provide economic opportunities, strengthen sustainable tourism, and improve community welfare," concluded Oridek. This success has also received recognition from indigenous communities who have long considered the sea part of their identity, culture, and living space. According to Charlie Imbir, one of the Raja Ampat Traditional Leaders, the process that was established twenty years ago cannot be separated from the strong support of indigenous communities and collaborative work. "We believe that the future of Raja Ampat can only be realized if indigenous communities remain a key part of every decision, and the spirit of collaboration continues to be the foundation in managing natural resources in Raja Ampat," said Charlie. As the organizer, Terra Papua Executive Director, Meity Mongdong said that the Raja Selamanya Initiative was built as a platform to unite the various conservation efforts carried out by partners so far. "Raja Selamanya is not a new program, but rather a collaborative space to unite the government, indigenous communities, local organizations, and development partners in a shared commitment. Terra Papua believes that the future of Raja Ampat can only be safeguarded if collaboration and partnerships, indigenous leadership, science, and public policy work hand in hand. We want to ensure that everyone has the space to contribute to safeguarding Raja Ampat, forever," concluded Meity. Through the Raja Selamanya Initiative, all stakeholders are committed to strengthening collaboration, ensuring Raja Ampat remains sustainable and provides benefits to the community. This initiative is expected to be a new milestone in building a sustainable future for Raja Ampat. Because safeguarding Raja Ampat not only protects one of the richest marine areas in the world, but also bequeaths a vibrant nature to future generations—forever.

About Terra Papua

Terra Papua is an organization that strengthens multi-stakeholder collaboration to support sustainable natural resource management in Papua. By prioritizing scientific approaches, local wisdom, and indigenous leadership, Terra Papua acts as a bridge between the government, communities, local organizations, and development partners in realizing inclusive and impactful conservation solutions.

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