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**PAPUA NEW GUINEA STATEMENT
TO THE
64th SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

BY

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed my honor and privilege, that on behalf of the People and Government of Papua New Guinea, I bring you the warmest greetings and pledge our support to you as you preside over 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We thank your predecessor, His Excellency, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his strong leadership during his tenure as President of the 63rd Assembly.

We would like to re-iterate our support for the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the UN agencies such as the UNDP and UNICEF for their efforts to enhance the benevolent work they do for the world and Papua New Guinea.

Mr. President

When God distributed the peoples of the world everywhere, He put Papua New Guinea, a small country of 6.5million people, wedged in between the South Pacific and the South East Asia. It has been a privilege which has allowed us to appreciate the peaceful and colorful people of the Pacific as well as the dynamic nations of South East Asia.

We may not be a large country or a country of economic or military power, but in our own way and from our own standpoint, we have a right to contribute to the world among other nations to collectively approach issues and problems and to 'speak out' whether in support or in disagreement.

Very recently, we celebrated the 34th Anniversary of our Independence on the 16th of September 2009. But an important achievement for us was the fact that by the grace of God, we have had an unbroken constitutional democracy for all those 34 years.

Our current Prime Minister the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare has been in Parliament for 41 years. He is the founding Prime Minister who was ousted through Parliamentary constitutional vote and returned three times as Prime Minister. The current term being his fourth.

I am mentioning this because Papua New Guinea is contributing to democracy in the world and that through a democratic form of Government, a nation of over 800 languages and people though diverse can find a way towards harmony and political acceptance of each other.

We are proud of this achievement but we are also mindful of the many critical challenges which lie ahead of us as we develop and progress. Many of these are challenges that no individual country whether large or small can handle on its own.

Mr. President

The United Nations therefore must continue to provide the global forum for all member States, big and small, both powerful and weak to come together to address the many global issues and challenges we face collectively as a human family.

And together we must confront firstly the continuing threats of climate change and global warming, the global food crisis now compounded by the global financial crisis, and the threats of diseases which know no borders such as H1N1, HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, cholera etcetera. Secondly, we must achieve together the social agenda of the MDGs.

Mr. President

Disarmament and International Peace & Security

Papua New Guinea firmly believes that strengthening international peace and security is fundamental to achieving human development, progress and prosperity.

My country denounces weapons of mass destruction and is fully committed to the principles of a world that is free from weapons of mass terror. This is attested to by the fact that we are a State Party to the South Pacific Nuclear Free-Zone Treaty and also fully supportive of the Treaty on the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapons-Free-Zone.

We are now working earnestly towards early ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. We also look forward to contributing constructively to the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Papua New Guinea therefore welcomes positive initiatives by the new US Government and other likeminded countries to enhance the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and encourage disarmament.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

A continuing major concern that Papua New Guinea has is the increase in global conflicts heightened by the illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons which continue to cause untold suffering to millions around the world. Papua New Guinea is no exception!

In the case of small arms, the global debate has focused on curbing their use. However, the supply side of weapons is never comprehensively discussed! We therefore support a proposed Arms Trade Treaty, which is still under negotiations and which will deal with one of key elements of the arms issue.

In Papua New Guinea we have seen that the presence of small arms and light weapons threatens stability of communities. My Government has prioritized the need to comprehensively address this through commissioning the 2005 National Gun Summit Report which will be implemented soon.

Mr. President

Global crisis

The various global crisis of today have had a disproportionate negative impact on many of developing countries. From falling commodity prices to increases in food and energy costs, the damage caused and the costs incurred to re-dress these consequences have heavily impacted their development. The impact of the crisis has also reduced levels of Official Development Assistance globally and resulted in the big shortfalls in national budgets of developing countries.

While we appreciate that many countries have had to assist their economies by massive injections of capital, we nevertheless support the strong call for reforms to the international financial architecture to include major developing countries like China and India.

Such reforms would better reflect today's global economic realities and provide effective management of the global process which needs to be fair, equitable and transparent.

Mr. President

UN Reforms

At the 2005 World Summit, Leaders agreed to a set of broad reforms to the United Nations. Since then the Human Rights Council and the Peace-building Commission have been established. Furthermore, the concept of the '*Responsibility to Protect*' has received broad support with an inclusive process now in train to elaborate it better.

Mr. President

Security Council

We support the continuing call for the reform of the UN Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent membership category. In this regard we support the on-going inter-governmental negotiations within the UN General Assembly and which has seen the emergence of strong agreement on certain issues.

Gender Agenda

We note that great strides are being made in reforming the global gender architecture. We applaud the strong but cautious consensus reached in the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly to support the creation of an Under-Secretary General's posts to assist in the better management of the various UN entities dealing with the gender issues.

We take note and commend the work of former Prime Minister of New Zealand H.E. Helen Clark as UNDP Administrator.

We therefore strongly support the on-going reform as the gender issue in its entirety remains one of the key policy issues of my Government.

Mr. President

Pacific Issues

As a growing democracy in the Pacific, it is my Government's desire to see our friends and neighbors in the Pacific and beyond, enjoy freedom and prosperity.

We re-affirm our continuing support to our Pacific neighbors in their development aspirations. We feel that on the issue of Fiji, we need to continue dialogue and not isolate them.

We also support the main thrust of the Pacific Plan and we encourage our Forum dialogue partners to assist with the on-going implementation of the Plan as we believe it will catalyze the Pacific Region's development.

Mr. President

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The social sector of many of our developing countries suffer greatly and the UN has quite rightly set the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They provide us with one of the greatest opportunities to leverage our development process. We commend and strongly support the UN Secretary-General for his proposal to convene a High-level session on the MDGs in September 2010.

Achieving the MDGs remains an integral development priority of our Government. We are working to achieve the MDGs in close cooperation with all stakeholders including civil society and international development partners such as the UN and its agencies, the Commonwealth, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the South Pacific Community.

The MDGs have been incorporated into the Medium Term Development Strategy focusing on 15 National Targets and 67 Indicators under the National Road Map. These are specifically designed for Papua New Guinea to reflect the nation's stage of development. MDG 8 is ongoing through international cooperation with multilateral and bilateral development partners.

Mr. President

The Joint MDGs Project was launched in August 2008 comprising National MDGs Steering Committee made up of Government representatives, the UN, academia and civil society. The Project is mandated to build national awareness and to facilitate a strong data collection and analysis regime in the country. The Project also serves as a constituency for the Medium Term Development Strategy and the MDGs.

The Government has localized the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness by reaffirming its principles in the Kavieng Declaration to foster collaborative commitments with our development partners in pursuing the achievement of the MDGs.

Our long term aim is to grow our economy to such a state as to allow us to exit from our dependency on Aid. We want to be economically independent. We choose not to be aid dependant forever. We want to give Aid and not Receive. Our aim is also to assist others from the richness of God's blessings to us.

The Government recognizes that more and sustained commitments in the implementation of policies at all levels is needed to achieve the MDGs. This will also be supported by the on-going public sector reforms especially in relation to delivery of basic services to our rural majority.

Mr. President

For the MDGs to be achieved, there has to be strong and viable partnerships. MDG 8 is critical to the achievement of the other seven Goals. However, all partnerships must be underpinned by mutual respect between the partners and the Government. Some of our key partners include: Australia, New Zealand, the EU, Japan, China, US, Italy and Austria along with many NGOs such as the Clinton Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which continue to strongly contribute to Papua New Guinea's development.

Climate Change

Mr. President

Climate change has emerged as one of the greatest crises now facing humanity. The consequences appear dire and it is truly global. Such a global challenge can only be met by a concerted global response.

In Papua New Guinea today, we see evidence of climate change in the inundation of coastal areas, increase in malaria due to warming in the Highlands region of the country and especially in the plight of the people of the Carteret Islands, where sea level has risen and some 1,200 people have to be resettled.

We therefore strongly support the recent AOSIS Declaration concerning Climate Change!

For many small island states to survive, we must strive to roll-back atmospheric carbon concentrations to less than 350 parts per million and limit temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Therefore, emissions of greenhouse gasses must peak by 2015 and be followed by reductions of 45% by 2020 and 90% before 2050. Further, we will require healthy and expanded forest cover and widely available low carbon technologies, including carbon capture and storage.

Within this context, the importance and urgency of extensive action on REDD Plus can hardly be overstated. Deforestation continues at an alarming pace, with around 13 million hectares of the world's forests being lost annually – It is an area the size of Denmark, Norway and Belgium, combined!

Mr. President

The IPCC estimates that deforestation and degradation within developing countries may contribute approximately 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans while also representing around 30% of the total cost-effective mitigation potential in the period up to 2020. Any solution to the problem should also attract 20% of any financial or institutional responses.

It is worth stressing that without rapid and significant reductions in emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, added to deep emissions reductions by rich countries, it may be impossible to avoid global warming levels that prove catastrophic for many vulnerable nations.

Without question, immediate action on REDD Plus is a crucial part of the climate change solution. We will therefore require under the UNFCCC strong institutional frameworks for REDD Plus including accommodating different national circumstances and providing for resource mobilization.

We also recognize the excellent work and analysis underway via the 'International Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD Plus'. This work estimates that if a total of Euro15-25 billion were provided to catalyze early action from 2010-2015, then a 25% reduction in annual global deforestation rates may be achieved by around 2015.

Deforestation and degradation in developing countries is a result of stark economic need for local communities to survive that propels the destruction of forests. How do we keep the trees standing to sequester carbon?

There is hope! Significant early actions for REDD Plus can be achieved at a reasonable cost, while protecting the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities, protecting biodiversity, rainfall patterns and soil quality, and helping countries to adapt to climate change.

To succeed, a REDD Plus mechanism should accommodate countries at different levels of development through a phased approach. The agreement should be result-based and incentives driven. To achieve this, it must include both a reliable framework for monitoring, reporting and verification and encourage a predictable and sustainable system for financing.

Mr. President

So we must succeed in Copenhagen! If we are to succeed, rich countries must come forth and take the lead. Without their collective leadership on emission reductions, finance and technology, governments of developing countries will not be able to make a compelling case at home to get people to allow trees to be left standing and so 20% of the carbon emissions will continue to flow into the atmosphere.

Therefore, let me be candid. Without a transformative 'grand financial bargain' in Copenhagen that involves all nations, there could be no deal!

Mr. President

Let me conclude by repeating that the UN is the Forum to agree on solutions for problems and challenges. In times of global crisis such as climate change, financial meltdown, social sector vulnerabilities, there is also opportunity. Indeed, there is opportunity here, if we remember that MDG 8 allows us to leverage the greatest asset we have and that is to have strong partnerships between nations.

More than ever before, we need the **political will** from the leading developed and developing countries, for the sake of the children of the world and generations after them.

Please reconsider and make a stroke for History!

Thank you.