



Please check against delivery

# **PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY**

**HON. PETER O'NEILL, CMG, MP  
PRIME MINISTER OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE SESSION  
OF THE  
66<sup>TH</sup> UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**24<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011, NEW YORK**

Mr. President  
Secretary General  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me on behalf of the Government and People of Papua New Guinea to offer our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly.

We pledge support to your statement highlighting the success of global endeavors that are founded on the principles of partnership, justice and responsibility.

I thank your predecessor, Dr. Joseph Diess, for his invaluable contributions to the UN and wish him well.

Mr. President

I also wish to congratulate the UN Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, on his re-appointment for a second term and thank him for attending our recent annual Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Summit in Auckland, New Zealand.

His attendance at our regional meeting is the first of its kind by a UN Secretary General and is testament to the strengthening ties between the United Nations and the Pacific region.

We particularly note his heartfelt comments when describing his experiences on witnessing the adverse effects of climate change in low lying atolls in the Republic of Kiribati and the various developmental challenges faced by many small island developing states, in our region.

Like other speakers, allow me to also take this opportunity to welcome our newest member of the UN Family – the Republic of South Sudan – admitted on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

Mr. President

Papua New Guinea continues to benefit from a strong UN presence through its delivery of various development programs.

Papua New Guinea has welcomed and formalized the "One UN – Delivering as One" concept in 2006, as a model self-starter country. This has unified all the efforts of various UN Agencies under One Budgetary Framework, Monitoring and Evaluation process.

This concept will enable a more effective and efficient way for the UN to deliver on its mandate. In particular, the new Country Program for Papua New Guinea which will be rolled out beginning in January 2012 targeting Governance, Social Justice, Health, Education, Gender, Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management.

Mr. President

This new country program is part of our overall efforts to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Since the publication of the inaugural MDG Report in 2004, Papua New Guinea has produced two MDG progress reports. The first was a summary report in 2009 and the second a comprehensive report in 2010. These reports showed that we were able to achieve some of the national MDG targets, especially on poverty reduction and child mortality.

In terms of universal primary education, Papua New Guinea is progressing well with enrollments for children in grades one to six increasing significantly by 53%. This is a marked improvement and will increase the literacy rate in the long term.

Our Government recently announced a free education policy from elementary level to Year 10 and subsidized education from Grades 11 to University, commencing 2012.

We are also revamping our National Health system to improve immunization programs, clean and safer water supply, centralize the purchase and supply of drugs, maternal and child mortality, and reduce malaria, HIV Aids, and other communicable diseases.

The recent important Non-Communicable Diseases Summit attended by our Minister for Health has re-iterated our equal responsibility for our own, our families' and our communities' health and wellbeing.

Mr. President

Our Government remains committed to achieving the MDGs and we are now up-scaling progress in all relevant sectors.

The new Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030, and Medium Term Development Plan aims to develop and foster key enabling environments, which will progress Papua New Guinea to a middle-income country and will improve on its Human Development Index ranking.

We call on all our development partners to complement our efforts to achieve the MDG targets in line with national development plans and policies. I believe other developing countries will support our call.

We are also investing heavily into the rehabilitation of our major transport infrastructure such as roads, airports and sea- ports. Aside from that we are also rolling out rural communication and electrification. As you are aware, improved infrastructure will enable effective service delivery.

Mr. President

Women play critical roles in all facets of development. Our Government is conscious of the need to have more women participate actively in the affairs of state and in the economic life of Papua New Guinea.

I am pleased to report that we have recently passed the first vote on a parliamentary bill that will provide for 22 reserved seats for women to contest in the coming Elections in 2012. This does not stop them from contesting any of the existing seats.

Mr. President

We also appreciate the push by multilateral partners like Asian Development Bank and World Bank on gender equality. But in the same breath, we urge them to support our financial institutions by specifically allocating funds without risk, to be lent to women entrepreneurs to develop business opportunities.

We note the recently adopted San Francisco Declaration by APEC countries last week under the leadership of the United States of America. This is a major step forward supporting Women in Business and is a powerful tool for women of APEC member countries.

We will encourage our women in Papua New Guinea to take advantage of opportunities created by the Declaration.

Mr. President

There remain many other global challenges, which continue to affect development aspirations of many nations.

### **Nuclear Non-Proliferation**

The Pacific remains a nuclear weapons free zone. We call upon other member states, those who are not signatories to sign and ratify the Rarotonga Treaty.

### **Small Arms and Light Weapons**

The illegal use, abuse and the dangerous proliferation of small arms and light weapons continue to hamper the development aspirations of many developing countries. We therefore call upon the international community to seriously deal with outstanding issues such as the illegal supply and trade of small arms.

Our Government will do all it can to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations of our Gun Summit Report.

## **Trans National Crime**

Papua New Guinea remains committed to work closely with governments and relevant international law enforcement agencies to curb drug trafficking, human trafficking and money laundering.

## **Climate Change**

As one of the top five remaining rainforest nations, we are committed to addressing the many challenges of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development of our forest and marine resources.

We continue to maintain dialogue with all stakeholders being mindful that issues confronting many nations on climate change are complex.

Mr. President

## **United Nations Reform**

We support and encourage the reform of the UN, its agencies and its secretariat to become more responsive and active to the global, regional and national challenges.

We re-iterate our call for an expansion of membership in the Permanent and Non-Permanent categories of the UN Security Council, which must take into account the geo-political realities of today's world.

## **Our Contribution to Global Security**

In terms of our contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, I am pleased to announce the deployment of our uniformed personnel as UN Military Observers.

This is history in the making for Papua New Guinea and we thank the UN for the opportunity for our security personnel to participate in international peace keeping duties.

## **Regional Issues**

Tuna is an important source of food and economic resource to the Pacific Island States besides tourism.

Papua New Guinea and countries that are Parties to the Nauru Agreement are determined to process tuna onshore to add value and create employment for our people. We encourage investors to invest in onshore activities.

At the Pacific regional level, we are conscious of our obligation to conserve the fishery through sustainable fishing. The Parties to the Nauru Agreement have introduced the VESSEL-DAY-SCHEME to limit the total catch for conservation purposes.

In addition, Papua New Guinea has made funds available to the South Pacific Community to tag the tuna species so that we are able to quantify and assess the tuna stocks for the future.

Mr. President,

Over the last nine years, Papua New Guinea has continued to experience unprecedented economic growth levels at 6 to 8 percent per annum.

This has been largely attributed to significant increases in foreign investments in our mineral and hydrocarbon sectors, and due to high prices of our agricultural commodities.

These economic growth levels have positioned Papua New Guinea to become a significant development partner within our region.

In conclusion, Mr. President

Papua New Guinea greatly values the objectives and principles of the UN Charter. We reaffirm our support for the maintenance of international peace and security, development of friendly relations among nations, and in working together towards the achievement of the aspirations of all of our peoples.

I thank you.