



PAPUA NEW GUINEA STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

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**Mr President;
Secretary-General;
Heads of State and Government;
Excellencies;
Distinguished Delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am honoured to deliver this Statement on behalf of the Prime Minister Honourable Peter O'Neill and the people of Papua New Guinea.

I also wish to congratulate you on your election as President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We welcome your overarching theme of *Post 2015 Development Agenda: "Setting the Stage"* advocating a solid global foundation for a results-oriented partnership that is people-centred and inclusive in our common pursuit of sustainable development.

Papua New Guinea pledges its support to you as you take on this important task.

We acknowledge the contributions of your predecessor and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

Mr President

I take this opportunity to address this Assembly on the state of our economy, highlighting the challenges before us, whilst putting forward the policies and development plans of my Government.

Papua New Guinea continues to be a vibrant and thriving democracy.

However, like other developing nations, the road has not been easy in terms of political, economic and social challenges that have confronted us domestically and globally.

In the past, our development efforts have been littered with missed economic opportunities. My Government is therefore determined to re-set the development and wealth creation direction for our nation.

We have set a transformative agenda for our country and people under our long-term PNG Vision 2050 policy framework and the five-year Medium Term Development Plan.

We are determined to achieve these development plans as they continue to reinforce our work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Mr President

Our economy continues to record unprecedented growth levels. This is attributed to a stable government with responsible and sound monetary and fiscal policies.

These positive economic growth levels complement the government's long-term development policies to grow the economy and achieve our development aspirations. Strategies to strengthen this economic growth include re-investing in key enablers, such as infrastructure, health and education to maximize opportunities and improve the lives of our citizens.

My Government is translating these positive economic growth levels to address and improve our social indicators including low literacy levels, high maternal and infant mortality rates, law and order enforcement as well as our country's major infrastructure developments.

This year, 50 percent of our Budget has been appropriated to education and basic health care, law and order enforcement and critical infrastructure improvements.

Mr President

My Government is committed to the Public Private Partnership model as an important catalyst for national development.

We are committed to strengthening existing programs and network with the private sector, the Churches, Donor Agencies and NGOs through cooperative and mutually beneficial arrangements.

We are equally committed to investing in provincial and local level governments to improve service delivery for the majority of our population living in rural areas.

We firmly believe that such partnerships will create an enabling environment and empower our people to take ownership of their lives and be proactive in nation building.

Mr President

My Government is embarking on investor-friendly policies supported by Public-Private-Partnerships and prudent economic management to promote growth in key non-mining sectors.

My Government is reviewing the taxation policies to provide incentives and concessions to encourage strategic investments in areas that are critical to driving our economic growth.

Exporting our raw materials is not an option. We therefore encourage downstream processing through genuine joint ventures and other acceptable economic cooperation.

My Government is committed to strengthening governance at all levels by combating corruption and has adopted the principle of 'zero tolerance'. To this end, the Government has adopted a National Anti-Corruption Strategy and established an independent task force with powers to investigate and prosecute.

An Independent Commission Against Corruption will be established to enhance implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption.

Mr. President

Given the importance of cross-border security and related issues, a National Security Policy is in the final stages of completion. The focus of this policy is to deal with national security issues as contained in Pillar 4 of the Vision 2050 policy framework.

In line with our National Security Policy, we are committed to rebuilding our disciplinary forces and institutions as well as continuing our participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr President

My Government is committed to addressing the unflattering international human development indices, including human rights issues.

We recognize our development challenges including gender based violence, sorcery related deaths, access to social services and the low level of representation of our women in the public and private sectors.

In our assessment, many of these human rights and human development reports are over exaggerated and insensitive with scant attention paid to the positive efforts by the Government in promoting and protecting basic rights for all our citizens.

Over the last 6 months, my Government has enacted the Family Protection Law and repealed the Sorcery Act of 1971, effectively making domestic and sorcery related violence criminal offences.

I am pleased to announce that my Government has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities. The Instrument of Ratification has been deposited with the UN during this Session.

Mr President

In recent months, much has been publicized about Papua New Guinea's bilateral agreement with Australia on the Regional Resettlement Arrangement on asylum seekers.

Papua New Guinea, as a State Party to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, recognizes the importance of addressing this international humanitarian issue.

Our two Governments are jointly working on this issue and call upon the international community to support our efforts. Furthermore, we call upon like-minded UN Member States and other stakeholders to enhance efforts to address the root causes of displacement and dislocation of these persons as well as combating human trafficking and people smuggling.

Mr President

As an emerging economy in the Pacific region, Papua New Guinea will enhance her level of engagement on issues of mutual concern both within the region and globally.

In the spirit of friendship and neighbourly South-South Cooperation, we are committed to sharing the benefits from our natural resources development with our Pacific islands neighbours.

We have embarked on this path with development assistance provided to our neighbours including the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Samoa.

Through the Melanesian Spearhead Group, we are forging dynamic and strong bonds in areas including trade and investment, education and training, judicial support, sporting and cultural exchanges and visa arrangements to facilitate movement of skilled persons.

To further consolidate this important partnership at the regional level, we are collectively reviewing the relevance of the Pacific Plan in relation to regional integration. Papua New Guinea is playing a leading role in this review exercise.

Mr President

Papua New Guinea supports the Rio-Plus-Twenty Outcome document, "*The Future We Want*", which is the basis for the post-2015 Development Agenda. This Agenda accounts for balanced human development, including addressing issues relating to the eradication of extreme poverty and improved living standards for humanity.

We also support inclusive economic growth whilst preserving the environment for future generations.

We welcome the work of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons and the creation of the High-Level Political Forum which succeeds the Commission on Sustainable Development. Both serve as a good starting point to drive this Agenda forward.

Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Small Island Developing States are calling on the international community to support the inclusion of Oceans as a stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal.

We are now in the initial stages of preparing a sustainable development policy and strategy which is to complement our long term Vision 2050 policy framework. We welcome support from the international community to enhance this work.

Mr President

Papua New Guinea is pleased to note that the sustainable development issues of Small Island Developing States are a priority on your Agenda. Further reaffirming the importance of the Rio Plus Twenty Outcomes and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Your two visits this year to our Pacific region underscores your commitment to small islands developing states, for which we applaud you. We look forward to strengthening this important work during your presidency.

As the global community prepares for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in September 2014 in Apia, Samoa, Papua New Guinea reiterates the call that small island developing states remain a special case for sustainable development.

The adverse impacts of climate change continue to be of serious concern to the global community but especially for small island developing states. While contributing the least to this threat, small island countries are not only suffering the most from the serious impacts of climate change and run the risk of being submerged by rising sea levels.

We support the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership adopted by Pacific Island Forum Leaders. We therefore reiterate the challenge to the international community to accept its responsibility and leadership role. We also urge the international community to renew its political commitment to prioritise the sustainable development issues of small island developing states in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr President

Papua New Guinea agrees that the Millennium Development Goals, despite their shortcomings have galvanized the international community's development efforts to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

We agree with the Secretary-General's 2013 MDGs Report to remain focused and redouble our efforts to consolidate the MDGs implementation for improved outcomes. We also welcome the outcomes of the just concluded High-Level Special Events on MDGs and Disabilities during this Session.

Mr President

Papua New Guinea is unlikely to achieve most of the MDGs by 2015.

However, my Government remains committed to implementing the goals beyond 2015. We have tailored MDGs targets and indicators under our 2011 - 2015 Medium Term Development Plan, and also within the Vision 2050 policy framework.

We are making progress in the areas of universal primary education enrolment, poverty reduction, reduced infant and maternal mortality rates, combating HIV/AIDS, TB and other health issues and strengthening gender equality and empowerment.

Papua New Guinea expresses its appreciation for the support from the UN agencies and other development partners in complementing our efforts to accelerate the implementation of the MDGs.

Mr President

I am pleased to report on the continued progress in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and also the successful scaling down of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. We thank the UN, regional partners and the international community in their continued assistance in both instances.

On international peace and security issues, Papua New Guinea remains concerned about conflicts and tensions in various regions of the world, including in the Middle East, North Africa, Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea.

We urge all parties involved to defuse the situation through peaceful dialogue.

We join the international community in condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria and urge full compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We therefore commend the UN Security Council for adopting a Resolution to dismantle and eradicate Syria's chemical weapons program.

Mr President

Since October 2011, Papua New Guinea has started contributing to UN Peacekeeping Operations in Sudan and South Sudan. Earlier this year, we became the 148th UN Member State to join the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

We are now looking at expanding and increasing our troop contributions.

We also pay tribute to those UN Peacekeepers serving around the world, often in very trying conditions, and especially those who have made the ultimate sacrifice with their lives.

Mr President

We express our concern over the lack of progress on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

As a strong supporter of a nuclear-free world, Papua New Guinea calls on the UN and the international community to address this serious lack of progress. We also need to revitalize the UN's disarmament work to foster international peace and security.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty that will regulate the trade and transfer of conventional arms, including Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Finally, Papua New Guinea welcomes the leadership of the UN Secretary-General in reforming the UN system.

We encourage robust and constructive reforms in the context of the growing budgetary constraints faced by the UN in recent years.

A lean, effective and responsive UN is imperative to better deliver on its Mandate.

We call for the UN Security Council to be reformed in order to reflect today's geopolitical realities.

Thank you Mr President.