



**Papua New Guinea Statement
by**

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Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration
of Papua New Guinea**

to the

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United Nations General Assembly**

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"Check against delivery"

**His Excellency Mr Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly;
His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Excellencies; and
Distinguished Delegates.**

Allow me, Mr President, to congratulate you, on behalf of the Government of Papua New Guinea, on your election to preside over the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Papua New Guinea supports your leadership as we work with you on your ambitious theme of ***"Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda"***.

I take the opportunity also to pay tribute to Ambassador John Ashe for his strong leadership in ***"setting the stage"*** for enhancing the sustainable development agenda of Members States, especially of the Small Island Developing States.

We also commend the UN Secretary-General for his leadership and untiring commitment to advancing the cause of global peace and security to enhance the multi-dimensional global development agenda.

Mr President,

It has been a long and sometimes hard road for the People of Fiji over the last 8 years. We therefore warmly congratulate the People of Fiji for their return to constitutional and democratic rule following the recent General Election. We welcome the return of Fiji to the Commonwealth and the Pacific Islands Forum.

In wishing the People of Fiji well, Papua New Guinea, as it has done in the past, will continue to stand ready to assist them, along with other major Pacific partners, in areas where it can be effective as Fiji embarks on its new path forward.

Mr President,

The recent Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa was a great success. We commend the adoption of the **SAMOA Pathway**, which reiterated the sustainable development priorities of SIDS and which has been reaffirmed by the international community.

But the adverse impacts of climate change continues to pose a serious challenge to the sustainable development efforts of SIDS. The full range of damaging impacts such as sea level rise, coastal erosion, fresh water table salination, prolonged and severe droughts, flooding, other extreme weather events and loss and damage of vital infrastructure remains a constant concern for SIDS.

Many of the SIDS, especially in the Pacific have reached a tipping point. While the right thing to do is for us to respond to these challenges by working smarter and harder to improve the livelihoods of people at risk, the bigger and advanced countries of the world must not only do likewise but re-double their efforts partnering with us.

As part of our support to Pacific SIDS Papua New Guinea has launched the Pacific Development Assistance Program. This is aimed at assisting Pacific SIDS in critical areas of development such as education, health, capacity building, climate change and reconstruction of vital infrastructure after natural disasters.

We reiterate our call on the international community, including the UN, to work together with SIDS *in the spirit of genuine and durable partnership*. We commend the Secretary-General for convening the successful High-Level Climate Summit last week.

In supporting the outcomes, we must build on the political momentum generated as we move towards Lima this year and importantly Paris in 2015, where the international community must conclude a legally binding agreement in order to collectively address the adverse impacts of Climate Change.

Mr President,

The international community stands at an important crossroad. The imminent deadline of the Millennium Development Goals, and the transition to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, have rightly become the center-stage of the global agenda.

We support a people-centered and transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda that must be underpinned by global partnerships that support national ownership of sustainable development.

We welcome the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Report of the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on SDGs which recommended seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

We must chart a path that is realistic with goals that are attainable with the necessary *Means of Implementation*. We also commend the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, which is critical to the successful implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Pacific Small Island Developing States, note with appreciation the inclusion of the important proposed stand-alone goals on Oceans and Seas, Sustainable Energy and Climate Change.

Along with the other proposed goals, these should form the basis for the inter-governmental negotiations to take place. We will fully engage in this critical process.

Mr President,

My Government remains fully committed to these efforts because we have learnt the galvanizing impact of the MDGs has helped us take national ownership and developed a home-grown sustainable development paradigm.

Whilst my country's MDGs scorecard remains a work in progress, my Government has undertaken various initiatives to redress the situation. We have re-tailored the MDGs to national priorities with 88 indicators connecting them to our national development plans.

A recent report on progress to achieve the MDGs by the United Nations Country Office was optimistic and positive. The report found that Papua New Guinea has made important strides towards achieving the MDGs, especially since the General Elections in 2012. These include the bold decision to run budget deficits until 2017, which the UN Report notes has enabled the nation to invest in essential areas.

My Government is implementing a policy of free education for all primary school children. This has seen school enrolments jump by as much as 80 percent in some areas. We now have around two million children in schools.

In the health sector, we are witnessing reduction of rates in early child and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other communicable diseases. There are more mothers and children getting access to health care as a result of our free health care policy.

Our infrastructure development program is improving Papua New Guinea's business environment and creating opportunities for our people to participate meaningfully in national development.

Mr President,

A key cornerstone of our development roadmap is a people-centered population management and stabilization focus. It entails empowering individuals to take leadership and full responsibility to improve their livelihoods through appropriate measures.

Our economy has grown over the last decade at an average rate of 6 to 8 percent per annum and is projected to grow above 20 percent in 2015. This growth is transforming our country, especially with revenue from the completion of our first Liquefied Natural Gas project and its export.

This is a new economic and development age for our economy. The unprecedented and transformative economic progress will coincide with the pursuit of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We are clearly focused to actively participate in this process and in its implementation at the national and regional levels.

Our Government is fully committed to ensuring that we manage this transformation carefully and effectively. Our challenge is to ensure that this growth delivers the maximum benefit to all our citizens.

Recently, our Government launched a 100 million US Dollars initiative, with our leading national bank, the Bank of the South Pacific, to make home ownership more affordable for citizens.

We are also facilitating financial inclusion services for our people. We are grateful to our development partners, including the United Nations, Australia, New Zealand, US, Japan and the EU.

My Government has helped with the capital for the first national Women's Bank as well as micro-credit schemes to involve our grassroots people become owners and drivers of their future wellbeing. In addition we are prioritizing Small and Medium Enterprises to drive development.

Furthermore, my Government is also developing a National Statistics Development Strategy to provide a Roadmap for Papua New Guinea to continually improve and update its statistical information collection and management for improved decision making. This includes embarking on a national biometric identification card system to record and maintain population information of our citizens.

Mr President,

Despite the economic growth, social issues still remain a challenge.

My Government values our women and girls who constitute half of our population as equal development partners. We are making sure that gender empowerment and equality continue to be a cornerstone of our responsible sustainable development. We therefore support the work of UN Women.

I am pleased to inform this Assembly that my Government has committed record funding of USD10 million this year for various initiatives including partnering with the UNFPA to make available forty thousand contraceptive implants as an important intervention measure for the health of our women and girls of child bearing age. This will be scaled up to USD20 million by 2015.

My Government in partnership with our Development Partners is also investing in upgrading vital mid-wifery skills along with enhancing our health referral systems to address complicated pregnancies.

As an Executive Board member of UNICEF, we will promote and participate in the 25th Anniversary on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr President,

My Government welcomes and pledge our support for your timely agenda for strengthening international peace and security.

As a responsible UN Member, committed to fostering global peace and security, my country is deploying a modest level of troops to UN Peacekeeping Missions in Sudan and South Sudan. We intend to contribute more UN peacekeepers as our capacity grows.

We are concerned about the increasing conflicts and tensions in many parts of the world, particularly those involving Non-State actors. It is unacceptable to witness the heavy toll of destruction exacted upon millions of innocent children, women and men. Often times uprooted from their homes, dislocated, downtrodden and their dignity humiliated.

We must rebuke and unite against the rising tide of intolerance, bigotry and hatred under various banners.

We again condemn terrorism in all its manifestations! We join the international community to combat this global threat.

Our support for the recent UN Security Council resolution against terrorism is a re-affirmation that inhumane atrocities committed cannot be and should not be condoned by the international community. Those responsible for such inhumanities must be held accountable.

We are also concerned by the rising tensions between and within certain countries and the re-emerging ugly head of another potential arms race. The world does not need this but rather recommit our efforts for a global disarmament that will support a transformative development agenda that brings long-lasting improvement to people's livelihoods everywhere.

The Ebola crisis is a concern that is not just limited to West Africa! It is a international crisis, one which we, the international community must address together as we have done with SARS and HIV/AIDS. These are diseases and pandemics which do not recognize national sovereign borders. Like other countries, we have taken appropriate measures to address the potential spread of Ebola.

Mr President,

We note with concern that the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism is nearing its end but progress has been slow. We need to strengthen efforts to complete this process.

We urge the implementation of the Report and Conclusions of the UN Visiting Mission to New Caledonia this year and thereby call on the United Nations and the international community and particularly Administering Power to support the process of decolonization under the Noumea Accord. The Melanesian Spearhead Group Leaders Summit in June 2013 supported through a Declaration the efforts of the FLNKS in New Caledonia.

Mr President,

Finally, Papua New Guinea strongly believes that the international community is a better, more secure and harmonious place because of the United Nations.

Certainly there are areas at the UN where reform is required - as is the case with any large organization.

We need to re-commit ourselves to the areas where the UN has been successful, and in other areas we need to build adequate systems.

Our ultimate objective must be to promote a more effective, more accountable, more responsible and more caring United Nations - a United Nations capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Papua New Guinea therefore shares your intention to further reform, rejuvenate and strengthen the current UN Security Council to allow for equitable geographic representation.

Regrettably this important organ does not reflect today's geo-political realities.

We again join many other UN Member States calling for the reform of the current UN Security Council in both categories of its membership.

Mr President,

This time next year we will be celebrating four decades of nation building just as the UN commemorates its 70th Anniversary. We continue to be a proud, united country of many diverse cultures and peoples speaking more than 800 languages.

We are also rapidly transforming our traditional way of life to a modern country in one generation.

In closing, I recommit my country to the ideals of the United Nations Charter and pledge to work closely together with all other Member States to collaborate on solutions to many issues we all face as humanity.

I thank you.