



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. JAMES MARAPE, MP
PRIME MINISTER**

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2021**

His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the General Assembly;

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General;

Fellow leaders, Excellencies and distinguished delegates;

It is my distinguished honour and pleasure on my own behalf and that of my 8 million plus people and Government, to join other global leaders in addressing the General Assembly today.

I also take this time to extend our condolences to the families in your countries who have lost someone due to COVID-19, and our get-well wishes to those who are sick. I also pay tribute to the global frontline workers and service personnel who have toiled over and beyond the call of duty to care for those who are sick and vulnerable.

Mr President,

Being my first attendance at this Global Forum, I am greatly humbled and warmly congratulate you and the Government and people of the Republic

of the Maldives, on your mandate, particularly as a Small Island Developing State, to lead our collective work this Session.

This is compounded by the intensifying and worrisome global climate crisis, accelerated biodiversity losses, other humanitarian, peace, security and trade related issues that pose great challenges to the way we now manage our regional and global political and socio- economic affairs.

Despite all of these challenges we are heartened by your foresight, commitment and leadership, under your "Presidency of Hope" vision and theme. We unequivocally pledge to support and partner you during your tenure as President of this august forum.

Mr. President,

I also thank your predecessor His Excellency, Mr. Volkan Bozkir and the delegation of Turkey, for his excellent leadership and outstanding work, this past year, under very challenging circumstances. We wish him and his family well.

I want to place on record Papua New Guinea's deep appreciation and support to Secretary-General Guterres for his continuing bold and decisive leadership of our collective work, as mandated by the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Secretary-General, your unanimous reappointment for another term, starting next year, is indeed a clear demonstration of the confidence and trust that UN Member States, including my own country, have in your work ethics and strong leadership, which this organisation needs at this very challenging period. I thank you for your frank and sobering assessment of the challenges before us and your proposals on how we confront these challenges, practically and at multilateral levels.

Mr. President,

I bring to you all greetings from Papua New Guinea in the peaceful blue Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean or the Blue Pacific Continent is home to marine and terrestrial biodiversity and is where the most-vulnerable small island states are being exposed to global threats of rise in sea level due to climate change, and the health and the associated economic woes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I speak for Papua New Guinea, but the issues will no doubt resonate with the small island states.

I also believe, Mr President that you too will have some appreciations on what these issues are about.

Our oceanic homes and our way of life is intertwined with the ecosystem in its natural equilibrium. This equilibrium is now affected by human influence, not of our making. But we are the first victims and the most affected because of our inherent vulnerabilities.

Mr President,

As we convene and continue to speak on climate change in the ambiances of our 21st century poised halls like this august UN assembly, may I remind us all that little children and their families are living in the seas of the earth in fear and uncertainty of what their future will be like. Because in their lifetime they have seen their arable and safe lands lost due to sea level rise and are watching as the structures that their lives are built upon slips away.

It is time the big carbon emitters of planet earth own up and apologise to the small island states and all other victims of climate change.

And today I make a call to all of us and especially to the big carbon emitting nations, who are now enjoying their national economic transformations through industrialization, to pause, think and take responsibility to save our planet.

I am comforted by the recent commitments by President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Boris Johnson on their respective nations' intention to respond better to tackling climate change issues.

I also hear of China's positive responses and note that it is good that we are now uniting to save our planet.

We have a collective responsibility to take actions to save earth. When astronaut Neil Armstrong walked on the moon on July 20, 1969, he looked back to the direction from where he'd come from and he did not see his home country – the United States of America, but he saw his home, Planet Earth.

It is the survival of the Earth that we must take action on now. I want to make this statement. Enough of talk. We have to take actions commensurate to the volume of emissions from our industries.

Leaders of the big carbon-emitting nations must now lead the global effort in rebalancing the environmental equilibrium. It is a hard ask but a necessary call for leadership and champions.

I point to all nation on earth to embrace the unity of humanity to save our planet, because what happens in Africa will affect Europe, whatever happens in Asia will affect America, and whatever happens in the Middle East will affect those of us in Pacific.

We live in one planet, one atmospheric envelope, one interlinked environmental ecosystem, hence as one humanity, we must rise and unite to preserve our one planet, our home. To not to do so is foolishness and we are doing so at the peril of our children and their Children, if Jesus Christ does not come back soon.

Mr. President,

Papua New Guinea recognizes the need to save Earth and we too are contributing and will contribute to preserve our Earth. God has blessed us with about 13 percent of the world's tropical rainforests and 6 percent of its biodiversity. These global assets we want to preserve.

One lesson I have learnt from Covid-19 is that oxygen is humanity's number one need; with less oxygen due to COVID-19 then suffocation and death. Well who produces the oxygen for earth? The trees of course!

If the world's rainforest reservoir were the global lung, we have a significant proportion of this organ that keeps the world breathing. We also function as the great carbon sink. We have this significant asset for our planet.

As chair of the Coalition of Rainforest Nations, Papua New Guinea stands at an important crossroad. We are a net remover of carbon from the atmosphere. The removal capacity from our forests is over 100 million tonnes per year. Our energy emissions are presently around 10 million annually. Therefore if the REDD + Mechanism delivers as it should, PNG can remain where every country needs to be by 2050 under the Paris Agreement – a net remover of carbon from the atmosphere.

The preservation and conservation plus sustainable harvest and use of forest resources can be our commitment to you all for the upkeep of earth heeding the “red code for humanity” call by Secretary-General Guterres. The recent Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report is crystal clear that human actions are the cause of the worsening climate crisis. We must take actions to change this trajectory.

We have long said that climate change is a serious existential threat to our national security and wellbeing. Therefore, the climate-security nexus reality must and cannot continue to be denied in the Security Council, as it would be a dereliction of duty to all peoples worldwide on the part of the Council. We welcome the increasing support in the Council on this important agenda.

Mr President,

Let me also welcome and commend the excellent leadership and efforts led by the United Kingdom, as COP26 President-designate, Italy as co-host of COP26 and the UN Secretary-General, in rallying the international community to take the bold decisions and practical measures necessary to deliver on the Paris Agreement commitments.

I cannot overstate the urgency and the ambitious actions needed under the Paris Agreement to undo the serious damage humanity has caused to Planet Earth. I will also continue to advocate strongly that responsibilities must be assigned correctly, appropriately, and proportionately to the scale of damages done.

Mr President,

During COP26, I will be seeking to progress a number of issues on behalf of Papua New Guinea and the wider Pacific Blue economy.

We must all commit to the energy targets, deal with land use, and advocate for the preservation of biodiversity and be more bold in climate financing commitments. These issues which are important to Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands Forum Countries and we will be seeking support and advocacy from developed and industrialised Countries to back our domestic and regional efforts towards adaptation and mitigation through global funding assistance.

I will be seeking an understanding to build a special set of criteria that is simplified to enable us to qualify for financial support for our adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Mr. President,

I join the previous Speakers in calling on the international community to collectively meet our Paris Agreement obligations and submit individual Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) without delay.

Papua New Guinea was among the first countries to submit our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in 2020 outlining our goal to be carbon neutral by 2050. This plan includes the drafting of our NDCs implementation Plan, Regulations and Alignment of NDC Adaptation and National Adaptation Plan thanks to the support of the United Nations Development Program.

We want to see major carbon emitters in the industrialised nations to be genuine and committed in their actions to fund climate change mitigation and adaptations. A failure in that regard is a denial of that responsibility.

We wish to advocate also that the US\$100 billion annual commitment by developed countries to developing nations on climate financing must be considered different from Official Development Assistance. This will allow its guidelines to be sensitive to the climate change mitigation and adaptation agenda and their specific requirement.

As a natural gas and oil exporter Papua New Guinea is working towards ensuring our carbon footprint is minimised by implementing our Sustainable Development Goal 13 Roadmap 2020-2030 on Climate Change launched last year.

However, despite multiple project submissions for climate financing, Papua New Guinea has had limited or no success in accessing these funds, except for technical assistance in developing the fiduciary framework. This is disappointing. We need to see a more practical demonstration of genuine commitments.

Other forms of assistance towards climate change adaptation and mitigation must also be streamlined to lessen the increasing debt burdens in Small Islands States to free up the required fiscal space to support economic recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve sustainable development.

I further call on the Member States to finalise a robust and fair Carbon Markets under the Paris Rulebook to unlock new financing streams that better account for the sustainable development interests of countries like mine. This will allow us to assign our development agenda under the different but appropriate financing opportunities as long as the guidelines are appropriate but friendly.

Papua New Guinea wants to achieve both conservation and development. In forestry, we have ceased issuance of new timber permits and renewal of existing ones and will achieve complete round log export ban by 2025. We want to move into value adding and downstream processing.

We have adopted and designated a large conservation area in our Northern Province as a pilot program in partnership with a regional environmental program which will give us the learning experience we need for further designations of conservation areas.

We are also in the process of establishing a NDC Roadmap for Agriculture Forestry and Other Land Use (AFLOU) and Energy Sector.

Mr. President,

COVID 19 will continue to remain our biggest challenge. Our numbers are low in terms of both confirmed cases and fatalities. But most concerning, the rates of vaccinations are also low.

Our Government took the necessary upfront ownership through the enactment of an appropriate legislation, the National Pandemic Act 2020. This together with very close working partnership with our valued development partners, including our Pacific family of nations through the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 Program, has given us much success. We cannot speak highly enough of such partnerships, including those through the Covax Facility, and with the UN system, Australia, New Zealand, US, Japan, China, EU, UK and United Arab Emirates, which enabled us to have immediate access to essential medical equipment and supplies including the AstraZeneca, Johnson and Johnson and Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines.

We continue to welcome and encourage further strengthening of cooperative global efforts to allow access to the COVID-19 vaccines in countries where they are most needed. We advocate for global efforts in curbing misinformation that has resulted in low rates of vaccinations in our country. It will truly support our efforts in building national advocacy and awareness on the efficacy and safety of COVID 19 vaccines, a program ably supported by our development partners, including most notably the churches and the UN country office.

We have to do all of that while keeping a close eye on the general health sector business as usual. A National Health Plan is ready to be launched except for the settlement of the financing plan. It will encompass facilities development, capacity building, pharmaceutical procurement, development of primary, secondary and tertiary health care, and provincial capacities, and the requisite capacity building and education.

Mr. President,

Economic management for us involves taking stock of where we were, building the structures for reengagement with our international partners, and ensuring that the right enablers are put in place to build and sustain a robust economy.

It involves taking stock of our debt portfolios, reprioritising our expenditures, and focusing on important reforms in the utilities sector, infrastructure, education, health and the natural resources.

It also involved taking a closer look at specific projects in the extractive industry and working with their proponents to see them come on stream. For the two years, the bulk of our effort was to ensure that we achieve a fine balance between adherence to all COVID 19 requirements, while at the same time ensure that the economy is open and functioning.

Our work in the transparent stock take of our debt portfolios have resulted in attracting strong support from the World Bank and the IMF, and has provided very important platform of support from Australia, Japan and other bilateral partners. We acknowledge their support to us at this time.

We continue to advocate for the use of our natural resources. But the foundational tenet is that the development of these resources are to be done on the premise that all stakeholders have a shared interests in these developments, and these interests are to be fully satisfied within principles of 'equity and equality' where we live no one behind.

A key area of focus is the substantive investment and development of quality economic infrastructure to link the provinces throughout the country and deliver important services to our citizens countrywide and enhance their socio-economic opportunities.

We have embarked on an important connectivity program branded Connect PNG, which is building and expanding infrastructure assets such as national roads, wharves, jetties, airports, airstrips, punching new road corridors, information and telecommunication network and electricity access to the majority of our population.

This is the stimulus for economic transformation for our people. This is done as required by our National Constitution and in alignment with The Eight Point Plan, PNG Vision 2050, Development Strategic Plan 2010-2030, Medium-Term Plan III 2018-2022 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) to better deliver socio-economic prosperity for the country and become a Middle-Income Country by 2050.

Mr. President,

Growth for PNG continues to be off the back of the petroleum, energy and mining sectors, which contribute around 60 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). We continue to advocate for these developments to take place, and do as much as we can, as hard as we can to advocate for important policies in those sectors.

Our policies on developments in the extractive sector has begun to be cognizant of the diminishing financing envelop from external sources such as loans and grants. At the same time, we have had to move towards better management of our national public debt. We strongly recognize the importance of generating sufficient revenue from domestic sources, to complement external budget support, for our national development priorities, as called for under the General Assembly's 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Financing for Development Framework.

It is in this spirit that my government has embarked on reviewing and reforming our legislation and policies in the resources sector to ensure appropriate levels of national content in projects and to facilitate fair and equitable returns for all stakeholders with shared interests. At the same time, we continue to value, respect and uphold our partnership obligations with the private sector in our natural resources sector. We remain open for business and therefore welcome bona fide international investors to join us in exploring opportunities available in my country.

Mr. President,

My country continues to enjoy the partnership with important multilateral financial institutions. Let me take a moment to thank the World Bank, IMF, ADB and our valued bilateral partners, including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, India, European Union and the United States for supporting my Government's development priorities.

It would be remiss of me not to also acknowledge the excellent work undertaken under the leadership of the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica and the UN Secretary-General for financing for development needed particularly in developing countries to recover and build back from the COVID-19 pandemic. A call, Papua New Guinea strongly supports.

Mr. President,

My government has prioritised investment in the agriculture sector as an engine of economic growth and prosperity for the country. The strategic interventions are a combination of credit scheme, freight and price subsidies which has helped broaden the scope and reach of agricultural production. This will not only help broaden the tax base and generate additional revenue the country needs for development but also more importantly improve our rural communities' lives and livelihoods and enable them to be proactive nation builders.

Our largely rural-based economy is dependent on subsistence agriculture. It is my government's desire to transform the agriculture sector into a reliable, commercial, sustainable food system that will address food security and climate resilience as well as conservation and management of our vast biodiversity.

To support this, we have set targets to increase cash crop production by 30 percent and also increase livestock production by 30 percent by 2025 and develop taxation incentives for our local farmers.

Additionally, these include the formulation of an Agriculture and Livestock Diversification Plan by 2025 and our efforts to increase down-stream processing by 30 percent in 2025 and ensure local landowners and Provincial Governments participate in equity sharing and downstream business spin-offs.

Mr. President,

Our efforts in the agriculture sector ties in well with the important global efforts under the UN Food Systems Summit, convened virtually yesterday by the UN Secretary-General.

For Papua New Guinea, we have identified five Key Priority Actions that forms our National Pathway to transform our Food Systems in ways that will build a sustainable, equitable, resilient, and healthier food system in our country. These details were shared in our national statement at the Food Systems Summit yesterday evening.

However, I would underline that my country with its arable and abundant land has the potential to serve as a food basket for the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, particularly at a time when food security around the world is now been threatened by the ravages of climate change, sea-level rise and other crisis.

We therefore welcome multi-stakeholder partnership and investment to transform our organic food systems to support address the global challenges relating to hunger, poverty, malnutrition, food security that fosters better health outcomes for our peoples and communities and to deliver on the SDGs.

Mr. President,

In the energy sector, we recognise the importance of energy transition to renewable sources to move significantly away from fossil fuels and to options including hydro, solar, wind and geothermal energy. We also have options with clean gas energy.

Our government has since 2018 under auspices of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), been working with our development partners (Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the US), on the Papua New Guinea Electrification Program (PEP). This is intended to provide reliable and affordable renewable energy to the unreached 70 percent of households in the country by 2030. Enormous development outcomes ride on this program for our people.

We have struck partnership with the International Solar Alliance and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and Fortescue Metal Group to strengthen our renewable energy transformation and options in geothermal and hydro power energy.

Our energy transformation will come about when the National Energy Authority is fully established. It is a strategic act early this year of extracting regulatory responsibilities and placing it where it can do the best in terms of facilitating important investment and development into the different energy options as well as recapitalising current energy provider to bring it to a place where it can respond to our energy requirements better.

Mr. President,

The virtual first-ever High-Level Dialogue on Energy convened today by the Secretary-General to accelerate efforts in implementing SDG7 on energy-related goals and targets for sustainable development is most timely and needed. It resonates well with my Government's development priorities and we look forward to harnessing the Ten-year Action Plan under the Global Roadmap to attain SDG7 by 2030 and further explore joining an "Energy Compact" to support SDG7 achievement by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

Mr. President,

As a maritime nation with a maritime zone spanning over 2.4 million square kilometres the oceans agenda is of immense importance to my country, not only for the living and non-living resources for the added value they bring to our national assets but also more importantly for our own identity and way of life as a people and nation.

My government is also prioritising and strengthening the management, governance and security of our maritime zones under our National Oceans Policy 2020 — 2030, which was adopted in July 2020.

To further complement this, my Government also officially launched last month our ten-year National Fisheries Strategic Plan 2021-2030, which provides the roadmap and vision for a broad-based fisheries sector and industry that is, inclusive, environmentally sustainable, globally competitive and promotes food security.

Furthermore, it addresses issues including prevention of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in our country and neighbouring Pacific waters and domestic downstream processing that enables our people, as resource owners to be meaningfully involved in economic opportunities. We call on countries within our region to be responsible in that regard.

Mr President,

I am pleased to say that my Government adopted and launched the country's Marine Protected Areas Policy and the National Action Plan of Action for Stingrays, Skates and Sharks in June 2021. This Policy will strengthen our efforts to better protect our marine resources, as an epicentre of global marine resources and biodiversity. We are grateful for the support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP, as valued development partners.

In doing so, this will assist us to reach the Biodiversity Aichi Target 11 to have 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas protected, which we remain committed to. It is in this context and also with the devastating wildfires and catastrophic climate change events around the world impacting adversely on biodiversity that we look forward to a successful outcome of the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) in China next month.

We therefore join the growing global call for an ambitious and transformational Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that can help us fully implement our national commitments to protect biodiversity and sustainably using them for our sustainable development and also meeting the SDGs.

Mr. President,

Regionally, I am pleased to join my fellow leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in heralding our milestone regional Declaration on preserving our maritime zones in the face of climate change-related sea-level rise, which was adopted last month.

As large oceanic States within a Blue Pacific Continent and with the advent of the devastating consequences of runaway climate change and rising sea-levels that continue to threaten our countries and people's security and lives and livelihoods, and sovereignty, this Declaration preserves our maritime zones in the face of climate change-related sea-level rise.

It also upholds the integrity of; and our long-standing commitment to; the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the global legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We therefore welcome the support of all UN Member States and the international community to our landmark Declaration. My earlier remark on climate change gives us the basis to call for those support and actions.

Mr. President,

In terms of peacebuilding, my Government recognizes the fundamental role the UN plays in supporting sustainable development and peace building.

It is therefore incumbent on the United Nations to ensure that we continue to adapt the existing multilateral arrangements, including the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the Secretary-General's Action for Peace (A4P) Initiative and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to make them relevant under evolving global circumstances to better foster and sustain global, regional and national peace and security.

For us, our continuing engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund, in recent years, and from which we have been a beneficiary, further strengthens the hand of national peace and security through peace by peaceful means.

This is especially true on our Bougainville Peace Agreement process for our Bougainville region and in the new initiative on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in two other provinces in the country.

Mr. President,

The Bougainville peace process continues to remain the top priority for my Government.

In this context, I would like to inform this august Hall that following the referendum in 2019, my Government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government have held the Second Post-Referendum Consultation and the Joint Supervisory Board (JSB) just three months ago, where several important decisions to move the peace process forward were agreed.

These included the reaffirmation of both Parties commitment to the Bougainville Peace Agreement; the importance of peaceful dialogue on the way forward, guided by the country's constitutional and parliamentary processes, including with respect to the outcome of the 2019 referendum; the transfer of agreed powers; and a Joint Roadmap to guide the post-referendum processes.

Mr President,

There is a clear recognition by both parties that much more work remains to be done in this critical phase and that constructive dialogue, mutual understanding and partnership is crucial for a lasting political settlement of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

My government is also realistic about our capacity challenges to successful peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The continued supportive partnership of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund and the wider United Nations system and other development partners will be vital to ensure the dividends of peace is shared and becomes long lasting.

I acknowledge the strong support by the UN in chairing the consultation process, and supporting the initial engagement of a moderator for these talks.

I would also like to put on record our sincere appreciation to our valued bilateral and multilateral development partners, including Australia, European Union, Japan, China, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, the United States, United Kingdom and the United Nations system, for their continuing commitment and support towards the Bougainville peace process and the recent initiative in two provinces in the country's Highlands region and look forward to further work with all development partners on this important priority for my Government.

Whilst commending the UN on the peace efforts in Papua New Guinea, I would also like to recall the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders decision in 2019 and the outstanding visit by the UN Human Rights mechanism to address the alleged human rights concerns in our neighbourhood. This visit is important to ensure that the greater peoples of the region have peace within their respective sovereignties and their rights and cultural dignities are fully maintained.

Mr. President,

We also have long recognised that our sustainable development efforts will be in vain if we do not safeguard our women and girl's human rights and dignity and provide them opportunities to be equal development partners for nation building.

This is why my Government has prioritised gender equality and empowerment opportunities, policies, laws, strategies and set in place among others the Gender-Based Violence Strategy (2016 — 2025) and the Family Protection Act and provided this demographic segment of our economy specific economic opportunities to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities to empower them.

These initiatives take account of our international commitments and obligations under relevant international frameworks, notably the Beijing Platform for Action. We recognize that much more work remains to be done but we are determined and committed to do what is right for our women and girls as our country's future prosperity and security also depends on how we treat them.

This is clearly demonstrated recently by the groundswell of support to combat and end the scourge of gender-based violence in the country.

I am pleased to note that this year my Government with the support of the Parliamentarians to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV) established a bipartisan Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender Based Violence to inquire into gender-based violence in the country and proposed recommendations and measures to combat and end this scourge.

A Report of this important work has been tabled in Parliament and we are working towards implementing it.

This will complement the work done under the EU-led and UN supported Spotlight Initiative for Ending Violence Against Women and Children, which was jointly launched with UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed in March 2020 in Port Moresby. And I thank Her Excellencies for the visit not only to our capital city Port Moresby but rural PNG.

We are also embarking on administrative measures for quotas for women's representation in Parliament. The inadequate representation of women Parliamentarians is a continuing concern for us. We are optimistic to set in motion this initiative at our next general election scheduled for July 2022.

These are but some of the key issues my Government is now working on in our Third cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Report to be presented to the Human Rights Council in November 2021.

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate our call on the General Assembly to do better in delivering on the reforms of the UN Security Council. This important organ, entrusted with the international community's peace and security, with its archaic representation and working methods is in dire need of an overhaul to ensure it meets with today's reality.

We are concerned that it has been nearly 12 long years now since the first round of the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) for the reforms of the Security Council and the costs keep on escalating for countries like ours.

Despite all the extensive efforts on the five agreed elements of the IGN package it still does not have any formal status.

For my delegation, a single consolidated document, now, not in an indeterminate future is needed for real negotiations to pave the way for the reforms of the Security Council. The importance of this cannot be overstated and we reiterate our call on this fundamental point.

I also recognise, as I close, the important reality check by Secretary General Guterres in his call for action on the Common Agenda. The Secretary General's proposals and recommendations calls for a robust UN system. We cannot progress the Common Agenda without dealing with the system that will carry it.

I thank you, Mr. President for the opportunity to speak. Under your Presidency, we hope for a better planet for all where we leave no one person or no place behind.

God bless you all;

God bless our planet earth.