



PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY STATEMENT

by

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PRIME MINISTER

of

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

to the

SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

of the

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY GENERAL DEBATE

22 SEPTEMBER 2022, NEW YORK

His Excellency, Mr. Csaba Korosi, President of the General Assembly;

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

Distinguished Fellow Heads of State and Government;

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my honour and privilege to, again, join and address this august Hall. On my Government and people's behalf, I congratulate you, Mr President, and the Government and people of Hungary, on your election to preside over the new term of the General Assembly's work and wish you well.

Mr. President,

Your presidency's theme of an integrated agenda for peace, prosperity and sustainability through multilateralism is most needed today. We must build on the good foundations laid by your predecessors and all of us. This is given the turmoil, uncertainty, mistrust, pain and suffering, from multiple crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the worsening climate crisis, escalating socio-economic challenges, and conflicts tearing us apart.

Let us transform words into actions. This must be underpinned by our collective commitments; supportive resources that are affordable, accessible and timely; and with enhanced opportunities, that will assist us all, to provide our people's basic needs, restore their trust and confidence in governments, heal our lands and ecosystems to deliver the future we want, as envisioned by the 2030 Agenda and many of our own development aspirations.

Mr. President, let me pay tribute to your predecessor, a fellow Small Island Developing State representative, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, of Maldives, for his outstanding “presidency of hope” that has renewed our collective resolve to turn the tide against the ravages of the pandemic and other evolving challenges. We wish him well.

May I also convey my delegation’s gratitude to Mr. Secretary-General, for his continued strong leadership and untiring efforts in rallying the world to save ourselves and to provide a future that is much better, safer and secure for all, including for succeeding generations.

The candid yet sobering report presented by the Secretary-General to us at this meeting on the state of our world today, is deeply troubling. The clarion call from the Secretary-General must not go unheeded. We must all do our part and act decisively, now, for our collective good. Otherwise, the alternative is to condemn ourselves to a future of doom and gloom. Is that what our children deserve?

It is with this in mind that Papua New Guinea is supportive of the Secretary-General’s narrative of “Our Common Agenda”. We welcome the preliminary progress made to better understand the range of defining issues and how we address this effectively to help deliver on the SDGs promise to improve our people’s lives and livelihoods whilst also protecting common environment better.

To this end, we applaud the Secretary-General for convening the Transforming Education Summit. We are pleased to note the shared recognition of education as the cornerstone for a prosperous, stable and secure future for all. I know that an educated society is an informed society that stands to make better decisions.

For my country, education is a key priority and is guided by our education policy of “leave no child behind”, supported by our Education Sector Development Plan 2023-2027.

It is a holistic and inclusive approach in ensuring focus on quality lifelong education for all and with special attention given to the most vulnerable

and marginalized population and recognizing the importance of multistakeholder participation.

A demonstration of this strong commitment for education is my Government's decision to provide free-education for all, up to Grade 12 and beyond and also providing opportunities to children, youth and adults through Flexible Open and Distance Education and community colleges to upskill their capacity to be entrepreneurs and nation builders.

Mr. President, we also welcome the consensus reached for the "Summit of the Future", scheduled for September 2024, to find solutions to the multiple crisis we are now facing. This should, however, be not defined by the lowest common denominator but rather be more ambitious yet realistic and workable.

We remain committed to engage in this process, because it provides an opportunity for us to also draw parallels with our national efforts to attain our National Vision 2050.

Mr. President, I am pleased to inform this Assembly that the COVID-19 pandemic and other stressors, including supply-chain difficulties and development financing challenges, affecting my country has spurred my Government to embark on our own similar national process to the Secretary-General's global efforts under "Our Common Agenda".

This is where we have taken stock of our own domestic development challenges and we have set in place key policies and legislative measures, including reforms in important sectors and development priorities, and tied to our budget cycle under the Medium-Term Development Plan. This path if walked upon would make PNG a middle-income earning nation by 2050 as envisioned by our nation's Vision 2050.

Mr President, I report to United Nations that the core focuses of my Government for the next 5 years will be to build a resilient and diversified economy, invest in high quality economic and social infrastructure, ensure fair and equitable natural resources development, address

business and investment confidences, strengthening the rule of law and domestic security, deliver quality education and health to all and strengthening the Institutions of State including governance.

These are fundamental building blocks of my country that should contribute towards peace, prosperity and sustainable development as proposed by yourself, Mr. President.

Mr. President, as Papua New Guinea approaches our 50th Independence Anniversary in 3-years time, my Government is also prioritizing industrializing our economy through import-substitution, value-adding and downstream processing of our natural resources with the use of modern clean green technology that will not compromise my country's rich biodiversity and our pristine natural environment, for PNG is documented to have about 5 to 6 percent of world's biodiversity and our huge tropical rainforest third behind Congo and the Amazon areas of our Earth.

We therefore welcome genuine and appropriate foreign investors to join us in partnership in various sectors of our renewable resources development and I assure them of a fair, equitable and secure returns on their investments.

Mr. President, while we note the global community's calls for domestic revenue sources to be expanded and better harnessed for development financing, we also recognise that the existing global economic and financial architecture is weighed against developing countries like mine.

This structure needs to be changed to better support our development needs. Least-we-forget, many times small developing countries get to bear the brunt of global economic and social woes that they have no hand in engendering.

In this spirit, I also join the calls from fellow Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for their development financing needs to be considered by taking into account their environmental, economic and social dimensions of vulnerability rather than the Gross National Income measure alone, which is no longer suitable.

We therefore urge the international community to support the proposed SIDS Multi Vulnerability Index (MVI) as a tool to support SIDS concessional financing and debt relief given their special circumstances amidst the

ongoing increasing challenges, they continue to face for their development needs including food securities that our good Secretary-General alluded to.

Mr President, today, many parts of the world are facing food insecurity, hunger and poverty and Papua New Guinea can be a country of food production. Papua New Guinea's 8 million people live in a land mass of four hundred and sixty four thousand eight hundred and forty square kilometres (464,840 km²) and our country has rain and water abundance with our seas equally is food source, like our supply of tuna to Asia and Europe.

Comparing for instance, United Kingdom of Great Britain's 24,610 km² or Japan's 377, 975 km² or the Philippines' 300,000 km², Papua New Guinea has enough land, sea and people to be a food supplier to the world, Mr Secretary-General in response to your concerns for global food security.

For the first time in our country, my Government has inserted efforts to address this imminent problem by placing more emphasis on the agriculture sector. This is viewed not only as a revenue source for our economy but also a conduit to empower the majority of our rural communities through introduction of innovative farming methods in cash crop production, livestock and poultry, to take ownership and leadership of their development needs, and livelihoods, and at the same time also foster poverty alleviation and food security.

It is from this perspective that we have established new ministerial portfolios for Oil Palm, Coffee and Livestock, that will assist us cater better not only for needs of the majority of our rural communities and their local economies to be integrated into the national and global markets, to improve their lives and livelihood but be the source for food security, and hunger and poverty, alleviation for other countries.

We therefore welcome new international development partners to work with us in the agriculture sector, particularly in the downstream processing of products that adds value and supports local communities and the country.

On climate change, **Mr. President**, as the world prepares for COP27 and despite the rallying efforts of the global community including through the pledges under the Paris Agreement to cut emission levels, the world remains on fire. This is further compounded by destructive floods and rising sea levels

that continue to inundate and adversely affect coastal communities, including displacement and loss of identity as a people, in my own country and across the Pacific region and beyond, as the carbon emission level continues its destructive spiral out of control. We cannot and must not allow this to continue.

I again reiterate my call last year, to this august Hall. My country, as one of the largest standing pristine tropical rainforest of the world, is one of the few carbon positive countries in the world. We remove more carbon than we emit. Over the past 5 years or so, we have reduced national forest emissions by 53 percent. This totals over 75 million tonnes of UN verified REDD+ credits that will be on the market by the end of this year.

My Government has updated our Climate Management Act and this year set in place Nationally Determined Contribution regulation. We now have the legislation needed to implement the Paris Agreement.

We have also endorsed our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) Implementation Plan and NDC Electricity Roadmap and Agriculture, Forestry and other Land use NDC Roadmaps. We are also drafting our first Electric Vehicle Policy and working towards endorsing our National Adaptation Plan.

It is, however, disheartening to note that despite our proactive national efforts to implementing our Paris Agreement commitment, we seem to continue to get the raw end of the deal. We have done our part. But we have had little support from the global north, including for our submissions to the Green Climate Fund.

But we have not lost hope despite the fact that REDD+ and Forest Nations were forgotten in Glasgow. We cannot be placated by toothless pledges. We need the power of sovereign carbon markets that fully comply with the Paris Agreement.

The world cannot talk about climate change without talking about forest conservations and proper land use managements.

Papua New Guinea is calling for an urgent global focus on conservation, preservation and sustainability of our global forests with proper land use practices because only in our dear trees of the forests that you find the dual benefit of carbon cleansing and oxygen production.

Excellencies, I was given the privilege of meeting His Majesty King Charles The Third, where his views shared with me on forest is the same as I am mentioning here and that the world, especially those whose carbon footprints over mother earth is the greatest must help preserve forests of earth that commensurate their levels of emissions.

It is Papua New Guinea's humble view that the atmospheric balance of Oxygen and Carbon should be ranked the number one focus of all mankind because there-in lies the sustenance of life and the dear trees of our forests plays this balancing act as created by the Creator God. The world must save our forest because not to do so is suicidal for the Earth's future.

This is something we must correct at COP-27 in Sharm El-Sheikh.

Let us not forget that there is more carbon stored in the worlds forest than held in all known coal, oil and gas reserves. In short, if we lose our rainforest, climate stability is impossible. We may as well kiss the temperature goal of 1.5 degrees goodbye.

We and other rainforest nations are trying our best to balance forest harvest for our development needs and conserving for our world. We need help here, hear us. Our planet is fragile. Time is short. Together, we can do this.

On my final point on climate change, given increasing adverse impact of climate change on our communities, I would also like to echo Papua New Guinea's strong support for our Melanesian neighbor, Vanuatu's initiative to seek International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on this

existential threat, and welcome others to join the Pacific, Caribbean and other partners to take this forward, in this General Assembly, for our common good.

On the ocean agenda, **Mr. President**, I would reaffirm that Papua New Guinea as a maritime nation, is strongly committed to ensuring our maritime zones remain safe, secure and peaceful, under the spirit of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It not only provides us economic opportunities including through our fisheries resources but also symbolizes our ties with the ocean.

Like other Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, Papua New Guinea calls on developed nations to assist us access appropriate capacity building resources, research, science and technology and finance to strengthen our national efforts to better protect our ocean and harness ocean-based economy. We therefore welcome public-private partnerships.

On SDG 14, it was pleasing to note the success of the Second UN Ocean Conference. We are also encouraged by the welcome offer by France and Costa Rica to be the next co-host of the Conference and look forward to working together with likeminded countries to take forward this initiative. Such partnerships on the ocean agenda is most welcomed.

Mr. President, I would also like to applaud the sterling efforts under the leadership and presidency of Singapore for last month's negotiations, related to the new implementing instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction and as a marine nation, we offer our full support.

Mr. President, a resounding call we continue to hear, loud and clear, and repeatedly, and rightly so, is the importance of empowering youth to be at the table of decision-making about their lives and livelihoods

and as real partners for national development. This is indeed long overdue and must be brought to fruition without further delay.

In recognition of the ever-increasing youth bulge in the country and the challenges they continue to face, under my Government's development priorities, youth is now front and center for nation building.

We are rolling out cadetship programs as a tool for capacity building and training that will equip them to be owners, drivers, leaders and entrepreneurs to build forward our nation. We are also using our education system as a lever to foster integral human development for our youth. We welcome development partners to join us in this transformative endeavor.

Mr. President, it is in this spirit that Papua New Guinea was pleased to be a main sponsor and strong supporter of the establishment of a Youth Office in the UN Secretariat. It was also pleasing to note the consensus on this issue.

While we recognize that much more work remains to be done, however, once operationalized, we look forward to harnessing the UN Youth Office to support our national efforts on the youth agenda. The potential of our youth was well recognized by Her Excellency Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, and the Youth Special Envoy, during their groundbreaking visit to my country in March 2020.

Mr. President, on gender equality and empowerment, including combating gender-based violence, this remains a top priority for my Government.

We have established a bipartisan Parliamentary Committee that has done extensive public consultations and the recommendations made to the last Parliament will be taken up by this Parliament in a serious way,

to address better protection of our women and girls and give them fair and just opportunities to reach their full potential.

We have also put in place legislation and policies to address concerns related to gender equality, empowerment and combat gender-based violence.

Additionally, we are pleased to have two new well qualified women parliamentarians join our 11th Parliament, an improvement from our last Parliament, where there were no women Parliamentarians.

I have also recognized their capabilities and professionalism and tasked them with certain responsibilities for the country. We will continue to work hard to have more women representatives in decision-making bodies, as equal development partners.

Mr. President, I would like to join the call for global peace and stability. The simmering tensions and mistrust, which are the nemesis of peace, cannot and must not be allowed to fester anymore.

We as members of this United Nations took it upon ourselves to uphold the Charter of the United Nations. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to ensure that we are seen to uphold our commitments to the UN Charter.

In our context of the Bougainville peace process, I want to assure this meeting that this important issue remains a top priority for us. Peace by peaceful means underpins this national priority.

We have a Roadmap that continues to serve as a blueprint and we will consider all issues under the existing parameters of our Constitution, for a lasting and peaceful political solution that is acceptable to all Papua New Guineans.

We would like to thank United Nations for their role in PNG and the Melanesian conflict resolution model can be replicated in other politically conflicted countries.

On the reforms of the Security Council, Mr. President, to make it relevant to today's realities, we note the incremental progress that continues to be made in the inter-governmental process.

However, let me again reiterate our call to expedite the long-drawn-out process, by ensuring that we have a negating document that can serve as a basis to go forward.

May I also take this opportunity to recognize the milestone achievement, earlier this year, of the General Assembly holding the members of the Security Council responsible for their decisions regarding peace and security.

We welcomed and supported the Emergency Special Session measures, invoked under the General Assembly with respect to the situation in Ukraine and to ensure the Security Council is accountable for their actions. The success that arose from this process is a small but significant step to why the reform of the Security Council is necessary and cannot be prolonged further.

In closing, and not the least, **Mr. President**, may I take this opportunity to pay homage to the memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second, who by the grace of God and Lord Jesus, was PNG's Head of State for 47 years. Our beloved Queen personified grace, dignity, honesty, humility, tolerance of others, forgiveness and all other Christian virtues and lived 70 years of consistent unfailing life of public service, some lessons we leaders of the world must learn to practice.

I on behalf of my Papua New Guinea pay our respects to Mama Kwin as we affectionately call her. May her soul rest in peace with her Maker Jesus. We share our heartfelt sympathies and Condolences to His Majesty King Charles the Third and his royal family and the people and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth family.

Let me conclude by thanking you Mr President for this speaking opportunity on a very appropriate theme contemporary to our shared global need and I thank United Nations for one more time being a wonderful host, in fact a milestone 77th session. May God bless the United Nations of our world.

I thank you Mr. President.