



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

COUNTRY STATEMENT

Delivered by

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At the

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**Chairperson,
Madam Executive Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates.**

Introduction

At the outset, let me join the previous speakers and express my delegation's gratitude and appreciation to the Government and people of Thailand and the ESCAP Secretariat for the courtesies accorded to us since our arrival in Bangkok, Thailand.

Let me also take this opportunity to convey my delegation's congratulations on your election as the Chairperson. We are confident that under your leadership and guidance, and the support of the Executive Secretary and her team, we will successfully reach decisions on all the issues on our agenda for the benefit of our people in the Asia and the Pacific region.

I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation to make this Session a great success

Chairperson, Papua New Guinea is among the countries identified in the Asia - Pacific region that is most vulnerable to various natural disasters due to its unique geo-climatic conditions. As a country whose economy is highly dependent on commodity exports, Papua New Guinea is also subject to adverse impacts of macro-economic pressures within its external environment.

Theme for the 69th Session,” Opportunities To Build Resilience To Natural Disasters And Major Economic Crises”

The theme; “**Opportunities To Build Resilience To Natural Disasters And Major Economic Crisis**”, provides a region wide platform and opportunity for exploring ways that member countries can be able to improve our capacities and resiliency against the adverse impacts on our economies and livelihood by natural disasters and economic crises.

Chairperson, The dialogue that we have had in the last few days regarding the theme is a step forward towards further enhancement of cooperation amongst us all in building the future we want for our generations to come.

In this context, my delegation commends the Under Secretary General and her team for the excellent work they have done to come up with the study, specifically the publication report by ESCAP entitled; ***Building Resilience to Natural Disasters and Major Economic Crisis***; It provides useful recommendations on how member states can build our resiliency and capacities to cope with the debilitating effects of natural disasters and economic crisis in the region.

As part of developing policy, measures and mechanism to improve our capacities to cope with impacts of natural disasters and economic crises, issues pertaining to good governance, strong institutions, accountable management of natural resources, human and financial resources and good leadership, should also be included into our agenda in this Forum.

The key note addresses from our distinguished Ministers/Leaders so far have in one way or the other touched on the challenges we all are facing in our journey towards achieving inclusive sustainable development in the region. Papua New Guinea believes progress in achieving inclusive sustainable development requires commitments and sacrifices.

Issues Pertinent to the Commission: Papua New Guinea's Perspective

Chairperson, having said that let me highlight some of the issues pertinent to inclusive sustainable development from the perspective of my country - Papua New Guinea.

Since 2005, Papua New Guinea has enjoyed strong economic growth resulting from windfall of revenues from minerals and petroleum sectors. This was possible due to the sound enabling environment including political stability under the previous and current governments.

Papua New Guinea's economy grew by 9.2% in 2012 on top of growth of 11.1% in 2011, making it one of the better performing economies in the Asia Pacific region. Much of the growth was driven by business activities associated with the construction of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project and high level of private sector investments and increased government spending.

However Papua New Guinea recognize that strong economic growths for a country should not be seen as an end in itself but as means to ensure its citizens are provided tangible development. As majority of our population are rural dwellers, providing physical infrastructures, improving health services, affordable education, efficient transportation system, accessibility to markets remains our biggest challenge for Papua New Guinea.

Moreover, Papua New Guinea has also recognized the adverse impact of large revenue inflows from one sector into the economy, especially the Dutch Disease. As measure to address this, in February 2012, Parliament approved the creation of Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWG) which will be used to manage hydrocarbon revenues, ensure economic stability and use to implement our existing national development policies.

Chairperson, since adopting the UN Declaration on Millennium Development Goals in 2000, Papua New Guinea has set a strategic direction in the form of a development plan, called the Vision 2050. The vision 2050 is aimed at transforming the country into a middle income country by 2050. The subsidiary development policies and strategies are tailored to meet national development targets in line with the MDGs.

At present, PNG has made impressive but slow progress in achieving the MDG targets. There are challenges in the governance framework for implementation, and this represents a major hurdle for creating effective economic, technological, social and legal responses to achieving the goals within the set timeframe.

In this context and having been selected as one of the 50 countries to participate in the Post 2015 development goals agenda, PNG fully supports and envisions the agenda as being part of an integrated approach to sustainable development. With the technical inputs from the UNDP Country office, PNG has begun the country consultations and will soon submit the country report to the relevant UN bodies.

The critical approach now would be to recognize each country's specifics and relevance and allow countries to have flexibility to choose their own pathways to contributing to the goals of Post 2015 Sustainable development agenda

Although challenging, we must succeed in this task because the lessons are already clear: poverty alleviation strategies that do not integrate environmental concerns are unlikely to succeed.

On that note, PNG's priority development issues that needs to be captured in the Post 2015 development agenda include; access to basic education, improved health, poverty eradication, gender equality, environment sustainability, social inclusion, youth and employment, climate change impacts and adaptation and mitigation, infrastructure development, sustainable financing and technology transfer.

Chairperson, Papua New Guinea has joined the global community in renewing its political commitment towards achieving inclusive and sustainable development at the Rio + 20 Conference, in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

PNG agreed along with members states on the objectives of the Rio + 20 and renewed its commitment to a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development through strengthening of the institutional frameworks.

PNG has in place an institutional framework that integrates the Rio + 20 outcomes; however there exist challenges especially with the effective implementation and coordination of the Sustainable Development priorities at the national and local levels of government.

Chairperson, In August 2012, Leaders of Pacific Island Countries including Papua New Guinea gathered in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, and declared Climate Change the single biggest threat facing them.

Papua New Guinea is vulnerable to various hazards due to climate change impacts including coastal and in-land flooding, malaria and vector borne diseases, agriculture yield changes, cyclones, landslides, and droughts and thus; join other fellow Pacific Island Countries, especially the SIDs to call for more efforts towards addressing the issue of Climate Change in the region.

Also, in recognition of our unique natural environment and strong reliance on our natural resources Papua New Guinea proposed to the world in 2005 that we could help save the climate system by protecting our forests, which were fast being depleted to grow our economy and sustain our people's livelihoods.

PNG succeeded in having the Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) issue being embedded into the global climate change negotiations as a positive measure for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our political leadership has ensured a banding of likeminded rainforest countries under the umbrella of the Coalition of Rainforest Nations (CfRN) of which PNG is current chair.

Apart from our national priorities to address this issue, it is imperative that the Commission's focus should be to support the efforts of the Pacific Island Countries.

Chairperson, Reliable data is necessary for strategic planning and decision making process. The collection of reliable statistical data and data gaps are still major challenges for Papua New Guinea. PNG requires reliable data for socioeconomic analysis, policy formulation and population planning.

PNG is currently embarking on developing the National Statistical Development Strategy (NSDS), as a follow up from the PARIS 21 in 1996

Chairperson, The Government of PNG recognizes the country's vulnerability to natural disasters and is committed to reducing disaster risk for sustainable development. PNG has an existing strategic framework for disaster risk management (Papua New Guinea Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management National Framework for Action 2005-2015) which is consistent with global and regional Disaster Risk Management policy frameworks.

One of the major focuses of the government has been the improvement of the existing early warning systems and community preparedness through public awareness and education programmes. Capacity building of provinces to effectively manage disaster risks is a top priority for the government in the last five years.

Chairperson, PNG recognizes that transport is an enabling environment that facilitates trade and economic activities and community interactions. It also provides feasible connection and access to markets and government services

PNG recognize a well integrated competitive affordable financially and environmentally sustainable transport system will serve the economic and social goals of Papua New Guinea as set out in the Vision 2050, Millennium Development Goals, and Development Strategic Plans.

Chairperson and Excellences, PNG notes the need to further strengthen the work of the United Nations in particular ESCAP to take account of the changed circumstances under which it operates as well as the new emerging challenges that it must address.

We commend the UN Secretary General for the on-going administrative and institutional reforms that are undertaken to improve the efficiency of ESCAP to better serve the member States.

In this connection, we urge all stakeholders in the Commission to demonstrate courage and leadership so that the composition and workings of the Commission are reformed in ways that are equitable and reflective of the current geo-political and economic realities.

Finally, Chairperson and Excellences, in our stride towards achieving the goals of inclusive sustainable development, let us unite in the hope for a balanced and sustainable world.

I thank you Chair