



PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY STATEMENT

Delivered by

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At the

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Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

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

Introduction

At the outset, I wish to join the previous Speakers to express my delegation's gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Thailand and the ESCAP Secretariat for hosting the 71st Commission session.

And we also convey our congratulations on your election as the Chairperson for the 71st Commission session. My delegation is confident that under your very able leadership, supported by the H. E the Executive-Secretary and her team, this year's Commission session will be a success.

Chairperson, The 71st Commission Session theme, "**Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation**" not only provides a region-wide platform for member states but also for PNG to explore opportunities to meet the challenges of sustainable development, including the MDGs and key UN ESCAP issues pertinent to Papua New Guinea. The issues are in relation to the need for statistical data, development of transportation and infrastructures, liberalising trade and increasing flow of Investment, climate change issues, relevance of agriculture to growth and developments, connectivity through information and communication technology, and Pacific SIDS Aspirations compatible to green economic growth in the region.

The Post 2015 Development Agenda which will be adopted during the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly this year in New York will again require a collective regional approach to achieve the goals, and as always, this forum plays an important role in doing that for all of us as member States of the Commission.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - Implementation & Results

Chairperson, I am pleased to note that through the implementation period of the Millennium Development Goals, Papua New Guinea has developed the long term development framework - Vision 2050 Framework that set the overarching goal of improving human development. And to implement Vision 2050, the PNG's Strategic Plan 2010-2030 was developed, supported by the action-oriented Medium Term Development Plan 2011-2015 sets out sectoral targets and indicators to be achieved.

We have also realigned our Official Development Assistance Programs with the donor partners that assisted PNG to progress the implementation of the national development priorities in order to achieve the MDG targets.

Chairperson, having said that let me highlight some of the agenda issues pertinent to regional economic integration and sustainable development from Papua New Guinea's perspective.

Key Policy and Implementation Issues Pertinent to Papua New Guinea

I am pleased to note that as an integral part of the Government's plans and programmes for development PNG has given priority to addressing many of these sustainable development issues on our agenda through structural reforms and sound macroeconomic policies.

The massive increase in foreign direct investment in the country especially in the development of the minerals and the energy sectors such as the multibillion LNG project that commenced production and export in 2014 has resulted in PNG achieving and continues to experience strong growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the last 14 years. The export of agriculture commodities processed or as raw materials has also contributed to the economic growth in the country during this period.

PNG is not immune to the world pricing landscape and have commenced the review process to determine where we are and what we need to change to maintain the growth, stability and prosperity PNG has enjoyed over the years.

The challenge **Chairperson** for PNG Government is to translate these revenues into pragmatic results and carry out implementation at the National goals to achieve more inclusive growth that will improve the lives of the rural people making up the majority of the population. Some of the challenges PNG is giving priorities are:

Transport & Infrastructure Developments

Like many developing countries in the region, PNG is confronted with many challenges to develop appropriate and adequate transportation infrastructure that is absolutely vital to connecting the people and easing the mobility of goods and services. The geographical constraints and social issues resulting from complex land tenure system, the national transportation connectivity still remains a major challenge for the country.

To address this, PNG Government has not only developed appropriate sectoral plans and programmes but has also realigned the Medium Term Development Plan for implementation. Today, the Government is focusing on the development of 16 priority national highways in the country and substantial budget resources have been appropriated over the past years.

Facilitation and Promoting Trade and Investment

Chairperson, aware of the enormous challenges in the area of trade and investment in relation to financial need, food shortages, fuel crisis and value chain disruptions as a result of natural disasters and the climate change, considering the costs and benefits of trade liberalisation, and to maximize the economic benefits from the development of the natural resources, PNG Government has initiated appropriate and outwards oriented trade and investment facilitation arrangements such as entering into Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) and Double Taxation Treaties with other countries. It has also introduced online Business Registration to attract investment from other countries to do business in the country.

At the regional level, through regional economic cooperation arrangements under APEC, ASEAN, Pacific Island Forum and others, Papua New Guinea is committed to support trade facilitation and business development programs that will stimulate and enhance trade and economic cooperation among the countries in the region.

Climate Change Affecting Agriculture Development

Chairperson, in response to global resolutions PNG has in place a Climate Compatible Development Plan to mitigate the effects of climate change, and the National Protected Area Systems Policy to protect the unique biodiversity available in the country.

In line with this, PNGs focus is on developing the blue economy in a sustainable manner. The Blue economy in a Green World is a global issue that the Pacific Small Island Developing Countries including Papua New Guinea will need collective and collaborative efforts to regain environmental and economic development balances and to pursue a sustainable development path.

As such, PNG Government has put in place Responsible Sustainable Development Framework and continues to transform the agriculture sector by reviewing policies and amending existing legislations.

Relevance of Information and Communication Technology

Chairperson, Information and Communication Technology today plays a significant role in enhancing social cohesion, integrating global trade and accelerating economic growth. In 2010, PNG Government introduced the national policy on ICT to meet the challenges. The successful implementation of the policy has dramatically increased the expansion of infrastructure roll - out service reaching many parts of the country reducing the digital divide and connectivity gaps that still exist in the country.

PNG recognise that competition alone cannot achieve the objectives to increase access to telecommunications and ICT services in rural areas.

In this regard and with the support of our donor partners, the Government has introduced a policy to promote a Universal Access Scheme through public-private partnership programmes aimed at extending the infrastructure network and services to remote rural areas of the country.

Chairperson, like other countries in the region, Papua New Guinea is not prone to natural disasters such as drought, flooding, sea-level rise, cyclones, volcanic eruptions, and landslides. We have in place a Disaster Management System in partnerships with development partners and the private sector to improve early warning systems. In fact, the Government through the Office of Climate Change and Development in partnership with the Private Sector (Digicel PNG limited) is utilizing its mobile phone network in sending out early warnings through text messaging.

Importance of Statistical Data & Information

Chairperson, the availability of reliable statistical data and bridging the data gaps remains a major challenge in Papua New Guinea. We require reliable data to do planning for environmentally sustainable economic developments for social services such as health, education and infrastructure to reduce poverty levels.

With proper infrastructure in place and availability of reliable data, trade and investment can be facilitated, promoted and further enhance to propel economic growth and to track reliable results of MDGs in the country. In this regard, PNG Government is rolling-out National Identity Project (NIP) to address the concerns and upon completion data will be used to roll out a pension program for disability and elderly peoples.

Chairperson PNG has made considerable progress in the implementation of UNCRPD and we have developed the National Disability Policy 2015 -2025, which provides an overall guidance towards the implementation of the UNCRPD. In this connection, PNG welcome the regions efforts to establish the ESCAP Disability Centre.

As a step forward, the Government this year endorsed the "Sign Language" to be the 4th official language of PNG and also provide annual budgetary support to the Women activities in all sectoral programmes.

Regional Cooperation - Pacific SIDS

Chairperson, in full support of the statements by all our Pacific leaders made during this session, PNG is committed to Pacific SIDS Aspiration and we welcome the support of the member States and ESCAP on the implementation of the Samoa Pathway for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

Also connected, we welcome the recent adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 as a global commitment to protect development gains from the adverse of natural disasters.

Given their high vulnerability the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific would need specific support to fully implement Sendai framework. In this connection like others we would like to request ESCAP to facilitate regional cooperation and advisory services to further enhance the disaster risk reduction capacities of Pacific countries including the application of space technology and geographical information systems.

Strengthening the Work of ESCAP

Chairperson, many of us gathered here recognize the need to further strengthen the work of the United Nations, in particular ESCAP to take account of the changing circumstances under which it operates, and the new and emerging challenges that it must address. In this regard, PNG is committed to support the work the Governing Councils hence will be providing its contributions to ESCAP.

All in all, we commend the Executive-Secretary for the ongoing administrative and institutional reforms undertaken to improve the efficiency of ESCAP to better serve the member States.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **Chairperson and Excellencies**, as we begin work towards implementing the Post-2015 Development Agenda, I am confident that member countries remain together in the hope for a balanced and more sustainable world that inter-linked the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Thank you.