



PAPUA NEW GUINEA COUNTRY STATEMENT

For presentation by

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at the

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

APIA, SAMOA, FROM 1 – 4 SEPTEMBER 2014

Mr. President,
Heads of Governments and Ministers,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Representatives of all stakeholder partners,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to commend the Government and people of Samoa for hosting The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

The logistics of this conference are immense, and our delegation appreciates the arrangements and hospitality that have been extended to us.

I would further like to congratulate the Government of Samoa, and the United Nations Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Ban-ki Moon, and staff of the UN Secretariat on advancing the substantive issues of this conference.

Your efforts from the national to regional levels have culminated in the "SAMOA Pathway" for which we are here to give our political endorsement.

The issues before us at this conference are serious and require attention from the broader global community. Some of these issues have been development priorities for decades, while others are new and alarming.

Mr. President,

Of all the sustainable development priorities, climate change, is one of the most pressuring issues for island states. This is certainly the case for people in several parts of Papua New Guinea where rising sea levels have already had a devastating affect.

The men, women and children of the Catarat Islands, near Bourgainville, became climate refugees with the first organized relocation of an entire population due to rising sea levels. Sadly, they will not be the last. There are so many island communities around the world facing the same prospect of climate-induced migration.

Action is required on many fronts to deal with this threat to our people.

The reduction of carbon emissions around the world is needed now and it must be enforced. But reducing emissions will not help countries already seriously threatened by existing climate change who need help right now.

Together, Pacific Island states call on the global community to act now to help communities facing catastrophe.

These threatened island communities did not cause climate change – but they need help from those countries that did.

The international community must step-up and support island communities to overcome the affects of a changing climate so that these people can have a future.

Mr. President,

While climate change is one of the most pressing issues for small island states and demands global attention, we must also maintain our focus on traditional development concerns.

As the world nears the Millennium Development Goals deadline in 2015, we need to take stock of progress and consider what needs to be done as we transition to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Working towards the MDGs has assisted Papua New Guinea to focus our efforts towards making real differences in the lives of our people.

A recent report on progress to achieve the MDGs by the United Nations Country Representative to Papua New Guinea, Roy Trivedy, was positive.

The report found that Papua New Guinea has made important strides towards achieving the MDGs especially since 2012.

This includes the bold decision to run budget deficits until 2017, which the UN report notes has enabled the nation to invest in essential areas.

In education, the government has made a substantial investment under our policy of providing free primary schooling to all Papua New Guinean children. The outcome of our investment in education is that there are now more Papua New Guinean children in schools than ever before.

The Government has further committed to provide free universal healthcare for all citizens. This is seeing more health posts being built and refurbished, and additional health professions being employed. These days more births are attended by trained healthcare workers and more children are being immunised.

We have been proactive in standing against discrimination, and implemented measures to combat violence against women and girls. This includes national awareness and information campaigns intended to change attitudes, while at the same time, we have increased resources for law and order enforcement and corrective services. The government has been proactive in empowering women's participation in business and commerce, including the launch of a new Bank for Women and the establishment of the Office for Women's Development.

While we will not fully attain our MDGs by 2015, the UN report found that with our investment in services and infrastructure around the country, Papua New Guinea is in a better positioned to achieve improved development outcomes beyond 2015.

Papua New Guinea is making an important contribution to shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda, as co-facilitator for the upcoming Global Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), next year in New York. We will use our experience in striving to attain the MDGs by 2015 to ensure that the Post-2015 goals are realistic and attainable, and are truly relevant to developing nations.

It is Papua New Guinea's view, that these Sustainable Development Goals need to focus on attainable outcomes. These include aiming to achieve 'zero extreme poverty,' seeking to end preventable child deaths, improved access to primary and secondary schooling, and ending all forms of violence and discrimination against women.

Mr. President,

In the current global environment there is still a lot of work to be done to enhance progress towards the MDGs, particularly for our smaller island states. This is a shared responsibility among our global community for nations both large and small.

Papua New Guinea, with an economy that is going from strength-to-strength, including economic growth of up to 21 per cent in 2015, is providing ongoing support to smaller island states in the Pacific.

We want to share the benefits of our economic prosperity. In this context, our Government is undertaking a Pacific Development Assistance Program aimed at assisting Pacific SIDS in critical areas

of development. This includes areas such as education, health, capacity building, climate change and reconstruction following natural disasters.

Papua New Guinea will further provide free office space to Pacific SIDS who wish to establish diplomatic missions in our country.

The approach taken by Papua New Guinea, both in the development of our own nation and in partnerships with our Pacific Community is a Paradigm Shift in our approach to development.

We are moving away from the old mentality of allowing unrestricted growth, to one of managed economic growth. In Papua New Guinea we have great wealth in our minerals, in our fisheries, and in our forests and in our agricultural land. But we owe it to future generations to manage these resources so that they last for generations, and that the wealth is shared equally among stakeholders.

Papua New Guinea is taking a new approach and leading the way with a development revolution, that will put people before cold economic calculations.

We look to share this new paradigm with our development partners.

Mr. President,

Before us, we have the Outcome Document “SAMOA Pathway” that reaffirms our commitments to the development aspirations of SIDS, and highlights priority development challenges.

The challenges before all island states in the global economy are great, but by working together, and through ongoing consultation and support, the objectives of this pathway will be achieved.

I urge all Delegations to make the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States a success by embracing difficult decisions that will move the SIDS agenda forward.

To ensure fairness, accountability and transparency, there should be ongoing reviews and assessments of the action, or even the inaction of some development partners. This includes developed countries, UN agencies, international financial institutions and other international organizations with a responsibility for the delivery of commitments under the SAMOA Pathway.

In this regard, I wish to call on the UN Secretary General to establish a framework to review, monitor and assess the performance of development partners in the delivery of their promises to support the sustainable development of SIDS.

With that I wish this importance Conference great success.

Thank You.