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PAPUA NEW GUINEA STATEMENT
TO THE
59TH SESSION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BY

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Minister For Foreign Affairs And Immigration

28 September, 2004
New York

Mr. President
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

My delegation warmly welcomes you to the Presidency of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly and pledges our support. We acknowledge that you are also from our Forum of Small States group and therefore share our common problems and challenges.

Please convey my delegation's commendation to your predecessor, Honorable Julian Hunte, Minister for External Relations, International Trade and Civil Aviation of St Lucia for his strong leadership of the 58th session of United Nations General Assembly.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan and his Staff for the good work they continue to do for our global community.

Mr. President,

We currently live in a changing World, one which even past generations would be amazed at.

One of the greatest achievements of the United Nations system is the process of decolonization which has seen more than 70 countries, including my own country, take their rightful place in this august Assembly. However, the process will not be complete until the remaining sixteen (16) non self-governing territories including New Caledonia and Tokelau have exercised their inalienable right to self-determination.

The world continues to witness great leaps in technology but at the same time we also have seen some of the global dilemmas such as poverty and hunger, the ravages of HIV/AIDS, wars, conflicts and terrorism, amongst others.

Each of our countries face numerous challenges in this changing World and many of these are common to all regardless of our size, location, and status as developed or developing countries.

Under these circumstances and more than ever before, we need to work together as a community of nations to help each other address these challenges.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the domain of international peace and security. A terrorist act committed in one state today also affects others elsewhere in the global community.

We condemn the recent tragedy of Beslan; the bombings of the Australian embassy in Jakarta, and the terrorist acts in the Middle East, Iraq, and in other parts of the world. We also condemn the recent tragedy in Darfur, Sudan and commend Canada and Japan for their generous assistance.

In these circumstances, the most affected are innocent civilians, especially women and children. We therefore support the Secretary-General's effort to rally the international community to subscribe to the treaties on the Protection of Civilians.

In many cases, they also take the lives of United Nations and other humanitarian workers who are doing unselfish and dedicated work under difficult circumstances to serve our common humanity. In this regard, we urge all member states to support the Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel.

The situation in the Middle East remains intractable and as one requiring constant and deliberate attention by the United Nations, especially by the Security Council.

Our own experience in the Bougainville conflict has taught us that there can be peace if all parties really desire it and are willing to resolve their differences.

We therefore urge all parties to this conflict including Israel and Palestine as well as the major players, especially the Quartet to formulate a "Peace Plan" that is beneficial to all.

Mr. President,

Papua New Guinea concurs with the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan's recent statement to this august Assembly that highlighted the importance of the rule of law to prevail if we are to achieve peace and security in our world.

Like many other member states, Papua New Guinea has acceded to the various counter terrorism treaties pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution '1373.

We believe that the reporting obligations under these treaty provisions should be streamlined to include regional reports that would solve many capacity issues for small nations with limited resources. As many of our regional legal, military and law enforcement agencies meet regularly, these meetings could provide the opportunity to compile regional reports on our fight against international terrorism.

We believe that there is every desire to fulfill treaty obligations but if some of the more onerous tasks can be lightened for the small countries through regional reports, bodies like the Counter Terrorism Committee, the Security Council, General Assembly and other related Agencies could be better served.

The small states are doing their best to fulfill their obligations. Like many other members states, we take our responsibilities and obligations seriously to fight the scourge of international terrorism and related issues including the trafficking of people.

Mr. President,

The Pacific region advocates that the UN continues to closely and seriously study the notion of "collective security along with collective action". These continue to underpin many of our actions to bring stability to our region.

We are custodians of the biggest ocean and its resources. Papua New Guinea in particular is endowed with 5-7 percent of the world's bio-diversity.

We therefore share a common responsibility to ensure the protection and conservation of these resources of vital importance to humanity.

We encourage sustainable logging practices in order to avoid the denuding of our vast rainforests resources. We condemn destructive fishing methods and urge all member states to adhere to sustainable management and conservation regimes in order to meet future demands.

Our Leaders in the Pacific Islands Forum recently adopted a new vision for the Pacific region in the form of the "Pacific Plan" which embraces the four (4) key areas of Economic Growth, Sustainable Development, Security and Good Governance.

The Pacific Islands Forum will be engaging with the European Union and other development partners to advance the interests of the region especially those of economic growth and sustainable development.

I therefore share the view enunciated by other speakers that "there can be no security without development and equally, there can be no development without peace and security." As important links, both need to be addressed simultaneously if we want peace and sustainable development to prevail.

We are pleased to see regional solidarity and assistance in conflict situations bear good results in Bougainville and our neighbor, the Solomon Islands. We also note that other regional actions taken by our Leaders such as the establishment of the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre in Fiji enhances law enforcement and intelligence sharing in the region.

On good governance, our Leaders encouraged Pacific member governments to sign and ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption in accordance with the spirit of the Biketawa Declaration.

Mr. President.

Papua New Guinea over the last several years has been the beneficiary of regional and international assistance in the re-building and return to normalcy on the Island of Bougainville after a decade long conflict.

We thank the members of the UN Security Council, both past and present, for their goodwill, patience and understanding in what has been an extremely painful experience for us. We have appreciated the support and counsel of each member of the Council throughout this important process.

The conflict greatly affected our nation and we have learnt many lessons. We are re-establishing the rule of law in a profound and thorough constitutional process which will result in a democratically elected autonomous government for the people of Bougainville.

While we are close to achieving this, we are equally mindful that each step taken now to finalize and consolidate the Bougainville constitution is critically important for the autonomous government of Bougainville to be sustained.

We continue to receive valuable support and assistance for the peace process from the Secretary-General of the United Nation as well as our Pacific neighbors: Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands.

Rebuilding and restoration of services in Bougainville have been greatly assisted by our development partners, including the UNDP, UNICEF and other UN Agencies, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan amongst others.

We thank you all and look forward to *your continued support and cooperation*.

We continue to be concerned about the security and vulnerability of many of our small island states. As noted and endorsed at the recent Pacific Islands Leaders' Summit in Samoa, the forthcoming International Meeting on the 10 Year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action in Mauritius will provide an opportunity to discuss with our development partners the many issues which confront small island states including those in our sub-region..

Development of women and children through sports must have a special place in our quest to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of our people.

We are also working hard to implement the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of the WSSD Summit.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to have devastating consequences in many developing countries. Our leaders in the Pacific Region have endorsed a Regional Strategy for HIV /AIDS noting the need to address this issue urgently.

Small arms and light weapons will always threaten the stability of many small states. Therefore we look forward to the continuing work for a UN supported Action Plan for dealing with small arms.

Mr. President

Climate change is a threat to all humankind and therefore deserves the attention of the international community to work together to address it. We are appreciative of the position of the United Kingdom as underlined by Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, in a recent statement highlighting the threat of sea level rise and related issues.

I am aware that there are scientific studies being carried out but the real issue is that the effects of climate change are being felt daily by many Island States.

We in Papua New Guinea are no less immune to climate change and sea level rise as many other small island states. The Island communities in Papua New Guinea like our neighboring countries in the Pacific, are being affected by sea level rise.

We empathize with our colleagues from many Island States who continually suffer from the effects of this problem. Our plight is further compounded by natural disasters, including the ravages of hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and tsunamis.

Our sympathies go to the peoples and governments of the Caribbean region especially Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, The Bahamas, The Dominican Republic amongst others, as well as those in cities and towns in the southern States of the United States of America which have been devastated by the recent hurricanes.

As a global community we must pool our resources and consider ways of mitigating the adverse effects of climate change in order to help those states which are vulnerable.

We applaud the intention of the Russian Federation to consider becoming a party to the Kyoto Protocol and urge others to recognize their responsibilities to the global community by doing the same.

Mr. President,

We look forward to the final Report of the High Level Panel appointed by the Secretary-General on Peace and Security which will form the basis for high level discussion on UN reforms including the expansion and composition of United Nations Security Council.

We believe the membership of the Security Council should be expanded in both Permanent and non-Permanent categories to take into account the lack of sufficient representation from developing countries in the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin American regions.

We also believe that Japan and Germany should be seriously considered for permanent membership with equal privileges and obligations. Considerations may be given to other countries with appropriate qualifications and integrity.

We also commend the indications from the Panel that the definition of "hard and soft" threats is no longer relevant. This allows a proper and objective discussion to be held given that the resonance of perceived threats can be viewed differently depending on where the threat is.

Having said that, Papua New Guinea believes the reform of the United Nations system should be comprehensive to enable the General Assembly to regain its pre-eminent role as the principal Organ of the United Nations. This will allow all member states, large and small, to engage more meaningfully in addressing all challenges in an effective way to fulfill its role in the pursuit of a peaceful, just and prosperous world.

This was the purpose for which the United Nations was established.

Mr. President,

Next year, as we move towards the review process of the Millennium Development Goals and the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, we should all look at the dire needs of the majority of humanity.

My delegation believes that the Millennium Development Goals provide the blueprint to achieve these objectives.

Finally, let me conclude by reaffirming my government's support for the "One China Policy" which has provided the sound basis for our bilateral relations with the Peoples Republic of China.

I thank you.