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PAPUA NEW GUINEA STATEMENT

TO THE

**60th SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

BY

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Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration

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Mr. President,

I bring greetings and well wishes to you from the Government and People of Papua New Guinea on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations.

I pledge my Delegation's support in the discharge of your noble responsibilities. I would like to again commend His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, the Foreign Minister of Gabon for his stewardship of the work of the 59th Session of the General Assembly.

I also pay tribute to the Secretary General of the UN and his staff for the continued efforts in servicing the needs of member countries.

Mr. President,

At the outset, we would like to convey our heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the Government of the United States of America, and its people, for the loss of lives and destruction to properties on the Gulf Coast. We wish them well for a speedy recovery and in their reconstruction efforts.

Mr. President

The UN has come a long way since its inception in 1945. The focus on international peace and security remains relevant, although since then, it has taken different dimensions, including the issue of global terrorism.

The reform process of the UN, particularly the General Assembly, the Secretariat, and the Security Council must be reflective of the changing landscape of today's international realities. Membership of the Security Council must be expanded to include equitable representation from developing countries.

Work on the reform agenda, as contained in the Outcome Document of the High-level Summit, must commence forthwith without any further delay. We strongly support the early resolution of all the outstanding issues, including human rights and disarmament.

Mr. President,

Convening the recently concluded High-level Summit enabled us to see how much progress we have made in the implementation of the MDGs in our respective countries. Despite the Government's efforts to achieve the MDGs, Papua New Guinea's score-card indicates much more needs to be done.

We recognize that poverty, HIV/AIDS, universal primary education, child and maternal mortality, unemployment, and gender equality are major concerns for Papua New Guinea.

Important legislative, policy and administrative instruments had been put in place. The MDG goals and targets have been incorporated into our Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS), which ties the MDGs into our development programs through the national budgetary process.

I am happy to report that in July this year, the Papua New Guinea National Parliament endorsed a comprehensive National MDG Report, compiled with the kind assistance of UNDP. This now paves the way for concrete efforts at all levels of government and all relevant stakeholders to implement its recommendations.

Mr. President,

We are extremely concerned about the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus in our country. Papua New Guinea has the highest incidence of reported cases in the Pacific Region.

Important national legislation and policies have been put in place to address all related aspects of this scourge. This includes the transfer of the National Aids Council directly under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Department.

Papua New Guinea therefore fully supports the efforts of the UN and the international community to address this scourge. We note in particular the leadership of the Secretary General in mobilizing international resources for the Global Fund to fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB and other diseases.

Our development partners, including Australia, New Zealand, UNDP, UNAIDS, and other UN agencies continue to support Papua New Guinea's efforts to address this critical issue. While we appreciate such valuable assistance, it must be coordinated effectively within the MTDS policy framework to achieve maximum impact.

International finance, especially foreign direct investment and overseas development assistance are vital instruments that can help developing countries, such as mine, to achieve the MDGs and other international commitments and obligations.

Our Government is therefore committed to attracting foreign direct investments in the country.

Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) must be effective and that must be measured against its use in achieving national development goals and priorities as set out in the MTDS.

Whilst Papua New Guinea has a good debt servicing record, the debt repayments places considerable strain on our ability to provide much needed services to our people. It affects the country's ability to implement the MDGs, the outcomes of the WSSD Summit, and other important development commitments.

Papua New Guinea commends the EU's assistance to Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) with their debt servicing difficulties. Consideration must also be given to other non-HIPC countries, such as mine, to benefit from such good will and assistance.

In this context, we support the proposal by Her Excellency, President Arroyo of the Philippines to extend debt servicing assistance to highly indebted non-HIPC developing countries, including PNG, under a debt for equity swap arrangement.

Trade is the engine of economic growth and development. It is a critical prerequisite for sustained efforts to achieve socio-economic development, including the MDGs.

PNG is heartened to hear some leaders of major developed and developing countries, at the High-level Summit, indicating firm commitments to addressing the current distortions on international trade regarding the elimination of agricultural subsidies and other trade barriers. These are positive signals towards the creation of an open, equitable, and rule-based international trading system.

The ongoing Doha Round of negotiations as well as the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations between the EU and the ACP countries must place greater emphasis on development at its deliberations. Peculiar development needs of small island developing states, owing to their physical and structural disadvantages, must also be given priority in the negotiating process.

Mr President,

As a young democracy, PNG is committed to fighting corruption and upholding the principles of good governance and rule of law.

Corruption, in particular, is the main impediment to progress and development in developing countries, such as PNG. The victims of corruption are the poor who are deprived of basic goods and services.

It is a great challenge for us and we are determined to combat it. As a step forward, Papua New Guinea has ratified the UN Convention Against Corruption. Other policies, administrative and legislative measures have been put in place, along with existing with existing Constitutional provisions on Leadership Code governing the conduct of leaders.

Mr President,

Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a major threat to the peace and security of our country. Small arm and light weapons almost disintegrated our country. The Bougainville crisis was fueled by large quantities of small arms and light weapons in Bougainville.

Papua New Guinea will seek the cooperation and support of the neighboring countries to put an end to the trafficking of small arms and light weapons into the region. We therefore support the ongoing work at the UN to address this critical issue.

Mr President,

Resolving the Bougainville crisis is a success story for the UN in the history of peace keeping efforts in the world. We thank the UN, especially the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General, and our friends in the Pacific Region, including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Tonga.

Peace and normalcy is now being consolidated with the election of the first Autonomous Government by the people of Bougainville. This must be strengthened through social and economic development all through-out the Island. Basic goods and services as well as infrastructure developments are being restored on the Island, and we will require the continued support of the UN and its agencies and the international community on these efforts.

We also look forward to the proposed the Peace-building Commission to assist in such endeavors.

Mr President,

Papua New Guinea, like many other SIDS, suffers from natural disasters, such as volcanic eruptions, floods, cyclones, landslides, droughts and even tsunamis.

The ongoing and never-ending cycle of natural disasters continue to place great difficulties for PNG to achieve social and economic progress, including achievement of the MDGs and other development objectives.

Papua New Guinea therefore supports the establishment of early warning systems for all natural disasters and hazards.

Mr President,

Papua New Guinea's coexistence with the environment was enshrined in the Preamble of National Constitution at the country's independence in 1975.

This constitutional imperative guided our commitments to implement the sustainable development goals and objectives that emanated from the Rio Earth Summit, including the WSSD Summit, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS and more recently the Mauritius Strategy for further Implementation of the BPoA.

These multilateral commitments are vital to ensure proper management of our country's rich natural resources and to addressing critical issues, such as poverty eradication, climate change, sea level rise, and natural disaster management.

Legal and policy framework have been put in place to enable us to pursue our development in a sustainable manner. Our government is committed to undertaking our economic development activities, such as mining, forestry, agriculture in a sustainable manner.

Mr President,

We call upon the UN and the international community to recognize the weakest, smallest, and most vulnerable peoples of the Small Island Developing States.

The recently adopted Mauritius Strategy identifies certain commitments that must be fulfilled to address the sustainable development and other development aspirations of SIDS. The international community, including this UN Session must translate

those commitments to actions, such as water and sanitation projects, renewable energy projects, and address training and capacity development needs.

In this regard, we support the call for the mobilization of financial resources on a more predictable basis to implement the Strategy as articulated in the Outcome Document of the High Level Summit.

Mr President,

As members of the UN, we emphasize that ALL nations have a critical responsibility to address climate change, including sea level rise. If we are to find lasting climatic stability, we must have global commitment to the objectives of the UN Convention on Climate Change.

The relationship between environmental sustainability and poverty is becoming increasingly clear. As such, PNG is of the view that when addressing tropical forestry, the world must better align market incentives with sustainable outcomes.

In the forested rural areas of my Nation, the only real options for economic growth often require the destruction of natural forests – either when clearing for agricultural commodities (like coffee) or through the sale of hard-wood timbers.

Furthermore, the International panel of climate change (IPCCO) found that during the 1990s, an estimated 20%-25% of annual global carbon emissions were generated through land use change, primarily from the degradation of forests resources. This is the second largest source of global carbon emissions behind only the combustion of fossil fuels. This has to change if we are to all take responsibility to help with issues related to climate change.

PNG is part of a new *Coalition for Rainforest Nations*, including Costa Rica and other countries and is requesting a global discussion on access to the global carbon markets for eco-system services as means to alleviate this problem. Simply put, the present incentives offered by international markets for agriculture, forestry and emissions reductions lead directly to deforestation, environmental degradation and further poverty.

We invite more likeminded nations to join our efforts to create new markets and reform outmoded market and regulatory mechanisms. This is necessary if we are to contribute more effectively toward environmental sustainability, economic development, climate stability and poverty reduction.

Mr President,

The oceans and fisheries issues are critical to PNG and other Pacific Island countries. It sustains the livelihood and wellbeing of our people and contributes significantly to our small economies.

Sustainable Development is a priority for Pacific Island Countries, including Papua New Guinea. We are concerned about the ongoing illegal fishing activities in the Region. We require the support and assistance of development partners with technical capacities to strengthen our surveillance capabilities and regulatory regimes to address these issues of vital importance.

PNG fully supports the entry into force of the Western and Central Pacific Tuna Convention. PNG welcomes any assistance by the UN agencies, including FAO and other bilateral and multilateral partners can give to enable effective functioning of the Convention Secretariat.

Mr President

The security of Pacific Island countries depends on the collective security efforts of the Region, and the wider Asia Pacific Region

Our regional security cooperation can be attested to in the successful mission by the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

Mr President

PNG also condemns international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Our support in the fight against this evil is unwavering and resolute.

We have ratified most of the counter-terrorism treaties, pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1373. However, our efforts are being hampered by technical and resource constraints. Hence, the need for the support and assistance of the international community to ensure effective implementation of these commitments..

Mr President

Over the years PNG has called for bold decision and leadership on the part of both Israel and Palestine to exercise restraint and resolve their disputes through peaceful means. We commend Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas for their bold and strong leadership towards the resolution of this long-outstanding issue.

Mr President

We fully support the positive efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan as democracy and rule of law take root.

This will be enhanced through economic and social development as well as vital infrastructural developments. Their efforts must therefore be supported by the international community.

Mr President

We are half way through the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010). Progress must be made to ensure that all the remaining 16 non self-governing territories, including New Caledonia, must exercise their inalienable right to self determination by 2010.

We are following the positive developments in Tokelau, where the Government of New Zealand is facilitating the people to freely exercise their right to self determination.

Mr President

South-south cooperation is critical among developing countries. It paves the way for enhanced trade relations and cooperation in areas of technology transfer and know-how to address issues affecting them, including the fight against HIV/AIDS, and eradication of poverty.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the establishment of the South Fund for Development and the Government of Qatar's initial pledge to contribute US\$20 million towards the Fund. We commend the pledges by India and China to contribute US\$2 million each to the Fund.

This is a significant step forward for developing countries to assist needy members, including vulnerable economies of small island countries.

We call upon the developed countries to recognize this valuable effort and provide support to the Fund.

Mr. President,

Papua New Guinea will assume the chairmanship of the Pacific Islands Forum commencing in October.

As chair, PNG will provide leadership in our collective efforts in addressing critical issues facing member countries, including the adoption of the Pacific Plan which is underpinned by the four pillars, namely: Regional security, economic growth, sustainable development and good governance in the region.

It must become a vehicle to translate the outcomes of the Mauritius Strategy, WSSD Summit, and the outcomes of High-level Summit into actions on the ground.

We therefore welcome the support of our development partners in the implementation of the Plan, after its adoption at the upcoming Forum Meeting in Port Moresby in October this year.

Thank you.