



Papua New Guinea Statement by Mr. Koney Samuel, Secretary for Department of National Planning and Monitoring and Head of Delegation to the 2022 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and High-Level Segment of the Ministerial Roundtable: Accelerating achievement of the SDGs by 2030: addressing ongoing crises and overcoming challenges, 14 July 2020, New York

"Check against delivery"

Mr. President,

Excellencies; and

Distinguished delegates,

Thank you for giving Papua New Guinea the floor.

I am pleased to be here today to represent the Government of Papua New Guinea and to share our experiences and views on the HLPF theme "Accelerating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030: Addressing ongoing crises and overcoming challenges."

Mr. President,

COVID-19 pandemic has affected virtually all countries across the globe and Papua New Guinea is no exception. It has been very challenging for all countries including Papua New Guinea to remain resilient in this darkest moment in our history. We have all experienced deeper setback in our progress in attaining the 2030 Agenda.

Many developing countries, including my own, have resorted to debt financing to keep their economy afloat. My country has been hard-hit by the pandemic and our Government with the support of our bilateral and multilateral development partners have taken all necessary actions to address the pandemic. Listening to all the speakers in the last few days give us greater resolve to move forward in our renewed commitment to Agenda 2030.

Papua New Guinea appreciates the global efforts by all Governments including the regional organisations in advancing Agenda 2030, as evidenced by all your presence today. We see this High Level Political Forum as a critical platform to share ideas and experiences from wide range of countries and partners spread across the globe in addressing the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, including climate change and other emerging challenges such as the rising fuel costs and disruption of supply chain for goods and services brought about by the War on Ukraine.

Papua New Guinea remains no exception from the negative impact of COVID-19. The pandemic has seriously affected our economic and social outcomes. Financing the COVID-19 pandemic adequately has been our biggest challenge, posing significant stress on our national budget and our debt service obligations. Our health systems have been stressed to its limit, our school systems were closed and most of our SMEs winded up with job losses across all sectors.

Measures to Build Back Better from Coronavirus Pandemic

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are grateful for the ongoing support from our development partners and other humanitarian organizations during this challenging times. Their valued support has greatly cushioned the shocks, lessened our burden and helping build our resilience.

The COVID-19 shock has affected number of critical sectors including service delivery, trade, transportation, tourism and mobility. In the fourth quarter of 2021, the Asian Development Bank revised PNG's GDP growth forecast downwards from 2.5% to 1.3% due to the COVID-19 shocks.

Our Government has undertaken significant budget adjustments by reducing expenditures on number of key sectors and taken on more debt financing to manage the loss of revenue.

Fiscal and Financial Measures to Build Back Better

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Government has introduced several key fiscal measures to assist the country build back better. From 2020 to 2021, the Government allocated K5.6 billion, equivalent to nearly US\$2 billion, as a COVID-19 Stimulus Package. Further K600 million equivalent to US\$171 million was injected to the domestic financial and banking institutions to defer mortgage and business loan repayments. Tax relief measures were also introduced. The country's superannuation industry also injected K500 million equivalent to US\$142.5 million to support its members.

Regional cooperation in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 SDG Agenda

Mr. President and fellow participants,

In conclusion, we would like to assure that Papua New Guinea remains strongly committed in our resolve to work together with all stakeholders at the national level and also with the international community to build back better and leave-no-one-behind by accelerating the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

I thank you.