



Papua New Guinea

**2025 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)
on Sustainable Development
Second Voluntary National Review (VNR)
Main Messages**

23 April 2025, New York

Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG) celebrates 50 years of independence this year – a moment of national reflection and commemoration. This Golden Jubilee Anniversary is not only a milestone of nationhood, but a strong reminder of the country's resilience and commitment to building a just, equitable, and sustainable future.

This is exemplified by Papua New Guinea's Second Voluntary National Review (VNR), which reaffirms its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are fully integrated into the country's Vision 2050 and national planning frameworks, including the Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDP) III 2018–2022 and IV 2023–2027. Papua New Guinea's journey over the past five years has been defined by partnership, perseverance, and progress.

SDG Progress

Papua New Guinea has made gains across several SDGs since 2020. Poverty reduction (SDG 1) has improved through social protection, increased rural infrastructure, and access to finance. In health (SDG 3), the number of underweight children has dropped significantly, while maternal health services have improved. Education (SDG 4) outcomes improved, including increased enrolment, gender parity, and an increase in alternative learning pathways.

Nutrition (SDG 2) has been prioritized through the Child Nutrition and Social Protection programme, while public investment in social sectors rose from 12 per cent in 2020 to 20 per cent in 2024.

Despite progress, challenges remain in gender equality (SDG 5), decent work (SDG 8), climate resilience (SDG 13), and institutional governance (SDG 16). PNG continues to build and sustain peace and strengthen its national response to corruption to increase public trust.

National Ownership and Institutional Arrangements

National ownership of the SDGs has deepened since 2020, with SDGs embedded within the MTDP IV, sectoral policies, and provincial plans. Papua New Guinea's institutional arrangements have matured through SDG Technical Working Groups and Inter-Ministerial Committees.

The establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and enhanced oversight by the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman Commission demonstrate Papua New Guinea's resolve to uphold SDG 16.6 to achieve good governance and promote Open Government Partnership initiatives.

Means of Implementation

MTDP IV is the first of four national delivery mechanisms through which capital investment finances SDG implementation. The Papua New Guinea Government has increased allocations in social and economic sectors.

Public-Private Partnerships, donor alignment through the Development Cooperation Policy, and targeted social and economic sector investments – including the “Connect PNG Program” – have all supported SDG outcomes.

However, expanding the fiscal space and improving access to innovative financing remain critical priorities.

Multi-Sectoral Stakeholder Engagement

Civil society, the private sector, development partners, and academic/research institutions have played a key role in Papua New Guinea’s sustainable development leveraging effective partnerships (SDG 17). The National Government has strengthened engagement through the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council, CSO Partnership Policy, and Open Government Partnership initiatives to deliver people-centered change.

Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

The Leave No One Behind principle guides Papua New Guinea’s development efforts, with a focus on reaching remote and vulnerable groups. National programmes on nutrition, labour mobility, finance access, and early childhood education, target those most in need.

Sub-national integration empowers communities to prioritize local development such as District Development Authorities and Provincial Health Authorities.

Challenges

Obstacles hampering SDG progress include limited data systems, geographic isolation, financing gaps, and service delivery weaknesses. Papua New Guinea is addressing these issues through governance and legislative reforms and by strengthening coordination across all levels of government.

Conclusion

As Papua New Guinea celebrate 50 years of independence, it reaffirms its commitment to sustainable development. This Second VNR is a record of progress and a roadmap for action and investment.

Guided by the SDGs and driven by the resilience of its people, PNG is charting a path toward 2030, and a sustainable and equitable future for all.