



INDEPENDENT STATE OF
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

STATEMENT BY

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AT THE

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President and General Committee of the Conference

On behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, I congratulate you on your election to preside over and steer the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. Our gratitude is also extended to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of this Conference for their visionary leadership and for steering the global community to realizing the potential of urbanization and the need for a paradigm shift as expressed in the New Urban Agenda. We are also extremely grateful to the government and people of Ecuador for hosting us here in Quito.

President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates;

Economic development and urbanization are co-related. Leveraging urbanization to advance social and environmental development is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals across countries. Papua New Guinea, being a developing country, is faced with numerous challenges of urbanization just as other developing countries – despite the extremely low level of urbanization, indicated as only 13 percent in the last census. The most pressing urbanization issues that need urgent attention are as follows;

1. Chronic housing shortage especially for the low and middle income earners
2. Rapid growth of informal settlements both in population and size
3. High rate of migration from the rural areas to the urban areas
4. Chronic land shortage in cities and towns
5. Deficit in urban infrastructure coverage such as roads, water, sewerage systems and electricity
6. Lack of safety and security especially for the vulnerable groups of people such as women, girls and people with disabilities
7. Ineffective urban governance structures and institutional arrangements and mandates
8. Climate change impacts including disasters and water and vector borne diseases
9. Malfunctioning urban economies and lack of job opportunities
10. Poor public transport systems
11. Limited financing mechanisms and their ineffectiveness

President

The Government of Papua New Guinea and other stakeholders have collectively initiated the following to address urbanization issues in the country.

- Formulated a National Urbanization Policy 2010-2030 to provide a policy

framework for urban development

- Established the Office of Urbanisation to advocate and coordinate all actors in urban development especially at the national level
- Affordable Land and Housing Programme to relieve pressure caused by shortage of affordable and adequate housing
- Introduce legislations to create City Commissions for three new regional cities
- Built world class infrastructures and services mostly in the cities of Port Moresby and Lae in preparation for regional and global events
- The Safer Cities programme is currently being supported by UN-Women
- National Settlements/Slum Upgrading Strategy and a NCD Citywide Settlement/Slum Upgrading and Prevention Strategy were formulated with the assistance from UN Habitat are partially implemented by national and local government.
- Climate Change is recognized as a key development challenge and Port Moresby as well as several other coastal cities have analyzed their vulnerability and are developing resilience plans UNDP and UN-Habitat have been supportive.
- We are very proud of our innovative approaches to use sports and health for community building, empowerment, crime prevention through a walk-for-life program – This programme was recognized by the International Olympic Committee’s Healthy City programme.

Port Moresby is near the bottom of the Economist Intelligence Unit’s livability index, through these initiatives we are aiming to make our capital city not only a better place for its citizens but receive the international support that we need to attract more investors.

President

In closing I would like to stress that despite the many attempts to make urbanization a national priority and to develop our towns and cities in a sustainable manner, we have a long way to go. The New Urban Agenda can be an impetus to accelerate urban programmes and to ensure that PNG, the Pacific Islands and the group of Small Island Developing States will more proactively address the challenges and most importantly recognize and seize the opportunities that urbanization can bring.

On behalf of my government I would like to express my gratitude to UN-Habitat and the United Nations at large for the support provided over the years and express my hope that this support can be expanded in order for us to be a leading country in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.