



GAVAMANI TOKTOK

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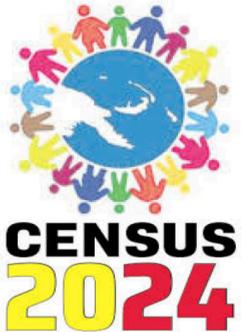
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Landmark Agreements Formalised During 27th CHOGM 2024 in Samoa



Head of the Commonwealth, King Charles III, during a Welcome Reception hosted for Heads of Government of the Commonwealth nations, held on Taumeasina Island Resort, Apia. (photo credit: SAMOA CHOGM 2024).

Five significant agreements, were adopted during the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), held in Samoa from 25 – 26 October 2024, underscoring Papua New Guinea’s commitment to working closely with Commonwealth partners to progressing these initiatives.

Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape, when commending the overall success of CHOGM 2024 leaders’ meeting, emphasised the importance of these agreements for Papua New Guinea and the broader Pacific region, describing them as “timely and critical” for building a resilient future.

The theme of the Meeting, ‘One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth’, brought together leaders from 56 Commonwealth nations, to address

critical global challenges, including climate change, sustainable development, and social equity.

He reiterated his government’s commitment to working closely with Commonwealth partners to advance these initiatives.

The Key Agreements from CHOGM 2024 include:

- Ocean Declaration: The leaders adopted a groundbreaking Ocean Declaration aimed at safeguarding the health and sustainability of the world’s oceans.

This agreement focuses on mitigating the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems, addressing ocean pollution, and promoting sustainable ocean-based economies. Prime Minister Marape welcomed this initiative, stating,

“The Ocean Declaration provides the Pacific region with a strong foundation to protect our oceans,

which are vital for our food security, economic growth, and cultural heritage.”

- Climate Action and Resilience: A central pillar of the discussions was the urgent need for climate action, with leaders reaffirming their commitment to intensifying efforts to combat climate change.

This includes scaling up adaptation and mitigation strategies, particularly for small Pacific Island nations, that face severe climate risks.

Leaders agreed on the need for innovative climate financing solutions to support vulnerable countries.

Prime Minister Marape stressed the importance of this agreement, saying, “Papua New Guinea and our Pacific neighbours are on the front lines of climate change.

The commitments made here are not just about addressing environmental

challenges—they are about safeguarding our future.”

- Strengthening Democratic Institutions: Commonwealth leaders pledged to strengthen democratic governance, uphold human rights, and reinforce the rule of law across member states.

This agreement aims to promote political stability and peace through resilient democratic institutions. “Strong, transparent, and accountable institutions are essential for peace and development.

This is particularly important as we work to ensure that all citizens, including the most vulnerable, are represented and protected,” Prime Minister Marape said.

- Empowering Women and Youth: Recognising the vital role of women and youth in driving progress, Commonwealth leaders agreed on new strategies to promote gender

equality and youth empowerment. This includes initiatives to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities, increase access to education, and develop skills for the 1.5 billion young people across the Commonwealth.

“Our youths are the future of the Commonwealth, and it is crucial that we invest in their potential. Likewise, empowering women to participate fully in economic and social life is essential for our nation’s prosperity,” said Prime Minister Marape.

- Economic Recovery and Sustainability: In the face of ongoing global economic challenges, Commonwealth leaders agreed to support sustainable economic recovery and growth. This includes promoting trade, investment, and innovation, as well as fostering resilient economies that can withstand future disruptions.

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GAVAMANI TOKTOK is a monthly publication dedicated to development information and contributions are welcomed. Government departments, statutory bodies, provincial governments, semi-government and non-government organisations are encouraged to provide articles and photos to be considered for publication. All enquiries should be address to: The Editor, GAVAMANI TOKTOK, Information Division, Department of Information and Communications Technology PO Box 784, Vision City, NCD, Papua New Guinea. Phone: 325 0148 Fax: 325 0412 Email: info@dict.gov.pg

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ECONOMY

Agreements Formalised in 27th CHOGM 2024, Samoa

FROM PAGE ONE

Prime Minister Marape highlighted the importance of this agreement for Papua New Guinea's economic development, saying, "A sustainable and inclusive economic recovery is key to building resilience."

"We must ensure that all citizens benefit from growth, particularly as we recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic."

In addition to these landmark agreements, CHOGM 2024 also included discussions on key Commonwealth programmes such as health, education, and digital transformation.

The meeting featured ministerial and bilateral sessions, as well as four major forums—focused on youth, women, business, and people—where participants shared best practices and showcased progress on key issues.

Prime Minister Marape expressed his gratitude to the Government of Samoa for hosting a successful CHOGM and praised the leadership of His Majesty King Charles III, who attended his first CHOGM as Head of the Commonwealth.

He also acknowledged the work of outgoing Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, saying, "Her leadership has been instrumental in advancing the interests of small states like Papua New Guinea, and we are grateful for her dedication to the Commonwealth."

Prime Minister Marape reaffirmed Papua New Guinea's commitment to the Commonwealth's shared values and goals.

"Through collective action, we can address the challenges of today and build a resilient, prosperous future for all members of our Commonwealth family." ■

Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu Sign Framework Agreement to Enhance Economic Cooperation

A framework agreement was signed in Samoa on Friday 25 October, between the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmās and Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon. James Marape, committing the two countries to pursue, develop, and implement economic and technical cooperation activities for the benefit of their peoples.

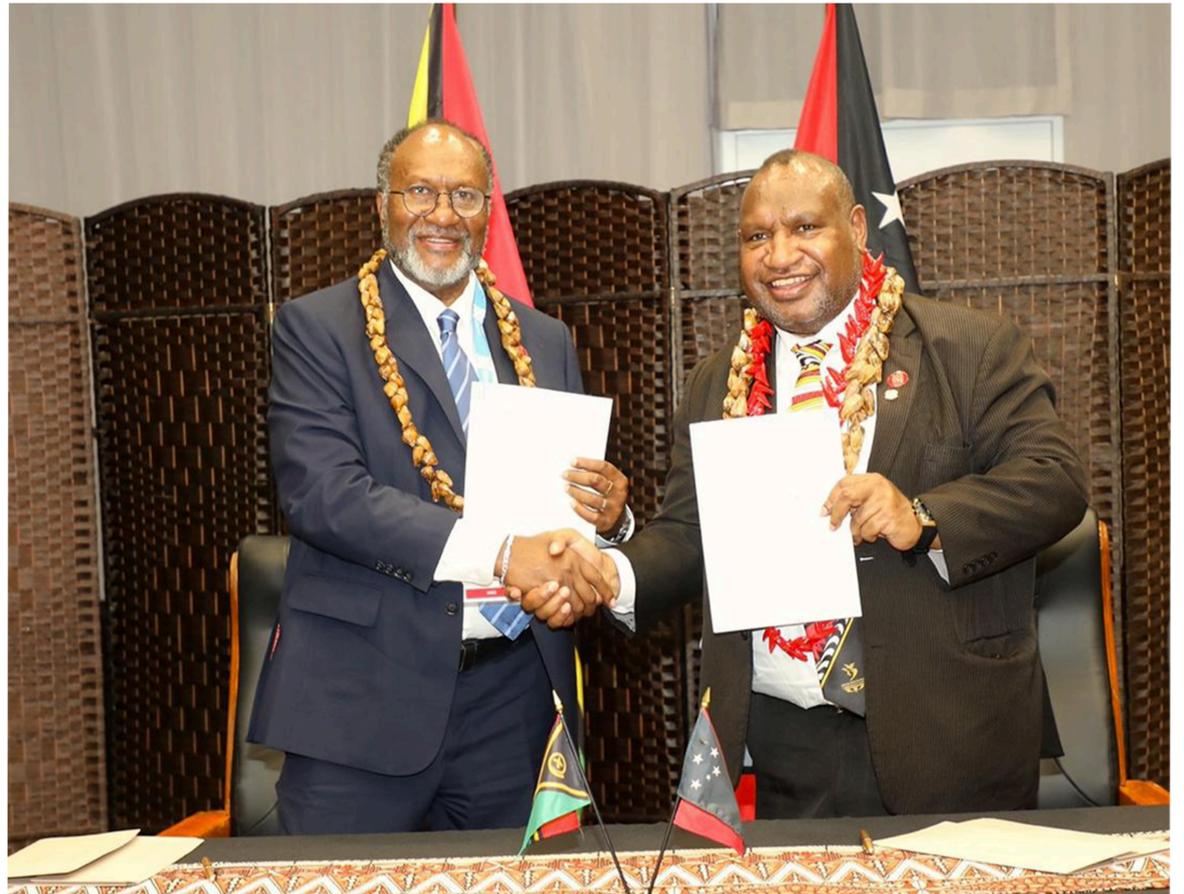
The signing took place at Taumeasina Island Resort in Apia, Samoa, and on the margins of the 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Prime Minister Marape described the agreement as a milestone achievement for both countries, whilst fostering and deepening a long relationship they have, as members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group and also with Papua New Guinea playing a small role in the birth of Vanuatu as a country.

Prime Minister Tabimasmās in response, expressed appreciation to PNG for its assistance in the past, including sending relief aid to Vanuatu after it was hit by a cyclone.

He highlighted that this was a result of discussions he held with leaders from PNG, and thanked government officials from both countries for their efforts in ensuring those discussions resulted in the development of this framework agreement.

The agreement provides an overarching framework under which the two parties are able to initiate, develop, and implement subsidiary cooperation understanding and agreements between various sectors and areas of development.



Vanuatu Prime Minister, Hon. Charlot Tabimasmās (left) and Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, displaying the signed Agreement. (photo credit: PM&NEC).

The scope of cooperation in the agreement includes, but is not limited to: Agriculture; Air Services; Bilateral Trade and Investment; Climate Change and Environment; Defence and Security Cooperation; Double Taxation; Education and Human Resource Development;

Disaster; Health and Medical Services; Infrastructure; Investment Promotion and Protection; Marine and Fisheries Cooperation; Policing; Mining and Energy; Tourism and Culture

The event was witnessed by PNG's Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon.

Justin Tkatchenko, Minister for International Trade and Investment Hon. Richard Maru, Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources Hon. Jelta Wong and Minister for Community Development, Religion and Youth Hon. Jason Peter.

Government Advocates for cleaner energy, calls for action to reduce coal production



Prime Minister James Marape, addressing the Petroleum and Energy Conference at the Hilton Hotel on Thursday 17 October 2024. (photo credit: PM's Media).

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape has emphasised the urgent need for Papua New Guinea to be among global leaders

to shift to cleaner energy without delay, with his government now seeking out investors to participate in cleaner energy solutions.

In his address at the recent 2024 Petroleum and Energy Conference at the Hilton Port Moresby, Prime Minister reaffirmed his government's

focus on cleaner energy, while at the same time, offering incentives and protections to investors to secure their investment in country.

"I want to assure you that whatever regime shifts we embark upon, one thing is certain, and that is, our provisions to protect our investors making a healthy return on their investments will always be protected."

The Prime Minister is adamant in opening up more liquefied natural gas (LNG) as transitional energy and eventually move to cleaner energy sources, while moving away from coal production and other heavy fossil fuels.

"I firmly believe that liquefied natural gas (LNG) is the best energy source for transition between now and life after 2050, if we are to keep Mother Earth.

"LNG is cleaner, more efficient, and aligns with our goal of reducing carbon emissions. It is the lowest hanging fruit in terms of transitional energy with availability of technologies and present use including diversification of LNG to fuel," Mr Marape added.

Whilst LNG remains the better option cleaner transitional energy choice, Prime Minister also offered PNG's vast potential in generating

clean energy from hydro, thermal, and solar sources, to those who want to venture into future renewable energies in line with environmental stewardship as "our present moral responsibility toward our earth's future."

"PNG is getting our house in order to "think globally and act locally".

"PNG is a carbon-negative country".

"Our forest have over 100 million metric tons of carbon absorption capacity, our own carbon foot print remains under 10 million metric tonnes, and despite the high cost of energy, we choose to differ now and into the future.

"We want to remain a clean green country and we want to make and lead this transition to clean energy," said Prime Minister.

He added, "As we work toward a cleaner energy future, research into cost-effective alternatives remain crucial, however, we cannot delay transitioning to LNG and other renewable sources.

"We must act now to reduce our reliance on coal and heavy oil/fuels."

The Petroleum and Energy Conference was held at the Hilton Hotel, Port Moresby, from 17 – 18 October, and attended by both local and international participants. ■

ECONOMY

Western Province Launch USD1.2 Billion Agro Forestry Project



Prime Minister Marape speaking at a press conference after the signing of the GRE Drimgas Project Agreement at Government House, flanked by a representative of the developer and the Governor for Western Province Hon. Toboi Awe Yoto. (Picture Credit: PM's Media)

The USD 1.2 billion (K4.8 billion) Agro Forestry Project in the Western Province is finally being realised, with the official signing of the project at Government House on Tuesday 29 October 2024.

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, in commending the Provincial Member for Western Province, Hon. Taboi Awi Yoto, and the people of the province for their commitment in moving the Foreign Direct Investment to completion, said it was a great moment of collaboration and partnership between the local landowners, the Provincial Government, and the National Government.

"I highly commend Western Governor Hon. Taboi Awi Yoto, the Western Provincial Government, all leaders past and present, and the people of Western Province for staying united in

came to fruition.

"With the help of the Marape-Rosso Government to push it over the crossing line, we have arrived at this moment of its signing. This Project has been a long time coming and today is truly a historical moment," said Prime Minister Marape.

Governor Yoto also expressed his gratitude for finally reaching the signing of the project, adding, "Some people who initiated and had the dream back then, have gone before us and are not here today. It is really a historic and joyous achievement." Mr Yoto further thanked the government for supporting his people of Western Province in ensuring that this Project carries through.

"I also thank the government ministers who have assisted in making this dream come true, since the Project idea was initiated in 1997.

"I thank the Developer who has

chosen our country and province to invest in. We will work together and make sure this Project is implemented successfully as agreed today," Mr Yoto added.

In addition, Prime Minister Marape highlighted the transformative impact of the project, stating, "Today I have the absolute pleasure of seeing a USD1.2 billion (K4.8 billion) Agro Forestry Project for remote parts of the midlands of Western Province.

"Given that the Western Province, having 98,000 square kilometres of land, has often been left behind in the past as far as major development projects are concerned, this Project will see over 300 kilometres of a sealed, all-weather Road that will run from Kiunga to Nomad to the Borders of Gulf Province, and later, we will push this Highway to Kikori (Gulf Province)."

"The logs harvested from this Road Corridor will be processed in-country

by 2028 in a base at the deep water area of Strickland River; it will have electricity sourced and agriculture and reforestation done on the harvested area."

With this 30-year project now officially underway, it is expected to positively impact the North Fly, Middle Fly, and Delta Fly districts, while linking South Fly to Gulf Province via a trunk road.

As with all national impact projects under Prime Minister Marape's Government, the Agro Forestry Project is structured to provide Papua New Guineans with a potential 51 percent interest upon full maturation. Prime Minister Marape explained the equity distribution, noting that "Papua New Guinea will begin with a 20 percent free carry equity stake in this Project, with 10 percent for the landowners of Western Province, 5 percent to the Western Provincial Government, and 5 percent to the National Government.

"We have negotiated for room to increase PNG's stake incrementally as the Project matures, allowing the State to bid to increase its stake at cost by the fifteenth year.

"By the twenty-fifth year, the State will be able to freely take the remaining 31 percent, resulting in a partnership of 51 percent for PNG and 49 percent for the investors."

Prime Minister Marape assured that Western Province stands to gain 70 percent of the project benefits, particularly through the infrastructure provided at no cost to the State.

The resource owners will receive royalties, premiums, and payments in addition to job opportunities, training, and business spin-offs.

According to the Prime Minister, the developers have not sought tax exemptions or holidays, adding the State will also benefit financially from this Project.

The project, based in Yabo in the Middle Fly District, includes a permanent River Port on the East Bank of Yabo and a 300 km asphalt-sealed trunk road connecting Kiunga, Nomad, Wawoi Falls, Balimo, and extending into South Fly and Gulf Province.

An additional 300 km of feeder roads will link communities within the project boundaries.

Prime Minister Marape further encouraged all Provincial Governors to attract investment in agriculture, sustainable forestry, fisheries, tourism, and other non-resource sectors, and urged them to coordinate with their landowners to seek out investors, and bring Foreign Direct Investment to respective provinces.

"The National Government is prepared to support, as we have done for Western Province," he said.

Epoca Group Ltd, the Italian-based project developers, attended the contract signing and expressed their commitment to delivering on this historic venture.

Company Director Gilberto Maggiolo shared their optimism about the project's potential to benefit Western Province and Papua New Guinea while securing a return on their investment.

Prime Minister Marape noted, "PNG beneficiaries will initially have a 20 percent share in the Project. After 25 years, the equity of PNG beneficiaries will increase to 51 percent.

This Project is expected to employ over 3,000 people and has many spin-off benefits, and will be compliant with the country's environmental laws and has a five-year Project review clause to ensure compliance.

In line with the Government's strategic direction, Prime Minister Marape added, "Our Government has in the pipeline oil palm, rice, cattle, and coffee, as well as the expansion of cocoa and copra.

"We also have coastal areas for fisheries expansion. I ask Provincial Governors in peaceful regions to seek investors, and my government will provide the necessary support, as we are doing for Western Province."

Since taking office, the Marape-led Government has emphasised a shift toward sustainable sectors, with a vision for national growth that involves broader economic participation for the people of Papua New Guinea. ■

Choices in energy production can result in climate crisis, says Marape

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, has emphasised that choices made in energy production and consumption, and their far-reaching consequences on future generations, can directly be connected to climate crisis.

In his address to the Petroleum and Energy conference at the Hilton this month, the Prime Minister further called for urgent response to climate crisis being faced today, as global warming and climate change and its effects are now common knowledge in the Pacific, and have become a real threat, due to rising sea levels and changing weather patterns.

"Even though Papua New Guinea and its sister, small island countries of the Pacific have very low carbon footprint, we face the highest risk from the climate crisis."

"I want to bring the spotlight Reflecting on the production of heavy carbon-filled fossil fuels, especially coal, Prime Minister Marape, stressed that it was hard to believe that in this modern age of space travel and superspeed technology, the world is still burning coal.

"Yet, this is true. Coal accounts for the largest share of electricity production worldwide, with gas coming in only at second place.

"In the Asia region where economic growth and high populations have placed very high demands on energy consumption, the reliance on coal is the highest worldwide."

The International Energy Agency has continually been publishing reports on the alarming trends of coal consumption by countries; and as indicated, the 2020 - 2023 figures reveal that China accounts for a massive 50.5 percent of the global coal consumption, followed by India at 11.3 percent. United States comes in next at 8.5 percent; Germany at 3 percent; and South Africa at 2.4 percent, Poland, Australia, and Brazil are also listed.

"The call to prioritize the wellbeing of our planet is more urgent now than ever before.

This call has become even more urgent with more nations switching back to coal in Europe and Asia and elsewhere.

"As we work toward a cleaner energy future, research into cost-effective

alternatives remain crucial, however we cannot delay transitioning to LNG and other renewable sources. We must act now to reduce our reliance on coal and heavy oil/fuels."

Prime Minister Marape emphasised the need for collaboration in achieving this vision, and urged governments, companies, and individuals to join forces and prioritize environmental stewardship.

"Together, we can create a sustainable energy landscape that benefits our nation, the region, the world, and our planet."

Mr Marape further invited investors and experts to explore and develop these resources, leveraging our strategic location closer to Asia markets.

"Our vast forests also provide a unique advantage, offsetting carbon footprints and making PNG an attractive destination for environmentally-conscious investments."

The conference aimed to seek ways to develop, regulate and promote the energy sector, and focus on its impact on planet earth. ■



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape addressing the Petroleum and Energy conference at the Hilton this month

Papua New Guinea Withdraws from COP29

Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. Justin Tkatchenko, has announced Papua New Guinea's non participation in the upcoming 29th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (UNFCCC COP29) this year at the political level, in defense of forest nations and small island states.

Minister Tkatchenko raised Papua New Guinea's concerns at the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Small State (CMMSS), in Apia, Samoa, ahead of the CHOGM Leaders' Week.

The CMMSS is a meeting of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers which is convened prior to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), and provides a platform for Ministers of Foreign Affairs to discuss challenges confronting commonwealth small states, including concrete action to strengthen resilience of these countries building on existing global development frameworks for sustainable development

The Commonwealth comprises 56 countries of which 33 are small states both island and landlocked including nine Pacific Island countries out of the total 42 Small States in the United Nations.

The 2024 CMMSS focused on members' efforts to advance the implementation of the Advocacy Strategy for Small States on: (i) mobilizing concrete actions to build resilience to address economic vulnerability; (ii) enhance climate action; and (iii) support small states to build fiscal resilience and improve debt sustainability while amplifying advocacy on access to concessional

development finance towards building resilient economies for small states in the Commonwealth.

In this context, Minister Tkatchenko, emphasized that this decision reflects the broader frustration felt by nations like Papua New Guinea (PNG), which suffered from the impacts of climate change, with no meaningful support from the global community.

"Papua New Guinea is making this stand for the benefit of all small island nations. We will no longer tolerate empty promises and inaction, while our people suffer the devastating consequences of climate change."

Minister Tkatchenko highlighted the various ways climate change is ravaging PNG, from rising sea levels and natural disasters to landslides, floods, and droughts.

"Yet, despite contributing little to the global climate crisis, countries like PNG are left grappling with its severe impacts."

He said Papua New Guinea is taking this stand for the benefit of all the small island nations, recognising that not much traction has been made to help small states, particularly Pacific Island small states.

"Small island states have had difficulty accessing climate finance over the recent years, despite making high level representation at the UNFCCC COP, yet nothing concrete has come out of such major multilateral meeting."

While it was noted that the outcome of the CMMSS would prepare commonwealth countries to make collective representation at the forthcoming COP29 in Azerbaijan, to progress the commonwealth efforts on building resilient economies and associated environmental commitments, Minister Tkatchenko informed that Papua New Guinea will



Papua New Guinea's Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. Justin Tkatchenko, during the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting on Small State in Apia, Samoa.

no longer listen to empty promises. Minister Tkatchenko has expressed concern over the international community's failure of its financial and moral commitments, leaving smaller nations like PNG to do things on their own in the face of increasingly frequent and severe climate events.

"The pledges made by major polluters amount to nothing more than empty talk. They impose impossible barriers for us to access the crucial funds we need to protect our people. Despite continuous attempts, we have not received any support to date."

Minister Tkatchenko stressed that Papua New Guinea is one of the third (3rd) biggest rain forest nations of the world, serving as the major lungs of the world that cleans the carbon dioxide that major greenhouse gas emitters (countries) produce, thus is an integral global lifeline in saving the

world and the planet from disaster.

In explaining PNG's withdrawal from COP29, the Minister added, "We need action, not more talk. The last three COP meetings have gone around in circles, producing no tangible results for small island states."

"COP29 will be no different, so PNG will not participate at the political level recognising the lack of respect for forest nations in the big carbon sink until some progress becomes evident to address the plight of PNG and other small states."

Minister Tkatchenko called attention to the hypocrisy surrounding global climate financing and the disregard for forest nations, which act as critical carbon sinks for the planet.

"The international community has shown a total lack of respect for countries like ours that play a crucial

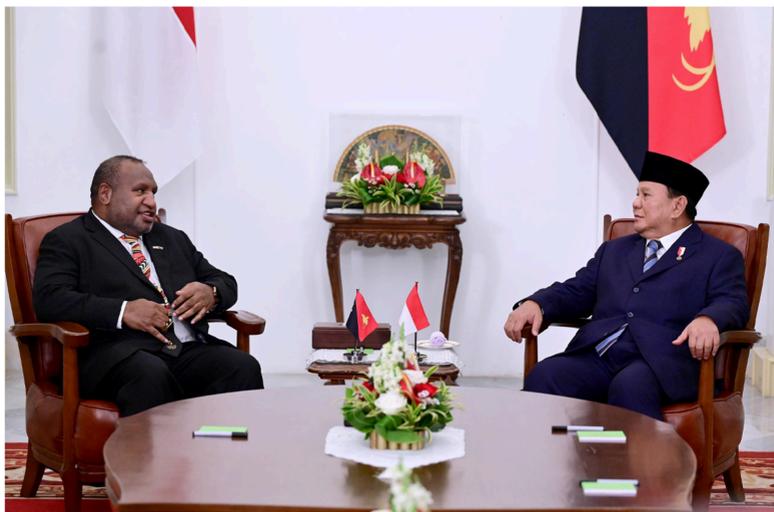
role in mitigating climate change. We are tired of being sidelined."

The Minister affirmed that Papua New Guinea would explore independent solutions to protect its people and natural assets, free from the empty promises of the global powers, as a way forward.

"If we must cut down our forests to sustain ourselves and develop our economy, so be it. Papua New Guinea will no longer wait for empty words while our people suffer. We are taking control of our destiny."

This bold decision underscores Papua New Guinea's frustration with the international community's inaction and sends a clear message: forest nations and small island states deserve more than lip service—they deserve real, tangible and immediate action. ■

PNG, Indonesia Strengthen Ties, as Marape Joins President-Elect Subianto's Inauguration in Jakarta



PM Marape's courtesy call on President Subianto at the his Presidential Palace, Jakarta. (Picture Credit: PM's Media)

Papua New Guinea is committed to building a stronger alliance with Indonesia from shared border, interconnected histories and economic interests Prime Minister Hon. James Marape in his remarks ahead of the inauguration of H.E. Prabowo Subianto as Indonesia's eighth President on Sunday, October 20, 2024, reaffirmed Papua New Guinea's commitment to building a

stronger alliance with Indonesia.

"Indonesia is a vital partner in the Pacific," Prime Minister Marape stated. "Our shared border, our interconnected histories, and our mutual economic interests make us natural allies."

"I look forward to strengthening our countries' bond and fostering further cooperation on regional prosperity and stability."

Prime Minister Marape's attendance

at this significant ceremony in Jakarta underscores the growing diplomatic and economic ties between the two neighboring nations.

His presence highlights the recent expansion of PNG-Indonesia relations beyond traditional border security to include economic development, educational exchange, and trade cooperation.

Prime Minister Marape's visit builds upon discussions held in August with President-elect Subianto in Port Moresby, where the leaders outlined aspirations for enhanced collaboration.

"The bond between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea is one of kinship," President-elect Subianto remarked at that time.

"We are joined together and should be like real brothers. Cooperation in defense, education, and trade will strengthen our shared vision for a prosperous future"

In recent years, Indonesia's significant economic growth has set an example for the Pacific region, positioning the country as a global economic player. "Indonesia's economic journey offers valuable lessons for Papua New Guinea," Prime Minister Marape observed.

"We look forward to learning from Indonesia's successes in sectors like mineral processing and trade, and we welcome opportunities for our nations to grow together."

"This inauguration marks an opportunity for PNG to further its role in the regional economic landscape by aligning closely with Southeast Asia's largest economy."

This visit follows PNG's ratification of a defense cooperation agreement with Indonesia earlier this year, establishing a framework for joint

border management and enhanced security efforts.

In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding on parliamentary cooperation reflects a commitment to strengthening political and economic ties.

Prime Minister Marape invited President-elect Subianto to join PNG in celebrating its 50th Independence anniversary next year, underscoring the bond between the two nations — a gesture that the President-elect warmly accepted. ■



PM Marape arriving in Jakarta for the 8th Presidential Inauguration ceremony.

Marape Among World Leaders who Witnessed Inauguration of President Subianto in JAKARTA



Prime Minister James Marape at a press conference at APEC Terminal on arrival from Indonesia on Monday 21 October. (photo credit: PM's Media).

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape was among world and regional leaders who witnessed the inauguration of Indonesia's incoming leader, President Prabowo Subianto on Sunday 20 October, 2024 in Jakarta.

On his arrival from Indonesia, Prime Minister highlighted the expanding PNG

-Indonesian relationship undertaken under the Marape-Widodo administrations that is now affirmed to continue under President Subianto, in a press conference.

He emphasized the exponential growth of Indonesia's economy which currently sits at nearly \$1.5 trillion

with Indonesia aggressively pushing this toward a first world nation status by 2045, and Papua New Guinea's opportunity to capitalize on its proximity to Indonesia.

He described the inauguration ceremony as colourful and an eventful transition of leadership, where they

witnessed the 7th president passing on leadership to the 8th president.

In his address, the President-elect highlighted priority areas for his country, among which included, the need for food and energy security for Indonesia, poverty alleviation for low-income earners and the rural population, and moving Indonesia toward a developed nation in the next 20 years, embracing peaceful living and co-existence with neighbours, and entrenching democracy in Indonesia.

Following the inauguration ceremony, PNG was among a few nations that was allocated time for a bilateral meeting with President Subianto, where he highlighted pertinent issues relating to Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

"We affirmed that the work that President Widodo and I started must continue.

These are in areas of education, land transport, economic cooperation, trade & investment, oil palm, electricity supply and all other related issue".

Prime Minister Marape has since held three bilateral meetings with President Widodo.

Meantime, President Subianto has affirmed this work will be elevated for both nations linked by a land border.

Prime Minister Marape also revealed the new president has sought his advice in relation to the Melanesian people of West Papua, Indonesia's eastern province, where the Prime Minister committed to greater autonomy and offered amnesty to law offenders.

"This is the first time for me to see openness on West Papua and whilst it is an Indonesia sovereignty matter, my advice was to give respect to land and their cultural heritage.

"I commend the offer on amnesty, and PNG will continue to respect Indonesia's sovereignty."

Mr Marape reaffirmed his government's intention to work just as closely with President Subianto in expanding further the areas of trade and investment, especially in business-to-business and people-to-people relations.

"In all areas of discussion, we look forward to working with Indonesia, not just on the border issues, but on people-to-people as a nation that shares land on this side of the world."

With Indonesia's direct neighbours, Prime Minister Marape joined the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Prime Minister for Singapore, President of the Philippines, Sultan of Brunei, Prime Minister of Timor Leste, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia.

Others within the vicinity who attended included the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, the Prime Minister of South Korea, the Vice President of China, the Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, the Vice President of Thailand, and the Vice President of Vietnam.

United States of America, India, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia were represented by special envoys.

Papua New Guinea, Rwanda may soon foster deeper collaboration in trade relations and climate change

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape had a bilateral meeting with President of Rwanda His Excellency Paul Kagame on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa, on Thursday 24 October 2024, expressing optimism that this meeting would result in both countries fostering deeper collaboration in trade and people-to-people relations, as well as Rwanda extending its assistance in other areas such as climate change.

Prime Minister Marape paid tribute to President Kagame for contributing to the Commonwealth countries as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth Secretariat in the last two years.

Rwanda hosted the CHOGM in 2022, and PNG was not able to attend due to its National General Elections, for which Prime Minister Marape expressed his regrets.

Prime Minister Marape noted that Papua New Guinea and Rwanda have engaged on several occasions at the multilateral level but no concrete agreements have been progressed yet bilaterally.

In addition, Prime Minister Marape described Rwanda as one of Africa's fastest-growing economies, and a model of post-conflict economic reconstruction and social cohesion.

"Its success in governance, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and infrastructure development presents an opportunity for PNG to explore knowledge-sharing initiatives," said Prime Minister Marape.

He noted Rwanda's ranking among the top in Africa in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, showcasing its commitment to creating a favourable environment for investors and entrepreneurs.

"Papua New Guinea with its abundant natural resources and growing focus on

diversifying its economy, stands to benefit from strategic engagement with Rwanda, particularly in areas such as ICT, tourism, governance, and sustainable development."

Other areas that PNG can benefit from Rwanda include:

- Rwanda's success in governance reforms, particularly in anti-corruption measures and the creation of transparent institutions. This is imperative to achieving national development goals. Rwanda's approach

to public service delivery and business-friendly policies provides a model for improving PNG's investment climate.

- Both PNG and Rwanda are active members of international organizations such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth. They share mutual interests in sustainable development, climate action, and South-South cooperation, providing avenues for enhanced diplomatic engagement.

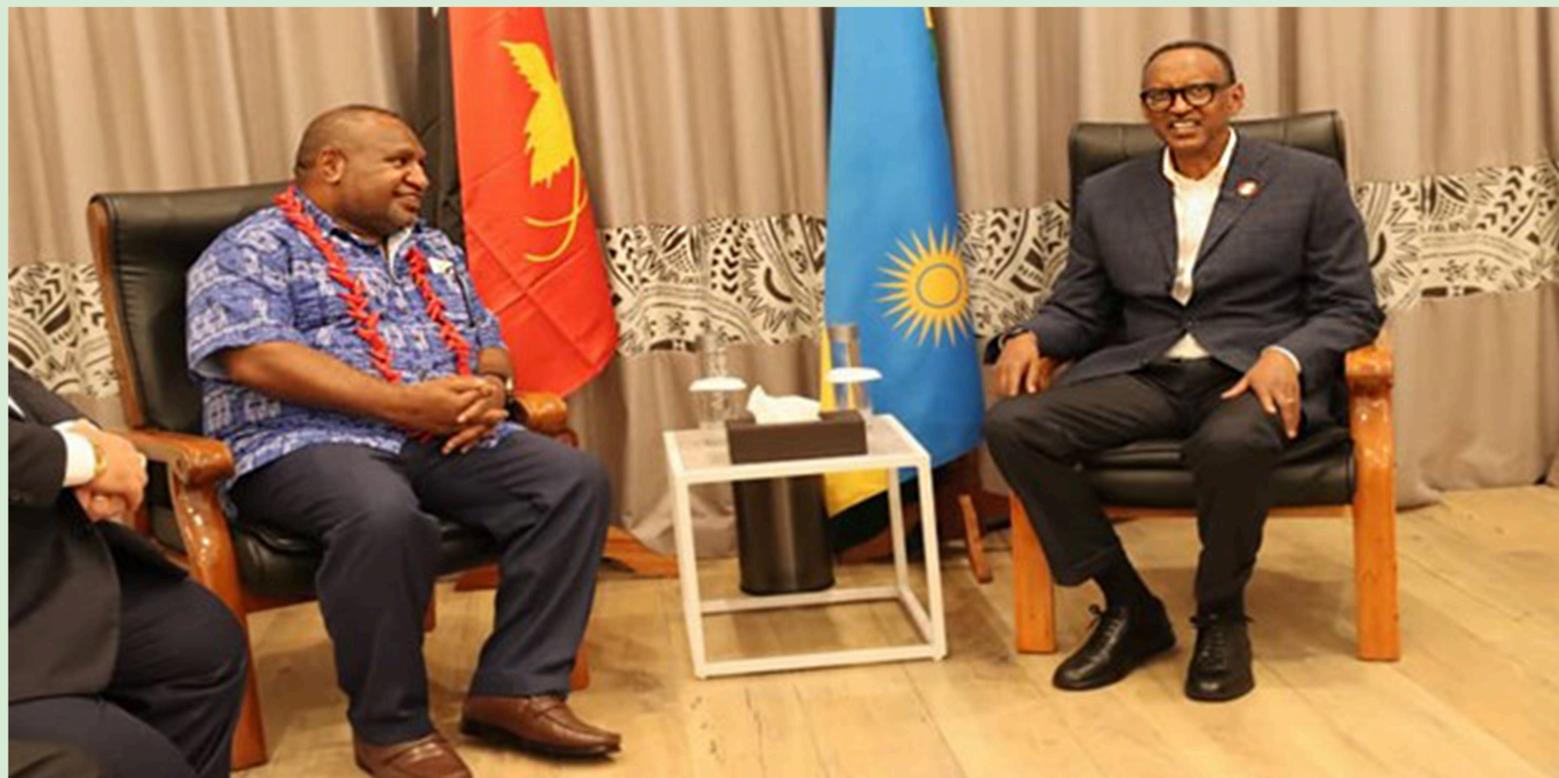
Prime Minister Marape also indicated sending a delegation to Rwanda before the 50th Independence Anniversary of PNG next year, to seek opportunities of investment and trade with PNG and to invite potential Rwanda investors who are looking to do business with PNG.

Moreover, Mr Marape extended an invitation to President Kagame to attend PNG's 50th Independence Anniversary next year, for which Pre-

sident Kagame said he would be honoured to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations in Port Moresby.

On the other hand, President Kagame acknowledged the long distance that they travel to this part of the world, but said the two countries could still make their relationship stronger and beneficial.

Both leaders met on Thursday 24 October, ahead of the official opening of the CHOGM on Friday, 25 October.



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape (right) with President-Elect of the Republic of Indonesia, His Excellency Prabowo Subianto, at their joint press conference, Stanley Hotel, Port Moresby, on Wednesday 21 August 2024.

27TH COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

Marape commends Samoa on successfully hosting CHOGM, reaffirms Commonwealth's place in the world

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape commended Samoa on successfully hosting the 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), as he reaffirmed the Commonwealth's place among the world's families of nations.

The Prime Minister made these remarks as he departed Apia on Sunday, 27 October 2024 for Port Moresby.

"I offer my highest commendations to Prime Minister, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mataafa, her government and the people of Samoa on successfully hosting this Commonwealth meeting."

Prime Minister Marape further reaffirmed the importance and value of the Commonwealth association, which he said continues to safeguard and promote ideals important to its member countries around the world, besides the economic significance of combining 56 nations as a block.

"The Commonwealth has found its place again in the world's family of nations."

We have many blocks of nations in the world, whether political or economic; some based on ideology, some based on commerce and trade, others based on region.

"But this family of nations, which covers a good part of the world, shares ideals of democracy, free trade, and promotes equality and equity."

"Most of us come from a shared colonial past, but from Papua New Guinea's perspective, we say 'past is in the past'. We look forward to constructing a future for individuals, families and our people."

"The Commonwealth family of nations has over 2.6 billion people. The combined economic volume of these nations equals to \$20 trillion making it a massive economic block in terms of people and economy, globally speaking," said PM Marape.

The Prime Minister believes the 27th CHOGM provided an opportunity for many countries with similar colonial background to look back on their past, while the members made commitments to move into the future.

"My own experience in this recently-concluded CHOGM was that it was seen from a context of our colonial past, but recultivated from the perspective of working toward the future by embracing contemporary issues of the world like climate change, economic and trade barriers, regional and inter-regional conflicts taking place globally."

"This block of nations emerged stronger after the Apia meeting to talk about our fight for equity and equality of people, fair trade, and leaving no one behind, which is the United Nations charter."

"Right behind the United Nations, the Commonwealth exist as the second biggest block of nations – of

diversity blending into one."

The Prime Minister highlighted Papua New Guinea's stance, delivered to the 27th CHOGM.

"Papua New Guinea spoke on the theme of reflecting the diversity of humanity. We have over 800 languages and many tribes within these language groups."

Despite our vast diversity, we are able to hold together 49 years on since gaining Independence and together facing our 50 years of nationhood next year, 2025.

"The Commonwealth, in every sense, represents a similar diversity on the global scale. Fifty-six (56) nations from all continents and areas of Planet Earth coming together in the goal of sharing beliefs and value of democracy, free trade, and equality of people, irrespective of religious preferences, individual cultures and differences, race and colour, by embracing our diversity and living together as the human race on Planet Earth," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister arrived in Samoa on Thursday, 24 October 2024, joined the leaders for the opening of the CHOGM and meetings on Friday, 25 October 2024, and departed Samoa on Sunday 27 October 2024.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Justin Tkatchenko attended Saturday's session on behalf of the Prime Minister, while he observed Sabbath.



(l-r) Mrs Rachael Marape, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Patricia Scotland, Prime Minister James Marape and 2024 CHOGM Host and Samoan Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mataafa at the Official Opening Ceremony on Friday, October 25 2024 in Apia, Samoa. Source: CHOGM Samoa Official Website



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape is seen seated with all heads of government as well as His Majesty King Charles III, who is the Head of the Commonwealth Family. The picture was taken at the opening ceremony on Friday, October 25 2024. Source: CHOGM Samoa Official Website



Prime Minister James Marape meets King Charles III in Samoa at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. King Charles III was Prince of Wales in 1975 when he won Independence in Port Moresby.

VERNMENT MEETING (CHOGM), SAMOA

sting Pacific's first e world



whilst attending
witnessed PNG's



Samoan Business Community meeting with Prime Minister James Marape and delegation at Taumeasina Island Resort. (picture credit: PM&NEC).



PNG delegation led by Prime Minister James Marape meets with Singapore delegation led by Prime Minister Lawrence Wong to discuss trade and investment opportunities, including new areas of co-operation that will further deepen ongoing relations between the two countries. (picture credit: PM&NEC).



Prime Minister Marape with Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong at the bilateral meeting in Taumeasina Island Resort, Apia. (picture credit: PM&NEC).

Government to Regulate Paga Hill SEZ Satellite Casino Ops

The Government will strictly regulate the operations of the newly launched Paga Hill Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Satellite Casino, in Port Moresby, whilst boosting

the country's economy, and safeguarding the welfare of its citizens. Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, when addressing concerns raised over the Paga Hill Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Satellite Casino, clarified, this cas-

ino will cater exclusively to "high rollers," including expatriates, tourists, and high-earning Papua New Guineans.

"Similar to Singapore's casino model, where locals are protected by specific regulations, we will ensure that only Papua New Guineans with an annual disposable income above K200,000 will be eligible to participate. Entry will require identification and membership," said Prime Minister Marape.

He further explained these measures align with recent adjustments to the minimum bet on pokies, increased to K100, to discourage participation by lower-income earners.

While the changes are designed to curb overseas gambling expenditures by affluent Papua New Guineans, who currently travel to destinations such as Cairns, Brisbane, Singapore, and Manila for casino experiences, Mr Marape affirmed that the government's primary focus is to attract international visitors and residents.

"We're observing a growing number of Asian visitors for whom gambling is a popular recreational activity," adding, "This project is tailored to accommodate these gambling tourists and other intern-

ational patrons."

"While there are concerns about unregulated casino-like gambling occurring in some private settings, this licensed casino can serve as a legitimate venue," he added.

Highlighting the broader economic benefits, Prime Minister Marape underscored the contributions of gaming operations to community funds through the National Gaming Control Board.

He stated that the licensed casino will follow this model, channeling a portion of revenue into programmes that benefit the community.

The Paga Hill SEZ project, which features hotels, residences, and commercial centers, is a transitional development poised for long-term expansion pending compliance with regulatory standards.

The Prime Minister also announced a priority hiring initiative for local Motu-Koitabuans within the SEZ development.

"While I personally do not advocate for gambling, it's undeniable that we have expatriates and others among us who participate in such activities.

"Licensed and regulated casinos offer an avenue for the State to collect taxes, retain spending in-country, create employment opportunities, and contribute to our economy," said Prime Minister Marape.

"We will trial run this Satellite Casino, and another on a floating ship, which will both be reviewed over time."

Reflecting on the history of gaming in Papua New Guinea, Prime Minister Marape noted that similar concerns were voiced when pokies were first introduced, yet they have become a regulated part of the country's landscape for over 30 years.

He assured citizens that these casino projects would be introduced as trial initiatives, subject to rigorous oversight to prevent adverse impacts on everyday Papua New Guineans.

"This SEZ project has been many years in the making.

We are committed to ensuring its development aligns with our standards and delivers economic benefits for Papua New Guinea," Prime Minister added.



Paga Hill Estate SEZ's planned foreshore promenade, featuring various tourism infrastructure including craft market, alfresco dining, amphitheatre, public plaza, community cinema, mangrove promenades and various lookouts (Picture: pagahill.com)

Government Launched Gov Private Network for Enhanced Digital Connectivity

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has unveiled a game-rolls out the Government Private Network (GPN), a game-changing initiative designed to transform connectivity under the Digital Government Act of 2022.

This initiative aims to streamline communication between government agencies, businesses, and citizens and is a key component of the Medium-Term Development Plan 4 (MTDP 4) for 2023-2027.

Acting Manager, Digital Infrastructure & Government Private Network (GPN) John Pandi said this project is pivotal in connecting PNG's telecommunication and ICT infrastructure.

"The GPN will facilitate efficient service delivery for government-to-government (G2G), government-to-business (G2B), and government-to-citizen (G2C) interactions," Pandi said.

The GPN operates through a dual-network model comprising an overlay network and an underlay network.

The overlay will utilize cloud-based technology and features secure access service edge capabilities, while the underlay will focus on IPCore infrastructure, enabling high availability, security, and rapid service deployment, particularly in remote areas.

"Connectivity will be tailored based on the specific nature and purpose of each agency's services," Pandi explained.

"Districts, provinces, and national agencies can connect to the GPN via either the overlay, the underlay, or both, depending on what is available."

The delivery model of the GPN includes collaboration with state-owned enterprises (S.O.Es) and other relevant stakeholders to optimize resource allocation and infrastructure investment.

"By working alongside established entities in the communications sector, we can achieve our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) without overextending government resources," Pandi noted.

The timeline for the GPN project outlines several key milestones, starting with project initiation in 2023, which includes planning, designing, and procurement.

By 2024 to 2026, the focus will be on connecting all provinces and districts to the GPN, along with linking all governmental agencies.

"The completion of the GPN's underlay is scheduled for 2025, along with the pilot rollout," Pandi said.

"We aim to wrap up the entire project by 2027, establishing a sustainable plan for the GPN."

As part of the GPN timeline, 2028 will see the completion and commissioning of the overlay, integrating Government Closed User Groups (CUG) for enhanced collaboration.

The ambitious GPN initiative is set to transform the digital landscape of Papua New Guinea, ensuring secure, reliable, and efficient government communication and service delivery.

DICT Launches eGovernment Portal Version 2.0

The Government of Papua New Guinea, through the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), early this month, launched the improved eGovernment Portal Version 2.0.

This upgraded platform improves access to government services, making them more efficient, secure, and user-friendly for citizens across the country.

Leading the development of this new portal, Chief Developer Samson Korawali emphasized the transformative impact of the new platform at its launch.

"Our goal is to create a fully functioning eGovernment portal and Digital ID Wallet that ensures safe access to a broad range of services while protecting personal information."

The revamped portal integrates key services in a single, accessible platform, allowing users to apply for police clearances, report crimes, manage school fees, and more—all through a streamlined design.

Enhanced with biometric sign-up and user verification, the eGovernment Portal 2.0 significantly shortens wait times and improves the overall user experience.

"By using biometric sign-up and user verification, we want to make the experience better while making services work faster," Korawali explained.

The Sevis Portal, Sevis Pass, and Sevis Wallet—integral parts of the eGovernment platform—provide a secure and efficient way for citizens to engage with government services online.

The SevisPass system enables digital ID verification, giving citizens access to their Digital ID stored in a secure wallet. This digital ID allows users to log in to the eGov Portal on-demand, avoiding queues and paperwork.

For citizens, the eGovernment Portal Version 2.0 offers greater accessibility, time savings, and a streamlined service experience.

DICT Secretary Steven Matainaho speaking on the closing day of the three-day Digital Transformation Summit 2024 at Stanley Hotel Port Moresby on Thursday, October 3rd.

Citizens can access services at any time, reducing errors and delays associated with traditional paperwork and promoting transparency that builds trust in government.

Mr Korawali added, "We believe that helping citizens get better access to information will lead to more openness and greater involvement in government matters."

The benefits extend beyond individuals, as the government stands to streamline workflows, lower operational costs, and make data-driven decisions, improving productivity and service delivery for the entire country.

Mr Korawali highlighted, "This portal isn't just about making things easier; it's about changing how the government works and makes decisions based on real data."

With this launch, the Government of Papua New Guinea is advancing its digital infrastructure, fostering a more connected and responsive public service.

The eGovernment Portal Version 2.0 represents a new era of digital access-

ibility, transparency, and citizen empowerment, reshaping how citizens interact with their government and laying the groundwork for a stronger digital future.

DICT Secretary Steven Matainaho emphasized that the portal is currently in its pilot phase, with sustainability being a crucial factor for its long-term success.

"This is a significant step forward in our digital transformation and the creation of a digitally empowered society.

The launch of this pilot service represents a major advancement in how we engage with both the public and private sectors," Matainaho stated.

The pilot phase will cater to the first 10,000 users.

Kumul Technical Consolidated Holdings Limited (KCHL) is partnering with DICT to support the delivery of digital government services. The portal was officially launched by KCHL Managing Director, Professor David Kavanamur.



PROTECT YOUR ACCOUNTS

CHOOSE STRONG PASSWORDS

- 1 USE 12+ CHARACTERS WITH LETTERS, NUMBERS, AND SYMBOLS
- 2 AVOID COMMON WORDS AND PERSONAL INFO
- 3 CREATE UNIQUE PASSWORDS FOR EACH ACCOUNT
- 4 CONSIDER A PASSWORD MANAGER FOR SECURE STORAGE
- 5 ENABLE 2FA FOR EXTRA SECURITY

CYBER SAFETY AWARENESS

NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTRE

DOMESTIC

Seven New Vice Ministers Sworn in



Governor General Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae and Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, with seven new Vice-Ministers after the swearing-in-ceremony at Government House early this month.

Seven new Parliamentary Secretaries and first time MPs, were sworn in as Vice-Ministers of State before Governor General, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae at Government House early this month. They are:

- Hon. Daniel Tindipu (Komo-Hulia) - Vice-Minister for National Planning
- Hon. Sam Basil Jnr (Bulolo) - Vice-Minister for Mining, assisting the Prime Minister in Sports
- Hon. Agena Gamai (Delta-Fly) - Vice-Minister for Forests
- Hon. Jacob Maki (Mul-Baiyer) - Vice-Minister for Police

- Hon. David Arore (Ijivitari) - Vice-Minister for Finance
- Hon. Alexander Orme (Sumkar) - Vice-Minister for Petroleum
- Hon. Francis Alua - (Salt-Nomane Karamui) - Vice-Minister for Justice and AttorneyGeneral

The Vice Ministers recited the Declaration of Office and Declaration of Loyalty to the state.

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, who was also present at the swearing-in-ceremony, commended the vice ministers, noting their appointments as crucial at this time

when significant work needs to be carried out by the Government, in order to serve the people of Papua New Guinea.

He assured that the Vice-Ministers are ready, able, and available to step into their roles and, more importantly, get the work done in the agencies of State assigned to them, and the entire clockwork of the Government machinery.

“There is no college for Members of Parliament or State Ministers to go to in order to progress in their political careers.

“I speak from experience as a former ViceMinister, later Minister of State, and eventually Prime Minister. Many MPs in our Parliament, who were once Vice-Ministers, went on to become Ministers of Government.

“These appointments are vital for our country, as they assist the Ministers of Government in delivering expected outcomes.”

Prime Minister Marape emphasised that this initiative is part of the Government’s efforts to cultivate the next generation of leadership for Papua New Guinea.

“We aim to create a breeding ground for future leaders who will help guide the country forward.

The Government will work closely with them as they develop their leadership skills,” he said.

Member for Kairuku, Hon. Peter Isoaimo, was also sworn in as Vice Minister for Works towards the end of this month. ■

E - Portal Payment System for Effective Government Services

The Government of Papua New Guinea through the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) has launched the e-Government Portal Version 2.0.

This exciting update will help citizens access essential government services more easily and securely.

The e-Gov Portal comes with a digital ID wallet that allows users to manage their identification safely.

This means that people can now access government services like paying for police clearances, school fees, medical registrations, and more—all from their computers or smartphones.

How It Works

To use the new portal, citizens need to sign up for an account.

This process includes verifying their identity using a system called SevisPass.

Once verified, users will receive a Digital ID stored in a secure wallet. With this ID, they can log into the e-Gov Portal anytime and access a variety of services without waiting in long lines.

Benefits for Citizens

The new e-Gov Portal provides several advantages:

- **Greater Accessibility:** Citizens can now access government services online at any time.

- **Time Savings:** No more long waits or piles of paperwork—everything can be done online.

- **Improved Service Delivery:** Services will be faster and less prone to mistakes, leading to a better experience for everyone.

- **Enhanced Transparency:** The portal allows citizens to easily access information, promoting trust in the government.

- **Empowerment:** With easy access to information, citizens can participate more in decision-making.

This digital transformation is not just beneficial for individuals. The government plans to save costs by reducing paperwork and streamlining processes. This makes the government more efficient and responsive to the needs of its citizens.

With the rollout of the e-Gov Portal, Papua New Guinea is taking significant steps toward a more connected and efficient future. Citizens can look forward to a more accessible government experience that makes their lives easier. ■

NBC receives new Television Outside Broadcast Van, “Studio on Wheels”

Minister for Information and Communications Technology Hon. Timothy Masiu officially received the keys to the new Outside Broadcast TV and Radio Van from the government of the People’s Republic of China.

This OB Van is a significant addition to the phase 1 of the A2D Project of the National Broadcasting Corporation of PNG funded through the Chinese Exim Bank loan.

The ceremony, on Monday 7 October at the NBC Headquarters underscored the strategic partnership between PNG

and China in enhancing telecommunications, and national broadcasting capabilities.

Ambassador Yang Xiaoguang of the People’s Republic of China to Papua New Guinea highlighted the technological prowess of China, stating, “China is the number one manufacturer for over 14 years, but it is easy to set up a record but it is hard to keep the record.”

He emphasized China’s leadership in telecommunications, including advancements in 5G and ongoing research into 6G.

Ambassador Yang reaffirmed China’s commitment to supporting Papua New Guinea’s development, outlining principles of cooperation: “No politics, no intervention in politics, and no empty promises.”

Minister Masiu further emphasized the transformative impact of digitalization on NBC.

“Digitalization of NBC is where our future lies,” he declared.

Minister Masiu outlined the phases of the digitalization project, highlighting that phase one already covers 10 provinces, with phase two set to extend to 12 provinces,” he said.

“This OB Van is a fully pledged studio on wheels.

We’ve tested it in the live Broadcast of the Pope’s visit.

“It is important that we partner with China to bring in important tools for us to improve Broadcast, and consistent with the one NBC brand, it has radio broadcasting capabilities in there.

“It will drastically enhance NBC capabilities to Broadcast national events for our nationwide audience so that they can just stay home and witness events instead of coming out and risking their safety.”

He added the van is one of its kind in the country and in the South Pacific, and urged the NBC staff to look after it.

(Left) Minister for Information and Communications Technology Hon. Timothy Masiu emphasizing on the transformative impact of digitalization on NBC



Ambassador Yang Xiaoguang of the People’s Republic of China to Papua New Guinea handing over the keys to the New OB Van to ICT Minister Hon. Timothy Masiu and NBC Managing Director Kora Nou at the NBC Headquarters, Port Moresby.



The New NBC OB Van at NBC HQ, Wonga Estate, Port Moresby.

DOMESTIC

ADB, PNG Agree on Action Plan to Accelerate Project Implementation

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG) have agreed on a timebound action plan to accelerate the implementation and improve the performance of ADB-financed projects at the 2024 Country Portfolio Review Mission Roundtable Meeting.

The hybrid meeting, co-chaired by ADB Country Director for PNG Said Zaidansyah and the Department of National Planning and Monitoring Acting First Assistant Secretary Reichert Thanda, and attended by government officials, project directors, and ADB staff, discussed the overall performance of the portfolio, reviewed projects, and delegated responsibilities with executing agencies and implementing agencies.

“As the biggest multilateral development partner of PNG, ADB will continue to support diversified, sustained, and inclusive growth in the country,” said Mr. Zaidansyah.

“The development impact and effectiveness of ADB’s support depend on the quality of the portfolio performance and we will continue to collaborate with the government to improve this and build the capacity of the relevant government agencies.”

ADB’s active program in PNG includes 15 loans and 6 grants with 10 projects amounting to \$1.38 billion.

The largest sectors ADB is supporting are transport (roads and civil aviation)—comprising 60% of the total active portfolio—and energy (20%) in response to the large infrastructure gap in the country.

The human and social development sector, building resilience to climate and supporting gender equity, are also integral parts of ADB’s active portfolio. ADB is also actively working on public sector management including state-owned enterprise reform.

The action plan designed to improve the portfolio performance focuses on contract and project management, procurement, financial management, social and environmental safeguards, and gender equality. ADB and the government will closely monitor the progress of the agreed actions.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 69 members—49 from the region. ■

ICT Minister Launches Kerowagi’s Website along with 5 Year District Development Plan, ALESCO Payroll System, E - Library



(l-r) Deputy Secretary for National Planning Mr Michael Kumung, Minister for ICT Hon. Timothy Masiu and Member for Kerowagi Hon. Francis Siune Kikin at the launch of the Kerowagi’s 5 Year Development Plan, at Kerowagi, Simbu Province, Thursday October 3, 2024.

Minister Hon. Timothy Masiu, representing Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, officiated several key initiatives in Kerowagi, Simbu Province on Thursday, October 3, 2024.

The launch ceremony celebrated the unveiling of Kerowagi District’s official website (www.kerowagi.gov.pg), the commissioning of the ALESCO Payroll System, and the introduction of the District’s comprehensive Five Year Development Plan.

Minister Masiu emphasized the importance of these initiatives in enhancing accessibility and transparency within Kerowagi.

“With the launch of the district’s

official website, www.kerowagi.gov.pg anyone from anywhere in the world can now easily access updates and insights about Kerowagi,” he noted.

He commended the proactive approach of local MP Hon. Francis Siune Kikin in providing educational resources through the distribution of e-learning materials to schools in the district.

“This initiative underscores Kerowagi’s commitment to investing in its youth and future human resource,” Minister Masiu remarked.

Reflecting on recent cabinet-approved policies, Minister Masiu outlined the government’s commitment to digital governance and media development.

“ICT today is not merely about mobile phones; it has national development function, cross-cutting education, health, planning, agriculture, finance, and beyond,” he affirmed.

Hon. Francis Siune Kikin, Member for Kerowagi, expressed gratitude for governmental support in realizing these initiatives, and appreciates the shift towards rural investments for the benefit of local communities.

“With 80% of our people residing in rural Papua New Guinea, these efforts are crucial, and I appreciate our government for supporting me with this initiatives,” he emphasized.

Deputy Secretary for the Department of National Planning,

KCH, ICT Hosts Appreciation Dinner for Solomon Islands ICT Delegation: Duma, Masiu Calls for Stronger Regional Ties

The Kumul Consolidated Holdings Limited (KCHL) and the ICT Ministry hosted an appreciation dinner to honor the Solomon Islands ICT delegation, marking the end of a productive visit aimed at building closer relations in the ICT sector between Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

More regional collaboration in driving digital transformation and economic development, was the unofficial theme of the dinner as the high-level delegation from both side expressed the same sentiments.

Deputy Secretary for DICT, Mr. Flierl Shongol, highlighted the importance of partnerships in achieving digital transformation goals.

“We have the policy, but partnership is important for digital transformation. Greater collaboration will drive digital transformation by improving efficiency in delivering services, advancing the digital economy, and encouraging greater participation in a digital society. We are also looking at regional collaboration to align and collaborate for regional development,” Mr. Shongol stated.

He further emphasized that despite progress, much work is required for the ideal outcomes.

“We are delivering and driving policy as well. There’s a lot of work to be done in ICT. We have set the outcome, and we are working.”

Managing Director for Kumul Consolidated Holdings Limited (KCHL), Professor David Kavanamur, highlighted the challenges and progress made through collaboration.

“We have gone through a lot of challenges, but we are collaborating more in the ICT space. This week, we’ve signed an important MoU between the two ministries, fostering closer relations for implementation and monetization,” Professor Kavanamur said.

ICT Minister Hon. Timothy Masiu expressed gratitude to all stakeholders involved in the sector and encouraged the Solomon Islands delegation to apply what they learned in their country.

“We are moving along smoothly, and I want to thank all the members and organizations in the sector.

I urge the Solomon Islands Minister and his delegation to take what you have learned here and improve ICT in your country.

We still have challenges to overcome, but with collaboration, we move forward in ICT,” Minister Masiu said.

Minister for Communication and Aviation for the Solomon Islands, Hon. Fredrick Kologeto, shared his reasons for visiting PNG, citing the value of learning from PNG’s experiences in ICT development.

“I came here to learn from PNG and help my people improve their livelihood.

There is more we can learn from PNG than from Australia or New Zealand.

I came here with a high-level delegation, and I am happy to be back in PNG after many years,” said Minister Kologeto.

Minister for State-Owned Enterprises, Hon. William Duma, appreciated the visit of the Solomon Islands delegation and highlighted the strong ties between the two Melanesian nations.

“We appreciate the Minister for Communication from the Solomon Islands for visiting us.

You are in Melanesia, ‘em ples blo yu’. Solomon Islands is our closest neighbor, and we are grateful for your visit.”

Minister Duma also in his statement added praise for Minister Masiu’s leadership in the ICT sector.

“I am in Politics for a long time, and Minister Masiu is the best ICT Minister we have so far.

He went out of his way to make things happen.

He has rejuvenated some failed institutions such as the NBC.” ■

Mr. Michael Kumung, urged closer collaboration between Kerowagi’s residents and leadership to foster inclusive growth.

He elaborated on the importance of interoperability in government, “now our systems are not talking to each other, and our public servants are not being assets to their sector.”

“Digitalizing government processes ensures seamless workflow across all sectors. The process is there, we have to be smart and just digitize the process,” he stated.

The launch ceremony also included the commissioning of Kerowagi’s Five Year Development Plan, accompanied by the rollout of e-learning tools, distribution of Coaster Buses to SME

holders, and the presentation of cultural certification by the National Cultural Commission.

These initiatives, aimed at promoting education, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation, mark a significant stride towards comprehensive community development in Kerowagi.

Delegates at the event included Petrus Ralda, CEO of SME Corporation, who encouraged land development as a pivotal asset; Loyed Pirari from the National Development Bank, who highlighted business opportunities for local residents; and Steven Kilanda of the National Cultural Commission, who presented cultural show certification.

DOMESTIC

PM Advocates For Stronger Business Relations between PNG and Samoa

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape has called on Papua New Guinea-owned businesses to maintain a strong presence and continued business relation between PNG and Samoa.

He reaffirmed both countries' shared common values in their development aspirations, adding, PNG-owned businesses operating in Samoa, stand to gain maximum returns on their investments.

"I encourage our PNG-owned businesses operating here and those looking for investment opportunities in the areas of finance and banking, tourism, and the construction industry to diversify their investments in Apia.

"I see the success of many PNG-owned businesses like Bank South Pacific (BSP), which has a strong presence in Samoa and the Constantinou Group of Companies, which has invested in the construction and hotel industry," he said.

Prime Minister has also encouraged investors to seize the opportunity to do business in Samoa and the other Pacific Island countries.

Mr Marape made these remarks at a business breakfast meeting organized by the Samoan business community at the Taumeasina Island Resort, in Apia on Friday 25 October.

Prime Minister Marape informed the Samoan-PNG business community of his government's intention to make the economic climate conducive for businesses to invest and operate in PNG, as well as expanding to other Pacific Island countries.

He added the government was considering removing the impediments and improving the ease of doing business in the country to assist with their operations.

"We have a good business arbitration system in place where issues over business contracts and dealings are mediated for a win-win outcome

between the government, developers and or landowners so that both sides interests are protected and cared for when conflicts arise.

"PNG looks forward to further expansion and continued presence of PNG businesses operating here in Apia, Samoa, and our people-to-people relations especially in tourism," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Samoa business community spoke highly of major PNG companies like Bank South Pacific (BSP) and the Constantinou Group of Companies operating in Samoa.

The Constantinou Group owns and operates the Taumeasina Island Resort, and its Hebou Construction is eyeing interest in the Samoan construction sector.

The PNG Government has shares in Bank South Pacific and the Taumeasina Hotel through landowner interests.

Prime Minister Marape attended the 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Apia, Samoa, followed by the Executive Session on Friday 25 October 2024.

The meeting was attended by the Executive Director of Australia-PNG Business Council Frank Youn, Group Chief Executive Officer of BSP Financial Group Mark Robinson, William Blank of Hall Contracting who has done dredging work on some of PNG's ports like Lae and Port Moresby and PNG's Honorary Consul to Samoa, Fiona Ey.

Business representatives and the community thanked the PNG Government support to PNG businesses like BSP and Constantinou group for investing in Samoa and called for further investment in the construction sector.

Prime Minister Marape also thanked BSP as a PNG bank in its support to the Samoan Government as a major sponsor of the CHOGM. ■



Samoan Business Community meeting with Prime Minister James Marape and delegation at Taumeasina Island Resort. (picture credit: PM&NEC).

Land Commission Progresses Research into Colonial Land Acquisitions in Germany

The Government, through the Papua New Guinea Land Commission is currently searching into colonial land acquisitions at the Bundesarchiv, the Federal Archives in Berlin, Germany.

Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Hon. Pila Niningi, when commending the Land Commission for its ongoing efforts, remarked, the research was a crucial step in addressing the historical injustices related to land ownership and will guide future policies to protect the rights of citizens.

The Land Commission team, led by Chief Commissioner Mr. Molean Kilepak, has made remarkable progress, analyzing over 25,000 slides so far, from various microfilm files related to German New Guinea.

"This initiative is an important step toward reconciling our colonial past.

By thoroughly examining the historical records, we can better advocate for the rights of our citizens and inform our policies to support rightful land ownership."

The Land Commission team had meetings in Berlin, including scheduled discussion with Hon. Katya Keul, Minister of State Assisting the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

These meetings will provide a platform to strengthen bilateral relations and explore potential support for the Land Commission's work.

Furthermore, Minister Niningi highlighted the potential for expanding research opportunities at additional archives, such as the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, the Political Archive of the Foreign Ministry and the Church Archives which will enrich the country's understanding

of this complex history.

"Our goal is to compile comprehensive data that can inform our legislative reforms and empower our communities," he added.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the Marape-Rosso Government, the German Federal Foreign Office and other diplomatic partners who have supported the Land Commission on its mission to retrieve Papua New Guinea's colonial land acquisition records from Germany.

He further thanked the Land Commission team for their dedication and professionalism in this critical undertaking.

He reassured the public that updates will be provided as the research progresses, reinforcing the government's commitment to addressing historical land issues. ■

Marape Refers to Office of the Registrar of Political Parties and Candidates as "Watchdog of Democracy"

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape has praised the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties and Candidates, referring to it as a "watchdog of democracy" for Papua New Guinea.

As the organisation responsible for enforcing the Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC), Prime Minister Marape emphasised the importance of the Registrar's role in safeguarding the nation's democratic principles.

Addressing the launch of the Office's new Corporate Plan on Wednesday, 30 October, Prime Minister Marape urged the Registrar and staff to uphold the highest standards in their work to ensure the resilience and integrity of Papua New Guinea's democracy.

Reflecting on the nation's political journey since 1975, Prime Minister Marape highlighted the challenges of political instability that have affected Papua New Guinea, especially in times of economic and political hardship.

He credited the late Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta, who introduced OLIPPAC in 2001, for establishing a foundational framework to promote stability.

"Sometimes I look back and wish that a Prime Minister like Sir Mekere Morauta, Sir Julius Chan, or Sir Michael Somare had 10 consecutive years or more of leadership of this country so that we would have been much better placed than we are as a country today, as far as social and economic development is concerned," Prime Minister Marape said, reflecting on the lack of continuity in leadership that has historically hindered sustained development.

Expressing his support for the Office of the Registrar, Mr Marape reaffirmed his government's commitment to empowering the "watchmen and watchwomen" responsible for overseeing political party integrity.

He noted that their role is essential not only during National General Elections but throughout a government's term to ensure that the political system remains rooted in democratic values.

The Prime Minister highlighted OLIPPAC as one of the most significant reforms in Papua New Guinea's political history, attributing its success to the efforts of late Sir Mekere Morauta in promoting reforms that strengthened the

nation's governance.

"Some reforms must be made in the context of us going forward, especially under the shadow of 50 years of our nationhood," he said, signaling a readiness for further improvements in PNG's political landscape.

Prime Minister Marape also referenced the legacy of the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, whose leadership of the National Alliance Party from 2002-2011 coincided with a period of unprecedented economic growth and political stability.

He attributed this success to the stability brought by OLIPPAC, which helped create a conducive environment for development.

Prime Minister Marape further highlighted his government's plans to introduce a Bill, inspired by recommendations from the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission, to consider the election of the prime minister by the people of Papua New Guinea—an initiative aimed at enhancing the nation's democratic framework.

He urged the Registrar to explore ways in which political parties can contribute to strengthening the political system, supporting effective governance, and fostering a vibrant democracy in Papua New Guinea. ■

Papua New Guinea, Singapore discuss trade and investment opportunities on the margins of CHOGM Leaders' Week in Samoa

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape and his Singapore counterpart, Hon. Lawrence Wong, discussed trade and investment opportunities at their bilateral meeting ahead of the official opening of the 27th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, on Friday 25 October 2024.

He personally congratulated Mr Wong on his ascension to office, in their meeting on the margins of the CHOGM Leaders' week..

The two leaders seized the opportunity to discuss trade and investment opportunities, including new areas of co-operation that will further deepen the ongoing relations.

Prime Minister Marape acknowledged the longstanding

diplomatic relations between Papua New Guinea and Singapore since 1976, affirming that relations between the two countries must continue to new heights.

"PNG knows that Singapore is a hub of transit, operates one of the largest ports in the world, and is a big trading partner with many countries."

Prime Minister Marape emphasised the need to expand relations in the area of trade and investment between Papua New Guinea and Singapore, adding, "We are ready to offer the potential we have for Singapore to tap into PNG's fresh primary agricultural produce to the Singaporean food market."

"This would greatly complement my government's effort to grow the PNG rural economy and improve the

livelihoods of the bulk of our people that are heavily dependent on the agriculture sector," said Prime Minister Marape.

Meanwhile, PNG will be setting up a trade and investment office in Singapore to encourage potential investment in this space and also explore other areas of mutual interest.

Prime Minister Marape also sought support for PNG's full membership to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and informed that PNG would submit its interest through Indonesia by the end of this year.

Prime Minister Wong, in response, expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and thanked Prime Minister Marape for allowing time to meet with him on the margins of his busy

schedule in attending the CHOGM leaders' Week.

He also reiterated that PNG/Singapore bilateral relations are longstanding and that Singapore is an active and constructive partner in the Pacific.

He expressed that their programs in the Pacific aim to be impactful in that they are also an island country and share the same challenges, such as impacts of climate change.

Prime Minister Wong welcomed the proposal for PNG's agricultural produce to be imported into the Singaporean food markets, and added that food diversification and safety standards are an important strategy for adapting to market trends and improving resilience

in a competitive landscape.

Prime Minister Marape in response thanked him for the exchanges and informed that he would be officially conveying a formal letter of invitation to Prime Minister Wong for his attendance at Papua New Guinea's 50th Anniversary in September 2025.

He also expressed his interest for an official visit to Singapore next year to discuss trade and investment opportunities in the area of downstream processing in agriculture, renewable energy resources, fisheries and forestry sectors, in particular, to process and export.

In addition, Prime Minister Marape also welcomed Singaporean investors to Papua New Guinea. ■



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BOROKO PNG



Deputy Prime Minister Hon. John Rosso, Chinese Ambassador H.E. Yang Xiaoguang, Education Minister Hon. Lucas Dekena, and Education Secretary Dr. Uke Kombra officially farewelled the 54 students last Friday 4 October 2024.

STEM Scholars Embark on Global Education Journey

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape has extended heartfelt congratulations to Fifty-Four young Papua New Guineans who have embarked on a transformative educational journey to the People's Republic of China.

The students are a part of the Papua New Guinea Government's prestigious Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) scholarships.

Deputy Prime Minister Hon. John Rosso, Chinese Ambassador H.E. Yang Xiaoguang, Education Minister

Hon. Lucas Dekena, and Education Secretary Dr. Uke Kombra officially farewelled the students on Friday 4 October 2024.

The 26 young women and 28 young men, all of whom excelled in their Grade 12 STEM studies at six of the nation's top schools – Sogeri, Aiyura, Kerevat, Passam, Wawin, and Port Moresby – are set to pursue advanced fields such as electrical engineering, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science, and more.

The first group of pioneers left for

China on Saturday, 5 October 2024, while the other group departed on Tuesday, 8 October 2024.

They joined a growing legacy of PNG STEM students pursuing excellence globally, with students already placed in India, the United States, and Fiji.

Prime Minister Marape highlighted the significance of this moment:

"The departure of these 54 brilliant young Papua New Guineans to China marks a historic moment.

"It is a proud day for PNG as these young minds embark on an inspiring

journey—one that not only represents their personal dreams but the shared aspirations of our entire nation.

"This journey is the product of our government's steadfast commitment to education, especially in the vital fields of STEM."

He continued: "These young scholars are the very best our schools have produced. They embody the future of PNG—future engineers, scientists, and innovators who will lead us into new heights of development.

"Through this initiative, we affirm

our unwavering belief that investing in education is the key to unlocking PNG's full potential."

Prime Minister Marape expressed his deep gratitude to those who made the scholarship programme a reality.

Prime Minister extended his gratitude to Education Minister Hon. Lucas Dekena, Education Secretary Dr. Uke Kombra, Dr. Clement Waine, Mr. Benny Rayappan, and their hardworking teams for turning this vision into reality.

He further paid tribute to the late Jimmy Uguro, for his vision and leadership in laying the foundation for the programme's success.

"We are exploring new horizons for our Grade 12 STEM school leavers in countries like Hungary, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Indonesia. Indonesia alone has extended 2,000 scholarships to PNG students.

"This is not just about opportunity—this is about expanding the boundaries of possibility for every PNG child.

"Whether they've completed their education through the regular system or through Flexible Open Distance Education (FODE), we want every child to have the chance to continue their learning, to grow, and to succeed.

"This STEM scholarship initiative is more than a programme; it is a beacon of hope and a testament to the resilience and potential of Papua New Guinea's next generation," Prime Minister added.

In addition, he said, "With every scholar who steps on a plane to China, India, or the USA, a new chapter in PNG's future is written—one of progress, innovation, and global leadership.

"As these 54 bright students embark on their journeys, they carry with them the pride of a nation and the responsibility to return and transform their communities and country." ■

Minister Launches 'GAVAMANI TOKTOK' Masiu 'GAVAMANI NEWSPAPER'

The Minister for Information and Communications Technology, Hon. Timothy Masiu, officially unveiled the monthly trilingual 'Gavamani Toktok', the government's newly branded development newspaper, at the PNG Digital Transformation Summit 2024 early this month.

"I am proud to announce that the Department of ICT has revived the Gavamani Sivarai newspaper, rebranded as 'Gavamani Toktok', which will be printed monthly and will cover government policy and development news to keep our citizens

informed of what we are doing in government," Minister Masiu said.

Secretary for the Department of ICT, Mr. Steven Matainaho, explained that the new government publication will focus on national policies and development updates, ensuring citizens are well-informed. "The July edition is now available for download in PDF format via the provided QR code," he noted.

Looking ahead, Mr. Matainaho shared plans to further enhance Gavamani Toktok's reach and accessibility.

"Moving forward, the plan is to expand the project with a dedicated

news website and app for Gavamani Toktok," he said. "Additionally, there are upcoming plans to initiate mass print and distribution at selected centers across Papua New Guinea."

He emphasized that this initiative aligns with the National Media Development Policy 2024, highlighting the importance of improving government communication.

"The Department has recently completed the setup of a government information studio with the intent to create content on public policies and development initiatives for dissemination to citizens," added Mr. Matainaho.

The launch of Gavamani Toktok marks a significant step in enhancing government transparency and communication, ensuring that vital information is easily accessible to the public. ■



Hon. Timothy Masiu, MP, Minister for Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and Member for South Bougainville.

How to COUNTER MISINFORMATION



Building Media Literacy

- Upskill your critical thinking.
- Fact-check before you LIKE and SHARE
- Diversify your news sources



Promote Responsible Journalism and Fact-Checking

- Support credible journalists and news organizations
- Amplify fact-checking efforts



Personal Accountability

- Be mindful of what you share
- Engage in respectful dialogue
- Own your mistakes