

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**CONCLUDING STATEMENT (VIRTUAL)**

**BY**

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF**

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,**

**NEW YORK, USA**

**TO THE**

**39TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC)**

**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) THIRD CYCLE**

**FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**9 NOVEMBER 2021**

“Check against delivery”

**Madam President, Excellencies, distinguished members of the Human Rights Council, Fellow delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

[[1]](#footnote-1)Daba Namona!

It is my distincthonour and pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of Papua New Guinea, to make some concluding remarks at this phase of the Third Cycle of the UPR process for my country – Papua New Guinea.

Let me begin by recognizing the laudable leadership of our collective work, by the President of the Human Rights Council and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations in Geneva Her Excellency Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan and her distinguished delegation of Fiji, our fellow Blue Pacific Continent and Melanesian neighbour, particularly under the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. [[2]](#footnote-2)Vinaka vaka levu!

We also pay tribute to Papua New Guinea’s UPR Troika Members; namely, the distinguished delegations of Eritrea, Fiji and Venezuela, for their important, supportive and valued role in facilitating my country’s UPR process, including on the Draft Working Report, which is now being considered by the Council.

Similarly, we extend our gratitude to the Members of the Council, other UN Member States, inter-governmental entities, civil society organizations and other interested parties for your welcome engagement with us, particularly through the review of our National UPR Report and the feedback, including notably the draft recommendations that are now before us for further consideration.

We are also pleased with the manner in which the Secretariat, including the representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Country Office in Papua New Guinea, ably assisted us in the UPR process and thank them for their valued guidance, forbearance and perseverance, without which it would have been even more challenging for us to deliver our UPR Report. We would be pleased to have their continued support, going forward.

Indeed, by far, this was the most challenging UPR process for us, as a consequence of the impact of COVID-19 on the overall national work programme.

The delayed submission of our Third Cycle UPR Report to the UPR Secretariat and the Council is a clear testament to this. We are optimistic, however, that the lessons we have learned from this UPR process will help us do better in future.

**Madam President,**

Turning specifically to the draft UPR Recommendations; it was indeed with great interest for us to hear the many voices from across the world on the human rights issues in my country – Papua New Guinea.

We have taken due note of the one-hundred and sixty-one draft Recommendations proposed for our consideration.

We also note that this covers a wide spectrum of thematic arears such as on international human rights treaty obligations, national human rights institutional framework, persons with disability, gender equality and empowerment, discrimination, rights to health and education, sustainable development, environment and human rights, children’s rights, and the administration of justice.

Many of these areas identified are of importance and relevance to Papua New Guinea. A good proportion of them are been addressed by my Government, albeit, at varying levels. However, there is also room for further improvement.

Given the complexity of the issues involved, I would underscore that Papua New Guinea will revert to the Council within the prescribed three months period on the draft Recommendations received.

This will allow for proper consideration of the draft Recommendations at the national level.

Meaningfully implementing the final set of UPR Recommendations, once adopted by the Council, together with those from the previous UPR cycles is highly important for Papua New Guinea.

Given the domestic challenges, including resource and capacity constraints Papua New Guinea continues to face, and particularly with the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, we welcome the helpful draft Recommendations made by certain delegations for technical cooperation and assistance from development partners, including the UN system, in further fostering and advancing human rights in the country.

**Madam President**,

Now let me make some additional preliminary general comments on the Draft Recommendations.

The aim, in this regard, is to suggest possible ways the Council and the wider UN membership could consider reviewing how the UPR draft Recommendations are prepared and processed under the existing UPR mechanism.

My delegation is cognizant of the Council’s resolution 16/21 regarding the review of the work and functioning of the Council as well as the ongoing efforts for the Council’s efficiency process in the context of the overall UN reforms taking place.

Nevertheless, we are concerned about the manner in which the UPR draft Recommendations are addressed in the Council. In our considered view there is a pressing need to further review it after 3 UPR cycles with the aim of improving and further strengthening it.

The current plethora of UPR Draft Recommendations from different delegations highlight that many are identical in nature except for certain nuances. This, in our considered view, needs to be streamlined.

**Madam President**,

Doing so, in our view, will not only help Members States, particularly Small Island Developing States with special circumstances, better deal with a manageable number of UPR Recommendations more effectively but also assist improve the working methods of the Council as it relates to the UPR process.

Focusing on been verbatim and not stepping on others toes, figuratively, with respect to the Draft Recommendations from different delegations over the gist of the substance, to our thinking is unhelpful, not only to the States under review but the Council’s overall UPR work.

Additionally, there are certain important draft Recommendations, however, elements therein are either ambiguous or not framed in the right context. In Papua New Guinea’s case we are aware of several of these. This may potentially result in such draft Recommendations not accepted by the State under review.

These are some food-for-thought that my delegation would like to share with the Human Rights Council and the wider UN membership to reflect on with the ultimate aim of further strengthening the UPR process.

**Madam President,**

In closing, as we work towards finalizing our UPR Recommendations, we stand ready and committed to continuing our close partnership with the Troika members of our UPR and other Council members as well as other relevant multistakeholders such as civil society and our development partners, including the UN system.

On our part, the importance of national leadership and ownership of our human rights agenda cannot be overstated. In this spirit, Papua New Guinea will endeavour to not only share the final UPR Recommendations with our people and communities countrywide but more importantly work towards ensuring that our people and country benefit from them.

Furthermore, my delegation would like to reassure the Council of Papua New Guinea’s steadfast commitment to upholding, safeguarding and fostering human rights in the country and beyond, and in accordance with our national and international human rights commitments and obligations.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to also pay special tribute to the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund, and the Friends of LDCs and SIDS in Geneva as well as the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Secretariat for the continuing exemplary work and transformative partnerships forged with LDCs and SIDS, particularly those unrepresented physically in Geneva, including my own country – Papua New Guinea - on human rights capacity building and training of LDCs and SIDS. Such welcome and targeted practical support has proven highly useful, including in the UPR process.

Thank you, Madam President.

1. Good morning in Hiri Motu, one of the National languages of Papua New Guinea and also one of the country’s over 850 languages! [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Thank you indeed! [↑](#footnote-ref-2)