

## PM MARAPE COMMISSIONS PAPUA NEW GUINEA PARTICIPATION IN THE 2025 WORLD EXPO IN OSAKA



Image courtesy of <https://www.expo2025.or.jp/en/expo-map-index/access/>

**Prime Minister James Marape has thrown his full support behind Papua New Guinea's participation in the 2025 World Expo in Osaka, as he officially commissioned the six month project in Japan at Parliament House.**

The global event is a massive showcasing platform for countries' products, produce, technology, services, and arts & culture both digitally and physically, and will be held in two venues in Japan. It is expected to attract up to 28 million visitors with over 160 countries already confirming their participation.

Prime Minister Marape, during a dinner event on March 6 labelled 'Osaka Night' held at the State Function Room and attended by relevant ministers, government officials and members of the diplomatic corp, reaffirmed Government's under-taking to support PNG's participation, including reopening direct flights from Port Moresby to Narita during the length of the event.

He also confirmed his participation at the world event to support the PNG Pavilion and to discuss with Japanese leadership the formalization of an economic agreement between PNG and Japan to capture the 50-year partnership between the two countries.

Although the Prime Minister mentioned the reopening of Air Niugini service to Japan, he cautioned that relevant agencies

such as State Enterprises and Tourism must work harder at making the route profitable as Government cannot keep subsidizing the costs of the flights just for the sake of keeping it open.

Prime Minister Marape also spoke strongly in support of PNG's position in the region, especially in relation to the growing Asian market and PNG's evolving status, even while it faces socio-economic challenges because of its diversity. He said, "Our diversity makes it quite challenging and we might have a long road ahead of us, but our nation is prospering toward what has been foreseen by Somare and our founding fathers. We take our place in the Pacific seriously.

"We will use this expo to tell the world that we remain a free-market economy with a robust democracy; where our government continues to honour business contracts with our investors.

"We have LNG, food, raw resources, fisheries, forestry and we will use this opportunity to find markets in Japan or elsewhere in the world.

"In Osaka, we will anchor PNG as a place of investment, business, and recreation – a destination of choice," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister has also requested that Pacific brothers Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji who cannot build their own pavilion to be allowed room in the PNG Pavilion to also showcase their work.

The Osaka World Expo will run from April to October this year with one venue holding a digital exhibition in Osaka, and another venue as a commercial facility in Tokyo.

The digital exhibition will showcase all ICT products and services which will be accessed in real-time across the world, while the commercial facility will showcase raw produce, processed products, tourism, mining and petroleum industries, investments opportunities and everything that needs to be showcased.

Besides the exposition, a two-day PNG-Japan Trade & Investment Conference will coincide with the event, to be held in Tokyo; as well as other meetings and events which will be held as part of the expo.

The Department of International Trade & Investment is spearheading this event with support from relevant government departments and agencies. Already on board are the National Fisheries Authority, the National Cultural Commission, Investment Promotion Authority, Tourism Promotion Authority, PNG National Forest Authority, Kumul Minerals Holding Limited and Ela Motors.

The world expo is held every five years and is a large-scale event that also assists to transform host cities for years because of the length of the shows and the volume of people that participate both as exhibitors and viewers.



## PM MARAPE OPENS ENGA PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL



L-R: Enga Province Governor Peter Ipatas and Prime Minister James Marape unveil the plaque to signify the official opening of the Enga Provincial Hospital

**Prime Minister James Marape officially opened the new K600 million Enga Provincial Hospital on March 31 in Wabag, describing it as a "greenfield, world-class facility" and one of the most significant health infrastructure investments in Papua New Guinea's history.**

"This hospital stands as a symbol of what strong leadership, consistency, and collaboration across all levels of government and development partners can achieve. At a cost of over K600 million, this is not only a milestone for Enga, but a model for our entire country," he said.

Addressing dignitaries, local leaders, development partners, public servants, and citizens who gathered in large numbers despite the rain, the Prime Minister praised the tireless efforts of Enga Governor Sir Peter Ipatas and acknowledged the pivotal roles played by past and present national governments, the

Chinese Government, the Australian Government, the Department of Health, and other stakeholders.

"Enga is privileged to have a governor who has worked tirelessly over many years to realise this vision. From concept to completion, this hospital reflects years of planning, hard work, and unwavering commitment," he said.

The hospital, which meets Level 5 standards, is fully equipped with cutting-edge medical technology and has the capacity to be upgraded to Level 6 or Level 7 in the future. It will not only serve the people of Enga, but also act as a major referral centre for over 3.5 to 4 million people across the Highlands and parts of the Sepik regions.

"This is more than just a building. It is a fully equipped modern medical facility capable of treating complex illnesses, training medical professionals, and becoming a centre of excellence—particularly

for lifestyle-related diseases such as cancer and diabetes," Prime Minister Marape said.

He thanked China for its support in constructing the hospital, and Australia for providing A\$7 million towards equipment and fit-out. He also acknowledged previous governments, including the NA and PNC administrations, for their roles in initiating and supporting the project.

The Prime Minister also instructed the Health Department to move swiftly on the rollout of other provincial hospitals, stating: "We have 16 more provincial hospitals to cover, including for Bougainville." "This facility is now ready—just one day away from being operational—and is a testament to our ability to work together over time for the good of our people," he said.

Prime Minister Marape urged the Enga Provincial Health Authority to ensure the hospital functions as a regional hub, linking rural health posts and sub-health centres to the main hospital, and making full use of resources from national funding and tax credit schemes tied to major resource projects like Porgera.

"The national government has invested over K5.6 billion into districts, including those held by the opposition, in the last six years. That funding must now translate into working health centres, working aid posts, and referral pathways that lead to this hospital," he said.

He concluded with a call to action for all public servants, health workers, and stakeholders to ensure that the hospital delivers real outcomes for ordinary citizens.

"This is not just about money — it is about making systems work, about public servants rising up, and about giving our people the healthcare they deserve. Let this hospital be a lighthouse of health for Enga and the entire Highlands region."

### Department Vision and Mission Statement

Our vision is to provide strategic leadership in supporting the Government of PNG in the Development, Coordination and Implementation of sound policies, programs and effective governance that works for the benefit of the people.

Our mission is to provide coherent, high quality and timely advice and support to the Prime Minister, the National Executive Council and the Chief Secretary to Government.

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**PM Marape briefs national media on his successful guest of government visit to New Zealand.**

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## Message from the Acting Chief Secretary to Government

Welcome everyone to Issue 3 of the 2025 edition of the Inside Melanesian Haus monthly newsletter.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge everyone's contribution towards the smooth operations of the Department last year and your continued dedication to the call to serve the people of Papua New Guinea. As we are in the 50th year of our Independence as a Sovereign Nation, everyone of us must continue to work together to continue to deliver quality basic services to our people right across the country, and enable them to become economically viable, leading to economic independence. Do not forget to adopt Christian values in your work ethics and your workplaces as well. Let us all work together with honesty, respect and tolerance to take back PNG. In this issue of the 2025 Edition of the Inside Melanesian Haus Newsletter, on **page 1**, we bring to you the official

opening of the Enga Provincial Hospital. On **page 2**, Prime Minister Marape meets with football corporation executives to discuss proposed football academy. On **page 3**, the Prime Minister briefs national media on his successful quest of government visit to New Zealand. On **page 4**, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand governments sign Statement of Partnership. On **page 5**, Prime Minister Marape thanks New Zealand Government for engaging Papua New Guineans in horticulture industry. On **page 6**, Government continues phase 3 of assistance to businesses, CPL Group and Eliseo, affected by January 10 riots. On **page 7**, Government and PNGTUC unite to tackle workplace harassment and gender-based violence. On **page 8**, Prime Minister Marape calls for a national shift in mind-set to end gender-based violence. On **page 9**, Parliament passes laws to set up new authority to better

regulate PNG's petroleum sector. On **page 10**, we bring to you the start of the APEC Secretariate Column. On **page 11**, PM Marape commends Police leadership on engagement of Commonwealth Police personnel to revamp RPNGC. On **page 12**, Prime Minister Marape commends appointment of international judges. On **page 13**, Agriculture Minister John Boito presents comprehensive sector report to PM Marape and key Ministers. On **page 14**, PNG's commitment to combat illegal fishing strengthened with U.S Defense Cooperation. On **page 15**, Kiunga Airport Terminal officially opened by Prime Minister Marape. On **page 16**, PM Marape commissions Papua New Guinea's participation in the 2025 World Expo in Osaka. Happy Reading!

Ivan Pomaleu, OBE  
Acting Chief Secretary

Inside Melanesian Haus is published monthly by the Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council.

**Publisher:** Dept of PMr & NEC  
**Executive Editor:** Chief Secretary  
Dept of Prime Minister & NEC

**Editor:** Matrom John  
**Sub-Editor:** Anesthesia Angoro  
**Reporter:** Terry Mark  
Firman Nanol  
Royden Geno  
Anesthesia Angoro

**Photography:** Media Branch  
**Layout & Design:** Pius Eano  
**Printing:** Media Branch

For editorial comments, please write to:

The Editor  
Inside Melanesian Haus Newsletter  
Department of Prime Minister & NEC  
P.O. Box 639  
Waigani, NCD  
Papua New Guinea

Phone: +675 301 9251 | 9254

Email: pm\_media@pmnec.gov.pg

## PM MARAPE MEETS WITH FOOTBALL CORPORATION EXECUTIVES TO DISCUSS PROPOSED FOOTBALL ACADEMY

**Prime Minister James Marape met with executives of the Wellington Phoenix Football Corporation today to discuss pathway development for young Papua New Guineans through a football academy training program in New Zealand.**

Prime Minister Marape met with General Manager David Dome of Wellington Phoenix Football Corporation, who is keen to work with Oceania Football Confederation nations, including Papua New Guinea, to help football development in the country. Mr Dome informed Prime Minister Marape and his visiting delegation that the academy will benefit PNG in terms of developing upcoming Papua New Guinean players. "There are three ways of how we will conduct this academy program. Firstly, we will go to PNG, and by using your contacts, we'll select the best players and bring them to Wellington. We will then put them in school and train them. These young Papua New Guineans will come out with English based education and

provide a proper training program," he said.

He added that a second option is to bring players or teams from PNG, a week at a time, to play while they train under the academy.

"Our final option is to go to PNG and set up a satellite academy and train your coaches to be at our academy level to develop your players in PNG," he said.

Impressed with Mr Dome's presentation, Prime Minister Marape said whilst the country is predominantly known for rugby league, football (soccer) footprint is almost 70 percent.

"We have a semi-pro competition in PNG, which is doing well but not well enough, so it would be nice to have at the ground level. I'm sure that thousands of kids who will funnelled through this program for development. Your assistance is welcome," the Prime Minister said. Also sharing the same sentiment with Prime Minister Marape was Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and Sports Hon. Kinoka Feo.

## PRIME MINISTER MARAPE OPENS KIUNGA AIRPORT TERMINAL



L-R: Governor for Western Province Toboi Awi Yoto and Prime Minister James Marape opening the Kiunga Airport

**Prime Minister James Marape officially opened the newly redeveloped Kiunga Airport terminal in North Fly District of Western Province on March 31, marking a significant milestone in Papua New Guinea's national infrastructure agenda and reaffirming the Government's commitment to connecting remote communities through transformative public investments.**

The occasion marked the launch of a K70 million infrastructure upgrade under the Civil Aviation Development Programme II (CADIP II)—a flagship initiative co-financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Papua New Guinea, implemented by the National Airports Corporation (NAC). This major project includes the construction of a new Type C terminal building, the strengthening and widening of the runway, apron and taxiway pavements, new aircraft parking pads and helipads, a new access road, and NAC staff housing, among other components. Once completed, the upgraded facilities will comply with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards and PNG Civil Aviation Rules, as administered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA PNG).

"This is not just an airport project. It is a bold signal that Western Province is not forgotten," Prime

Minister Marape stated. "Kiunga sits at the heart of what I call the 'Midwest' of Papua New Guinea—linking the Highlands, Southern, and Gulf regions. It is a growth centre in the making."

The event also featured the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between NAC, the Fly River Provincial Government, and contractor China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC)—the firm awarded the contract in September 2024. Preliminary works commenced earlier this month, with full project delivery scheduled for completion within two years.

CCECC has mobilised to Kiunga and is progressing with site preparation. Upon completion, the upgraded runway and taxiway pavements are expected to last five to ten years without major maintenance. The new terminal facilities will improve passenger and cargo processing and create employment opportunities for local residents. Prior to launching the CADIP II works, Prime Minister Marape inaugurated a newly constructed K7.8 million terminal, jointly funded by the North Fly District Development Authority (K4.5 million) and the PNG Sustainable Development Programme (K3.3 million). A commemorative plaque was unveiled to honour the occasion.

"I commend local leadership, particularly James Donald, for

making prudent use of district funds to deliver real infrastructure for our people," Prime Minister Marape added.

Prime Minister Marape reminded all Members of Parliament and development stakeholders that public funds must yield visible results.

He emphasised that his government has transferred more than K5.6 billion directly to districts over the past six years—an unprecedented redistribution of national wealth from Waigani to the people.

"Districts that deliver results will receive more. Kiunga and North Fly are leading by example," he said.

He urged citizens to hold elected leaders accountable for the effective use of district development funding. The Kiunga Airport Upgrade is part of a broader nationwide initiative to modernise Papua New Guinea's aviation network under CADIP II. Other major works include:

- Aropa Airport (Autonomous Region of Bougainville)
- Hoskins Airport (West New Britain)
- Wewak Airport (East Sepik)
- Air traffic control upgrades at Port Moresby and Goroka airports by NiuSky Pacific Ltd
- Rural airstrip rehabilitation through the Department of Transport

Kiunga Airport also benefited under CADIP I (Tranche 3), which provided K10 million for perimeter fencing and security upgrades.

"I thank ADB for remaining a true development partner," said Prime Minister Marape.

"While others turned away, ADB stayed with us. Projects like this show what partnership, vision and commitment can achieve."

Prime Minister Marape called for the extension of Kiunga's runway to accommodate night landings and larger aircraft, noting the town's growing significance with resource projects like P'nyang LNG.

He also reiterated the Government's intent to invest in other strategic towns in the Southern Corridor, including Daru and Kerema, and to continue developing rural airstrips to improve access and service delivery.

"We are growing PNG—one project at a time, one district at a time. We must keep moving forward with enabling infrastructure that connects our people and unlocks our nation's full potential," Prime Minister Marape concluded.



## RPNGC First National Agency to join Special Audit Team on Connect PNG



Julius Tasion Assistant Commissioner, Specialist Operations (left) and Barry Egu Principal Internal Auditor (right)

**Acting Chief Secretary to Government Ivan Pomaleu has welcomed and commended the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) for answering his call for collaboration in the Special Audit of the Connect PNG Infrastructure Programme.**

The RPNGC is the first agency to answer this call for collaboration after Mr Pomaleu made the call during the signing of contractual agreements on February 25, between the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, international firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, and Norths Projects Ltd, a Brisbane based specialist consultancy firm for construction and infrastructure development projects.

Conducting an audit of the Connect PNG Infrastructure Programme is crucial to ensuring transparency, accountability, and proper use of public funds. The role of police in providing security during the special audit is essential for a number of reasons which include protecting Auditors, Engineers and Officials, preventing tampering or interference, maintaining public order, enforcing compliance, deterring corruption and fraud and safeguarding infrastructure and assets over the course of the audit process.

He further added that with the addition of the RPNGC in the National Team for the Special Audit, the people of Papua New Guinea can be assured of a fair, transparent, and effective assessment of the implementation of the program. The involvement of RPNGC ensures safety, compliance, and integrity, ultimately contributing to good governance and accountability in infrastructure development.

## PNG'S COMMITMENT TO COMBAT ILLEGAL FISHING STRENGTHENED WITH U.S. DEFENSE COOPERATION

**Prime Minister James Marape has reinforced Papua New Guinea's commitment to protecting its marine resources by intensifying efforts against illegal fishing.** Through the Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with the United States, PNG will enhance surveillance and enforcement in its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), ensuring that illegal fishing activities are promptly identified and addressed.

Prime Minister Marape emphasised the critical economic value of PNG's fisheries sector, particularly tuna, which accounts for over 55% of the world's tuna supply. He highlighted that small Pacific Island nations, despite being custodians of vast ocean resources, must not remain economically disadvantaged due to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Papua New Guinea is responsible for approximately 15-20% of the world's tuna supply. However, when considering the wider Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO)—which includes PNG and other Pacific nations—this region accounts for over 55% of the global tuna catch. PNG has the largest EEZ in the Pacific, rich in skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye, and albacore tuna, making it one of the most significant contributors to the global tuna industry.

"Illegal fishing costs us billions in lost revenue. I call on all our partners—including the United States, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and Australia—to work with PNG and other Pacific nations to remain vigilant against illegal fishing. As large ocean states, we must ensure that our rich marine resources benefit our people and economies," Prime Minister Marape said.

Under the DCA with the U.S., PNG will enhance its capacity to apprehend illegal fishing vessels through joint maritime patrols and real-time surveillance technology. The U.S. military will assist in bolstering PNG's ability to monitor its waters and swiftly act against unauthorised fishing activities.

"We are working with the U.S. military to strengthen our naval and air surveillance capabilities. Any illegal fishing vessels caught

in PNG's waters will be immediately apprehended. To further safeguard PNG's fisheries sector, the Government is set to introduce a Fish Domestication Policy in the second quarter of 2025. This policy mandates that all fish caught in PNG's waters must be processed locally, ensuring value addition before export.

"No unprocessed fish will leave our waters. All catches will be brought back to processing facilities in Madang, Lae, and other designated locations to create jobs, boost our economy, and maximise the benefits of our natural resources," Prime Minister Marape said.

As a senior member of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA), PNG is also committed to supporting other Pacific Island nations in strengthening their fisheries enforcement. Through regional cooperation, PNG will share surveillance capabilities with neighbouring nations, ensuring a united approach against IUU fishing.

"We will extend our enforcement capabilities to support our Pacific neighbours. As a leader in regional fisheries management, PNG is committed to ensuring that our ocean resources are properly accounted for and that Pacific nations benefit from our vast marine wealth," the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Marape also reaffirmed his government's broader agenda of protecting national resources, extending beyond fisheries to include forestry and other extractive industries. Through state-led marketing strategies, PNG aims to ensure that timber and other natural resources are harvested responsibly, processed locally, and contribute directly to the national economy.

"Just as we are securing our fisheries sector, we will also ensure transparency and accountability in forestry. Our resources must benefit our people first before they are exported. The Government remains steadfast in its mission to protect PNG's sovereignty, enforce sustainable resource management, and ensure that the country derives maximum benefit from our rich natural wealth," he said.

## PM MARAPE'S SUCCESSFUL GUEST OF GOVERNMENT VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND



L-R: Prime Minister of New Zealand Christopher Luxon and Prime Minister James Marape at a joint press conference during the guest of government visit

**Prime Minister James Marape returned from a successful official visit to New Zealand on March 28, where he was hosted as a distinguished guest of the New Zealand Government.**

The visit, characterised by productive discussions and enhanced bilateral relations, focused on economic cooperation, labour mobility, agriculture, education, and state-owned enterprise reforms.

### Strengthening Bilateral Relations

Prime Minister Marape's official visit to New Zealand commenced with a high-level bilateral meeting held in the New Zealand Parliament in Wellington with New Zealand Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Christopher Luxon. The discussions culminated in the signing of a Statement of Partnership for 2025–2029, aimed at bolstering economic, political, and cultural ties between the two nations, while providing a strategic roadmap for collaboration in various sectors.

"Upon arrival, the Prime Minister and I had a good bilateral meeting in the Parliament that concluded with the signing of the Statement of Partnership for 2025–2029," said Prime Minister Marape.

He added, "Both Prime Minister Luxon and I agree that there must

be a step up. We also agreed that the Statement of Partnership is a living document... we must work so that we can be mutually beneficial to the relationship we have."

The Prime Minister also engaged in constructive discussions with New Zealand's Deputy Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader, emphasising the bipartisan approach of the New Zealand Government in its engagements with Papua New Guinea. The series of meetings reflected New Zealand's commitment to strengthening its relationship with Papua New Guinea at all levels of government.

### Labour Mobility and Economic Opportunities

A major focus of the visit was the enhancement of labour mobility between Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. Presently, over 600 Papua New Guineans are employed under New Zealand's seasonal work schemes, earning approximately K50,000 annually. Prime Minister Marape highlighted the potential to expand this number to over 10,000 in the coming years.

"We will continue working with both Australia and New Zealand to create more opportunities for our youth," he stated.

The Prime Minister shared positive feedback from New Zealand employers who praised the diligence and productivity of Papua New Guinean workers. "I pitched for the space and the report we got from a couple of employers we had contact with was that Papua New Guineans working there are hard workers, productive workers and a good report we received."

Additionally, the New Zealand Government expressed interest in collaborating with Papua New Guinea to enhance its agricultural export standards, particularly for tropical produce such as coffee and cocoa.

### Agriculture and Livestock Collaboration

Prime Minister Marape was particularly impressed by New Zealand's agricultural success, noting that agriculture, livestock, and fisheries contribute between 60% and 70% of New Zealand's economy.

The Prime Minister remarked on the vast potential Papua New Guinea possesses but has yet to fully harness, particularly in agriculture and livestock.

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# PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND NEW ZEALAND SIGN NEW STATEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP

**Prime Minister James Marape and New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon signed the refreshed PNG-New Zealand Statement of Partnership 2025 - 2029 to reaffirm their countries' bilateral relationship.**

The signing took place on March 25 at the New Zealand Parliament House Theatre Room following the leaders' bilateral meeting this afternoon.

During the press stand-up, Prime Minister Luxon said that New Zealand deeply valued its friendship with Papua New Guinea, a crucial partner in the Pacific.

"We look forward to continuing to work alongside Papua New Guinea on issues facing the Pacific region, including climate change and upholding Pacific Islands Forum unity," said Prime Minister Luxon.

In response, Prime Minister Marape said the Statement of Partnership by the leaders instilled a new desire to achieve practical and meaningful



L-R: Prime Minister of New Zealand Christopher Luxon and Prime Minister James Marape signing the Statement of Partnership

outcomes that would contribute to Papua New Guinea in the areas of education, public sector support, climate change, increased business, trade and investment and regional security.

"It is a two-way arrangement that is strategic, more focused, and of mutual benefit, particularly in developing stronger ties in

agriculture and fisheries.

"It also increases and structures dialogue to be more frequent at Leaders', Ministerial, and Officials levels," said Prime Minister Marape. Following the signing ceremony, Prime Minister Marape was hosted to an official dinner by Prime Minister Luxon at the PM's official residence, the Premier House.

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## PM MARAPE VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND A SUCCESS

"These potentials we have in PNG... but we face challenges at various levels of governance," he noted.

Discussions were also held to enhance collaboration between the Livestock Improvement Corporation of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea's Livestock Development Corporation, aimed at boosting local livestock production and developing sustainable agricultural practices.

"We are a country bigger than New Zealand by over 100,000 square kilometres. But our livestock is under 50,000. We are closest to the biggest beef-eating nation, that's Indonesia next door. Yet for so long we've just been focusing on oil and gold and gas and not focusing on key areas that could anchor the economy," Prime Minister Marape stated.

### Technical Expertise and Infrastructure Development

A key outcome of the visit was Prime Minister Marape's request for technical expertise from New Zealand to enhance the efficiency of Papua New Guinea's State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

He proposed the appointment of independent directors from New Zealand to contribute their expertise to sectors such as power, water, telecommunications, and airlines.

"I've asked for about five technical experts especially to be inserted at our board level in our power company, in our water company, in our telco company and in our airline company," he stated.

### Humanitarian Efforts and Educational Collaboration

Prime Minister Marape acknowledged the continuous support provided by New Zealand-based NGOs, including the Fred Hollows Foundation, which has been actively working in Papua New Guinea. He also noted a substantial investment by New Zealand in developing a world-class eye clinic at the Port Moresby General Hospital, which is expected to benefit thousands of Papua New Guineans.

He also met over 50 Papua New Guinean students studying under New Zealand Government scholarships and expressed

his desire to increase these opportunities. "I pitched very high in New Zealand that I'm going to send more kids to study there," Prime Minister Marape said, stressing the importance of education and collaboration between the two nations.

Enhancing Regional Relations Prime Minister Marape emphasised that Papua New Guinea's position as a respected regional partner has been strengthened by its continued commitment to democracy and engagement with neighbouring countries. As Papua New Guinea approaches its 50th anniversary of independence, the Prime Minister stressed the significance of building stronger ties with New Zealand and other regional partners.

"They appreciate who we are in our region... seen from the context of Pacific Nation that bridges Southeast Asia and Asia," Prime Minister Marape said.

He further noted, "No longer is PNG seen from a lower perspective. We are seen from an equal regional partnership perspective. Our views in the region are taken on board seriously and we are a valued partner in the region."

## AGRICULTURE MINISTER PRESENTS COMPREHENSIVE SECTOR REPORT TO PM MARAPE & KEY MINISTERS

**Minister for Agriculture, John Boito, has presented a detailed report on the status and future direction of Papua New Guinea's agriculture sector during a high-level ministerial meeting with Prime Minister James Marape on March 4, 2025.**

The meeting, held in Port Moresby, brought together key ministers, including Minister for Coffee William Bando, Minister for Livestock Sekie Agisa, and Minister for Oil Palm Francis Maneke, along with their respective agency heads. The discussions focused on the Department of Agriculture and Livestock's (NDAL) achievements in 2024, major challenges faced, and strategic priorities for 2025 aimed at revitalising the sector as a key pillar of economic growth and food security in Papua New Guinea.

Minister Boito's presentation outlined NDAL's key result areas (KRAs) as part of the Medium-Term Development Plan IV (MTDP IV), with a strong emphasis on:

- Governance and Policy Leadership – Strengthening agricultural policies and oversight.

- Sector Coordination and Investment Promotion – Enhancing partnerships with foreign and domestic investors to boost commercial agriculture.

- Financial Oversight and Budget Management – Ensuring effective resource allocation for maximum impact.

"Despite facing budgetary and operational constraints in 2024, we have made significant strides in reforming the agriculture sector. Through strengthened policies, strategic investments, and sector-wide coordination, we are paving the way for sustainable growth," Minister Boito stated.

Minister Boito provided an overview of major accomplishments in 2024, which include:

1. Strengthening Policy & Strategic Planning

- Successfully launched the National Agriculture Sector Plan (NASP) 2024-2033 and the NDAL Corporate Plan 2024-2028 to guide sector growth.

- Advanced the review of the National Agriculture Administration (NAA) Bill, which is now in its final legislative stages.

- Developed the Rice Import Replacement Strategy, aimed at

reducing dependence on imported rice by increasing local production.

- Progressed the formulation of the Spice Industry Policy 2025-2030 to boost the high-value spice sector.

2. Securing External Partnerships & Investment

- US\$60 million secured from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to develop fresh food systems and market infrastructure.

- US\$350 million funding negotiations with the World Bank's PACD Project for 2026, targeting rural agricultural development and productivity improvements.

- Represented PNG at the FAO Global Investor Forum (Rome), advocating for downstream agricultural processing and value-added exports.

- Extended the IFAD-funded 'Market Bilong Vilis Fama' fresh produce project for an additional two years.

3. Enhancing Accountability & Collaboration

- Completed a full financial audit of NDAL in 2024 to strengthen governance and accountability.

- Launched the Agriculture Management Information System (AMIS) to streamline data collection and improve transparency.

- Conducted nationwide consultations to enhance sector agency performance and budget alignment.

4. Boosting Commodity Yields & Domestic Market Growth

- Coffee production grew by 10% annually since 2021, driven by farmer support programme and improved processing techniques.

- Cocoa production saw a 3% annual increase since 2019, solidifying PNG's position as a high-quality cocoa exporter.

- Implemented pilot programs for potato, bulb onion, and citrus production, supporting domestic import replacement initiatives.

Despite these achievements, Minister Boito acknowledged ongoing challenges, including budget limitations, logistics constraints, and market access issues that continue to affect agricultural expansion.

Minister Boito outlined an ambitious roadmap for 2025, focusing on fully implementing NASP and strengthening governance and investment. Key strategic priorities include:

1. Implementing NASP & Strengthening Institutional Frameworks

- NDAL's corporate restructuring to enhance efficiency, with Phase 1 completion by December 2025.

- Establishing the NASP Implementing Secretariat by Q1 2025 to oversee national agricultural projects.

- Passing the Agriculture Investment Corporation (AIC) Bill, which will facilitate investment opportunities for commercial farming.

- Hosting the first-ever National Agriculture Industry Public-Private Sector Partnership Conference in Lae from April 7-11, 2025, bringing together government, private sector, and development partners.

2. Strengthening Sector Coordination & Investment Promotion

- Re-establishing the National Agriculture Council (NAC) to oversee governance in the sector.

- Collaborating with provincial and district authorities to revive District Resource Centres, ensuring better service delivery to farmers.

- Finalising a Host Country Agreement (HCA) with the FAO by June 2025 to strengthen international cooperation in agricultural development.

3. Combating Pests & Strengthening Biosecurity

- National response strategy for Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) infestations, which threaten PNG's K500 million coffee industry.

- Implementing biosecurity measures to monitor agricultural imports and exports, ensuring compliance with global standards.

- Enhancing agriculture land inventory and management to optimize state land utilisation.

4. Policy and Legislative Reforms

- Removing import duty (tax) on agriculture inputs to lower production costs for farmers.

- Reviewing key policies, including:

- Food Security Policy
- Rice and Grain Policy
- Agricultural Digitalisation Policy
- Fresh Produce Policy

- Promoting Women in Agriculture initiatives, in collaboration with EU and FAO, to increase female participation in farming enterprises.



## PM MARAPE COMMENDS APPOINTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL JUDGES

Prime Minister James Marape has expressed his commendation on March 27 for the Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Pila Niningi, and the Judicial and Legal Services Commission (JLSC) for their recent appointment of international judges to key positions within Papua New Guinea's judiciary.

This initiative is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the judicial system, enhancing the delivery of justice, and improving efficiency across the nation.

The Judicial and Legal Services Commission (JLSC) is an independent commission responsible for the appointment, promotion, and discipline of judges in Papua New Guinea. The commission is composed of several key members including Chief Justice (Chairperson), the Attorney-General, a representative of the Public Services Commission, a representative of the National Executive Council, and two representatives from the Law Society of Papua New Guinea. The Commission's work is pivotal in maintaining a credible and efficient justice system that upholds the principles of impartiality, integrity, and professionalism.

Prime Minister Marape acknowledged the leadership of the Chief Justice in spearheading efforts to integrate external judges into both the National Court and Supreme Court, underscoring the country's commitment to enhancing its judicial capacity and ensuring



Prime Minister James Marape

the timely delivery of justice. The inclusion of international judges is intended to bolster the nation's capacity to address complex legal cases and reduce backlog, thereby promoting public confidence in the justice system.

The Prime Minister made special mention of a particular judge who, along with his young family, has chosen to relocate to Tari, the capital of Hela Province. This decision is of great significance given Tari's central role as the headquarters of Hela Province

and its proximity to the PNG LNG project, a major contributor to the national economy, accounting for approximately 35% of Papua New Guinea's annual budget.

"Having a resident judge in Tari is a monumental step forward for our justice system. It ensures that law enforcement efforts are complemented by timely prosecutions and convictions, particularly in regions critical to our nation's economy," he said.

The Prime Minister further expressed his appreciation to the Hela Provincial Government for their proactive support in providing accommodation for the judiciary and facilitating the judge's transition into the community. He noted that this cooperation demonstrates a shared commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring that justice is both accessible and effective for all citizens.

"The presence of a resident judge in Tari will enhance the administration of justice, particularly in a region where law enforcement faces unique challenges. It also serves as a strong message of our government's dedication to ensuring equal access to justice for all Papua New Guineans, regardless of their location," he added.

The Prime Minister concluded by expressing his heartfelt gratitude to the judge and his family for their willingness to take on this important role in Tari, as well as to other judges who have accepted postings throughout the country to enhance the justice system.

## DEPT LAUNCHES CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



The Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council has recently launched its Christian Fellowship Program for its staff. The fellowship program was officially launched on the 4th of March by Deputy Secretary Operations Mr Joshua Uvau and witnessed by staff and Living Light Four-Square Church Senior Pastor Rodney Tomuriesa with few of his Church members at the Melanesian Haus. During the launch, Senior Pastor Tomuriesa shared the Word of God before concluding the program. The fellowship program is now held every Tuesday of this year and is opened to all staff members to attend.

## NEW ZEALAND GOV'T EMPLOYS PAPUA NEW GUINEANS IN HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY



A Papua New Guinean is seen working on a farm in Blenheim, New Zealand

**Prime Minister James Marape has thanked the New Zealand Government for the engagement of Papua New Guineans, who are currently working and living in Blenheim, New Zealand.**

Prime Minister Marape expressed his appreciation to the Government of New Zealand and the employers especially Hortus Ltd for employing Papua New Guineans through the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE), a labour mobility scheme that allows New Zealand employers in the horticulture industry to recruit seasonal workers from Pacific Island nations like Papua New Guinea.

Speaking at the Hortus Ltd facilities on March 26, Prime Minister said he was pleased to see PNG employees satisfied with what they have been taught and trained whilst employed at the facilities.

Prime Minister Marape also

encouraged the employees to use the opportunity to improve their lives and become better men and women in the future.

"I am pleased to see all my sons who could have been back at home in PNG but are here, trying to find their way to survive. So, I want to appreciate you all and also thank Hortus Ltd for your engagement.

"We are pleased to see our people finding a safe haven in which they can progress in their lives," he said. The Prime Minister further encouraged the employees to use the opportunity to better their lives and continue to use the facilities to re-educate themselves for self-improvement.

"In the future, we want to use this batch not only for work under the seasonal workforce arrangement but also for them to gain education in New Zealand. So, we encourage

the PNG High Commission to take stock of the progress of our RSE workers and through our High Commission, the PNG Government can interface and overlay skill-based education or higher education for their qualifications," he said.

Prime Minister Marape said that from then on, the employers could reemploy them into skill-based employment in New Zealand, or they could return to PNG with their skills and knowledge to benefit them.

There is intention by the PNG Government to work with New Zealand in the future to open up trade and university study pathways for Grade 12 school leavers on the scheme to receive trade training or university education for the option for full employment in New Zealand or back in PNG, he said.



## EMPOWERED FUTURE STARTS AT HOME

The Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council commemorated the National Women's Day on March 24, in a small get together at the Melanesian Haus, Port Moresby.

The theme for this year is 'Take Action for an Empowered Future.' In his opening address to the staff during the event, the Acting Chief Secretary to Government Ivan Pomaleu stated that we have days of observance like the National Women's Day in our calendar simply because we are not doing enough to empower women and girls in our communities.

"Every time we nominate a day to celebrate an occasion, it is a reminder that we are not doing enough," Mr Pomaleu said.

He added that, that is why the UN agencies, the National Government and those who are in authority, in making decisions, allocate days like this so that we can continue to acknowledge those among us who are just as important as everyone else in our State and to remind ourselves that we are not doing enough to empower them. Mr Pomaleu said that in terms of taking action to empower the future, he is an advocate of taking action, starting at home, in each family.

He said children must be thought at home that both male and female offspring's have equal opportunities in life and that no one is more important than the other.

Mr Pomaleu said when the values of respect and tolerance are embodied by parents and taught to their offspring's, they will carry those values into the future and use those teachings to respect, value and empower others.

Main guest speaker of the day, the Hon. Kessy Sawang, Member for Rai Coast and Minister for Labour and Industrial Relations also urged the staff of the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council to do what they can do in their position to take action and empower others.

She added that no matter how small that action maybe, combined will millions more small actions by others can have a big impact on someone else's life in the future.

## CPL GROUP AND ELISEO RECEIVES PHASE 3 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AFTER JAN 10 RIOTS

Acting Chief Secretary to Government Ivan Pomaleu handed over K8 million (K4 million respectively) on March 31 to the CPL Group and Eliseo under Phase 3 of Government Assistance to businesses affected by the January 10 riots last year.

The cheque presentations took place at the Office of the Chief Secretary, Melanesian Haus, Port Moresby.

In his remarks before the presentation, the Acting Chief Secretary informed the press that the phase 3 of the government support is to help businesses who qualify, after stringent screening process supported by the PNG Business Council and the Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said phase 3 is to support those businesses whose properties were destroyed during the riots to rebuild their business properties to not only provide goods and services to the people but also to help them create employment for Papua New Guineans.

"It's important just to continue to clarify that we have a working relationship with the business coalition that comprises the PNG Business Council and Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce and Industry in an operating arrangement that all claims for payments are processed and the business coalition signs off on those claims before they come to our team here in the department to process," Mr Pomaleu said.

"We continue to encourage compliance with all business regulations so while we are indebted to companies that may have lost businesses during the riots, we must continue to be consistent in terms of our conversation and requirements relating to government compliance."

Mr Pomaleu informed the press that the total funding made available to assist businesses by a National Executive Council is K270 million.

He said by end of this round of payments, the government would have spent K101 million from the K270 million. Phase 3 assistance is valued around K51 million and after the handing over of the cheques today, the total value paid under Phase 3 so far would be K31 million (including the K25 million paid last week).



L-R: CPL Board Independent Director Ms. Mary Handan receiving phase 3 payment from Acting Chief Secretary Ivan Pomaleu on behalf of the CPL Group

There are about four phases to the government assistance. Phase one is the wage support that was paid last year to cover wages for National employees, estimated at around K8.7 million. Phase 2 is payment to businesses who qualified to get government assistance to remove debris from their properties which were destroyed. In phase 3, funding is now being made available, again to those businesses who qualify, to rebuild their business infrastructure. Then will come phase 4, this is having dialogue with the businesses and commercial banks to make available concessional loans to businesses who qualify under the government assistance scheme to have access to those loan facilities.

Responding to questions from Post Courier, the Acting Chief Secretary informed the press that funding for this assistance comes from the Government and is a budgeted item.

He also informed the press that government is unable to absolutely ensure that there is no repeat occurrence of such a tragedy because we are dealing with people who are living beings and have the qualified right to decide on what action they want to take in such situations.

Mr Pomaleu concluded by saying all the government can do is appeal to the good sense of the people to think about how such events can affect them, their families and communities before they take any form of action.

## PM MARAPE COMMENDS POLICE LEADERSHIP ON ENGAGEMENT OF COMMONWEALTH POLICE PERSONNEL TO REVAMP RPNGC



Prime Minister James Marape is inspecting a combined Correctional Services and RPNGC guard of honour in Madang last year. File Pic

**Prime Minister James Marape has commended the Minister for Police, Peter Tsiamalili and Police Commissioner, David Manning on March 5, for following through on his government's direction to bring in police personnel from over-seas to help revitalize capacity and leadership in the Royal PNG Constabulary.**

The Prime Minister offered the commendations following the swearing-in this week of two senior policemen from within the Commonwealth reassigned to Papua New Guinea. This is part of the ongoing police revitalization program being undertaken by the Marape-Rosso Government to rebuild the RPNGC within the next 10 years that has begun two years ago.

Chief Superintendent Rodney Swain and Chief Superintendent Glyn Lewis, both with the Australian Federal Police, were sworn in on March 4, into the Royal PNG Constabulary.

Swain will work with Community Policing to assist build the reserve constabulary while Lewis will assist the Fraud and Anti-Corruption division.

Both policemen have served in other Commonwealth countries, and together share a total of 55 years of policing experience.

Prime Minister Marape said, "Amidst our great need to

strengthen policy capacity, I want to commend Minister Tsiamalili and Commissioner Manning. It has not been easy with accumulative issues within the RPNGC, and, therefore, welcoming to see Police hierarchy move on my government's direction to engage over-seas capacity to strengthen our Police in the key areas.

"Our police leadership is being revitalized to strengthen capacity in the essential police functions such as community policing, fighting corruption, foreign security investigations and prosecutions.

"We want to bring in more overseas police personnel to twin with our own police in the government's mid-term plan to modernize the RPNGC and build it up to a 10,000-strong, vibrant and energetic force from the aging 4000-personnel police force I took over in 2019.

"I am particularly happy with these appointments into the corruption-fighting division of the police because of these ongoing efforts to combat corruption at all levels, and I sincerely thank the two officers for taking up the offer to come and work in our country," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister once more reiterated his government's resolve to systemically overhaul the RPNGC, highlighting those results of this process would take time to fully mature.

"Fighting crime is not an event but a process. Our nation – the most diverse on earth – is facing many challenges from a backlog of inefficiencies which we must contend with today.

"The current police system must stop and be changed completely; overhauled and rebuilt," he said.

Prime Minister Marape listed work that has already gone into strengthening policing since 2021 with recruitment resuming at Bomana Police College, the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement with Australia to source capacity, the recent enactment of the anti-terrorism law, and the set-up of a special police unit.

"Modernizing our police force will take time to reach the outcome we are looking at. For instance, to reach a 10,000-strong force, we must work for 10 years to train 6000 police personnel to add to what we now have. We can only out-put up to 600 officers a year on the training program that is running. We have a better chance at combating crime more effectively with our current population if we have such police manpower of 10,000. This is the reality of it."

The Prime Minister added that Government is also examining other models of policing including grafting soldiers to assist police combat crime and lawlessness, including reservist.



## BUBBLES

I know they say money talks, but all mine says is "goodbye."

Do I know any jokes about sodium? Na

I stayed up all night and tried to figure out where the sun was. Then it dawned on me

Why do bananas never get lonely? Because they hang out in bunches.

What do you call a lazy kangaroo? A pouch potato.

Cleans jokes courtesy of 100 Clean Jokes for All Ages to Tell in Any Situation

Did you know?

The Mamo Kananda (L=54,800 m) and Atea Kananda (L=34,500 m), both located in the Muller Range in the Southern Highlands are the two longest cave systems in Papua New Guinea while the Neide-Muruk Cave (VR=1,258 m), is the deepest cave system in the Galowe Plateau, Nakanai Range in West New Britain.

## APEC SECRETARIAT COLUMN

## APEC CAN HELP PNG BUILD CAPACITY TO MOVE AWAY FROM IMPORTS TO EXPORTS



Prime Minister James Marape participating in an informal meeting during the APEC 2023 held in San Francisco, US. File Pic

In this issue of the Inside Melanesian Haus Newsletter, we bring to you our APEC column, where will keep you updated on achievements, we have received from being a part of the APEC organisation.

As a prelude to promoting how we can use the 21-member economy forum as a vehicle to foster economic growth, we will define APEC and give a brief overview of what APEC is and where Papua New Guinea is, in terms of its membership with the forum. The acronym APEC stand for the Asia Pacific Economic Corporation, which was established in 1989. The forums Mission Statement as per the APEC Website is: "to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. APEC's 21 members aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional

economic integration." You will notice that members of APEC are more commonly known as economies although the membership is made up of inter-governments. This is because their role focuses more on trade and economy therefore member countries engage with each other as economies.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) has been an active participant in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) four years after its (APEC) establishment in 1989. Papua New Guinea officially became a member of APEC in November, 1993 and hosted our first APEC Leaders' Meeting in 2018. As the host of the APEC Leaders' Summit in 2018, PNG aimed to showcase its economic potential and enhance regional ties. In recent years, PNG has focused on leveraging its membership to boost economic development, improve infrastructure, and attract foreign investment. Currently,

focus is on capacity building that will help with economic development, in terms of training people in our SME sector to upskill them to go into exporting. The country faces challenges, such as limited infrastructure and economic diversification, but APEC engagement helps promote dialogue on trade, investment, and sustainable growth. PNG benefits from APEC initiatives that support capacity building, trade facilitation, and efforts to address climate change, which are crucial for its development goals. Overall, PNG is working to utilize its APEC membership to foster economic growth and improve the standard of living for its citizens, while also tackling the various challenges that come with its geographic and economic landscape. This year's APEC Leaders' Summit will be held in Gyeongji, South Korea from 27th October to 1st November. The Theme for this year is 'Building a Sustainable Tomorrow.'

## GOV'T AND TUC UNITE TO TACKLE WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Front Row L-R: UN Women Resident Representative Peterson Magoola, US Ambassador H.E Ann Marie Yastishock, NCD Governor and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on GBV and Women Empowerment Powes Parkop and Prime Minister James Marape, UN Resident Coordinator Richard Howard and Internal Security Minister Peter Tsiamalili Jnr

**Prime Minister James Marape has welcomed a new partnership with the PNG Trade Union Congress (PNGTUC) in a collaborative effort to combat workplace harassment and gender-based violence (GBV).**

The initiative aims to introduce stronger policies, advocacy programmes, and legal frameworks to protect women and girls in the workforce and beyond. At a high-level meeting, PNGTUC General Secretary Clemence Kanau highlighted the critical role of trade unions in addressing GBV and workplace harassment, stating that this issue has never been formally tackled in employment contracts before.

"GBV is a serious problem. As unions, we have fought for workers' rights for many years, but this is one issue that has never been properly addressed in our workplaces. We want to collaborate with the Employers' Federation and other stakeholders to develop a policy that will make workplace harassment a dismissible offence. This is something new, and we are committed to making it work," he said.

Mr Kanau further outlined PNGTUC's nationwide approach, which includes advocacy in schools, workplaces, and rural communities to educate young boys and girls about the importance of respect, safeguarding women, and rejecting violence.

"We must train boys and girls in classrooms so they understand why violence is wrong and learn to protect their sisters and mothers. This will not only empower women but also create a generation of men

who stand against violence," he said.

Prime Minister Marape commended PNGTUC's initiative and agreed that legal amendments may be necessary to incorporate anti-harassment and anti-violence clauses into employment contracts. "This is a powerful and necessary step.

"We already have workplace policies that address harassment, but they are often confined to specific organisations. It's time to expand these protections across all sectors and make them a national standard," he said.

The Prime Minister reiterated that combating GBV is not just about workplace policies—it starts in the home. He noted that abusive behaviour, whether by men or women, must be addressed at its root cause to create a society where violence is unacceptable in every form.

"Leadership starts in the home. If a person is found to be abusive—whether it's a man towards a woman or vice versa—there must be consequences. We must change our national mindset," Prime Minister Marape stated.

Mr Kanau also emphasised the importance of engaging international organisations, diplomatic missions, and development partners in this effort. PNGTUC plans to work closely with the United Nations, employers' groups, and civil society organisations to ensure this initiative is well-resourced and effectively implemented.

"Unions have been fighting for workers' rights for years, but often governments do not listen to us.

"However, because of our democratic foundation, unions remain a critical voice in society. This collaboration is our first major step towards institutionalising protections against workplace harassment and GBV," he said.

PNGTUC's strategy includes:

- Developing curriculum-based advocacy programmes in schools to educate young people about gender equality and violence prevention.

- Strengthening link with rural communities to ensure that anti-violence messages reach all Papua New Guineans, not just those in urban centres.

- Incorporating GBV protections into labour laws and workplace policies to ensure victims are protected and offenders are held accountable.

As part of PNG's 50th anniversary of independence commemorations, Prime Minister Marape emphasised that addressing GBV and workplace harassment must be a key part of the country's long-term development goals.

"This issue is not just about workplace policies—it is about creating a safer, more respectful society.

"As we reflect on our nation's journey over the past 50 years, let us make a commitment to ensuring that our next 50 years are defined by equality, justice, and respect for all," he said.

The government, in collaboration with PNGTUC, will work towards legislative changes, workplace reforms, and national awareness campaigns to ensure that violence and harassment in any form are no longer tolerated in PNG.



## PRIME MINISTER MARAPE CALLS FOR A NATIONAL SHIFT IN MIND-SET TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Prime Minister James Marape has reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and the broader challenges faced by women in Papua New Guinea, calling for stronger laws, better enforcement, and a nationwide transformation in attitudes and cultural practices.**

Speaking at a high-level meeting on GBV, which took place on March 9, Prime Minister Marape highlighted the escalating violence against women, stressing that urgent action is needed to break the cycle of abuse and impunity. The meeting was attended by NCD Governor Powes Parkop, Police Minister Peter Tsiamalili Jr, representatives from the United Nations, diplomatic missions, and other stakeholders, all of whom expressed support for stronger policies, legal reforms, and better protection mechanisms for victims of violence. We must ensure that no woman in Papua New Guinea suffers in silence, and that perpetrators are held accountable under the full force of the law," Prime Minister Marape said.

He acknowledged that while laws exist, the lack of effective enforcement and deeply ingrained cultural attitudes continue to hinder real progress. He called for a multi-pronged approach, combining legal reforms, community education, economic empowerment, and better policing to ensure that survivors receive justice and protection.

"We must work to eliminate these harmful practices before they become embedded in future generations. This requires educating our young people, empowering our women, and ensuring that men take responsibility for their actions," Prime Minister Marape said.

He also criticised the practice of compensation, where perpetrators or their families offer payments to victims' families as a way to resolve disputes. He stressed that GBV is a criminal act, not a negotiable issue, and urged law enforcement to prosecute offenders regardless of traditional customs or community pressure.

"In many of our societies, women have historically played a strong role in governance and resource

ownership. But today, modern pressures and economic hardship have distorted our values, leading to more violence and inequality," Prime Minister Marape said.

He urged leaders, communities, and families to return to the values of respect and fairness, ensuring that women are treated as equals, not as second-class citizens.

To combat GBV and ensure justice for victims, the government will:

- Establish a dedicated GBV unit in every police station across the country.

- Enforce stricter penalties for offenders and prosecute cases without external interference.

- Criminalise attempts to pressure victims into silence through compensation or community negotiations.

- Create economic opportunities for women, reducing their dependence on abusive relationships.

With mobile phone access increasing across PNG, the Prime Minister highlighted the role of technology in combating GBV.

## DEPT STAFF TAKES PART IN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ACTIVITIES



This month of 2025, the Department of Prime Minister's staff took on the role to champion the empowerment of women. For the first time, they took part in the International Women's Day Solidarity March from the Era Kone to the Sir Hurbert Murray Stadium on March 8.



Then on March 24, the Department again had a discussion panel at the Melanesia Haus to talk about actions that can be taken to empower women to progress their dreams and careers and even go into politics. Special guest appearances were made by the Minister for Labour and Industrial Relation Kessy Sawang and Acting Chief Secretary Ivan Pomaleu.

## PARLIAMENT PASSES LAWS TO SET UP NEW AUTHORITY TO BETTER REGULATE PNG'S PETROLEUM SECTOR

**Parliament on March 12 passed two laws for the establishment and operation of the National Petroleum Authority (NPA), a new body that will take over as the regulator of the petroleum sector in the country.**

The National Petroleum Bill 2025 was voted 84 to 0 into law, while the Oil and Gas Act Amendment Bill 2025 was passed on voices. Both bills were presented to Parliament by Minister for Petroleum, Jimmy Maladina.

These Acts of Parliament now pave the way for the set-up and operation of NPA, which will take over from the Department of Petroleum and Energy as the administering arm of the petroleum sector under the Oil and Gas Act 1998.

Prime Minister James Marape, in a press conference after Parliament session, highlighted the importance in the role NPA would play in underpinning the country's

petroleum sector.

"The National Petroleum Authority will be the regulator of this big sector that contributes over 50 percent of the country's GDP and economy.

"Petroleum is an important sector, but the Oil and Gas Act has carried us for the last 20 years, and so it is timely that we change to keep up with a bigger economy and a more robust hydrocarbon industry, petroleum, and gas projects.

"Under this new framework and structure, regulations, licensing, administration of our petroleum and gas sector will be governed. This will give us a platform for us to move into hybrid production-sharing regime that has Papua New Guinean characteristics," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister gave the assurance that investors have nothing to fear but to have the confidence that their investments

would be better protected under the revised mechanism.

"This work will include protecting the return on investors so that they too are making money at the same time but that we are clear on PNG's entitlements in taxes, royalty, equity, levies and so on.

"So I give assurance to our industry stakeholders out there. The restructure happening is not to diminish their presence or their value, but to ensure that we operate in clarity of regulation and the environment, and that their interest – in as far as return on investment is concerned – is secured.

"This authority will make it easier for all of us," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister said this work to set up NPA will continue into the country's 50th year which begins on 16 September until 15 September 2026.

## PARLIAMENT PASSES AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION TO DECLARE PNG'S CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

**The role of Christianity and the work of churches in unifying the diverse people of PNG is finally being formally recognized by the State of Papua New Guinea.**

Parliament on March 12 voted to allow the Constitution of PNG to declare its affinity to and identity as a Christian country with these words to appear in the preamble of the Constitution, "(we) acknowledge and declare God, the Father; Jesus Christ, the Son; and Holy Spirit, as our Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe and the source of our powers and authorities, delegated to the people and all persons within the geographical jurisdiction of Papua New Guinea." Parliament voted 80 to 4 in favour of the bill so the Preamble of the Constitution can bear this declaration; and for Christianity to be reflected as part of the PNG Ways in the Fifth Goal, which is also in the Preamble; and similar identification to be made in section 1; and the Bible to be declared as one of the national symbols in section 3 of the Constitution.

The amendment has been a long time coming, and is part of an

extensive work carried out by the PNG Constitutional Law Reform Commission in 2022 throughout the country consulting communities, churches, provincial and local leaders, and the civil society who have all agreed to have the Constitution make these important declarations.

Prime Minister James Marape, who has always been vocal of the role of Christian churches in the PNG in tandem with government service pre- and post-Independence, said today was "happy" to finally see the bill passed.

"I am happy. This constitutional amendment finally recognizes our country as a Christian country. This reflects, in the highest form, the role Christian churches have played in our development as a country.

"With so much diversity, languages, associated cultures and tribal affiliations, no one can dispute the fact that Christian churches have anchored our country's unity and togetherness.

"Christian churches precede government in many areas. Where government is absent, churches are there. Churches and missionaries

have been here well before 1975, the first one of them more than 150 years ago, and they continue to be here to this day, and will continue to work and help our people," said Prime Minister Marape.

Prime Minister Marape clarified that this change to the Constitution does not prohibit those from other religions from practicing their faith, as section 45 of the Constitution, which protects the freedom of conscience, thought and religion, is intact.

"This is not an operational law, but an addition to the preamble of the Constitution; that we are now placing God in His rightful place.

"When we look into the Christian ethos and theology, it recognizes God as the Creator of the universe, the world and our country. And so through this, we recognize God as the Creator of the resources we have and the Creator of our life.

"I offer my highest commendations to the Members of Parliament for their votes. This is the final vote and so the due process will run its course and amendment take place," said Prime Minister Marape