

PNG Update 2020 Opening Address

Thursday 8 August 2019, University of Papua New Guinea

The Hon James Marape MP, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

Thank you very much for everyone who all is part of this PNG Update and the forums that are always conducted here at UPNG, for giving me, once again, this privilege to be part of this auspicious occasion. I always like to read or hear intelligent conversation, especially from those who are higher in intellect and IQ than I am. So, it's nice to be in your presence, because you learn from it.

You can't profess to know everything —sometimes it's important to sit back and listen to people who know the subject better than you do. And I am happy to be in the midst of very, very learned citizens and friends of our country. To those of you who are always here at UPNG, let me pay my respect to faculty members, from the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor, to all the Provost Chancellors as well as faculty heads, staff members, lecturers, students, all helping hands who are non-faculty members, and to all the staff, the ancillary staff past and today, serving.

Without you, some of us will not be standing here speaking as we're speaking today. So, let me, from the outset, pay my greatest commendation to every one of you who have held UPNG together since its inception in the 60s up until today. Thank you very much, and may our God of Papua New Guinea continue to bless each and every one of you.

[Applause]

Having said this, let me also pay respect to three special people I have here. I'll be unfair not to mention Professor Melam, Professor Pillai, Professor, my friend, Manohar, and every one of you in the business faculty who were kind enough to allow me to pass through your courses.

[Applause]

Let me say now, in 2013, I wanted to spread my MBA program over a two-year period, but they pushed me, and said, "condense into a one-year program." And I thought they'll be kind on me, but they were never kind on me! They gave me the hardest exam, and I subscribed to every rule that they pushed for. And I tried my very best to sit in every course, spread from 4 o'clock in the afternoon to 8 or 9 in the evening. But it was good.

But thank you very much to those in the School of Business, for your continual perseverance and by ensuring that you provide balance in conversations that are taking place in our public space. And hopefully today, I don't let you down. I will put to good use some of the words that you taught me back then. Am I right?

Before I go into my small conversation with every one of you, let me welcome our visitors and our friends of Papua New Guinea, who continue to grace our country over a long period of time. Of course, starting with—formally, our High Commissioner of Australia to PNG, His Excellency, Bruce Davis. He's a warm person, a warm person towards Papua New Guinea, not only to myself.

And every one of you in the Australian High Commission here, let me pay my greatest respect. Evidence of our continued relationship cannot be more greatly evident than in the building that we are sitting in this morning. It's a posh new modern environment, and I wish, when I was studying at UPNG, I was being served in such a modern environment. But I'm a father, and my children are part of this institution going forward, so I'm happy that our partnership goes well and is consolidating for the better.

And thank you, again, for this good building, as well as many other kind gestures you have continued to give and are giving, and support of PNG and our shared history, not only in the 44 years we've been independent, but even before that, up to this point in time. We don't take all your help for granted.

We don't pay tax in Australia as we speak today, but you continue to be kind to us, and let me acknowledge every help the of Australian government and her people. And so, to our friends who contribute, and come up all the time, including Professor Stephen Howes and your team from ANU. You know? I must admit, sometimes, your criticism of us is hard, but it's better listening to hard and honest conversations. You can only learn from those voices out there.

[Applause]

I am the first to admit, while I may not be supportive of every criticism, those criticisms that come with clear recommendations are worth reading and have been muchly appreciated. Criticisms that come with no alternate solutions are criticisms in vain, because you will find no ear to listen to your criticisms. So, let me commend Professor Howes and the team from ANU, who continue to be part of us for a long, many years, and we look forward to this continuing on into the future so that next generation of UPNG and ANU faculty members may interface going into the future, and that inventory and data and intelligence we pull together can be our contribution to the world of science and study and humanities. So, thank you very much for your continual presence with us.

As you go back to ANU, please pass our sincerest appreciation to Australian National University and that, in PNG, we do take note of your continual contribution to our, not only just our public conversation, but importantly, on many, many more occasions, key data and statistics that must be evidenced for the way we want to do business going into the future.

Talking about data and evidence and statistics, it will be unfair of me not to mention our key national institutions we have, UPNG of course, and to every intellect in our UPNG community, that your arguments must be sound and proper, substantiated with clear data.

Gone are the days where we, Papua New Guinea, are an oral society. We like to talk a lot without evidence. So, let me encourage everyone, and I, two institutions that I always liked reading or hearing or sit with is National Research Institute and NAFC. And I think NAFC and NRI are key body of my success. They have been lesser liked. Such like sun, moon, and star, maybe they've been stars for a long time, but I like to interface greatly with them, and I note their presence amongst us also.

So, NRI and NAFC, especially NAFC, you're all doing cost/benefit analysis in many of our proposed government programs, which must be clearly brought to greater light. So, I look forward to greater exchange with some of your intelligent committee.

In search of intelligence and in search of data and in search of statistics, and in view of government that hears people in getting policy in terms for the future, we've engaged in citizen consultation. So, when the offer came for my conversation here, I took it with great, great interest and appreciation, simply because gives an opportunity for you to hear what we're all about, but as well as for us to hear what you're all about, so that together, hopefully we can pick up elements of our conversation that can really work for our country as we set out for the right formula to ensure we move in the right space, to get our country to the right space as far as development is concerned.

So, thank you again, for giving me this space and time. You'll see in the crowd, I see many of you, many faces familiar with me. Many of you, I may not know you personally but let me say it's not about me knowing you or you knowing me, it's about us knowing our country and knowing where we are placed in this point in time in our nation's history.

And so, for those who are already in employment in the public space, let me from the outset remind us that there is no greater responsibility than on those of us who are currently entrusted with shaping the course of our country. In the various placements that you are in, in our country's public service structure, from the highest, in myself as Prime Minister, to those of us who work in a different strata, through a public service strata. Look beyond your fortnightly income. Expand your horizon to the future. Many of us are confined to the—confined our horizons to only our pay into us. I'd like to encourage us to look beyond your pay. Look beyond your contracts. Look into what sort of country you envision that you truly must live in. There is the future that you must all encapsulate in your mind, dream and research, and we all work tougher.

Because the Prime Minister alone cannot do it. My responsibility is to set the vision. My responsibility is combinedly harnessed from you, your aspirations, and put into a roadmap that is workable, *[inaudible]* evident, the drivers of how our country's future will—journey will be is really those of us who are in the public sector and public service.

Let me remind those of us in the public service, and I always remind every time, that under three percent of Papua New Guineans are in the public service... it entails those of us who eat out of the Waigani public accounts, those in the judiciary services, those in the National Parliamentary Services, including myself, paid out of the National Parliamentary allocation, and those in the public service

proper, including subsidiary bodies like the Teaching Service Commission, total, every one of us, around 200,000 of us, consume every payday — that is growing by the year and growing by the pay fortnight — every payday, we consume about 170 million [Kina] now, as I speak, on the latest statistics, 170 million Kina every payday.

That equates to, when I throw in current expenditures, paying the power bills, fueling the cars, paying for the telephone costs, that almost accounts to 70 percent of the money we find every fiscal year.

And so, when you talk about having about 10 billion Kina revenue in our country, and that has been the size of revenue for the last 7 or 8 years, consuming 70 percent of our scarce resources into upkeep of the public service demands greater response from us as public servants, to the core duty of dispensing diligently the engagement you have as public servant in our country.

So, my first part of our conversation this morning is to rally the conscience of every public servant, including those of you who are teaching in this esteemed university, that honest call and true call. The dedication of your call is very, very incumbent upon each and every one of us, including turning up on time—turning up on time for the start of your work.

Lateness must not be part of our lifestyle, but punctuality must be our lifestyle as we go forward. In small matters, it starts from the fundamental character that we must all have, and I intend to rally the conscience of our public servants to ensure we get moving to the right place.

Anyway, I've spoken long. I visited Australia last month, and I think His Excellency, Bruce Davis... basically sort of gave an indication to where my line of thinking is. My conversation in the last two months has been clearly *[inaudible]* if I can—if you can bear with me, if you can bear with me, and if I can go through it so you, as part of our intelligent and intellect in our *[inaudible]*.

That's alright. As part of the intelligent members of our society, I need you to clearly hear, and you can appreciate and hopefully you can expand from it, or you can deduct from it. So long as your expansion or deduction is, as I said, evidently and statistically substantiated, I would buy into that.

Then I pay my respect to all young students amidst us.

[Applause]

This conversation is really about you, and not about me. I will belong to part of the history of this country, and you are the future of this country, so I take my hat off to every one of you.

[Applause]

Today, Papua New Guinea is really at the crossroads. We must decide the future of our country. No one else will decide. All our friends who come in, they will offer advice, but whether we take them or leave

them, fully, is our discretion. And it is up to us, Papua New Guineans, to decide collectively what is the future of our country, because at our crossroads, fair action comes at a price.

And those of you who are in the School of Economy knows this. The cost of opportunity, missing an opportunity, can never be greater appreciated, and our nation is littered with many histories of failures, amidst few successes that we have. Our government has really embarked on learning from past failures, as well as building on from some of the successes that we've had in the last 44 years.

Despite failures that many of us like to also talk about, and I am one of them that talks about failures of past, let also attribute some success. A nation of 830 different language and culture groups continues to maintain unity under one flag, and a flag that is governed by a democratic system of government that has a very independent and functional and robust judiciary. In my view, our unity and diversity is our greatest success story thus far, amidst all the challenges.

[Applause]

You only have to step back and look and see and learn, and look at BBC and Al' Jazeera, and much of the news across the world, you see a world that is showing increasing evidence of the fragmentation of nations, and contests of ideologies, and contests of space, and contests on demand for office. But our nation, amidst many challenges, has but only eight Prime Ministers thus far, that have been peaceful transition of governments, and maintained democratic form of government under one united system of government.

So, this is testament to the resilience of our combined efforts thus far.

So, whilst we have many legacy issues, and faith that can be practiced, failures on one side, we can also proudly stand in the contemporary world, especially in our region of inter-power play, power play between the East and West, so to speak, power play between different ideologies, power play between different religious contests.

In that space, PNG living between the East and the West, PNG living between those growing contemporary demands of society, and the modern economy, continues to maintain a democratic system of government and an independent judiciary. In my view, this is one of our greatest successes, if not our greatest success thus far.

We've made quite a headway. In 44 years, we've come from a life totally devoid of electricity and devoid of modern communication, into our society today, as diverse as we may be, because the person sitting next to you speaks a different language from the person sitting on either your left or right. We are still together living as one people.

And let me say, this is greater, in my view, if not the greatest success we have thus far.

But look, it is not about just talking about unity and diversity and professing that we are a nation of a thousand tribes still living under one flag. The greater challenge now for us is to really ensure that that tribe, those ancestral tribes, find greater purpose in that unity, and the purpose can only be found if every human being in our country, every citizen, eight million of us, are given the fairest opportunity to decide their own future and live in a space where everyone has an equal opportunity for progress.

And there can be no greater opportunity or progress if we don't talk about changing some of the ways we've been doing business. Our modus operandi thus far may not have given us the right pitch as far as transferring resources to our people, or giving empowerment to our people.

And so, when our government came into office, we have looked into some areas. In fact, the way I detached myself from the former government is that I resigned on the 10th of April this year from my former regime that I was with. I basically resigned of the view that some of my interventions were not really sustainable and not consistent.

And as Finance Minister, I'm more—in the last seven years, I was more an Expenditure Minister, trying my best to contain and control expenditure. It is a Revenue Minister, and I know my colleague, the Honorable Patrick Pruaitch will be speaking after me to you. Please remind him, from 2007 to 2017, over 10 years, he was Treasurer about seven years. He was Treasurer for seven years.

And Treasury and the Prime Minister holds the key to the way the country will move. And I've reminded them time and time out. Treasury, and especially treasurers of Papua New Guinea, must be an extrovert treasury. You must be innovative, to look beyond existing bounds and confines.

Because we have a huge resource base. Capitalizing on our resource base and diversifying the economy must be part of the conversation. Unfortunately, in the last seven years, we've only gone to the easy way out, waiting for an oil price boom, when for most of the last seven years, the oil price hasn't been booming, it has been busting all the time.

And so, I am now in a conversation to look into shifting over from just relying on the global economy price market, and going into areas that can really anchor our economy, and as you all have been hearing from me, my focus now is now shifting to a sustainable part of our economy, especially giving our people opportunity to invest in the agricultural space, giving our people opportunity to invest in sustainable forestry, including in our forestry sector.

So, for those of you in the forestry space, I'll be having conversation with you early September on our government's drive for you to now shift away from log export into processed timber in our country, and selective logging will be part of the conversation that we will have.

[Applause]

We live in a world where the market is before us, and I am not hesitant, I am not intimidated to appreciate the Asian marketplace. In my last conversation with the Australian leadership and the Australian people, from the highest in Prime Minister Morrison and down to everyone I've engaged in conversation, I said, "Australia and PNG are not in competition, but must be in partnership."

And our relationship also, neither will be in a donor/recipient relationship, but more in an economic partnership. And I am happy to announce that Prime Minister Morrison is warm towards this thought, and he's gearing his entire Canberra mindset to appreciate that PNG's here to stay for as long as the planet exists.

[Applause]

Our combined resources in providing, for instance, in the productivity of both nations, including New Zealand, cannot be totally adequate to supply the greater four billion people in the Asian marketplace.

And so, I mean you and me, we don't eat oil every day, do you? You have a choice whether to go to the fuel service station or not, but you don't have choice in asking for a plate of food every afternoon.

And so, food is the greatest resource we have in our country, and I'd like to impress on every mind here, especially the youth who are students amongst us. When you pick up a pen sitting in your courses, don't focus on getting employed after you come out of school system. Focus on being an employer yourself.

[Applause]

Focus on going to a SME [small and medium enterprise], focus on going to the tourism space. Your country's biodiversity and your country's cultural diversity is a huge tangible asset we have, and I will endeavor to protect our biodiversity and our cultural diversity for as long as life remains in me, so that that becomes an asset, a salable asset, into the future.

So, our government is now thinking about putting into place a focus on the sustainable economy that is deeply rooted in assets that we traditionally have and that God has blessed us with. Finding oil and gas and finding gold and finding minerals, things that we will endeavor to find, but transfer of them successfully into a sustainable economy, in my view, is the greatest need of ours right now. I would rally the conscience of every think tank to assist us in government to find that formula.

How do we make the right transition into that mindset, or that economy, or that space? What is the formula? Formula in law, formula in public policy. How do we get there?

And as I told Canberra and Australia in my last conversation with them, you can culture as many beef products as you can, and animal products, or grow as many agricultural products, but together, yourselves and ourselves in PNG, can never fully satisfy the Asian marketplace, and I'm excited to be part of a region that has a market right in our midst.

Right next door to us are 260 million Indonesians who mostly profess to be Muslims, and they don't subscribe to your pork lifestyle here. They eat beef all the time. And so, how do we harness from our plains in the Western province, and plains of Sepik, and plains of Ramu, to ensure we grow enough livestock to ship to the other side, and they can slaughter it the way they do it as Muslims on the other side?

[Applause]

So, those are the line of thoughts that we are processing at the moment as a government, and I am pleased to inform every one of you that if you have contribution to make to this line of thought, then I want to come back to your conclusion tomorrow afternoon. I'll be with you as you conclude, Professor Stephen Howes, that I can promise you, so that your time here is not wasted.

[Applause]

I will come back before 5 tomorrow and sit in as you wrap up your session here.

We stand at the cusp of the 2020s. The next 10 years is fundamentally important for us. 10 years, for those of us who pass through school and at work, is insignificant for us. But 10 years for the young kids sitting in our class auditorium today, or 10 years for a child in grade 4 today, in the next 10 years, that grade 4 child will migrate into university potentially, and if we don't get it right, that child will not migrate into a skilled person in 10 years, but possibly into an unskilled person. And that is the challenge we have.

And in the next 10 years together, our conversations must be geared towards growing the economy in the first instance, and as we grow the economy, on one side, I am also mindful, growing the economy on one side without putting in the check mechanisms, and the nuts and bolts together to stop waste, waste either through complacency, deliberate complacency and corruption, or just a complacency in attitude and recklessness, is something that we must curtail or stop completely.

I repeat this again. There is no point in growing the economy if participants in the economy are not stopping waste through complacency or corruption. Deliberate complacency or corruption-induced complacency and waste.

And that is something that I am geared towards. Let me, at this juncture, also announce that our cabinet we had last night, we sat all the way into 10 o'clock last night, and one of our decisions reached last night was the establishment of a long-awaited inquiry on the UBS issue. We've now set up a commission inquiry. The terms will be announced.

[Applause]

The terms will be announced through the nation nothing later today, if I find time after our program after I've been with you, and we will announce clearly. But His Honor, retired Sir Salamo Injia has now been appointed as the Commissioner to the inquiry.

[Applause]

We will sit up with him, and basically the inquiry will look into all matters relating to the UBS saga, whether there's legality there or otherwise. The germination of the idea, where did it come from, how did it start, whether it's beneficial to our country or not, if there was losses made, where are the losses, and if there is impropriety or corruption, or if any money was gained illegally in the transaction in some way. I will not stand in the way of total deeper investigation into this one, so that this becomes a litmus test, or this becomes a pointer, to our nation's demand to fight corruption in its fullest.

[Applause]

I don't stand in front of you as someone's steward or someone's caretaker, I am the Prime Minister of this country, and I intend to make my mark in my time.

[Applause]

Whilst there are many players who have helped me to get into this spot, the greater help came from God, and I intend to ensure the time I am given to work for this...

[Applause]

...fully materializes, ensuring that our economy and our country is secure from waste through corruption or waste through unnecessary complacency, starting with our lack of respect for time management.

So, these are some things that we want to do going forward, and I encourage every one of you, for our commitment together as a united Papua New Guinea, and especially again, for those of us who are ancillary from the public purse — if every one of us committed to this cause, definitely in 10 years' time, we can make PNG the richest black Christian nation on the face of Planet Earth.

[Applause]

And when I mention richest black Christian nation on the face of the planet, it's got nothing whatsoever to do with race, and many misconstrue it, thinking it is all about race. For black connotes our struggles as we struggle up until today. 44 years as an independent nation, and do it with so much of resource base, second to none per capita, globally speaking.

You intelligent man, you look, and almost all of 200 countries in the world, so to speak, name me a country that has oil, gold, gas, copper, nickel, fish, marine resources, coffee, copra, palm oil, vanilla, and also, organic food.

[Applause]

There's a mismatch somewhere, and I intend to ensure that we unlock this formula. And I appeal on really intelligent members of our country, whilst our friends from outside, and we appreciate a gentle helping hand, who come in to help us, we have the ability to resonate and differentiate between self-interest and gentle help, and I know in this sort of room, you have general interest in wanting to help us.

And I point to those outside of our country want to help us. You're doing it for the betterment, helping PNG's securing of a better Planet Earth, so to speak.

Let me point this again. Helping PNG is about helping a better Planet Earth, and I'll tell you why. We have seven percent, six to seven percent, of the world's biodiversity. We have six to seven percent of the world's biodiversity. Most of our biodiversity is found in our marine ecosystem, as well as our terrestrial ecosystems.

If our economy doesn't have the fiscal space to sustain its needs every year, or on a yearly basis, our citizens' demand for money and demand for development, in a modern term, for PNG it will mean that they harvest the forestry sector in an unsustainable manner.

And I know I speak to you as intelligent members of this community, so you can pick snippets of my conversation and digest and model them, and say what I am speaking correctly, and not—most of you are PhD and above me, and professionals. I am the only odd one out, personally.

But we have, in the contest for raising money, whether as a country or as individual citizens in our country, for a better life for themselves, a possible propensity towards the unsustainable harvest of our resources.

I don't intend to lose six percent or seven percent of the world's biodiversity that we have in our country, that is our contribution to the world of science and study for research, for medicinal purposes, only to sustain us into the future. So, protecting that is one interest we must have, protecting our cultural diversity we have is one interest we also must have.

So, how do we protect that? We have to grow our economy in other areas in a sustainable manner. I encourage you to sound it out to the world, and I will sound this out in our United Nations conversation in September this year, that we have not only 6-7 percent of the world's biodiversity, the terrestrial diversity we have is contained, especially, in our 12-13 percent of the world's tropical rainforests.

In 2009 or '10, I spoke in a university, in the US. And I said that our 12-13 percent, of course, it's come down now, but we are an oxygen factory. We produce oxygen. Whether you are in the US or you're in the United States, or you're in China, or you're in England, or you're right across the world, you need oxygen to survive, correct?

I don't want you bottling oxygen in the future, and PNG has a lot of places in our natural factory to produce oxygen. And it's contained in our 12-13 percent of undisturbed tropical rainforest. It's the oxygen factory.

I want UPNG to coin this word. We have an oxygen factory. We've got 12-13 percent of the world's oxygen produced from PNG. So, if you want me to preserve my rainforests, someone must tell me, how can I preserve my rainforests? That's a conversation for another time at the United Nations later this year.

But let me tell you. We, those of you who are contributing to the debate, and the think tanks — to find right formula for PNG, you're not only doing it for PNG, but you're doing it for yourself in the context of preserving humanity and in the world also, of many conflicts, I'd like to believe the Asia-Pacific region is the best place to live in this part of Planet Earth.

We'd like to present this also.

[Applause]

A place where there is no war, a place where pristine beaches and clear waters from Papua New Guinea all the way to Kiribati and all the way to Pelican Islands, the Greater Pacific is one of the most friendliest places, the friendliest part of our Planet Earth, and we live in this space on Planet Earth, and we'd like to preserve and protect this going into the future.

And PNG's role in that sort of thinking, PNG will play a greater role to partner with Australia, and partner with New Zealand to ensure we look after our Pacific backdrop.

In my conversation with Prime Minister Morrison last time I was with him, I said, "I don't intend for us to be donor recipient for you long-term. In 10 years' time, we want to shift away from receiving aid to being a great economic partner, and we ourselves, want to look towards supporting our Pacific island nations who live amidst our region."

And so, that is the sort of direction we want to move in. We are looking at being economically independent 10 years from now instead of being so dependent, for we can never fully claim to be an independent nation if we are still economically dependent on help every way around. We must be economically dependent, and that is what I mean by taking back PNG so that we are economically independent.

And talk about taking back PNG. Let me also ask this question, in the name of fairness. Who took PNG away from us? It is ourselves who took PNG away from us. It is ourselves, and that is why rallying ourselves to look again inwards, so that we don't fall into the trap of corruption and corporate greed and personal greed, but more towards ensuring that our country, and all our citizens, have fair opportunity for all, where quality education is available to all, where quality health is available to all, regardless of where you live or who you are, where you come from.

That is the type of PNG I envision into the future. We want to build a system of government that is fair, equitable, friendly, shifting government away from Waigani into the provinces, and most of you have heard my cat's cry of provinces will not only become a cat's call center, but we must generate revenue in the provinces.

I'm asking the provinces, for instance, in a baseline minimum, that every province must find five investment opportunities. If you're a province that is geared towards agriculture, grow agriculture there. If you're a province that is geared towards tourism, grow your tourism industry there. If you're a province that is in the oil and gas sector, then we do downstream and other varied improvements in the oil and gas sector.

So, in September, I will be announcing about 17 or 18 specific economic jobs. In fact, in the cabinet yesterday, I personally took the paper in. As we go forward, our infrastructure focus, our education focus, will be geared towards developing to suit the economic potential of those regions in our country, so that provinces are not just depending on Waigani, we will transfer funds to them as well as giving them the ability to raise resources to meet the functions that are transferred to them.

[Applause]

So, these are some of the conversations that we are having in the public space. Let me conclude by also appreciating the Australian government's continued level of support to us. Your support to us is noted, and I hear clearly what the High Commissioner has mentioned this morning. I also continue to point you, please, if there are investments that you want to do, I want—request kindly, not want, I request kindly, I've got to be politically correct, so I request kindly, I don't mind if you don't give me budget support, although I request a little bit of budget support, but if you are investing in this sort of infrastructure, in all my universities, we've got seven of them, all our technical colleges, and teacher's colleges, we've got 20 of them, if you're investing in infrastructure like this, I can forfeit budget support forever.

So, get in there.

[Applause]

So, I am pointing to you in the first place. In other areas, our government can look into, if you continue to be kind to us, and want to invest in universities, seven of them, as well as technical colleges and our

teacher's colleges, I want investment, or I beg for investment in those areas. I think investing in education will ensure our people are skilled to sustain themselves for the better. Am I right?

[Applause]

Thank you very much for allowing me to be part of your conversation this morning. My apologies if I have spoken long, but it's not every now and then you hear from your Prime Minister. And if I have, in my conversation, if I have offended any one of you, I beg your apologies, and I beg your forgiveness. But we all have to speak hard and have honest conversation.

I look forward to your hard and honest conversations in the course of your dialogue. Some of the hard and honest conversations that I'll be thinking on will continue taking place, and will culminate in some amendments we'll be doing in the resource law space.

We are looking forward to honest investors who will add value to the resource harvest in our country, including evidence of downstream processing in your resource harvest plan, evidence of your resource harvest giving greater incubation for local SMEs, evidence of value-added in the resource harvest plan you are bringing into our country, not only in mining and oil and gas, but every other business endeavor that we'll be encouraging.

And these are some of the issues that we'll put to clarity as I engage, or as I say a manifesto, a blueprint in September, at the eve of our 44 years of independence.

You know? The past 44 years is their history and their story. The next 44 years must be our story, and I am writing the first chapter.

[Applause]

I look forward to each and every one of you, especially the youth behind my generation. You'll rise up and write your own chapter. Write your own story.

[Applause]

Don't be engaged in pessimist views in life. There are many success stories amongst us. There are many citizens of our country who have excelled very well.

When I returned from Perth, I was encouraged by one young Papua New Guinean, who came out of Port Moresby Technical School. Today, he's working as a boilermaker in a mining company in Australia. This is a success story. He did it. Ask him, "Who brought you here?" And he said, "I threw my application around, and I found myself here." You know?

Never be inhibited by your mind. For every human being is given potential to push beyond the boundaries.

[Applause]

For it was in the mind of John F. Kennedy, who dreamt that man will walk on the moon one day, and he went —he's dead and gone, but man walked on moon.

It is in the mind of human intelligence to make it happen for our country, and I absolutely believe that our country can move in the right space, not only for our citizens, but to contribute to the world around us. But the challenge is finding the right men and women to sell those dreams and have those commitments to make it happen for us, and I hope I've found the right people in this auditorium this morning.

Thank you very much. God bless.

[Applause]