



PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGH COMMISSION

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STATEMENT BY MR SAKIAS TAMEO, ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER AT AUSTRALIA PAPUA NEW GUINEA BUSINESS COUNCIL AND THE 174th EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN BRISBANE ON 8 JUNE 2017

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to thank the Australia Papua New Guinea Business Council for the invitation to attend this very important meeting and also for the opportunity to make a few remarks.

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, I must thank you all and your companies for doing businesses in Papua New Guinea and supporting the development of our country. You are making invaluable contributions to the development of the country, including the provision of employment for which we greatly appreciate.

Mr Chairman,

You are all too familiar with the current economic and financial situation our country is currently going through. For someone coming from Canberra, I won't comment much on it but to hear more from you and your perspectives on this and other important issues on the agenda.

Mr Chairman,

At this meeting of business people, in your respective businesses, the benchmark to measure the success of your business are the profits you make every year.

As the Acting High Commissioner, what is my benchmark to measure the success of my performance? For me, the success of my work is not money but the tangible contributions that I can make to address the development challenges facing the country.

It is no secret and you are all aware of the development challenges facing Papua New Guinea. These include, inter alia, the low UN Human Development Index, poverty and low living standards of the people, pursuing the Government's broad-based economic development agenda, poor infrastructure developments, high unemployment, challenges to provision of basic health, education and other government services.

Mr Chairman

As Acting High Commissioner, I am looking for answers to address these and other development challenges facing my country. And I am forever grateful for the support and goodwill of Australians to help support the development of my country.

There are many good Australians in Canberra, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and all parts of Australia who love my country and want Papua New Guinea to become a successful and prosperous country. Many are already doing a great deal of work to support the development of my country. These include the YWAM, Kokoda Track Foundation, Book Bilong Pikini, Australian Business Volunteers, Children First Foundation in Melbourne, to name a few.

I take this time to thank them for their contributions to the development of my country.

Mr Chairman,

The two countries have reached agreements, treaties, communiques and so forth in many areas of mutual interests to both countries. These are important but what matters most is the actions that must be taken to implement those commitments.

Let me take this opportunity to note some of those priorities here:

1. Of great concern to me is that Papua New Guinea export to Australia is dominated by gas, crude oil, and other minerals but not very much of our agricultural crops/commodities such as coffee, cocoa, fisheries and other products are entering the Australian market.

These are products that matters most to Papua New Guinea as they contribute to rural development, poverty eradication, achieve the Government broad-based economic development agenda, and sustain the economic development of our country.

2. PNG needs to ride on the economic prosperity and success of Australia. We need to have shop fronts in the main Australian cities, such as Cairns,

Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and other cities to sell Papua New Guinean products such as bilums, artefacts, carvings, baskets and so forth.

I also want to see some restaurants and kai bars in these cities serving PNG food/cuisine.

3. I want to see Papua New Guineans living in all States and Cities to participate actively in the cultural lives of the cities and towns in Australia.
4. There are many NGOs, Churches, charity organizations, foundations contributing to PNG's development. They require additional support in their efforts to provide vital services towards the development of the country.
5. We need to promote and strengthen Sister City relations between the Cities and town of both countries.
6. Big supermarkets are selling coconuts, tropical flowers, taro, ginger and other products that are imported from Africa, Asia and other parts of the world.

Papua New Guinea has too much of such products and we need to export them to Australia. This is vital for the growth of our SMEs and small businesses in our country.

7. I will also seek the support of businesses for some programs at the High Commissions and Posts to promote PNG/Australia relations and require the support of Australian companies doing businesses in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Chairman,

These are some important matters that I wish pursue in Australia and I will require the support of Australian businesses to achieve these and other priorities that will strengthen the relations between the two countries.

I thank you for giving the opportunity to say these few words.