



Independent State of Papua New Guinea

Country Statement on the 80th Commission Session of ESCAP and the common agenda on "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific"

Delivered By: Mr. Koney Samuel, Secretary, Department of National Planning and Monitoring of Papua New Guinea| Date: 23rd April 2024

Chair,

Madam Executive Secretary,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to present this statement on behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea.

The Asia and the Pacific region is uniquely placed to maximise the benefits of the opportunities offered by innovative solutions and the use of digital technologies.

Digital technologies in Asia and the Pacific region have tremendously transformed the economic and social development landscape in areas of education and health systems, business operations in e-commerce platform, with much gratitude to the advancement of modern science in our region and the world.

ESCAP is commended for its role in creating and promoting many of the regional policy dialogues and exchanges to advance many of our development aspirations including the current theme on "**Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific**".

In light of the technological advancements, our region and the global communities over the last 7 years have made slow progress in the implementation of the SDGs with only 12.6 percent achievement, as we have passed the midpoint of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of you would agree with me that much of our SDG implementation efforts on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of the pandemic has severely affected all aspects of our State and communities. In Papua New Guinea, the COVID-19 has brought major setbacks in children's education; health sector being stretched beyond its limits; the economy went through adverse shocks, including increased in public debt; with youth bulk being totally disillusioned; and the quality of life for majority of our people deteriorated. Overall, there has been minimal progress made to meet the SDGs during this pandemic period.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The remaining years of implementing the 2030 Agenda would require our collective efforts as a region to do better and smarter in taking advantage in leveraging the benefits of the digital innovations. Given our region's 60 percent of the total global population and with 60 percent of the world's GDP, this places us in an optimal position to achieve at least 50 percent progress by 2030.

Through effective multilateral and bilateral arrangements, it is now becoming possible for us to move further in sharing this technological innovations through partnerships and collaborations in the region and to the rest of the world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Covid 19 pandemic has brought challenges as well as opportunities within the region and around the world. One of the benefits from the pandemic has been the digital transformation in e-commerce, telemedicine, videoconferencing, online teaching, financial technologies and automation in improving financial services for businesses and consumers.

In closing, let's forge strategic partnerships to leverage digital technologies and scale up Sustainable Development across the Asia-Pacific. We must bridge the financing gap for Small Island Development States (SIDS), addressing their unique vulnerabilities. An ongoing development financing package can provide the critical support they need.

So let us join forces to deliver on the ambitious promise – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – made by our leaders in 2015. Together, we can achieve a sustainable future at the global, regional and national levels.

I thank you!