

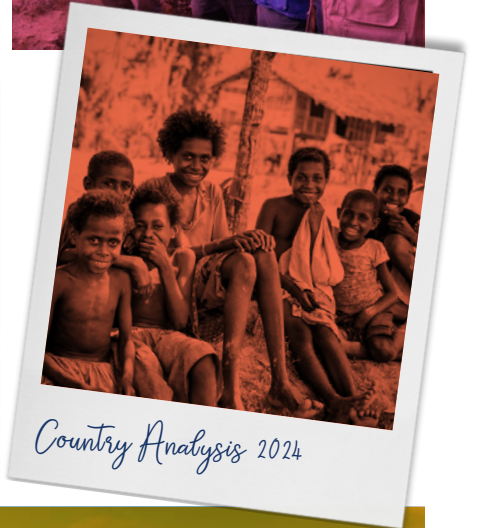
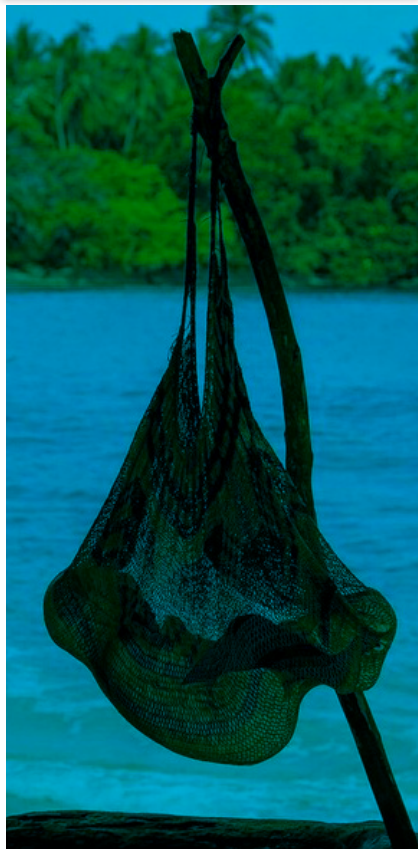


UNITED
NATIONS
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

COUNTRY ANALYSIS 2024

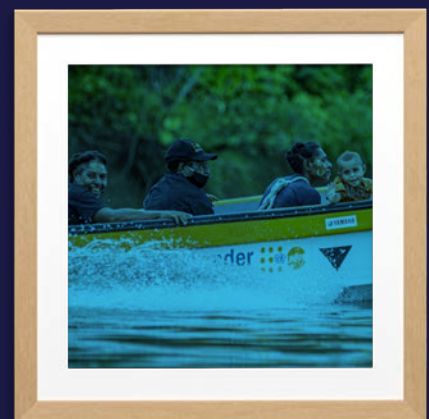
The overview of key development challenges and opportunities





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Introduction

Papua New Guinea (PNG) stands at a critical juncture in its development journey, facing a myriad of challenges that impede its progress towards sustainable development. This comprehensive country analysis looks at the key development challenges confronting PNG, with a focus on governance, economic stability, social equity, environmental sustainability, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. As a nation rich in natural resources, PNG's potential for growth is significant; however, systemic issues such as corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and social inequality hinder its advancement.

Governance remains a pivotal concern, with corruption deeply entrenched in various sectors, eroding public trust and undermining institutional effectiveness. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2010-2030 aims to address these issues, yet the implementation of reforms faces significant hurdles. The establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) represents a crucial step towards enhancing accountability, but challenges persist in achieving political consensus and resource allocation.

Economically, PNG's reliance on the extractive sector poses risks to fiscal stability and human capital development. The country grapples with high unemployment rates, particularly among youth, exacerbated by a lack of access to education and training opportunities. Socially, vulnerable populations, including women, children, and marginalized communities, face significant barriers to accessing essential services, further entrenching cycles of poverty and inequality.

Environmental challenges, including climate change and biodiversity loss, threaten the livelihoods of many PNG citizens. The government's commitment to sustainable development is reflected in its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and various international agreements, yet effective implementation remains a challenge. The intersection of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts is crucial, particularly in addressing the impacts of natural disasters and internal displacement.

This country analysis aims to illuminate the complex interplay of these challenges and their implications for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By identifying critical capacity gaps and proposing integrated solutions, it seeks to foster a collaborative approach among government, civil society, and international partners. Ultimately, addressing these multifaceted challenges is essential for unlocking PNG's potential and ensuring a stable, prosperous future for its citizens.

This 2024 update builds on the analysis done in the 2023 update. The research methodology for this analysis was a desk review followed by substantial inputs from subject matter experts across the UN system in Papua New Guinea



1. Key development challenges

Papua New Guinea (PNG) faces a complex array of development challenges that significantly hinder its progress toward sustainable growth and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This section outlines the critical areas of concern, including governance, economic stability, social equity, environmental sustainability, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

- 1. Governance:** Corruption remains a pervasive issue in PNG, undermining public trust and the effectiveness of institutions. Patronage networks and weak regulatory frameworks facilitate corrupt practices, leading to misallocation of resources and poor service delivery, particularly affecting vulnerable populations. The establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2010-2030 are steps toward addressing these issues. However, implementation challenges persist, including political resistance and inadequate resources.
- 2. Economic Challenges:** PNG's economy is heavily reliant on the extractive sector, which, while a significant revenue source, exposes the country to external shocks and limits diversification. High public spending demands, coupled with low domestic revenue mobilization, constrain fiscal stability. The public sector wage bill consumes a substantial portion of government revenues, crowding out essential services. Additionally, human capital development is stunted by high unemployment rates, particularly among youth, and inadequate access to education and training.
- 3. Social Inequality:** Social challenges in PNG are marked by significant disparities in access to essential services, particularly for women, children, and marginalized communities. Gender-based violence (GBV) and sorcery accusation-related violence (SARV) are prevalent, exacerbating vulnerabilities. The education and health systems face critical shortcomings, with low enrollment rates, poor health outcomes, and inadequate infrastructure further entrenching cycles of poverty.
- 4. Environmental Sustainability:** PNG is grappling with severe environmental challenges, including climate change vulnerability, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. While the government has made commitments to environmental governance through various policies and international agreements, effective implementation remains a challenge. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) outlines strategies for resilience, but financial and institutional capacities need strengthening.
- 5. Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus:** Internal conflicts, natural disasters, and displacement significantly impact vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. The lack of effective disaster management and response mechanisms exacerbates these challenges, highlighting the need for integrated approaches that address the root causes of conflict and promote peacebuilding.

The UN work programme in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is strategically designed to address the multifaceted development challenges the country faces, focusing on governance, economic stability, social equity, environmental sustainability, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This comprehensive approach aims to foster collaboration among government entities, civil society, and international partners to create sustainable solutions.

Governance: The UN has played a pivotal role in promoting accountability and combating corruption in PNG. Initiatives include supporting the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the development of the Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption, and Whistleblower Protection Policy. These efforts aim to enhance transparency, strengthen public institutions, and improve the effectiveness of auditing and accountability mechanisms.

Economic Challenges: The UN work programme addresses economic vulnerabilities by promoting financial inclusion and diversifying economic opportunities. Projects like the Markets Economic Recovery and Inclusion (MERI) Project aim to expand financial services to underserved populations. At the same time, the STREIT Joint Programme focuses on enhancing rural entrepreneurship and sustainable agricultural practices. These initiatives are crucial for reducing reliance on the extractive sector and fostering economic resilience.

Social Issues: The UN has implemented various programs to tackle social challenges, particularly gender-based violence (GBV) and access to essential services. Initiatives include training programs for local leaders on GBV prevention and response, as well as community awareness campaigns. The UN also supports educational initiatives aimed at improving access to quality education and vocational training, particularly for marginalized groups, including women and youth.

Environmental Sustainability: The UN's environmental work programme emphasizes climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. Support for PNG's REDD+ readiness efforts and the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) are key components. The UN assists in enhancing the country's capacity to manage natural resources sustainably, promoting eco-industrial development, and implementing renewable energy projects to increase access to clean energy.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: The UN addresses the intersection of humanitarian needs, development, and peacebuilding by enhancing disaster preparedness and response capabilities, including training local authorities, developing community-based disaster risk management plans, and improving access to clean water and sanitation. The UN also engages in peacebuilding efforts, particularly in conflict-prone regions, facilitating dialogues to resolve disputes and promote community resilience.

GOVERNANCE



96%

Respondents in a survey indicate that corruption is a significant problem.



67%

Respondents in a survey think people can make a difference in the fight against corruption



133

Out of 180 countries, on the Transparency International Corruption Index

WORK OF THE UN INCLUDED:



Supported creation of Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption, & Whistleblower Protection Policy.



Organised National Dialogue for the Community Coalition Against Corruption, involving over **1,700 participants**.



Provided technical assistance to enhance capacity of governance institutions.

K47M



BUDGET

Independent Commission Against Corruption's (ICAC)



For the recruitment of additional staff and the establishment of necessary infrastructure.

THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION PLAN OF ACTION (NACPA) 2020-2025.

Key Action Areas to combat corruption:

- ✔ Promoting honest leadership.
- ✔ Enhancing transparency and public exposure of corruption.
- ✔ Building, and maintaining influential people management systems
- ✔ Strengthening compliance and enforcement
- ✔ Ensuring the integrity of the public finance management system
- ✔ Enhancing accountability and oversight
- ✔ Promoting public awareness and education about corruption issues
- ✔ Strengthening coordination and partnership among various stakeholders.



ECONOMICS



33%

Contribution to the GDP from the extractive sector



87%

Population lives in rural areas.



89%

In exports is from the extractive sector

EXPENDITURE ON

EDUCATION

3.5% OF GDP

Quality of education is persistently low, with significant disparities in funding & outcomes across provinces.

Teacher salaries dominate education budgets, leaving little room for investment in quality improvements or infrastructure.



**COMMON OCCUPATIONS:
AGRICULTURE, FISHING
AND FORESTRY**

♂ 36.4% MALE &

♀ 38.3% FEMALE

★ 1/3 PNG's GDP:

MINING & QUARRYING SECTOR

1

Porgera Goldmine

2

P'nyang Gas Project

3

PNG LNG

4

Papua LNG

**New
Projects!**

SOCIAL



28

Safe houses and a men's hub for victims of GBV



66.1%

Population, have access to improved drinking water sources.



33

Family Sexual Violence Unit Desks, in 17 provinces, with 88 police personnel.



43%

Students enrolled in basic education, since inception of the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy (GTFS) policy



Attendance rate for school

elementary:

108.7%

primary:

92.2%

secondary:

42.5%



55%

 Births
Delivered in a health facility.

UN PROJECTS & PROGRAM

Addressing social challenges include:

- ✓ Advocated for increased government expenditure on essential services. Towards health and gender-based violence initiatives.
- ✓ Implemented programs to improve access to education and vocational training and enhance educational outcomes.
- ✓ Supported development of the National Health Plan 2021-2030, facilitating the development of strategies to improve health service delivery and access, particularly in rural areas.

59.7%

Breastfeeding increased. A positive practice to improve a child's health.



ENVIRONMENT



80%

Population is susceptible to climatic extremes due to their direct dependence,



78%

Country covered by forests (35.95 million hectares)



30%

Protected territory by 2030, is the aim of the Protected Areas Act.



DID YOU KNOW?

1,786

✓ Reptiles ✓ Birds ✓ Mammal

Species make up between 5% to 9% of the world's total.



13,634

PLANT SPECIES

Plant endemism in New Guinea is also remarkably high, and about 2/3 of the plants in New Guinea do not grow anywhere else



4,000 RURAL COMMUNITIES IN 14 MARITIME PROVINCES

Survive on artisanal fishing, hunting, and gardening.

UN WORK PROGRAMME

Environmental challenges:

- ✓ Technical assistance to enable PNG to deliver the first climate National Adaptation Plan. Includes measures to protect vulnerable populations from climate change impacts.
- ✓ Assisting in the formulation of the Climate Response Roadmap. An action plan to achieve enhanced NDC and supports PNG's aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2050.
- ✓ Supported creation National Protected Area Finance and Investment Plan to identify financial solutions for managing PNG's protected areas, potentially generating up to \$75 million annually.



Acronyms

ABG	Autonomous Bougainville Government	MP	Member of Parliament
ADB	Asian Development Bank	MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprise
ARoB	Autonomous Region of Bougainville (Bougainville)	MTDP IV	Medium-Term Development Plan IV 2023-2027
BPA	Bougainville Peace Agreement	NAP	National Adaptation Plan
BPNG	Bank of Papua New Guinea	NCD	National Capital District
CCDA	Climate Change and Development Authority	NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
CEPA	Conservation and Environment Protection Authority	NEC	National Executive Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization	NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
DfCDR	Department for Community Development and Religion	NPSP	National Policy on Social Protection
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey	ODA	Official Development Assistance
DMT	Disaster Management Team	PGK	Papua New Guinean Kina
DNPM	Department of National Planning and Monitoring	PNGFA	PNG Forest Authority
DSIP	District Services Improvement Program	PPL	PNG Power Limited
FDI	Foreign direct investments	PSIP	Provincial Service Improvement Program
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework	PWD	People with disabilities
GBV	Gender-based violence	SARV	Sorcery accusation-related violence
GDP	Gross domestic product	SDES	Socio-Demographic and Economic Survey 2022
GNI	Gross national income	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea	SDR	Special Drawing Rights
HDI	Human Development Index	SME	Small and medium enterprise
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption	SOE	State-owned enterprise
IDA	International Development Association	SPA	Strategic Priority Area
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	STARS	National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development 2015
ILO	International Labour Organization	STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
IMF	International Monetary Fund	TLS	Timber Legality Standard
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning (+ related communities)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
LLG	Local-level government	UNDRR	United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas	WaSH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene



Country Analysis 2024



1.1 Governance

1.1.1 Corruption

Corruption remains a significant threat to Papua New Guinea's stability, governance, and security. It is enabled through patronage networks, cross-border transactions, weak regulatory frameworks in key industries, and other sophisticated schemes. Additionally, corruption is linked to the growing presence and influence of criminal actors, the erosion of justice systems, and declining public service delivery, particularly impacting vulnerable groups.

Corruption in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a significant issue that undermines national development by eroding public trust in institutions, distorting economic markets, and diverting resources away from essential services. Corruption leads to a loss of trust in government institutions, reducing social cohesion and stability. It also distorts economic markets, creating an uneven playing field where decisions are made based on personal gain rather than merit. This corruption leads to inefficiencies in resource allocation, stifling economic growth. Corruption also leads to the misallocation of resources, diverting public funds for development projects and essential services to corrupt officials, exacerbating poverty and inequality, and weakening the rule of law and accountability mechanisms, making it difficult to combat corruption effectively. Corruption hinders progress in areas such as human capital development, wealth creation, and environmental sustainability. Addressing corruption is crucial for fostering a stable and prosperous future for the country¹.

The PNG National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2010-2030 aims to combat corruption and improve governance in Papua New Guinea. Key action areas include promoting honest leadership, enhancing transparency, improving people management, ensuring financial regulation compliance, strengthening accountability, promoting education, and fostering coordination among government, civil society, and the private sector. The strategy also aims to enhance the effectiveness of auditing and accountability institutions, improve enforcement agency capacity, and promote education about corruption. The strategy supports Vision 2050 and the Sustainable Development Goals by recognizing corruption as a significant barrier to development. It calls for detailed implementation plans to address key action areas through prevention, law enforcement, international cooperation, leadership, coordination, and monitoring activities. GoPNG is responsible for the overall leadership of the strategy².

The Cabinet endorsed the National Anti-Corruption Plan of Action 2020-2025 in October 2020, the second implementation plan under the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. The implementation plan contains 15 work programs for combating corruption. The National Anti-Corruption Taskforce coordinates and oversees the implementation of the Plan and is co-chaired by the Secretaries of the Department of Prime Minister and NEC and the Department of Justice and Attorney General. The National Anti-Corruption Plan of Action (NACPA) 2020-2025, among others, outlines the following eight Key Action Areas (KAAs) to combat corruption in Papua New Guinea:

- Promote and Strengthen Honest Leadership - Encouraging ethical leadership at all levels of government.
- Strengthen Transparency and Public Exposure of Corruption - Enhancing mechanisms for public access to information and accountability.
- Build and Maintain Effective People Management Systems - Ensuring that human resource practices support integrity and accountability.
- Strengthen the Integrity of the Public Finance Management System - Improving financial management practices to prevent corruption.
- Strengthen Accountability and Oversight - Enhancing the roles of oversight bodies to ensure accountability in governance.
- Strengthen Compliance and Enforcement - Ensuring that laws and regulations against corruption are effectively enforced.
- Strengthen Public Awareness and Education - Promoting awareness and understanding of corruption and its impacts among the public.
- Strengthen Coordination and Partnership - Fostering collaboration among government, civil society, and private sector actors in the fight against corruption.

¹ Government of Papua New Guinea. (2010). Papua New Guinea National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2010-

² Government of Papua New Guinea. (2010). Papua New Guinea National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2010-2030.

³ National Anti-Corruption Plan of Action (NACPA) 2020-2025, Papua New Guinea.

The NACPA aims to address systemic issues contributing to corruption in the country and promote ethical behaviour among leaders. The KAAs serve as a framework for the implementation strategies and aim to create a national system of integrity and combat corruption effectively³.

The establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) is a central element of the government's strategy to combat corruption. The ICAC has made substantial progress towards becoming fully operational, with increased funding and the appointment of Commissioners in July 2023. The ICAC's responsibilities include preventive, investigative, and prosecutorial mandates. This progress includes the establishment of an oversight committee to ensure sound governance. Also, the government has significantly increased the ICAC's budget from K10 million in 2023 to at least K47 million in 2024, allowing for the recruitment of additional staff and the establishment of necessary infrastructure. The ICAC is working on memoranda of understanding with various government agencies involved in anti-corruption efforts, including the Bank of Papua New Guinea's Financial Analysis and Supervision Unit, the Police, the Ombudsman's Office, the Auditor General's Office, and the Public Prosecutor's Office. This collaboration aims to facilitate information sharing and enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, including the need for political consensus on proposed reforms, such as amendments to the Income Tax Act, which have faced delays. The recent civil unrest in January 2024 highlighted the sensitivity of public perception regarding tax changes and governance issues⁴.

The national legal framework to prevent and combat corruption is relatively comprehensive. However, GoPNG and the UN have identified the need for further anti-corruption legal reform, including amendment of whistleblower protection legislation, access to information legislation, and asset recovery reforms. Implementing existing anti-corruption laws against systemic corruption requires further strengthening. While the Courts routinely hear prosecutions of fraud and corruption offences, enforcement of anti-corruption legislation is hampered by sustained, gross under-resourcing of integrity institutions.

Table 1 – Papua New Guinea: Structural Benchmarks - Governance and Anti-Corruption Framework – November 2023 to May 2025

Measure	Purpose/Macro-Criticality	Implementation Date	Status of Implementation
Adopt key implementing regulations to the Organic Law on Independent Commission Against Corruption	To specify operational processes for ICAC to meet its preventive, investigative and prosecutorial mandates, and to ensure the sharing of information across relevant entities	End-December 2023	Regulations to the OLICAC endorsed on May 2024
Post details (including the names of the entities awarded the contract and its beneficial owners) of COVID-19-related procurements awarded on the government procurement website, at least covering years 2020 and 2021.	To improve transparency in public procurement in COVID-related contracts, in line with commitments made under the disbursement under the Rapid Credit Facility.	End-December 2023	Not met. (partially implemented with delay in March 2024)
Initiate an inter-agency working group on external sector statistics, including representatives from the NSO, Treasury Department, PNG Customs Service and the BPNG.	To improve the consistency of external sector statistics with other official statistics.	End-June 2024	In progress.
Appoint the ICAC's oversight committee as mandated by Part XII of the ICAC law.	To ensure sound governance and independent oversight over ICAC's operations	End-September 2024	In progress
Adopt memoranda of understanding between ICAC and at least four of the following agencies involved in the fight against corruption: (i) the BPNG's Financial Analysis and Supervision Unit (FASU), (ii) the Police, (iii) the Ombudsman's Office, (iv) the Auditor General's Office; and (v) the Public Prosecutor's Office.	To facilitate collaboration and exchange of information between anti-corruption agencies.	End-December 2024	In progress

Source: IMF Papua New Guinea Country Report, July 2024

⁴ IMF Papua New Guinea Country Report, July 2024 <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2024/07/17/Papua-New-Guinea-Second-Reviews-Under-Extended-Arrangement-Under-the-Extended-Fund-Facility-552090>

Integrity institutions directly involved in the operational work of preventing and countering corruption include the Royal PNG Constabulary, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), Investment Promotion Authority, Financial Analysis and Supervision Unit, Ombudsman Commission, National Procurement Commission, Auditor-General's Office, Internal Revenue Service, Commissions of Inquiry, the Judiciary and the Department of Justice and Attorney General. These institutions urgently need more significant resources, independence, and inter-agency collaboration to strengthen PNG's law and order and anti-corruption efforts.

PNG ratified the UN Convention Against Corruption in 2007 and has been working with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime since 2009 to review the implementation of the Convention. This mechanism allows each state party to be reviewed periodically by two other state parties. The first cycle review, completed in PNG in 2012, focused on anti-corruption criminalization, law enforcement, and international cooperation. The second review cycle is focused on prevention and asset recovery and is currently underway, with a country visit having taken place in May 2022. The reviews identify implementation gaps in each focus area and make findings and recommendations, including proposals for technical assistance needs, to enhance PNG's anti-corruption efforts in line with international standards. Executive summaries of reviews are published, and complete reports are published at the discretion of GoPNG.⁵

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index does not measure the actual extent of corruption; it is a ranking based on perceptions of how much corruption occurs in a country's public sector. Although some commentators have criticized methodological issues and usage practices connected with the Index,⁶ the Index garners public attention. It can be a practical rallying point to encourage policy change or to recognize perceived progress. In 2023, PNG ranked 133 out of 180 countries, compared with 130 in 2022, and scored 29/100 in 2023, compared with 30 in 2022 (0 indicating highly corrupt to 100 indicating very clean).

Based on survey data collected during the first quarter of 2021, the Global Corruption Barometer indicates that 96 per cent of survey respondents think corruption is a big problem in PNG.⁷ Further, 57 per cent of survey respondents were offered a bribe in exchange for their vote in the last five years. Also, 54 per cent of survey respondents who used public services in the previous 12 months paid a bribe. Most survey respondents (67 per cent) think regular people can make a difference in the fight against corruption.⁸

Papua New Guinea's (PNG) Asia Pacific Group (APG) Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) was adopted during the APG Annual Plenary Meeting in September 2024 in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and subsequently published in November 2024. Following the MER findings, PNG was included in the FATF International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) process in October 2024. The report identified 75 recommended actions to enhance PNG's Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorist Financing (CTF) framework.

The evaluation included the effectiveness of the anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism regime. The limited enforcement of the legal framework in these areas and the poorly defined processes and systems to investigate money laundering and proceeds deriving from transnational organized crime and corruption highlight the need to strengthen PNG's anti-money laundering regime further.

The ICRG action plan will address key issues, including most of the 11 Immediate Outcomes on effectiveness and several priority areas of technical compliance. The plan will emphasize effectiveness and deep implementation to mitigate PNG's highest-risk areas, particularly in tackling financial crimes. It will require significant progress, especially in the law and justice sector, and is expected to be completed within two years starting from February 2026. If the action plan is not fulfilled within the timeframe, PNG could face additional pressure from FATF.

According to the APG, being listed in the FATF ICRG poses severe economic risks, warranting consideration as a national economic emergency due to its profound impacts on:

- Business costs and the economy's reputation.
- The speed and costs of transactions.
- De-banking of PNG businesses from international financial institutions, along with higher costs and challenges for individuals maintaining accounts.

PNG entered the 16-month ICRG observation period in October 2024. During this time, PNG must report progress on the 75 recommended actions outlined in the MER. The final report, due in February 2026, will determine PNG's commitment to the action plan, after which FATF will publicly list PNG. Post-listing, PNG must submit progress reports to FATF every four months.

A Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) Workshop and a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) Meeting on AML/CTF were held from 19 to 22 November 2024 to address the MER's findings. These events brought together 22 implementing agencies, experts, donors and development partners to develop strategies for improving compliance and effectiveness.

⁵ See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, PNG Country Page, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/country-profile/countryprofile.html?CountryProfileDetails=%2Funodc%2Fcorruption%2Fcountry-profile%2Fprofiles%2Fpng.html>

⁶ See, for example, Pormanong Budsaratragoon and Boonlert Jitmaneeeroj: A critique on the Corruption Perception Index: An interdisciplinary approach. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0038012118301411#bib16>

⁷ Transparency International: Global Corruption Barometer Pacific 2021. https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2021_Report_GCB-Pacific_EN-WEB-reduced-size-v2.pdf

⁸ <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/papua-new-guinea>

PNG conducted its first Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism National Risk Assessment (NRA) in 2017, identifying strong indicators of large-scale corruption and illegal logging in the country's forest sector. In line with the findings of the NRA, the 2017- 2022 National Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Strategic Plan requires the PNG Forest Authority (PNGFA) to conduct a sectoral risk assessment. The NRA identified that environmental crime covers many offences and does not limit it to mining-related crimes and waste trafficking.

PNGFA collaborates with the BPNG Financial Analysis and Supervision Unit and PNG Customs to enforce national laws. These organizations also partner with international organizations, namely Interpol and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to combat international forest crimes and illegal activities within the forestry sector.⁹

1.1.2 Law and order

Weak security institutions in PNG are underfunded and cannot maintain law and order effectively. This weakness leads to a reliance on private security firms and contributes to a perception of lawlessness¹⁰.

In recent years, PNG has increasingly suffered severe harm from transnational crime threats. International organized crime syndicates are strengthening their presence in PNG, profiting from a wide range of illicit activities. Due to its porous borders and strategic geographical position, PNG is increasingly used as a source and transit point for illicit trafficking, such as drug trafficking, wildlife trafficking, illegal logging, human trafficking, and illegal firearm trafficking.

Synthetic drugs are trafficked from Southeast Asia through PNG to reach neighbouring consumer markets in the Pacific, and occasionally, synthetic drugs are also produced in PNG. Changes in international demand for wildlife have increased PNG's vulnerability to illegal wildlife trafficking and logging because of the abundant natural resources present in PNG and the limited wildlife protection laws and enforcement. Human trafficking continues to impact the most vulnerable in PNG's society. Men are reportedly trafficked for forced labour, women for sex trafficking and forced labour, and children for child labour in the various prevalent industries of PNG, including fishing, logging, and extractive industries.

Organised crime groups profit from these activities, laundering proceeds both domestically and offshore.

PNG's criminal justice system faces significant challenges in addressing transnational organised crime due to limited resources.

Key constraints include insufficient personnel, a lack of crime data, slow prosecution processes, and inadequate specialised training for law enforcement, all of which weaken the country's response to these illicit activities.

Additionally, PNG has not yet signed nor ratified many international instruments to counter transnational organized crime. PNG is not a State Party to the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime nor to its Protocols on human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants and firearms. PNG is also not a party to the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988 (Vienna Convention).

The NRA also found the occurrence of illegal mining, such as alluvial gold mining, failures to comply with various conditions relating to mining and production activities designed to protect PNG's environment, and breaches of environmental conditions with waste dumping.¹¹

1.1.3 Political Landscape

The political landscape is highly fragmented, characterised by frequent leadership changes, a lack of coherent policy direction, and reliance on 'big man' politics and localised patronage, which undermine accountability and effective governance.

With Members of Parliament (MP) turnover rates exceeding 50% in recent elections, institutional memory and policy continuity are significantly impacted. This instability hampers effective policy implementation and weakens responses to pressing challenges.

Prime Minister Mr Marape won a no-confidence vote in September 2024 by 75 votes to 32 (more than a two-thirds majority). The opposition has vowed to file another no-confidence motion in late 2024¹².

Political instability in Papua New Guinea (PNG) results from several interrelated factors. These include state weakness, societal fragmentation, clientelism, corruption, economic dependency, historical conflicts, and weak security institutions. The country's pre-colonial and colonial history has shaped its societal structure, leading to a high degree of social fragmentation with thousands of distinct tribes and languages. This fragmentation complicates the establishment of a cohesive

⁹ PNGFA (2022b). National Forest Development Program 2023-2027. PNGFA, Port Moresby

¹⁰ Bizhan, Nematullah, and Gorea, Emanuel Guba (2022)

¹¹ Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Report - Money Laundering from Environmental Crime, FATF-OECD, July 2021

¹² enforcement is compromised. The World Bank's

national identity and effective governance structures. Clientelism and patronage politics are heavily influenced by PNG's political landscape, where politicians distribute resources to their wantok or descent groups. This practice undermines the rational-legal legitimacy of the state and fosters a culture of patronage, making political stability contingent on personal relationships rather than institutional integrity. Corruption is endemic in PNG, ranking among the most corrupt globally. This pervasive corruption erodes public trust in government and hampers effective governance, contributing to political instability¹³.

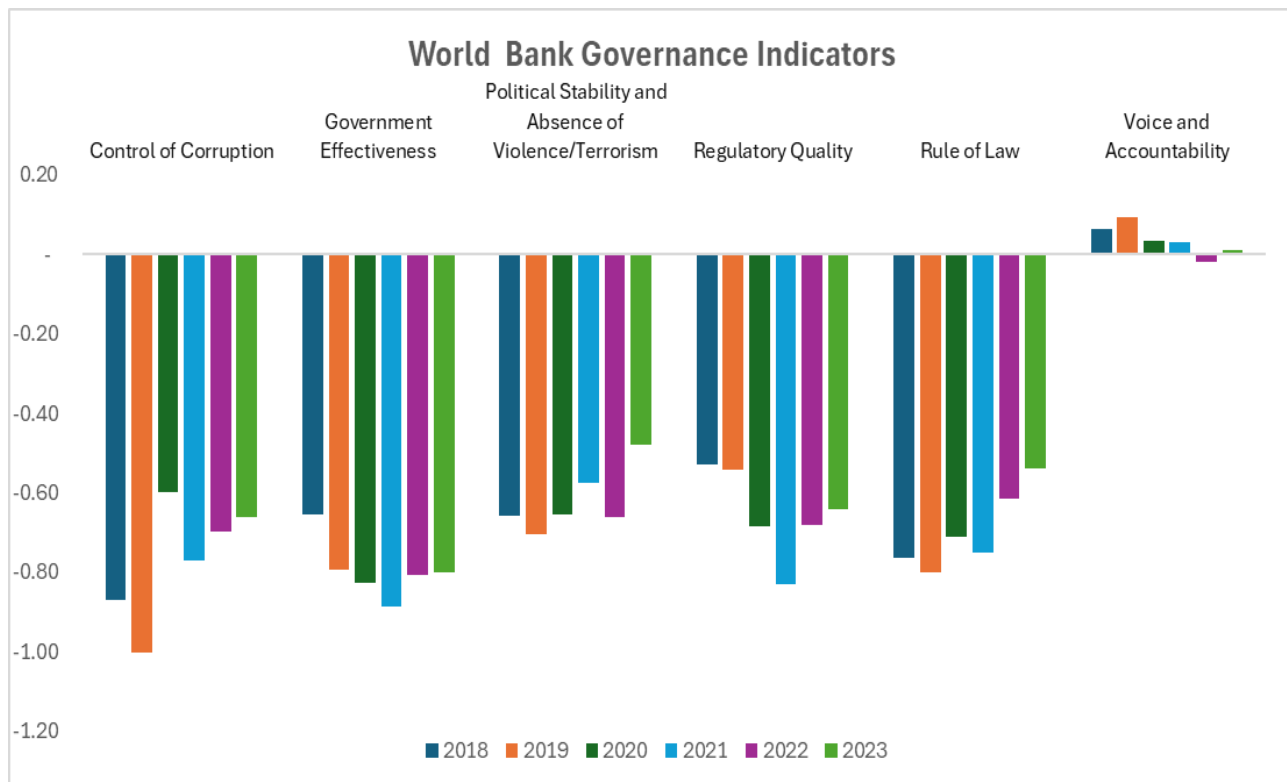
The electoral system, influenced by the wantok system, leads to high levels of political contestation and instability. Frequent changes in political alliances and the inability of leaders to complete full terms in office exacerbate this instability. PNG's economy is heavily reliant on natural resources, which has not translated into effective development outcomes. High levels of poverty and inequality persist, leading to social unrest and dissatisfaction with the government¹⁴.

1.1.4 Governance and Institutions

Governance institutions are not robust, leading to ineffective service delivery and a lack of transparency in resource allocation. The independence of the judiciary and law enforcement is compromised. The World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment score for PNG is 2.8 (on a scale of 1 to 6), indicating weak governance frameworks.

World Bank Governance Indicators are ranked across six categories of governance performance ranging from -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong). PNG's best performance is in Voice and Accountability, which is positive. However, Voice and Accountability have declined since 2018. The Control of Corruption has deteriorated since 2020 to a lower unfavourable rating of -0.66. Improvements have been seen since 2020 in Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Political Stability, Absence of Violence, and the Rule of Law. However, these indicators were still negative. PNG's worst performance continues to be Government Effectiveness, which has declined significantly since 2015.¹⁵

Figure 1: World Bank Governance Indicators: Voice, Corruption and Regulatory Quality



Source: World Bank Governance Indicators

¹³ Bizhan, Nematullah, and Gorea, Emanuel Guba (2022)

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/WGI/>

PNG's 2022 World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment score, which assesses the quality of policy and institutional frameworks in economic management, structural policies, social inclusion, equity, and public sector management, has remained approximately the same since 2020. On a scale of 1 (low quality) to 6 (high quality), PNG's average score across these areas was 2.8 in 2022.

The interplay of historical legacies, clientelism, corruption, weak state capacity, economic dependency, societal fragmentation, violence, ineffective electoral systems, and unresolved regional conflicts collectively contribute to the weak institutions in Papua New Guinea. These factors create a stable-fragile environment where democratic processes persist, but institutional effectiveness remains severely compromised¹⁶.

The World Bank notes that the sociopolitical environment, combined with weak law and order enforcement, has been responsible for a proliferation of corruption and rent-seeking behaviour. Significant elements of a rentier state have emerged, with what could be characterized as attempts at state capture by various local and foreign actors and the misappropriation of public resources.¹⁷

The quality of resource governance is assessed based on institutional and legal settings, reporting practices, safeguards and quality controls, and the enabling environment. The Natural Resource Governance Institute's Resource Governance Index ranks PNG 39 out of 58 resource-rich countries, classifying it as 'weak' and placing it only a short distance away from 'failing'.¹⁸

According to the World Bank, policymaking in PNG is informed and driven by a medley of financial advice (of varying quality) provided to the government, the personal political strength of the senior civil servant whose department is responsible for a policy area, and the political realities in the country. The public sector's track record of varied and often limited implementation effectiveness adds complexity, even when good policies and political appetite align well¹⁹.

The World Bank points out that elements of success evident across the country provide resilience to institutions and are helping to create momentum for improved service delivery. Service delivery may be fragmented, but local hospitals, clinics, and schools function alongside quality provincial, urban, district, and Local Level Government (LLG) structures. There is also capable leadership in departments, the private sector, civil society, churches, and social services, as well as law and justice in urban settlements. The province, district, LLG, and ward roles

are being redefined following a 2015 review of the country's Organic Law on Provincial and Local-level Governments, and city authorities are emerging with greater capacity²⁰.

While more should be done to strengthen institutions and governance in the resource sector, PNG's ongoing participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which seeks to improve sector transparency and accountability, is a step in the right direction. These factors could see PNG emerge with more effective governance over time.

Revenues are commonly channelled to the local level via development budget projects rather than recurrent spending. They travel into institutional arrangements dominated by individual leaders, enabling the return of political favours and rents (kickbacks) to officeholders and patrons. These arrangements continue unabated due to poor implementation/lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms across government, ultimately detrimental to public expenditure quality.

This institutional weakness manifests in poorly conceived projects without the associated recurrent expenditure to support their ongoing staffing, operation, and maintenance. This weakness is a familiar experience among PNG's many underfunded and understaffed health centres and school classrooms. It is also reflected in the 'build-neglect-rebuild' investment pattern in local road construction. Inadequate infrastructure and, among other things, weak capacity in the government's provision of law-and-order services were identified as crucial impediments to private sector development.²¹

The central government directly controls statutory authorities and State-owned Enterprises (SOEs), and their proliferation has increased centralized power. Statutory authorities and SOEs have tended to have appointed boards and officials with direct linkages to central government actors, raising challenges for their governance. For instance, contracting and other discretions can be expanded by this means, being less subject to official scrutiny or integration into broader policy. Furthermore, revenues (or SOE dividends) can be transferred without public scrutiny²².

Some emergent examples have been positive, but centralization has yet to deliver notable coordination gains. Key points to note include:

- ◆ The Department of Finance has improved visibility across central and subnational agencies through legislative and financial management systems.

¹⁶ Bizhan, Nematullah, and Gorea, Emanuel Guba (2022). "A weak state and strong microsocieties in Papua New Guinea." In *Stable-Fragile: Political Legitimacy and State Capacity in Papua New Guinea*, DOI: 10.4324/9781003297697-7

¹⁷ A rentier state is a state which derives all or a substantial portion of its national revenues from the rent paid by foreign individuals, concerns or governments (Wikipedia).

¹⁸ World Bank, 2018. PNG Country Diagnostic, 97-105

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ World Bank, PNG Country Diagnostic, 97-105

²² Ibid

- ◆ Policy coordination has been enhanced through the Alotau Accords.
- ◆ The National Economic and Fiscal Commission has rationalized function assignments and grants to the provincial government.
- ◆ Some agencies, like education, have been better able to leverage central funds, directing them from the centre to local facilities.
- ◆ High-level support for district-focused decentralization has boosted the influence of Open MPs.
- ◆ Open MPs have a central and influential position in allocating constituency development funds. However, these arrangements have left Open MPs largely unaccountable for translating scarce funds into service delivery outcomes.
- ◆ The lack of transparency, accountability, and capacity of subnational governments limits the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- ◆ Despite some success, there is a need for more access to information, few incentives to perform, no contesting of plans, poor coordination, and unsound investment choices.²³

UN work programme on governance challenges

The UN has played a crucial role in promoting accountability and governance in PNG, particularly in the country's fight against corruption. The work of the UN included:

- ◆ Supported the creation of PNG's first Anti-Fraud, Anti-Corruption, and Whistleblower Protection Policy, which aims to enable civil servants to report corruption and malfeasance.
- ◆ Facilitated the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, which enforces anti-corruption laws and promotes transparency.
- ◆ Organized the National Dialogue for the Community Coalition Against Corruption, involving over 1,700 participants.
- ◆ Facilitated post-referendum dialogues between the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the PNG government, fostering inclusive political processes and stability.
- ◆ Training programs for local leaders and community engagement initiatives have been implemented to strengthen political accountability and governance.
- ◆ Provided technical assistance to enhance the capacity of governance institutions, including the National Office of Child and Family Services and the Department of Community Development and Religion.
- ◆ Promoted public engagement in the legislative process to ensure a more inclusive democracy.
- ◆ Enhanced financial management systems, which has led to increased revenue collection. For instance, five additional provinces adopted the Financial Information Management System.

²³ Ibid



1.2 Financing development and the Economy

1.2.1 Extractive Sector Reigns Supreme

One-third of PNG's GDP comes from the mining and quarrying sector. In addition to the Porgera goldmine restarting operations in December 2023, PNG now has three LNG projects – the P'nyang gas project (agreement signed in 2022), the PNG LNG, which began construction in 2011 and production in 2014, and the Papua LNG, which is expected to begin construction in 2024 and production in 2028. As shown in the table below, while most sectors are declining, the mining and quarrying sector has expanded. Agriculture, fishing, and forestry are the second highest contributors to GDP at 17.6 per cent and mainly fall within the subsistence and informal economy, where small-scale producers dominate. The third highest is wholesale and retail trade at 9.4 per cent of GDP, including businesses owned and operated by expatriates. The other sectors that contribute more than five per cent to GDP are administrative and support services (7.5 per cent), construction (6.2 per cent), and real estate (5.7 per cent). The public sector accounts for 4.7 per cent of GDP.

Table 2: Sectoral contribution to GDP for PNG, 2006 to 2022, selected years (%)

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	21.0%	20.2%	18.3%	19.6%	19.9%	17.6%
Mining and Quarrying	27.4%	21.0%	25.3%	25.3%	26.5%	33.2%
Manufacturing	2.4%	2.5%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air conditioning supply	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%
Water supply, sewage, waste management	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Construction	5.6%	9.7%	8.2%	6.2%	6.3%	6.2%
Wholesale and retail trade	11.9%	11.5%	10.1%	10.3%	10.2%	9.4%
Transport and storage	2.6%	2.9%	2.4%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%
Accommodation and food service activity	2.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	1.5%
Information and communication	0.9%	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	1.8%
Financial and Insurance Activities	2.7%	3.7%	3.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.0%
Real Estate Activities	6.4%	6.3%	6.3%	6.9%	6.5%	5.7%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.8%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%
Administrative and support service activities	6.0%	7.3%	7.5%	8.5%	8.0%	7.5%
Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	4.7%	4.5%	5.2%	5.6%	5.4%	4.7%
Education	2.3%	2.1%	3.0%	2.9%	2.8%	2.4%
Human health and social work activities	1.6%	1.8%	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%
Arts, Entertainment and recreation	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other service activities	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Activities of households as employers	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Papua New Guinea, National Statistical Office

PNG's economy is heavily dependent on the extractive sector (mining, oil, and gas), which makes it vulnerable to global market fluctuations and limits diversification. This reliance shapes the country's economic landscape, influencing fiscal policies, growth prospects, and overall economic stability. This dependence limits diversification and job creation, particularly for youth and women. The benefits of resource extraction are often not equitably distributed among local communities. The extractive sector contributes 33 per cent to GDP and 89 per cent to exports, making the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices. The PNG government relies heavily on revenues from the extractive sector to fund its budget. In 2023, resource revenue constituted a notable share of total government revenue, with mining and petroleum taxes being critical components²⁴.

²⁴ IMF Papua New Guinea Country Report, July 2024

This heavy reliance on resource extraction makes the economy vulnerable to external shocks, particularly fluctuations in global commodity prices, which can lead to significant revenue shortfalls and economic instability. The dependence on the extractive sector has led to a lack of robust non-resource revenue streams, which are essential for long-term fiscal stability. The government is working on a Medium-Term Revenue Strategy to enhance domestic revenue mobilization. Still, the success of these initiatives remains contingent on the performance of the extractive sector. Moreover, the extractive sector's volatility can exacerbate existing economic challenges, including public debt and foreign exchange shortages. While the extractive sector is a vital driver of PNG's economy, its dominance presents significant challenges. Balancing the benefits of resource extraction with the need for sustainable development will be essential for PNG's future economic trajectory²⁴.

1.2.2 Fiscal Landscape

A combination of low domestic revenue mobilization, high public spending demands, and ineffective fiscal management practices constrains PNG's public finances. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to enhance revenue collection, control spending, and improve the efficiency of public service delivery, particularly in health and education, to ensure sustainable economic growth and better outcomes for the population²⁶.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) faces significant challenges in managing its public finances, primarily characterized by a low tax-to-GDP ratio, high public spending pressures, and a volatile economic environment driven by the natural resource sector. Despite being rich in natural resources, including gold and liquefied natural gas (LNG), the country struggles with poor social sector outcomes, particularly in health and education. Over 85 per cent of its population lives in rural areas, where access to essential services remains limited²⁷.

PNG has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios globally, which limits government revenue and its ability to fund essential services. The IMF reports that Tax revenue as a percentage of GDP was around 14.8 per cent in 2022 and 15.8 per cent in 2023. The government has implemented a Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (MTRS) to strengthen domestic revenue mobilization, aiming to broaden the tax base, reduce distortions, and improve

tax compliance. Amendments to the Income Tax Act are also being considered to streamline operations and strengthen revenue mobilization. The authorities aim to modernize the tax system and close tax loopholes through legislative reforms²⁸.

The fiscal landscape in PNG is marked by boom-and-bust cycles, heavily influenced by fluctuations in the resource sector. Economic growth has been inconsistent, with periods of expansion followed by sharp contractions, particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing fiscal pressures. The pandemic led to increased health spending and a significant shortfall in tax revenues, pushing the fiscal deficit to approximately eight per cent of GDP in 2020. As a result, PNG is at high risk of debt distress, with public debt projected to rise unsustainably if current trends continue²⁹.

One of the core issues is unrealistic budgeting practices, where initial budget estimates often do not align with actual revenue performance. This practice has led to a cycle of budgetary shortfalls, necessitating cuts in capital spending and increasing reliance on borrowing. The government has attempted various fiscal reforms, including the introduction of a Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (MTRS) aimed at improving tax collection and broadening the tax base. However, the implementation of these reforms has been slow, and tax revenues remain inadequate for sustaining public services³⁰.

Moreover, PNG's public sector wage bill poses a significant challenge, consuming nearly half of government revenues. The wage bill has been rising due to inflationary pressures and a growing number of public employees, which crowds out funding for essential services and capital investments. Efforts to control the wage bill have included audits and recruitment freezes, but these measures have yet to yield substantial results³¹.

In the health sector, despite substantial government expenditure, the outcomes remain poor, with high rates of maternal and infant mortality and declining immunization coverage. The Free Health Care Policy, aimed at alleviating financial burdens, has seen limited success due to implementation gaps and inefficiencies. The health system is further strained by an ageing workforce and inadequate distribution of health professionals, particularly in rural areas³².

Education spending in PNG also lags regional peers, with government expenditure on education constituting only 3.5 per cent of GDP, compared to 4 per cent in lower-middle-income

²⁵ IMF Papua New Guinea Country Report, July 2024

²⁶ World Bank. (2021). Papua New Guinea public finance review: Resuming fiscal consolidation while improving public service delivery. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/646631644232126869/pdf/Papua-New-Guinea-Public-Finance-Review-Resuming-Fiscal-Consolidation-while-Improving-Public-Service-Delivery.pdf>

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ IMF Papua New Guinea Country Report, July 2024

²⁹ World Bank. (2021). Papua New Guinea public finance review: Resuming fiscal consolidation while improving public service

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

countries. The quality of education is persistently low, with significant disparities in funding and outcomes across provinces. Teacher salaries dominate education budgets, leaving little room for investment in quality improvements or infrastructure³³.

The Performance Audit on the Effectiveness of Payments and Acquittals of Service Improvement Programs (DSIP, PSIP, and LLGSIP) in Papua New Guinea, conducted by the Auditor General's Office, highlights significant issues in the management and reporting of these programs from 2013 to 2016. The audit aimed to assess the governance framework, funding management, and monitoring effectiveness for programs that are crucial for service delivery across various sectors, including health, education, and infrastructure³⁴. The audit revealed:

- Low submission rate of acquittal reports from Districts and Provinces: 30% of 111 entities submitted their reports in 2016.
- No acquittal reports for the LLGSIP during the audit period.
- Late submissions and discrepancies between reported acquittal amounts and actual payments.
- Systemic issues include a lack of resources and skills at the District and Provincial levels for compiling acquittal reports.
- Capacity constraints of the Department of Implementation and Rural Development (DIRD) hindered timely monitoring and compliance.
- Poor coordination between the Department of Finance and DIRD led to ineffective management of payments and acquittals.

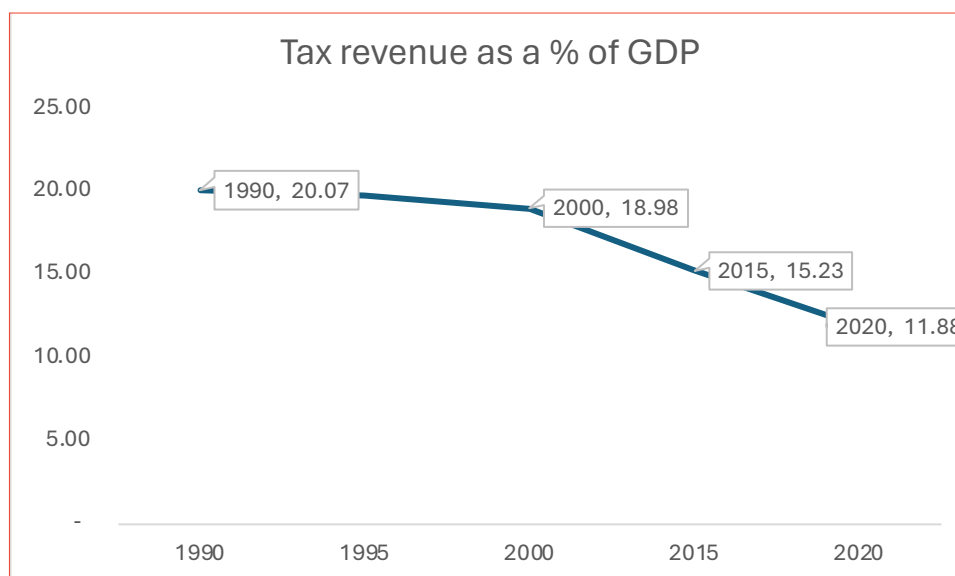
- Unequal distribution of funds among Districts and Provinces due to ineffective financial management³⁵

Recommendations included the need for more transparent policy criteria for payment vetting, adherence to administrative guidelines, timely appraisal of acquittal reports, and improved coordination between DIRD and the Finance Department. Additionally, the audit emphasized the importance of training and awareness programs to equip key personnel at the sub-national level with the necessary skills to comply with reporting requirements³⁶.

Tax revenue

The most recent estimates show that PNG's tax revenue as a per cent of GDP declined significantly between 1990 and 2020. In 1990, tax-to-GDP was 20.1 per cent of GDP. By 2020, tax-to-GDP was estimated at 11.9 per cent of GDP. Tax revenue and grants received by the government increased by 48 per cent between 2017 and 2023 in terms of Kina value, amounting to K17.1 billion in 2023. Non-resource revenue at K15.9 billion in 2023 is 93 per cent of the revenue received by the government, indicating the government's high reliance on taxes on income, profits, capital gains, and trade. Revenue from resources, which comprises taxes and dividends on mining, petroleum, and gas, amounted to K1.2 billion in 2023.

Figure 2: PNG Tax Revenue as a per cent of GDP 2000-2020 selected years (per cent)



Source: World Development Indicators

³³ Ibid
³⁴ Auditor General's Office of Papua New Guinea. (2019). Performance audit on the effectiveness of payments and acquittals of service improvement programs (DSIP, PSIP, and LLGSIP) for the fiscal years 2013-2016. Retrieved from <https://ago.gov.pg/>
³⁵ Ibid
³⁶ Ibid

Figure 2: PNG Tax Revenue as a per cent of GDP 2000-2020 selected years (per cent)

PNG Revenue and Grants 2017-2023 (in millions of kina)							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 Prel	2022 Revise	2023 Proj
Total revenue and grants	11,525	14,086	13,681	12,093	13,861	16,416	17,117
Non-resource revenue	10,849	12,657	12,439	11,341	12,845	14,217	15,923
Resource revenue	676	1,429	1,242	752	1,016	2,199	1,194
of which: Mining and Petroleum taxes	114	775	761	183	635	738	694
of which: Mining and Petroleum and Gas dividends	562	654	381	569	381	1,461	500
Other Dividends	-	-	100	-	-	-	-

Source: International Monetary Fund

Domestic and external public sector borrowing

The Medium-Term Debt Strategy 2018-22 is guided by the legal framework for government borrowing, including the authority to borrow and issue new debt, invest, and undertake transactions on the government's behalf. The overall objective of the Strategy is to "raise the required amount of budget financing and manage the debt portfolio to achieve prudent risk and cost minimization objectives and develop and maintain an efficient market for government securities and diversification of funding sources." Significant strategies to support the debt management objective include:

- maintaining debt at sustainable levels
- maintaining financial risk at prudent levels
- developing and efficiently managing the domestic debt market, which involves broadening and deepening the market in domestic securities and improving the market infrastructure
- developing and managing the offshore commercial market, including the inaugural sovereign bond issuance that will diversify funding sources.

GoPNG borrows in the domestic market through treasury bills and inscribed stock (i.e., bonds) denominated in Kina. The IMF and World Bank data show that Zero-coupon T-bills are issued roughly weekly, with tenors typically six and 12 months. Inscribed stock is currently being issued at fixed rates with maturities of two, 10, and 17 years. These instruments are issued on market terms; there is no captive placement with public or quasi-public investors. Hence, no instruments specifically suit retail investors, although retail investors may acquire T-bills and inscribed stock directly or through commercial banks under the Central Banking Act.

According to the IMF Debt Sustainability Analysis, PNG remains at high risk of debt distress under the Low-Income Country Debt Sustainability Framework, with weak debt-carrying capacity. The IMF notes that public debt enters a downward trend over

the medium term, and debt management operations and revenue generation improvements can primarily address the projected temporary breaches of sustainability indicators. The Debt Sustainability Analysis suggests that PNG is susceptible to exports and other shocks, signalling downside risks to the debt outlook in a global environment of high uncertainty. To lower the risk of debt distress and ensure debt sustainability, gradual fiscal consolidation, including boosting revenues, and steadfast structural reforms to promote private sector growth would be needed.³⁷

Between 2017 and 2021, public debt stock in PNG increased from around K25 billion to K49 billion. This development was mainly due to external loans, while the creditor composition has been gradually shifting away from commercial loans towards official multilateral and bilateral financing. The IMF's general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) (SDR1 = \$1.3229242) became effective in August 2021, with SDR 252 million (\$357 million, or 95.7 per cent of quota) allocated to PNG. The authorities used the total SDR allocation to support the 2021 budget. PNG is an International Development Association (IDA) blend country with an IDA19 allocation of SDR 178.4 million. IDA's Performance-Based Allocation (PBA) for PNG benefitted from resource frontloading amid a shortening of IDA19 to two years and an intra-regional reallocation for SDR 0.6 million, approved in November 2021. The IDA decision to graduate a country with International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)-only status is based on assessing the country's macroeconomic prospects, risk of debt distress, vulnerability to shocks, institutional constraints, poverty levels, and social indicators.

The IDA Sustainable Development Finance Policy (SDFP) supports PNG in addressing critical debt vulnerabilities. This support may allow future access to total IBRD borrowing. As part of the SDFP, PNG has satisfactorily implemented the Performance and Policy Actions for fiscal year 2021. These were aimed at improving debt management and debt transparency. PNG has two further SDFP Actions for the fiscal year 2022, including a \$1 billion non-concessional prudential practice guide

³⁷International Monetary Fund (2022) Papua New Guinea Article IV consultations, IMF country Report No. 22/305

borrowing limit for new non-concessional long-term contractual obligations.³⁸

Under the Debt Sustainability Analysis baseline scenario, the debt-service to revenue indicator is projected to breach its threshold. This relatively large breach in 2028 arises from the bullet payment for the \$500 million Eurobond issued in 2018. After 2028, the indicator remains close to the threshold, with further marginal breaches until 2032.³⁹

Loans accumulated since the fourth quarter of 2021 include AU\$650 million⁴⁰ (K1.736 billion) from the Government of Australia and US\$325 million (K1.141 billion) from the ADB.⁴¹ Australia's support contributes to refinancing an existing AU\$410 million (K1.95 billion) loan to assist PNG in delivering core government services, with a combined commitment of AU\$600 million (K1.602 billion) during the pandemic period of 2020-21.⁴¹ China also signed a \$1.6 billion (K5.616 billion) loan to support the creation of a 'Special Economic Zone' in Kikori, located in the Gulf of PNG.

In March 2023, the IMF Executive Board approved PNG's request for SDR684.3 million (equivalent to \$918 million) under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) and the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The 38-month arrangement will support PNG's reform agenda, which seeks to help protect the vulnerable and foster inclusive growth. The reforms will strengthen debt sustainability, alleviate foreign exchange shortages, enhance governance, and operationalize the anti-corruption framework.⁴² The IMF Executive Board completed the First Reviews under the 38-month ECF/EFF arrangements for PNG, providing the country with immediate access to \$88 million. The review found that all end-June 2023 performance criteria were met, namely

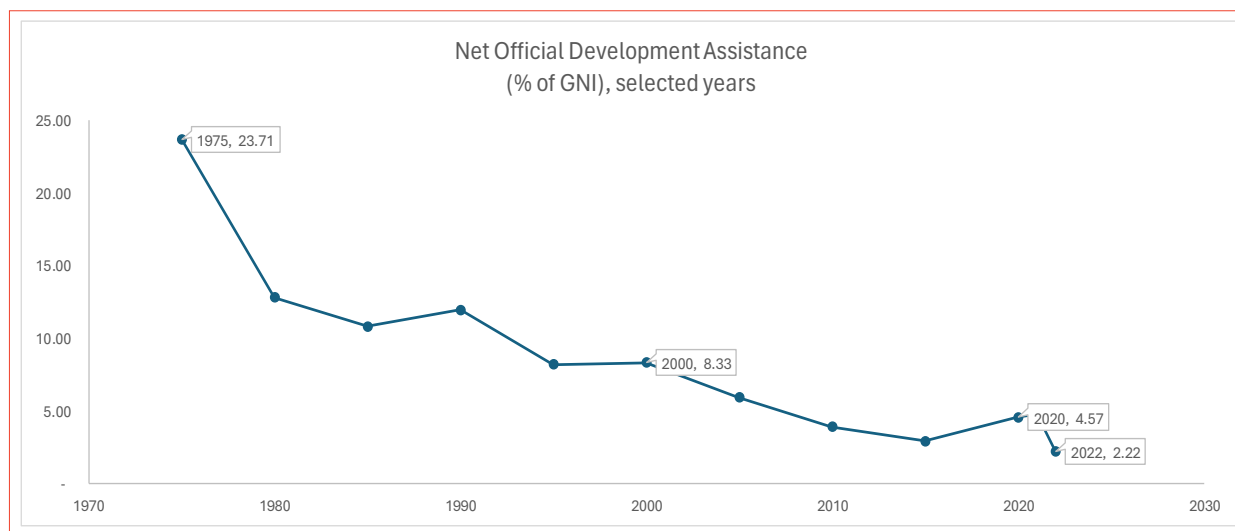
strengthening the government human resources business processes and appointments to ICAC. In addition, two of the August 2023 criteria were met: the modification of open market operations and the development of an action plan for exchange rate reform and monetary policy reform. The program will continue to support PNG's reform agenda, including several other newly proposed criteria, such as cleansing the government payroll by the end of August 2024.⁴³

According to World Development Indicators, net Official Development Assistance (ODA) to PNG is declining. In 2020, net ODA was 4.57 per cent of GNI, compared with 2.22 per cent of GNI in 2022. The declining percentage is also due to the increase in PNG GNI. The net ODA received was \$661.2 million in 2022, compared with \$1.1 billion in 2020. The IMF estimated PNG's government debt-to-GDP to be 49.9 per cent or K52 billion at the end of 2023.

The PNG government has significant contingent liabilities of K8.3bn (\$2.2bn), equivalent to 7 per cent of GDP, linked to State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). These SOEs are unprofitable, generate low returns, and heavily rely on the government for cash infusions and asset donations. The government's contingent liabilities are not included in the public debt stock. Including them would push the public debt/GDP ratio to above 60 per cent, breaching the debt ceiling set out in the Fiscal Responsibility Act. Most contingent liabilities are from external creditors, which exposes the government to exchange rate risk. The rise in interest rates and greater exchange-rate volatility will reduce SOEs' ability to repay foreign debt, forcing the government to assist. This situation will raise PNG's debt servicing costs, although an outright sovereign default is unlikely.⁴⁴

Figure 3: PNG Net ODA received 1990-2020 selected years (per cent of GNI)

Source: World Development Indicators



³⁸ International Monetary Fund (2022) Papua New Guinea Article IV consultations, IMF Country Report No. 22/305

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ More information about this loan can be found at <https://treasury.gov.au/publication/p2022-247810>

⁴¹ World Report 2022: Papua New Guinea | Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/papua-new-guinea>

⁴² <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/03/22/pr2389-papua-new-guinea-imf-executive-board-approves-us918m-under-the-ecf-eff>

⁴³ International Monetary Fund (2023) Papua New Guinea, First Review of the Extended Fund Facility, IMF Country Report 23/385

⁴⁴ Economic Intelligence Unit, January 2024 PNG Country Report

The authority to issue guarantees on behalf of the state is set out in the Public Finances (Management) Act, which requires the Minister to table the documents associated with the guarantee at the next sitting of Parliament. Ministerial approval also guarantees medium- or long-term loans (i.e., longer than six months of maturity) contracted by provincial governments or LLGs. While the Act gives the minister the authority to charge a fee for a guarantee, no such fee is required nor linked to the level of risk associated with the guarantee.

1.2.3 Human Capital Development

Approximately 57% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty despite a GDP of \$31 billion. A significant portion of the population lives in multidimensional poverty, with limited access to essential services and economic opportunities. Economic growth has not been inclusive, with significant disparities in wealth and access to resources. Rural populations, particularly those in the lowest wealth quintiles, experience higher rates of food insecurity and poverty. About 87 per cent of PNG's population live in peri-urban, rural, and remote settlements, and 80 per cent rely on artisanal fishing, hunting, gathering, and gardening.⁴⁵ There is little cash flow and limited access to health care, education, sanitation, and clean water.⁴⁶

PNG's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2022 is 0.568, placing the country in the medium human development category at 155 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2022, PNG's HDI value increased 49.5 per cent from 0.380 to 0.568. PNG's life expectancy is now 66 years, and the expected years of schooling are 11.1 years. PNG's GNI per capita increased to \$3,710.⁴⁷

The most recent survey data publicly available for PNG's Multidimensional Poverty Index estimation is from 2016/2018, which shows that 56.6 per cent of the population (5.6 million people in 2021) are multidimensionally poor. At the same time, 25.3 per cent are classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty (2.5 million people in 2021),⁴⁸ and 25.8 per cent of the population is in severe multidimensional poverty. Regarding the breadth of deprivation (intensity), the average deprivation score experienced by people in multidimensional poverty is 46.5 per cent in PNG. The Multidimensional Poverty Index shows that the share of the multidimensionally poor population, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations, is 0.263. The contribution to multidimensional poverty comes from deprivations in the standard of living (65.8 per cent), deprivations in education (30.1 per cent) and health (4.6 per cent). Consequences of

multidimensional poverty include reduced access to critical necessities of life, reduced resilience to various forms of shocks such as natural disasters, civil unrest, or armed conflict, and reduced access to justice and higher potential inequalities in participation.

Urban poverty in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a complex issue driven by multiple interrelated factors. A primary cause is the lack of employment opportunities, which leaves many individuals without the means to earn cash. This joblessness is compounded by insufficient access to land, making it difficult for urban residents to engage in subsistence farming or secure housing. The high cost of living exacerbates the situation, as prices for essential goods and services, including food, water, and transportation, continue to rise, particularly following global events like the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions. Moreover, urban poverty is characterized by limited access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and sanitation. This lack of access reinforces a cycle of poverty, as individuals are unable to improve their skills or health, which are critical for securing better employment. The breakdown of traditional social support systems, where kin-based practices once assisted those in need, further isolates the urban poor, leaving them without essential safety nets⁴⁹.

Children, youth, and women disproportionately feel the effects of poverty. Children face malnutrition and inadequate healthcare, while youth struggle with high unemployment rates and often resort to crime or substance abuse. Women are particularly affected by economic disparities and social pressures, which limit their opportunities and exacerbate their vulnerability. Overall, the causes of urban poverty in PNG are deeply rooted in systemic issues, including weak governance, inadequate infrastructure, and social exclusion. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative approach involving the government, NGOs, churches, and communities to implement effective poverty reduction strategies that prioritize the needs and views of the poor⁵⁰.

Poverty significantly impacts children and youth in urban areas of Papua New Guinea (PNG), manifesting in various detrimental ways. For children, poverty leads to malnutrition and inadequate healthcare, as families often lack the financial resources to provide sufficient food and access to medical services. This results in children suffering from treatable diseases such as scabies and tuberculosis. Additionally, many children face barriers to education due to the inability of their parents to afford school fees, uniforms, or transportation. Consequently, some families migrate to urban centres in search of better educational opportunities. However, the breakdown of traditional support

⁴⁵ Bourke, M., 'COVID-19 and food systems in Papua New Guinea', in Robins L, et al., COVID-19 and Food Systems in the Indo-Pacific: An Assessment of Vulnerabilities, Impacts and Opportunities for Action, ACIAR Technical Report 96, 2020.

⁴⁶ Department of National Planning and Monitoring, Papua New Guinea's Voluntary National Review 2020: Progress of implementing the SDGs, Port Moresby.

⁴⁷ <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>

⁴⁸ PNG.pdf (undp.org)

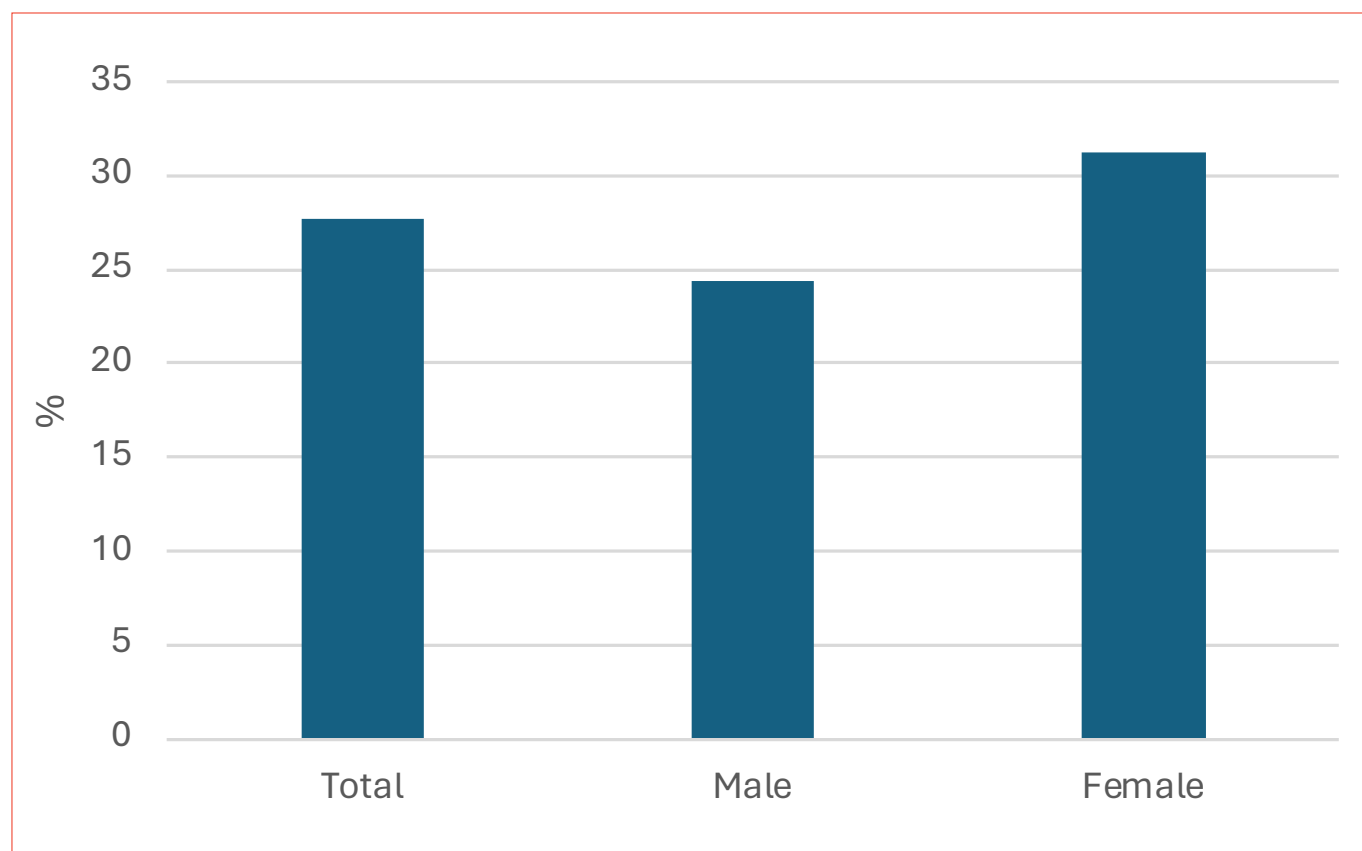
systems often leaves children vulnerable, contributing to a growing crisis of street children in cities. Youth are also heavily affected by urban poverty, primarily through high unemployment rates and a lack of educational opportunities. Many young people lack the necessary skills and training for available jobs, leading to joblessness and increased vulnerability to crime. The youth unemployment rate in PNG was reported at 5.25 per cent in 2021, with many unemployed youths resorting to criminal activities, such as theft and drug use, as a means of survival. Young women, in particular, may turn to prostitution as a result of economic hardship and limited opportunities. Overall, urban poverty strips children and youth of their dignity, potential, and safety, reinforcing cycles of disadvantage and hindering progress toward national development goals. Addressing these issues requires a collaborative approach that prioritizes the needs of these vulnerable groups through improved access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities⁵¹.

1.2.4 Jobs and social protection

While the youth unemployment rate was fairly low at 3.8 per cent in 2022, the latest year for which data are available, the share of youth aged 15-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) was substantial, at nearly 28 per cent.⁵² The NEET rate is substantially higher among young women than men (figure 4). The total unemployment rate stood at 2.7 per cent. The labour force participation rate of the population aged 15+ is 52 per cent, with similar values for women (50.6 per cent) and men (53.3 per cent). The employment-to-population ratio (EPR) was 50.6 per cent rate, which is slightly lower than the global EPR as estimated by the ILO.⁵³ The SDES found that in 2022, 12.2 per cent of children aged 10 to 17 years old were working.⁵⁴

The most common occupation is skilled agriculture, forestry and fishery workers, accounting for 37.3 per cent of total employment

Figure 4: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training, %



Source: ILOSTAT, based on PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic Economic Survey, 2022

⁵¹ Kavan, P. (2023)

⁵² ILOSTAT, based on PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic Economic Survey, 2022.

⁵³ ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2023.

⁵⁴ PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic Economic Survey, 2022

(36.4 per cent for men and 38.3 per cent for women), followed by service and sales workers at 23.3 per cent of total employment (17 per cent for men and 29.9 per cent for women). As for the economic activity, the largest sector of employment is agriculture, forestry and fishing (38.6 per cent), followed by wholesale and retail trade (33.1 per cent) and education (7.1 per cent). Workers with only basic or less than basic educational attainment level account for about 78 per cent of total employment (73 per cent per cent for men and 83 per cent for women).

The lack of a comprehensive social protection system leaves many vulnerable populations without safety nets, exacerbating poverty and inequality. Social protection provision for those in formal employment (and self-employed and informal workers with the ability to contribute) are limited to superannuation funds (cash accumulation schemes) and the Workers' Compensation scheme (employer-liability insurance with third party carriers). No social insurance cash maternity or cash sickness benefits are available, while existing employer-liability benefits are meagre, even compared to those found in peer economies in the region. PNG's non-contributory social protection is equally weak.

The latest ILO statistics on social protection systems in Papua New Guinea show that only 20.5 per cent of the employed population were covered in the event of work injury and only 1.9% of the population above statutory retirement age received an old-age pension.⁵⁵ Only 9.1 per cent of the population were covered by at least one social protection benefit (excluding health). No one in Papua New Guinea is covered by a tax-financed social protection benefit.



⁵⁵ ILO, World Social Protection Data Dashboard.

UN work programme on economic challenges

UN support includes:

- ◆ The Markets Economic Recovery and Inclusion (MERI) Project aimed at expanding financial services to underserved populations and enhancing economic participation;
- ◆ The STREIT Joint Programme focused on enhancing access to financial services, enhancing rural entrepreneurship, empowering marginalized communities, particularly women and youth, developing sustainable agricultural practices, and diversifying economic opportunities beyond extractive industries.
- ◆ To contribute to the development of the blue economy in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the United Nations is implementing a joint initiative funded by both the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) and the Joint SDG Fund. This project aims to establish the Blue Economy Investment Credit Facility, designed to expand financial access for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) actively engaged in sustainable coral-positive business practices. By fostering access to affordable finance, the initiative encourages the creation of new businesses and jobs while promoting the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. A core focus of the facility is to empower mainly women-led enterprises working to protect PNG's coral reefs and marine ecosystems, aligning with national environmental priorities and supporting livelihoods in coastal communities.



1.3 Basic services and the Social Sector

1.3.1 Gender equality and women's empowerment

Men are more likely to be employed than women in PNG. Sixty-four per cent of currently married men were employed in the past 12 months (2016-2018), compared with only 36 per cent of currently married women. Forty-six per cent of currently married women with cash earnings independently decide how they are used. About half of women and men report making joint decisions regarding husbands' cash earnings. DHS results show that more men than women own a house (60 per cent versus 49 per cent) and land (65 per cent versus 44 per cent). More than 8 in 10 currently married women participate in decision-making, either by themselves or jointly with their husbands, regarding their health care. At the same time, 70 per cent decide to make major household purchases alone or jointly, and 79 per cent decide to visit their family or relatives alone or jointly. Sixty-two per cent participate in all three decisions, while 10 per cent do not participate in any of the decisions.

The use of modern family planning is higher among women who participate in one or more household decisions. In most cases, women's participation in decision-making is positively associated with reproductive health-seeking behaviour related to antenatal care, delivery from a skilled provider, and postnatal checks.

Alarmingly, 70 per cent of women and 72 per cent of men believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife in at least one of five specified situations. The 2016-2018 DHS results show that 56 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 in PNG have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 28 per cent have experienced sexual violence. Eighteen per cent of women who have ever been pregnant have experienced violence during pregnancy. Regarding spousal violence, 63 per cent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical, sexual, or emotional violence. The most common type of spousal violence is physical violence (54 per cent), followed by emotional violence (51 per cent). Twenty-nine per cent of women have experienced spousal sexual violence.

Regarding injuries due to spousal violence, 57 per cent of women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence have sustained injuries. Cuts, bruises, or aches are the most common injuries reported. Regarding seeking help, 35 per cent of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence have sought help, while 13 per cent have never sought help but

have told someone about the violence. Thirty-nine per cent of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence have not sought help or told anyone about the violence.⁵⁷ Women with disabilities often experience more significant negative consequences from GBV than women without disabilities⁵⁸.

About 8 per cent of girls are married before age 15, and 27.3 per cent are married before age 18.

The Department of Justice and Attorney General are working towards a Women's Health Protection Bill to give greater legal rights to GBV and sexual and reproductive health services. The Department is also working with the Constitutional Law Reform Commission to develop a Human Rights Defenders Bill.

1.3.2 GBV and sorcery accusation-related violence

GBV remains at endemic levels in PNG. Sorcery accusation-related violence (SARV) killings are a continuing, rising area of concern. Belief in sorcery (sanguma) or witchcraft is widely held in different forms across PNG, not only in remote or rural areas. Both the number of SARV incidents and the brutality of the violence have increased in recent years, and many victims of reported cases are women. Cases are understood to be significantly underreported. Available services for survivors remain significantly low, and challenges are faced in administering justice concerning alleged perpetrators, including in the investigation and prosecution of cases.

Research conducted in two provinces between January 2016 and October 2017 found that one-third of almost 150 recorded cases of accusations of sorcery or witchcraft resulted in violence, and of these, almost three-quarters involved torture of people accused of sorcery or witchcraft. Increasingly, SARV appears to be targeting older women, but individuals of any age and gender can be targeted, and young children, including girls, have been targeted in some cases. In some cases, SARV has been linked to intimate partner violence/domestic violence.

Individuals accused of sorcery or witchcraft are subject to interrogation, physical torture, or murder in 'payback' for harm they are thought to have perpetrated. Triggers are often related

⁵⁷ PNG Demographic and Health Survey 2016-2018

⁵⁸ Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Papua New Guinea, A/HRC/WG.6/39/PNG/3 (17 August 2021), available in <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/226/01/PDF/G2122601.pdf?OpenElement>, at para. 53.

to an unexplained illness (including HIV/AIDS and COVID-19), death, or land grabbing. Violent methods include beating, breaking bones, burning with hot metal, rape, hanging over the fire, cutting body parts slowly, including genitalia, amputation, and are often conducted in public. If death does not result from the torture process, the victim may be killed. More than one in ten victims were killed, and over one-third were permanently injured. Research indicates that women are six times more likely to experience sorcery accusations and violent retribution than men.⁵⁹ Survivors of SARV are often not able to return to their villages and require extensive medical attention or lengthy legal proceedings before they can be relocated with their children to another village.

Several measures have been implemented to strengthen legal recourse for female victims of GBV and SARV in PNG:

- ◆ **Establishment of a Special Parliamentary Committee:** This committee was formed by the Government of PNG (GoPNG) to focus on providing clear legal avenues for female victims of rape within marriage and other forms of GBV.
- ◆ **Enforcement of Legislation:** The Family Protection Act, Family Protection Regulations, and the Amended Criminal Code Act have been reinforced to ensure stricter enforcement and to impose severe penalties for offenders, leading to an increase in the reporting of GBV cases.
- ◆ **National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to GBV (2016–2025):** This strategy aims to institutionalize initiatives to achieve a zero-tolerance policy towards GBV. It includes the establishment of the National GBV Secretariat to coordinate and monitor activities related to GBV prevention and response.
- ◆ **Legal Penalties for Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence (SARV):** In early 2022, the Criminal Code Act was amended to impose specific legal penalties on individuals acting as “glasman” or “glasmeri” who falsely identify alleged sorcerers for a fee, aiming to reduce the violence associated with sorcery accusations, which disproportionately affects women.
- ◆ **Family Support Centres:** The Department of Health, in collaboration with the Family Sexual Violence Action Committee, established Family Support Centres (FSCs) across significant hospitals and health centres. These centres provide essential medical and psychological services to survivors of GBV. The government of PNG has adopted standard operating procedures for FSCs in the country.
- ◆ **Capacity Building and Training:** Human rights defenders have been trained on standard operating procedures and GBV data collection, equipping them with the tools to respond effectively to GBV cases.

- ◆ **Expansion of Police Units:** The Royal PNG Constabulary transformed its Family Sexual Violence Unit into a fully-fledged directorate within the Crimes Division, enhancing its capacity to address domestic violence and support victims.
- ◆ **Community Awareness and Advocacy:** The GBV Secretariat has conducted awareness-raising campaigns and organized men's forums to engage men in addressing GBV and promote a community-based approach to prevention.

Despite these measures, challenges remain, including high levels of impunity for GBV, under-resourced police units, and the need for further institutional strengthening to effectively investigate and prosecute cases.⁶⁰

In Papua New Guinea (PNG), several services are available for survivors of sorcery accusation-related violence (SARV) and gender-based violence (GBV). These services aim to provide immediate support, legal assistance, and long-term rehabilitation for victims. Key services include:

1. **Family Support Centres:** The Department of Health, in conjunction with the Family Sexual Violence Action Committee, also established Family Support Centres in major hospitals and health centres throughout the country. These Centres respond to the medical and psychological needs of survivors by offering free essential services, including medical first aid, psychological first aid, and the provision of advice by paralegals, as well as supporting the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the prevention of unwanted or unintended pregnancy, and the prevention of hepatitis B and tetanus or other life-threatening medical conditions. Currently, there are 28 safe houses and a men's hub for victims of GBV in 17 provinces and 14 Family Support Centres in 13 provinces.
2. **Safe Houses:** There are currently 28 safe houses across 17 provinces, providing temporary shelter and support for survivors of GBV and SARV. These facilities offer a secure environment for victims to recover and access necessary services.
3. **NGO Support:** Several NGOs, including Oxfam, the Tribal Foundation, and the Meri Seif Haus, along with grassroots women's human rights defenders such as the Kafe Urban Women's Settlers Association, KUP Women for Peace, Voices for Change, Southern Highlands Women Demand for Change, and Mama Helpim Mama, provide life-saving services for survivors of SARV, including shelter, medical and legal services, rehabilitation and relocation. In Southern Highlands Province, the Catholic Church operates a temporary shelter for SARV survivors with a holistic support program.

⁵⁹ PNG UNICEF research into social inclusion, 2020

⁶⁰ UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

- 4. National GBV Secretariat:** Since 2016, the GBV Secretariat has advocated for and conducted awareness-raising on issues relating to GBV, organized men's forums to highlight men's role in addressing GBV, and established GBV secretariats and committees at the provincial level. Pilot programs have been rolled out in four provinces (Morobe, Milne Bay, NCD, and East New Britain), but the initiative has not resulted in further programs.
- 5. Training for Human Rights Defenders:** In 2016 and 2017, 33 human rights defenders in three NCD electorates were trained on standard operating procedures and GBV data collection. They were also equipped with response tools, such as phones, identification cards, uniforms, and manuals, to carry out their duties effectively.
- 6. Royal PNG Constabulary Family Sexual Violence Unit:** The Royal PNG Constabulary transformed its Family Sexual Violence Unit into a fully-fledged directorate within the Crimes Division. Its expanded role included addressing domestic violence victims. The Unit had 33 established desks in 17 provinces, with 88 policemen and policewomen engaged in that work.⁶¹ Unfortunately, many Family and Sexual Violence Units remained under-resourced.
- 7. SARV National Action Plan:** Developed by the government and partners, with a focus on services (through counselling, health sector, and child protection), prevention through advocacy and communications, legal protection and prosecution, and research.

These services collectively aim to address the immediate needs of survivors while also working towards long-term solutions to reduce the prevalence of GBV and SARV in PNG. However, challenges remain, including under-resourced units and the need for further institutional strengthening to ensure effective implementation and access to these services.

1.3.3 Water, sanitation, and hygiene

PNG suffers from issues related to water quality and safety, physical accessibility, affordability, and sufficiency – issues that reflect the wealth divide, with the wealthier having greater enjoyment of water rights, sanitation, and hygiene. The 2019 Joint Monitoring Programme reported that less than half of PNG households (41 per cent) in 2017 had access to at least an essential improved drinking water source, and only 35 per cent in rural areas. Nationally, 51 per cent rely on surface water, which increased from 38 per cent in 2000. In the wealth quintile, 90.4 per cent of people have at least primary, safe drinking water compared to only 11 per cent in the lowest quintile.⁶²

There are considerable differences in access to drinking water sources across the country. For example, the proportion of households with an improved source of drinking water ranges from only 19 per cent in Southern Highlands to 99 per cent in the NCD. Overall, 10 per cent of households use an appropriate method to make their drinking water safer, including boiling, adding bleach/chlorine, filtering, and disinfecting. Urban households are much more likely to use an appropriate water treatment method than rural households (26 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively).

The 2019 Joint Monitoring Programme reported that 13 per cent of people in 2017 accessed at least a basic toilet, while most people (70 per cent) used an unimproved toilet, usually a pit latrine. Fourteen per cent were still defecating in the open, with only a one percentage point change since 2000. Rural people were most likely to openly defecate (17 per cent) or use an unimproved facility (74 per cent). In the 2016-2018 DHS, the Islands region had by far the highest percentage of people practising open defecation. Households in the NCD are far more likely to have an improved sanitation facility (86 per cent) than those in other provinces, especially Hela (10 per cent).⁶³

Less than half of the provinces in 2018 achieved 50 per cent coverage of essential water and sanitation in schools, with the northern and Highland provinces having the lowest coverage. Basic hygiene coverage in schools is below 25 per cent in all provinces except East New Britain and Chimbu. A 2015 baseline survey assessing WaSH in schools, led by the National Department of Education and UNICEF, found that 41 per cent and 51 per cent of primary schools surveyed had only one operational toilet for girls and boys. An analysis of 2016 Education Management Information System data on WaSH in schools showed that only 10 per cent of schools had soap, and 28 per cent had clean, operational, and separate toilets for girls and boys, with the toilets beside each other.

Menstrual hygiene is affected by the absence of washing facilities, privacy, and unavailability of clean, absorbent materials due to limited availability or prohibitive costs. The baseline survey showed that only 8 per cent of primary schools promoted menstrual health management for adolescent girls, with almost one in five (or 20 per cent of the girls indicating that they did not attend school during menstruation. This phenomenon led to a reduction in girls attending school by 10-15 per cent.

According to the Joint Monitoring Programme report, 30 per cent of healthcare facilities did not have essential water services, meaning water was unavailable from an improved source. Thirty-two per cent had no toilets. WaSH in healthcare facilities

⁶¹ UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

⁶² Op cit.

⁶³ PNG Demographic and Health Survey 2016-2018

is essential to curb infection and the spread of diseases and to provide privacy and dignity to staff and patients. Unhygienic birth deliveries leading to infections such as sepsis remain a frequent cause of neonatal and maternal mortality in PNG.

Overall, WASH responsibilities are fragmented and uncoordinated across PNG. The SOEs serve the most significant urban areas, but the rural areas tend to be underserved by their LLGs. The PNG Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Policy 2015-2030 focuses on improved service delivery of water, sanitation, and environmental hygiene and increased access. The Policy is aligned with the government's SDG target of 70 per cent of the population accessing clean water supply and safe sanitation by 2030. The Policy also aims for 100 per cent of public schools and health facilities to have water and proper sanitation.

The 2016 Water Supply and Sanitation Act aimed to strengthen the coordination of water supply and sanitation services throughout the country. It provides for planning, designing, constructing, and managing systems, including correctly disposing of wastewater and sewage. Legislation has been proposed and long-pending to create a National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Authority, with subnational offices, to manage WaSH as a high-priority development target for PNG. The WaSH Programme Management Unit under DNPM is the interim body coordinating and implementing the WASH Policy.⁶⁴

A set place for hand washing exists for 57 per cent of households surveyed. Soap and water, the essential hand-washing agents, were available to 33 per cent of people. The availability of a place to wash hands that has soap and water varies widely, being highest among the population in Manus (83 per cent) and in NCD (73 per cent), as well as among people in the highest wealth quintile (73 per cent).

Water access, particularly regarding physical accessibility and quality/safety, is also impacted by pollution/waste management and management of extractive industries. These have been understood to contribute to issues with the quality/safety of easily accessible water sources and are subject to inadequate regulation/enforcement of existing legal and regulatory frameworks, as described in other sections. These issues have a disproportionate impact on women, indigenous groups, individuals in rural areas, and many others who are unable to access alternative water sources physically.

Most persons in PNG in 2022 get their drinking water from unprotected springs (24.2 per cent), an unimproved source,

followed by rainwater collection (23 per cent), an improved source, and protected springs (improved source) (14.8 per cent). These water sources are an improvement from the 2016-2018 DHS findings, where the figures were 29.3 per cent and 15.3 per cent, respectively, for unprotected spring and rainwater and 15.2 per cent for surface water. Further, 65.5 per cent of households, or 66.1 per cent of the population, have access to improved drinking water sources, an improvement from the 2018 figures of 45.5 per cent of households, or 46.9 per cent of the population. Of these households with access in 2022, only 18.5 per cent had access to safely managed drinking water services (no water testing), accounting for 19.3 per cent of the population.⁶⁵

The 2022 SDES found that 50 per cent of toilet facilities are pit latrines without slabs/open, followed by 14 per cent of open defecation and 13 per cent of pit latrines with slabs, an improvement from the 2016-18 DHS, where the percentages were 52.3 per cent, 16.7 per cent, and 14.4 per cent. The number of households and people with improved sanitation facilities improved in 2022 compared with 2018. In 2022, 32.6 per cent of households, or 33.1 per cent of the population, had access to improved sanitation facilities. However, only 7.6 per cent of households, or 8.2 per cent of the population, use safely managed sanitation services. In 2022, 35.9 per cent of households had a handwashing facility such as a bucket, jug, or kettle, while another 35 per cent had no handwashing facility in the dwelling or yard. Among the households with handwashing facilities, water is available in 92.2 per cent, and soap is available in 70.1 per cent.⁶⁶

1.3.4 Energy Accessibility & Affordability

Papua New Guineans across the country face significant challenges with poor access to electricity, and even for those with access, unreliable power supplies and lengthy blackouts impact homes, businesses, and the delivery of critical services. While PNG has significant untapped energy resources, the development of these resources is lagging, and the country's electricity access remains extremely low, with only an estimated 13 per cent of the population having access to grid-connected electricity.⁶⁷

Grid-connected power is primarily restricted to the main urban areas, and supply is often unreliable. Access to electricity is very limited in off-grid rural areas, which limits economic growth in urban areas, constrains growth in smaller urban centres, and

⁶⁴ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/664926/making-urban-sanitation-more-inclusive-png.pdf>

⁶⁵ PNG National Statistical Office, Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022 <https://www.nso.gov.pg/census-surveys/population-data-collection-and-assessment/socio-demographic-and-economic-survey/>

⁶⁶ PNG National Statistical Office, Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022 <https://www.nso.gov.pg/census-surveys/population-data-collection-and-assessment/socio-demographic-and-economic-survey/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/04/06/papua-new-guinea-improved-access-to-reliable-affordable-energy>

contributes to poverty in rural areas. Most provincial centres are supplied entirely by diesel, resulting in high generation costs and low power supply quality. PNG's per capita electricity consumption is among the lowest globally. The national state-owned power utility, PNG Power Limited (PPL), manages about 320 MW of installed generation capacity, including three main grids and 19 isolated mini-grids. The remaining capacity comprises self-generation systems owned by industrial facilities and private generators. PNG's mountainous terrain and geographically dispersed population compound the challenge of developing town/rural electrification infrastructure. High network losses, high household connection charges, lack of coordination and leadership in the energy sector, and weak governance and financial management within PPL further complicate the implementation of the government's power sector roadmap.⁶⁸

The energy sector in PNG faces several development challenges, including the Gazelle, Port Moresby, and Ramu power grids, which face rapid demand due to robust economic growth. The unreliable and low-quality power supply, high maintenance and operation costs, and low efficiencies in power generation make significant investments from both the public and private sectors necessary. Town and rural electrification are also challenging due to the geographical conditions and higher operation and maintenance costs for diesel-based mini-grid systems. This issue makes it difficult for PPL to expand its grids into rural areas.⁶⁹

1.3.5 Digital connectivity

Digital connectivity faces several challenges in PNG. Despite government efforts, there is insufficient coherence in approaching digitalization across government departments at national and local levels, reducing sustainability. Challenges include inadequate institutional and individual capacity within GoPNG to conduct whole-of-government and whole-of-society digitalization;

inadequate, affordable broadband connectivity nationwide; lack of infrastructure, power, network connection, and essential equipment access; and lack of knowledge and information about digital transformation.⁷⁰

The opportunities that exist include:

- ◆ Implementing digital government to enhance interoperability, promote reuse, and increase scalability.
- ◆ Developing a skills roadmap for capacity-building among government departments, public service training institutes, and academia.
- ◆ Establishing public-private-investor platforms for synergy and agreement on roadmaps.
- ◆ Developing a nationwide information campaign about digitalization benefits and implementing programs like Smart Villages, Smart Islands, and Digital Villages.
- ◆ Offering technical support to the National Department of Information and Communications Technology and other digital transformation officers.
- ◆ Promoting a common understanding of digitalization and collaborating on sector-specific e-strategies.
- ◆ Sharing international best practices, including policy and regulatory assistance.
- ◆ Integrating government-wide digitalization into public service training programs.
- ◆ Creating a sandbox environment for staff to build.
- ◆ Increase competition for nationwide broadband infrastructure.
- ◆ Promoting the adoption of relevant digital services.
- ◆ Organizing public-private sector roundtables with investors, donors, and development banks.
- ◆ Allocating budget resources for digital transformation initiatives.⁷¹

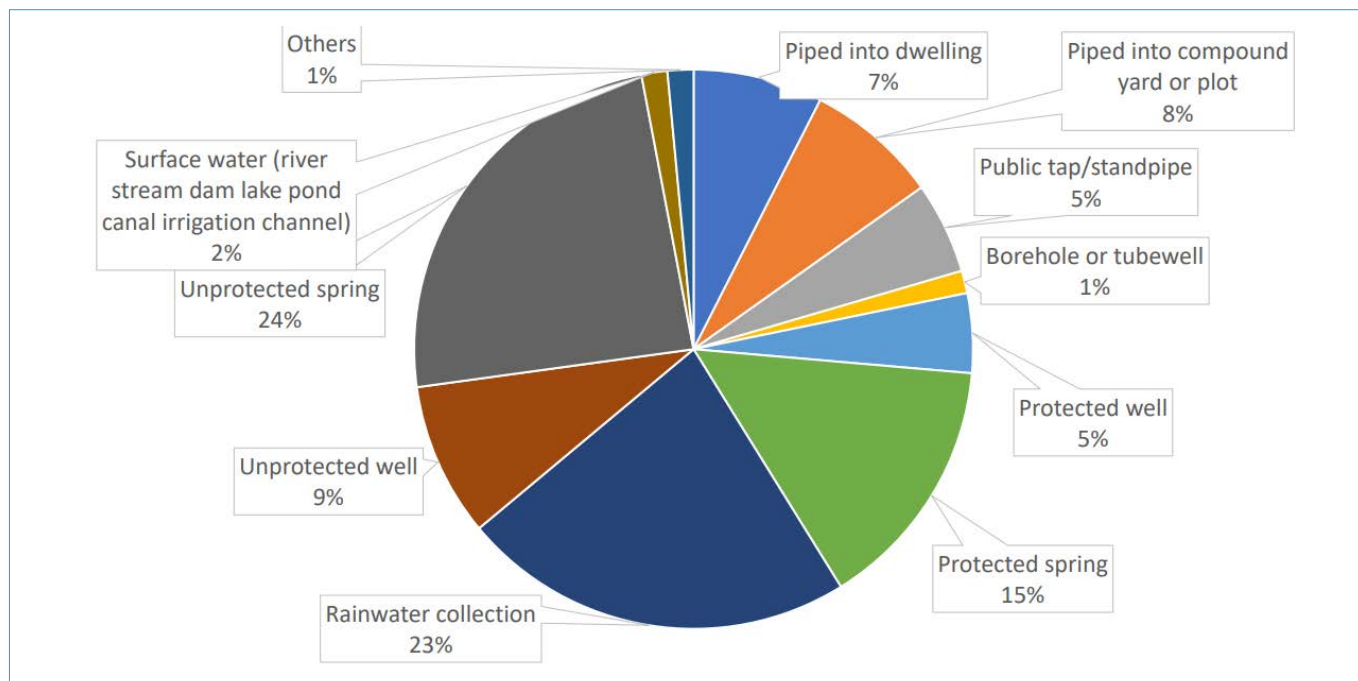
⁶⁸ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/47356-002-ssa.pdf>

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ ITU Asia-Pacific Regional Office

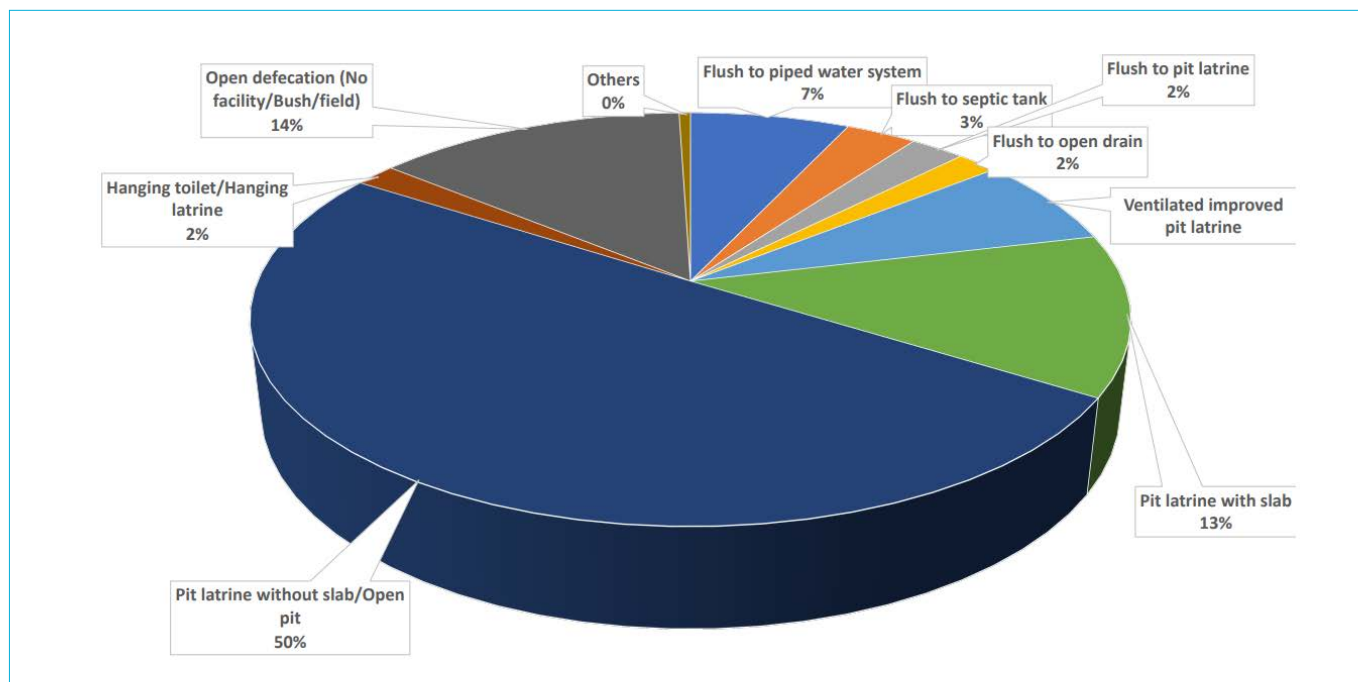
⁷¹ Ibid

Figure 5: Sources of Drinking Water



Source: PNG National Statistical Office, Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022

Figure 6: Percentage distribution of households by type of toilet facilities



Source: PNG National Statistical Office, Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022

1.3.6 Education System & Indicators

Insufficient investment in education infrastructure resulted in low educational attainment, particularly in rural areas. While school attendance has improved (from 57.4 per cent in 2011 to 77.7 per cent in 2022), completion rates for secondary education remain low, with government expenditure on education declining from 10.7 per cent of total expenditure in 2017 to 8.7 per cent in 2018.

Implementing the new 1+6+6 education system in Papua New Guinea will face challenges such as inadequate teacher awareness and training, insufficient curriculum materials, overcrowded school facilities, and low teacher remuneration⁷².

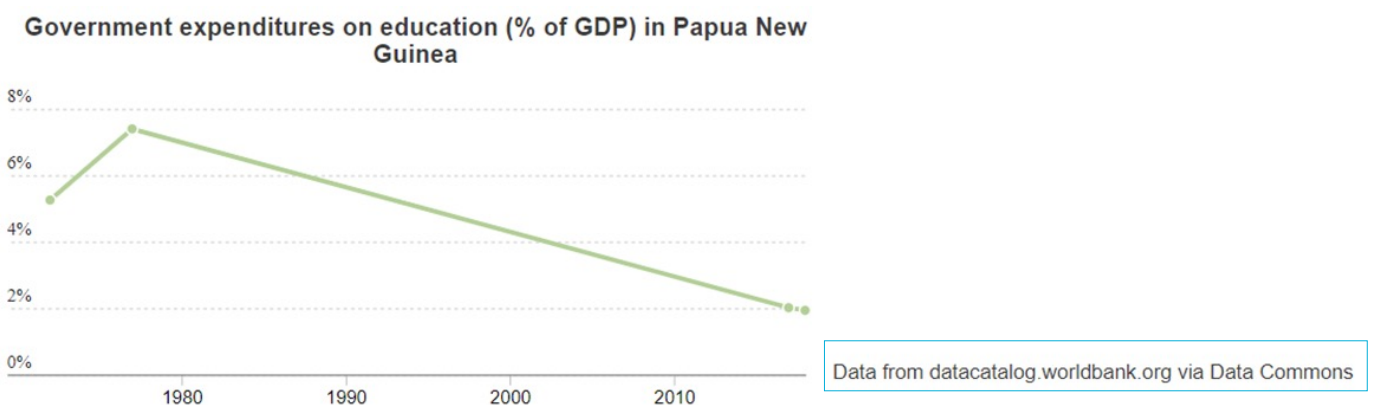
The PNG Education Sector Analysis indicates:

- ◆ **Access and Equity:** Since the inception of the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy (GTFS) policy/program, PNG has seen a 43 per cent growth in the number of students enrolled in basic education. However, an estimated 700,000 children aged six to eighteen are not in school, and challenges persist in attendance, transition, and completion rates.
- ◆ **Gender in Education:** More girls are in school than before, and gender parity has been achieved at elementary and very close at primary, but there is still a gap in secondary (GPI 0.75 in 2019). Learning environments need to be safe and conducive through gender-responsive education, improved teacher capacity, implementation of the Behaviour Management Policy (BMP), gender-sensitive WASH facilities, and support for Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in schools to support girls in education.
- ◆ **Overaged students:** Children not starting education at the right age nor enrolled in age-appropriate grades cause many students to age, which affects internal efficiencies of the education system (repetition, drop-out, low pass, completion, or transition rates) but also safe learning environments as older children bully or overpower younger ones in classrooms.

- ◆ **Quality and Teachers:** Key policy reforms to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes have been adopted, such as curriculum reform from outcome-based curriculum (OBC) to standards-based curriculum (SBC) and provision of early childhood education (ECE) as part of foundational education. However, pupil-per-teacher ratios (PTRs) range from 23 to 70 students per teacher (in NCD, PTR could be around 100), and more teachers are needed to meet the increasing numbers of learners – annually 3,000-3,500 new teachers.
- ◆ **Education Financing:** While the GTFS has reached all schools and education institutions across the country, the stagnant budget ceiling over the past five years, coupled with increasing enrolments, has resulted in a decrease in absolute funding each year. Additionally, financial resources are not equitably distributed across provinces. Education financing needs to become sustainable and needs to be increased, such as investing in school inspection, rationalizing the pupil-teacher ratio, 1-6-6 school infrastructure, digital transformation, and learning pathways.
- ◆ **System Management and Governance:** Communication and linkages between national and provincial education authorities need to be improved for more effective policy implementation, monitoring, and impact evaluation. Data management systems must be improved and streamlined to inform decision-making in policy development, strategic planning, and monitoring.

Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP has declined significantly. In 2018, expenditure was 1.9 per cent of GDP compared with 7.4 per cent in 1977, the highest level since independence. Expenditure on education as a percentage of total expenditure has also declined, from 10.7 per cent in 2017 to 8.7 per cent in 2018.

Figure 7: GoPNG expenditure on education



⁷²Goro, J. (2021). Is it the right time to implement the new 1+6+6 basic education system in Papua New Guinea? Spotlight, 14(4). Papua New Guinea National Research Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.pngnri.org>

Educational attainment at the household level has increased since 2006. The percentage of women and men without education has declined in almost all age groups. It fell from 35 per cent to 24 per cent for men and 45 per cent to 32 per cent for women between 2006 and 2018. The percentage of the school-age population that attends primary or secondary school was higher in urban areas than in rural areas in 2018. Not all the students who should be attending school are attending. In 2018, these figures were 94 per cent, 80 per cent, and 37 per cent for elementary, primary, and secondary school, respectively.

Education is an essential factor influencing an individual's attitudes and opportunities. Almost one in four women (23 per cent) and 13 per cent of men aged 15-49 have no formal education. Many respondents (35 per cent of women and men) have attended but not completed some primary school. Men have generally attained higher levels of education than women; only 8 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 have completed secondary school or attained a higher level of education compared with 11 per cent of men. Residents of urban areas generally have more education than rural residents.

The urban-rural difference is pronounced at the secondary or higher levels of education. For example, 19 per cent of women in urban areas have completed secondary or higher education compared with only 6 per cent of rural women. Similarly, 26 per cent of urban men completed a secondary or higher level of education, compared with 10 per cent of rural men. Educational attainment also varies by wealth quintile. For example, less than 1 per cent of women in the lowest wealth quintile have completed secondary or higher education, compared with 25 per cent of women in the highest quintile.

Similarly, only 1 per cent of men in the lowest wealth quintile have completed a secondary or higher level of education, compared with 33 per cent of those in the highest quintile. Two-thirds of women and 80 per cent of men aged 15-49 are literate, meaning they can at least read a simple sentence. Literacy levels are higher among younger and urban respondents and increase with wealth.⁷³

About 30 per cent of girls and boys aged 6 to 14 have not attended school, but among older children, there was marked gender disparity: 9 per cent of boys aged 15 to 24 have not attended school compared to 13 per cent of girls. Retention loss starts very early among those who attend school: 84 per cent of boys and 81 per cent of girls transition from Elementary 2 to primary school (Grade 3).⁷⁴ For girls and boys, the significant loss in transition from one year to the next occurs from Grade 8 to 9 (primary to lower secondary), as only 63.1 per cent of boys and 55.1 per cent of girls transition to lower secondary.

Forty-four per cent of the population attended primary or secondary school, with a 46.3 per cent net admission rate (NAR) at the elementary level, 50.3 per cent NAR in primary school, and 20.6 per cent NAR in secondary school. All three NARs (elementary, primary, and secondary school) were higher in urban areas than in rural areas, with NARs in both primary and secondary schools being higher at higher levels of household wealth. Gender parity indices at different levels of schooling over time show that by 2016, there was gender parity – with a slightly higher percentage of girls than boys enrolled in primary and secondary school. Boys are much more likely to be in vocational training, while girls are more likely to marry early.

Table 4 Gender Parity Index 2009-2016 for children and adolescents enrolled in school or training

NB: A gender parity index lower than 1.00 indicates a gender disparity in favour of males, with a higher proportion of males than females attending that level of schooling.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2016
Elementary	0.86	0.9	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.99
Primary	0.78	0.83	0.84	0.83	0.81	1.04
Secondary	0.64	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.71	1.06
Vocational	-	0.42	0.36	0.37	0.4	-

Source: <https://www.educationpng.gov.pg/Staff/Devinfo%20Dashboard/dashboard.html>

⁷³ PNG Demographic and Health Survey 2016-18

⁷⁴ [http://education.gov.pg/documents/PNG-COVID-19-Education-Response-and-Recovery-Plan-\(Final-Draft-04-05-2020\)](http://education.gov.pg/documents/PNG-COVID-19-Education-Response-and-Recovery-Plan-(Final-Draft-04-05-2020)).

Several factors cause non-enrolment and low transition rates to higher levels. Public education is underfunded, especially in rural areas. Despite the official policy, subsidies have not always been paid in full or disbursed on time, forcing parents to cover fees or keep children at home. Additionally, not all students in rural areas can access schools easily, as they have to trek long distances to get to their schools or pay boarding fees. Many schools lack access to clean water, functional and gender-segregated toilets, and even classroom space. Often, their teachers lack appropriate training and teaching materials. In 2016, there was a shortage of 10,000 teachers in schools, most of whom were in rural areas.⁷⁵

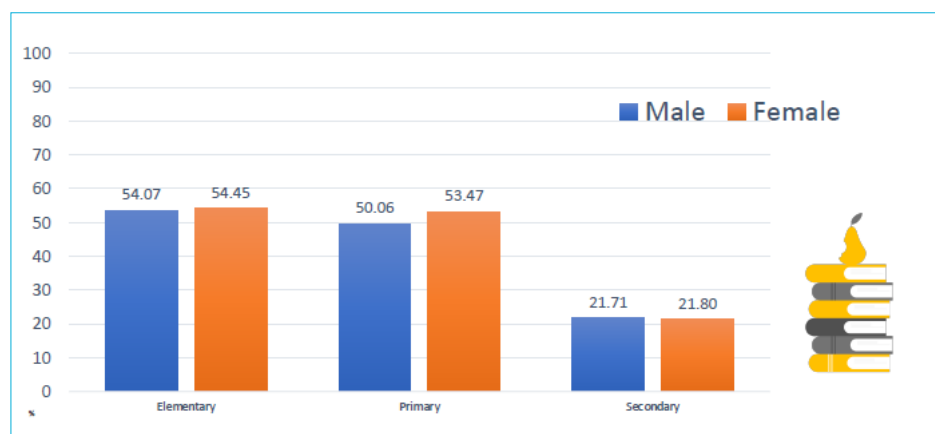
Children with disabilities continue to face issues with access to quality, inclusive education. Complete and accurate national figures on the number of children with disabilities in PNG and in or out of school are not readily available. According to civil society submissions to PNG's Universal Periodic Review in 2021, five of 24 provinces are engaged in disability learning.⁷⁶ Existing services supporting disabled children operate through only 19 inclusive education resource centres, with limited outreach and direct service capacity to schools.⁷⁷ The exclusion could be attributed to:

- ◆ lack of awareness of the rights of children with disabilities
- ◆ inadequate budget allocation to put the Special Education policy into operation
- ◆ lack of competent teachers with disability-inclusive education training
- ◆ difficulties with retention and transition in various educational settings from early childhood to post-secondary
- ◆ inaccessible infrastructure and materials in educational settings
- ◆ limited appropriate disability services
- ◆ lack of inclusive education curriculum and assessment practices.

The 2022 SDES found that the proportion of the five-year-old and older population who had been to school increased from 57.4 per cent (60.9 per cent male and 74.2 per cent female) in 2011 to 77.7 per cent (81.1 per cent male, 74.2 per cent female) in 2022. The proportion of the population (aged 6-24 years) attending school increased from 41.8 per cent in 2011 and 59.6 per cent in 2016-2018 to 62.7 per cent (65 per cent male, 60.2 per cent female) in 2022. The net attendance rate for elementary, primary, and secondary schools increased from 2018 to 2022. The most significant increase is in elementary education. The net attendance rate in 2022 was 54.3 per cent for elementary, 51.7 per cent for primary, and 21.8 per cent for secondary, compared with the 2011 statistics of 43.6 per cent, 50.3 per cent, and 20.6 per cent, respectively. The gross attendance rate increased significantly between 2018 and 2022. The SDES found that the gross attendance rate in 2022 was 108.7 per cent for elementary, 92.2 per cent for primary, and 42.5 per cent for secondary, compared with the DHS findings in 2018 at 93.9 per cent, 79.9 per cent, and 36.7 per cent, respectively.

Attendance is higher for females at all levels of schooling. Literacy increased significantly between 2011 and 2022. The SDES found that the 2022 literacy rate was 85.7 per cent (88.0 per cent male, 83.2 per cent female) compared with 67.6 per cent in 2011 (71.1 per cent male, 64 per cent female). On average, affordability was the main reason for not attending school. For females, getting married was the main reason for not attending school.⁷⁸

Figure 7: Net attendance rate by sex



Source: PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022

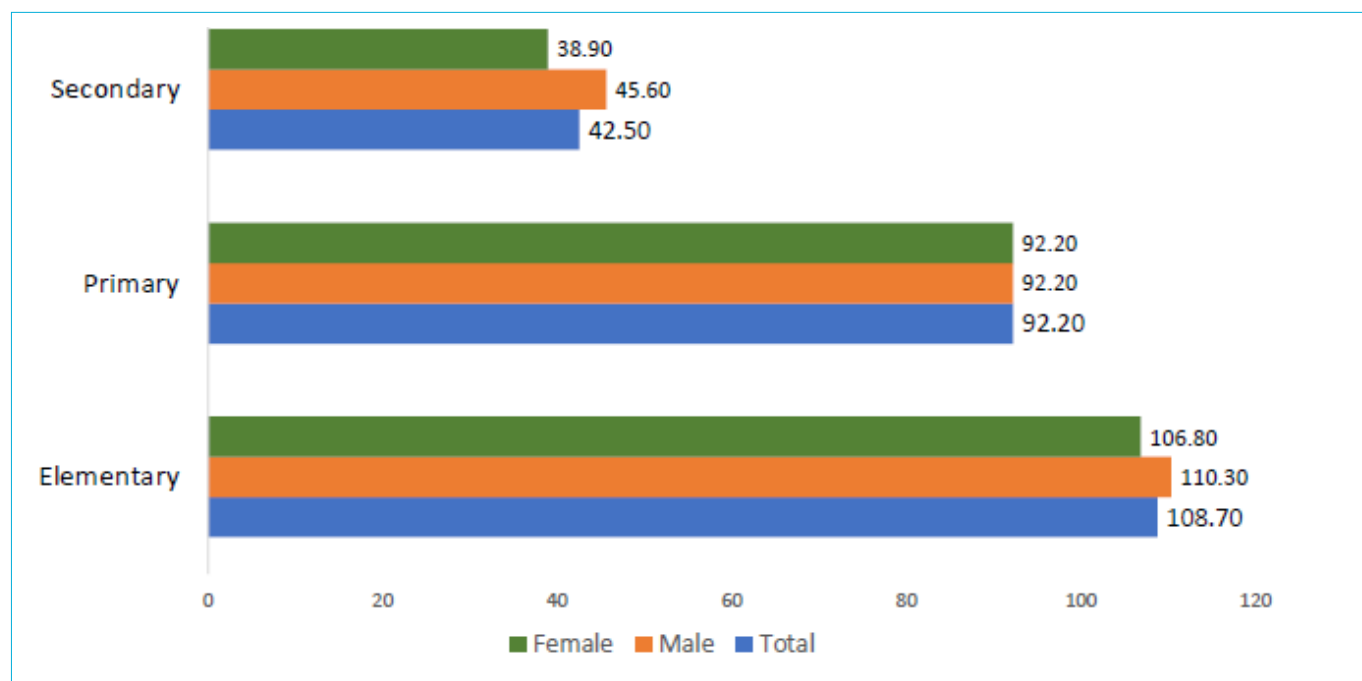
⁷⁵ <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/302786/teacher-shortage-in-png-hurting-rural-students>

⁷⁶ Magna Carta Inc submission to PNG Universal Periodic Review, 2021, available in https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/2.png_magna_carta_inc.pdf

⁷⁷ [http://education.gov.pg/documents/PNG-COVID-19-Education-Response-and-Recovery-Plan-\(Final-Draft-04-05-2020\)](http://education.gov.pg/documents/PNG-COVID-19-Education-Response-and-Recovery-Plan-(Final-Draft-04-05-2020)).

⁷⁸ PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and economic survey, 2022

Figure 8: Gross Attendance Rate for population 6-24 years old, 2022



Source: PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022

Table 5: Main reasons for not attending school by sex

	Both Sexes	Male	Female
No money for fees/cannot afford school fees	20.5%	22.1%	18.9%
Lost interest/refused to go to school	15.4%	17.5%	13.3%
Working/looking for work	15.0%	17.9%	12.0%
Getting married	14.4%	6.8%	22.0%
Not qualified for secondary/tertiary/(Grade 9 or 11)	13.5%	14.8%	12.1%

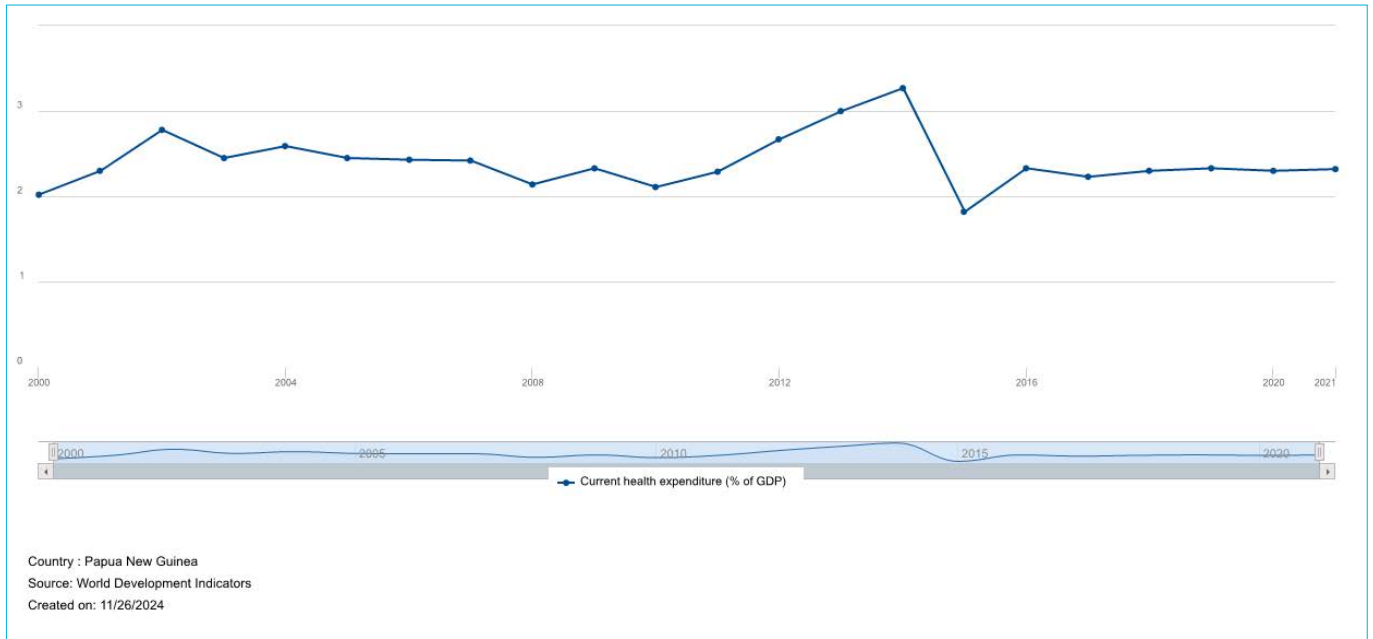
Source: PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2022

1.3.7 Health System & Indicators

Papua New Guinea (PNG) faces significant challenges in health service delivery. The health system is under-resourced, with a shortage of healthcare professionals and inadequate access to essential services, particularly in rural areas. Nationally, the under-five mortality rate is 49 deaths per 1,000 live births. The prevalence of stunting among children under five is 49.5 per cent, and the country faces a critical shortage of healthcare workers, with only 0.5 physicians per 10,000 population.

Current health expenditure as a per cent of GDP for 2021 was 2.53 per cent, compared with 1.8 per cent in 2015 and a maximum of 3.3 per cent in 2014. The world average in 2020, based on 179 countries, is 7.04 per cent. The per capita health expenditure has increased since 2015 to \$65 in 2019. The highest expenditure per capita per year was \$96 in 2014.

Figure 9: PNG Health Expenditure



One of the core issues is the need for more funding streams for health services. Primary healthcare services are publicly funded and should be free at points of service. The government subsidizes some specialized public hospital services and a portion of church-provided health services, but overall financial management within the health sector could be more robust. This inefficiency limits the allocation and mobilization of funds at provincial and facility levels, compounding the effects of lower health budgets⁷⁹. Some sources indicate that from 2010 to 2013, there was an increase in health budgets/funding. However, this growth plateaued, and health financing saw a decline by 2016-2017 due to fiscal constraints and reductions in external donor support. There has been an increase in the health budget again from 2022 onward.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the fragility of PNG's health system. The country struggled with disease surveillance and early detection due to slow and fragmented diagnostic capacities, often relying on overseas testing, which delayed responses to health emergencies. PNG has also faced numerous health security threats, including outbreaks of cholera, measles, and polio, highlighting the need for robust disease surveillance systems. Health indicators in PNG are alarming. The country has the lowest life expectancy in the Pacific region and still needs to meet the SDGs for maternal and child health. Antenatal care coverage has declined, and there is a significant unmet need for modern contraception among women. High maternal and infant mortality rates, coupled with a burden of communicable diseases, further illustrate the inadequacies of the health system⁸⁰.

The health workforce in PNG is facing a crisis characterized by an ageing workforce, limited training opportunities, and poor attraction and retention strategies. The country has only 0.66 medical doctors and 4.53 nurses per 10,000 population, far below global and regional averages. This shortage is compounded by a lack of systemic in-service training, particularly for rural health, and curriculum weaknesses in preservice training. Infrastructure is another critical issue. Many health facilities are old and poorly maintained and need to meet national health standards. Access to basic utilities such as water and electricity is limited, and the majority of health clinics lack essential resources for effective service delivery. The government is responsible for capital investment, but a significant percentage of health facilities require rebuilding or maintenance⁸¹.

⁷⁹ Asian Development Bank. (2023). Second Additional Financing of Health Services Sector Development Program (RRP PNG 51035): Sector Assessment (Summary): <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/51035-001-ssa.pdf>

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

Partnerships and collaborations are essential for improving health service delivery, yet governance and management within new provincial health authorities still need to be stronger. The lack of accountability and performance management further complicates the situation, leading to inefficient use of funds and resources. To strengthen health management, the government is developing a health sector monitoring framework and conducting reviews of health service costs and workforce policies. This improvement will facilitate the establishment of a package of essential health services and streamline budgeting processes through facility-based and direct facility budgeting. These initiatives are aligned with national development plans, including the National Health Plan (2021–2030), which emphasizes improving access to primary health care (PHC) and enhancing health infrastructure⁸³.

In response to health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the government is preparing a national laboratory policy to improve disease surveillance and diagnostic capacity. This laboratory policy includes establishing a national reference laboratory to reduce reliance on overseas testing and enhance local capabilities for early detection and response to health threats. Additionally, the government is adopting digital health systems to improve planning, monitoring, and management, including a national health information system and a health workforce management system. These technological advancements aim to streamline operations and improve data collection. To strengthen health management, the government is developing a health sector monitoring framework and conducting reviews of health service costs and workforce policies. This framework will facilitate the establishment of a package of essential health services and streamline budgeting processes through facility-based and direct facility budgeting. These initiatives are aligned with national development plans, including the National Health Plan (2021–2030), which emphasizes improving access to primary health care (PHC) and enhancing health infrastructure

Papua New Guinea is facing an epidemiological transition characterized by the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). For instance, despite substantial needs, there is a considerable lack of services and support for people in PNG with mental health conditions, limited access to support to prevent poor mental health, and programs to promote psychosocial well-being. Personnel with mental health training and skills are extremely limited across all sectors, which places a significant barrier to implementation. Services that are responsive to the needs of children and adolescents are minimal, particularly at the primary health care level, and over-reliance

on tertiary and institutional-based care also contributes to high unmet needs and delays in access to services. Insufficient budgets for mental health and psychosocial support-related programs and budgeting processes that do not support agenda-based and cross-sectoral budget planning are also key challenges. There are no large-scale programs to support healthy peer relationships and address peer victimization in schools, communities, and online spaces.

On the other hand, Papua New Guinea continues to have a high burden of maternal and child deaths and infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria. Marginalized populations, including women, children and those living in poverty, are disproportionately affected. Limited access to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services exists in rural and remote areas.

Infant mortality declined from 57 per 1000 live births in 2006 to 33 per 1000 live births in 2018, and childhood mortality has also reduced from 75 per 1000 live births to 49 per 1000 live births in the same period. Based on Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2022 by the UN Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME):

- ◆ For 2021 - 21 Neonatal Mortality, 34 Infant Mortality, 43 Under 5 Mortality (U5M);
- ◆ Probability of dying among children aged 5–14 years (per 1,000 children aged 5) 8 for 2021 (9 males, 7 females);
- ◆ Probability of dying among children aged 15–24 years (per 1,000 children aged 15) 15 for 2021 (16 males, 13 females)

With regards to Maternal Mortality Ratio - Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is estimated at 171 deaths per 100,000 live births (DHS 2016–2018). Based on Trends in MMR 2000–2020 by UN MMIEG Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division, WHO 2023, 192/100,000 live births.

Based on SPAR - Nationally, the coverage rates for four or more ANC visits (ANC-4) steadily decreased by one percentage point between 2019–2021. 27% in 2022 and then increased to 29% in 2023. When ANC-4 is compared with coverage of at least one visit (ANC-1), a similar trend is seen with a decrease followed by a significant increase in coverage in 2022–23 - ANC 1: 46% 2021, 58% 2022 and 59% 2023.

Three-quarters (76 per cent) of women in PNG who gave birth five years before 2016 received antenatal care from a skilled provider. Just under half of the women had at least four antenatal care visits during their last pregnancy; however, only 17 per cent had an antenatal care visit during their first

⁸³ Asian Development Bank. (2023)

trimester. Almost nine out of ten pregnant women (87 per cent) who received antenatal care had their blood pressure measured, eight out of ten (78 per cent) had a blood sample, and 46 per cent had a urine sample taken. Seven in ten women took iron supplements during pregnancy. Only 38 per cent of women's most recent births were protected against neonatal tetanus.

Over half (55 per cent) of births in PNG are delivered in a health facility. Skilled providers assist fifty-six per cent of births. Only three per cent of births are delivered via cesarean section. Forty-six per cent of women and 45 per cent of newborns received a postnatal check within the first two days of birth. The main problems women face in accessing health care for themselves are getting money for treatment and distance to a health facility.⁸⁴

While estimates vary, the most recent national survey report for maternal mortality was 171 per 100,000 live births. These deaths are primarily the result of preventable or treatable conditions, such as haemorrhages, infections, and pre-eclampsia or eclampsia. A Task Force on Maternal Mortality reported in 2019 that women opt for the risks of an unattended birth at home because many health facilities often did not have staff or only had male staff. Many facilities lack running water and electricity needed to ensure a safe and sanitary environment for giving birth, and many facilities do not have refrigerators for vaccines or adequate stock of essential drugs and supplies to treat common conditions. Cost is a significant issue for many women, including the cost of transport and payments for services and supplies that should be free. TB is the leading cause of hospital admission (except admission due to labour/delivery) and the leading cause of death among inpatients in PNG. PNG is among the 30 high TB and multi-drug resistant TB countries in the world. The incidence of TB is estimated at 432 per 100,000 population (3x the global average incidence), and there is no declining trend in the incidence in PNG, unlike the global trend. TB deaths occur at 27 per 100,000 population (double the global average) and are not declining. (WHO 2024 Global TB Report).

According to a 2019 study,⁸⁵ 41 per cent of male and 49 per cent of female deaths in PNG are due to infectious diseases, maternal, neonatal, and/or nutritional causes, while 45 per cent of male and 42 per cent of female deaths arise from non-communicable diseases. Provinces with the highest estimated mortality due to endemic infectious, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional causes are geographically isolated. At the same time, deaths from heart disease and strokes are higher among those with comparatively high socio-economic status.⁸⁶

In the past decade, contraceptive use among married women increased from 32 per cent in 2006 to 37 per cent in 2016-18. Modern methods have increased from 24 per cent to 31 per cent over the same period. Almost nine out of ten users of modern contraceptive methods obtained their method from a public (government) source; only five per cent obtained it from private medical sector sources. In 2011, only 16 per cent of all new contraceptive users discontinued use of their method within 12 months; four per cent switched to another method. One-quarter of currently married women (26 per cent) have an unmet need for family planning. Over half (59 per cent) of currently married women have satisfied their demand for family planning.⁸⁷

Nutrition

Stunting in children is correlated with lower measured cognitive abilities, fewer years of completed schooling, and lower earnings as an adult. The loss of adult productivity related to early childhood stunting has been linked with economic losses for the country – up to an estimated 11 per cent of GDP.⁸⁸ Over the last decade, the national prevalence of chronic malnutrition (stunting) for children under five has exceeded 30 per cent, the threshold considered “very high” in terms of public health significance. Unfortunately, the trend is continuing upward. Stunting was 43.9 per cent in 2005-2007, 49.5 per cent in 2010-2014, and 40.1 per cent between 2015-2019.⁸⁹ The ADB reported a prevalence of 48.4 per cent for 2020.

A new national nutrition survey is needed to understand the differences and causes of malnutrition in PNG. We know that in 2010, stunting was higher in boys (50.9 per cent) than girls (47.9 per cent) and higher in children aged 48-59 months (55.2 per cent) than those aged 0-23 months (44.5 per cent). Stunting was higher for children living in rural areas (51.2 per cent) than those in urban areas (36.4 per cent).⁸⁸ The worst affected are children in households in the bottom 40 per cent of wealth distribution, whose mothers have either no education or secondary education. Among that group, 56 per cent are stunted (compared to 30 per cent in the wealthiest households). East Sepik, West Sepik, and Gulf provinces reported the highest prevalence of stunting in 2019, with Chimbu and NCD reporting the lowest.

If untreated, severe acute malnutrition can lead to a risk of death of up to 12 times more than non-malnourished children.⁹⁰ Child wasting (acute malnutrition) was 8.1 per cent in 2004-2008, 14.1 per cent in 2010-2014, and 6.1 per cent in 2015-2019.⁹¹ The worst affected are children living in households in the bottom 40 per cent of wealth distribution and with more than

⁸⁴ PNG Demographic and Health Survey 2016-2018

⁸⁵ Kitur, U., Adair, T., Riley, I. et al. Estimating the pattern of causes of death in Papua New Guinea. *BMC Public Health* 19, 1322 (2019). < <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7620-5> >.

⁸⁶ Kitur, U., Adair, T., Riley, I. et al. Estimating the pattern of causes of death in Papua New Guinea. *BMC Public Health* 19, 1322 (2019). < <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7620-5> >.

⁸⁷ National Statistical Office (NSO) [Papua New Guinea] and ICF. 2019. Papua New Guinea Demographic and Health Survey 2016-18. Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NSO and ICF.

⁸⁸ UNICEF Papua New Guinea, Country Programme 2018-2022: Nutrition Programme Strategy Note, 2016

⁸⁹ Asian Development Bank, Key indicators for Asia and the Pacific in 2021.

⁹⁰ Global Nutrition Report (2021): < <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/oceania/melanesia/papua-new-guinea/> >

⁹¹ Olofin, I, et al., Associations of suboptimal growth with all-cause and cause-specific mortality in children under five years: a pooled analysis of ten prospective studies. *PLoS One* 8(5), 2013.

⁹² Concern International, Global Hunger Index: Linking Health and Sustainable Food Systems, 2020.

two children in households under the age of five years. Thirteen per cent of that group suffer from wasting (compared to five per cent in the wealthiest population group). Wasting differed very little between girls and boys, with only a 0.7 percentage point difference. It was, however, higher in children aged 0-23 months (18.3 per cent) compared to children aged 24-59 months (below 12.5 per cent). Fourteen per cent of the children admitted to health facilities in PNG were there because of severe acute malnutrition, and 27 per cent of all registered children's deaths in 2015 were related to severe acute malnutrition.⁹³

The PNG Dental and Medical Catalogue 2010 states that therapeutic food supplements required to treat the condition of severe acute malnutrition should be available in all major health facilities throughout PNG. Since then, and supported by the training of health care workers, the country's case-fatality rates for children under the age of five have shown a steady decline, signalling that acute malnutrition can be controlled and managed.

PNG is approaching a situation of double-burden malnutrition, as obesity in some population groups is increasing. At the same time, stunting prevalence also has not progressed towards achieving its target for obesity. The prevalence of obesity among children and adolescents aged 5-10 years has increased from 7.1 per cent to 10.1 per cent for girls within five years, in comparison to boys, which increased from 6.0 per cent to 9.3 per cent within the same period. The percentage of overweight children under five years was 3.4 in 2005, 7.7 in 2010, 8.9 per cent in 2020, and 13.7 in 2010.⁹⁴ Interventions aiming to prevent both obesity and underweight at an early stage are needed to avoid health-related co-morbidities.

The nutritional status of women affects the intrauterine developmental process and cannot be separated from the birth weight of their children and, consequently, child survival. In PNG, about eight per cent of babies born each year have low birth weight, associated with maternal undernutrition and anaemia, among other causes. This nutritional crisis is attributed to traditional beliefs and practices and inadequate access to nutritional information and adolescent-friendly services.

Breastfeeding is one of the most cost-effective practices to improve child health, nutrition, and development outcomes. In PNG, exclusive breastfeeding increased from 56.1 per cent in 2006 to 59.7 per cent in 2018. Exclusive breastfeeding rates decline with a mother's education and household wealth increase. Among the lowest wealth quintile, 56 per cent of children were exclusively breastfed, compared to 45 per cent among the highest quintile. Breastfeeding was more frequent

among children delivered with assistance from health personnel (52 per cent) than those assisted by a traditional birth attendant (47 per cent).

The prevalence of anaemia among women of childbearing age (15-49 years) was estimated to be 36.6 per cent in 2016, up from 34.2 per cent in 2011, while the prevalence among children under 5 was 48.4 per cent as of 2016 and 47.90 in 2011. As of 2016, the prevalence value was 44.8 per cent among pregnant women compared to 36 per cent among non-pregnant women.⁹⁵ Pregnant women take iron folate supplements and/or eat iron-rich foods to prevent anaemia. As per the 2016-18 DHS, 28 per cent of women aged 15-49 who gave birth in the five years before the survey did not take any iron tablets during their most recent pregnancy, and only eight per cent of women took iron tablets for 90 days or more during their most recent pregnancy.

Micronutrient deficiency contributes to childhood morbidity and mortality, and the prevalence of these deficiencies is high among children and women. The 2016-2018 DHS shows that 86 per cent of children aged 6-23 months consumed foods rich in vitamin A in the 24 hours preceding the survey, while 41 per cent consumed foods rich in iron. Seven per cent of children aged 6-59 months had been given iron supplements in the past seven days, while 31 per cent were given vitamin A supplements in the past six months. Children in urban areas (11 per cent) were twice as likely to receive iron supplements as those in rural areas (six per cent). Vitamin A supplements were also higher in urban areas (44 per cent) than in rural areas (29 per cent). Vitamin A deficiency affects children's sight and general immune system. The percentage of children consuming vitamin A-rich and iron-rich foods increases with the mother's education and household wealth.

Bottlenecks and barriers to strengthening public health and nutrition service delivery include:

- ◆ insufficient budget allocations for public health system strengthening
- ◆ low investment in nutrition governance and services
- ◆ inadequate resources for scaling up proven models
- ◆ a lack of costed plans at the provincial level for specific interventions critical to quality primary health care.

Barriers to equitably delivered, quality health and nutrition services impact rural areas where needs are the greatest. Increasing needs can be found in urban slums as well. Constrained access to services, poor infrastructure, and quality affect care, as do minimal availability and accessibility of community-based, child and adolescent-friendly, family-centred,

⁹³ A Government of Papua New Guinea, National Nutrition Policy, 2016-2026.

⁹⁴ Asian Development Bank, Key indicators for Asia and the Pacific in 2021

⁹⁵ Index Mundi, "Papua New Guinea - Prevalence of anemia", < <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/papua-new-guinea/prevalence-of-anemia> >

and multi-disciplinary care for physical and mental health and malnutrition conditions.

Bottlenecks, barriers to behaviour change, knowledge, and use of health and nutrition services are created by social norms, traditional beliefs, and gender inequalities. PNG has a high percentage of zero-dose children whose parents refuse to have them vaccinated due to misinformation or mistrust. Low reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH) knowledge compromises healthcare decision-making, as do poverty and low educational attainment. There is low awareness of the importance of nutrition among the general population and key decision-makers. GoPNG currently lacks both strategy and assets for social behaviour change communication for nutrition.

Sexual and reproductive health

The National Department of Health's National Sexual Reproductive Health Policy 2014 aims to foster improvement in the quality of life of all Papua New Guineans and thus contribute to decreased morbidity and mortality among the target population. The Policy states that women and girls, as well as men and boys, should have access to modern contraceptives free of charge in all health facilities; they should have equal access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and be encouraged to engage actively in reproductive health. However, in PNG, significant public health challenges remain in providing reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health services and preventing and controlling infectious and non-communicable diseases. Compared to other Pacific Island Countries, PNG has relatively low coverage of essential services. The Universal Health Coverage index indicates limited service capacity and access. Universal access to emergency obstetric and newborn care is considered essential to reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. This access includes rapid access to well-functioning facilities for all pregnant women and newborns with complications.

Utilization of skilled sexual and reproductive health delivery services was found to be low among pregnant women in PNG and has not substantially increased. Data from 2023 revealed that individual-level factors such as wealth, employment status, educational level, and the number of antenatal care visits, as well as community-level factors such as access to healthcare facilities and place of residence, affected the degree to which skilled delivery services were utilized. A reason for the disparity between urban and rural areas in utilizing skilled delivery services concerns the long distances to reach health facilities in rural areas across PNG.⁹⁶

A quarter of women did not receive antenatal care (2016–2018) (latest available data), a slight increase from 1996. There has been a small increase in the share of rural women who delivered in a health facility: from 43 per cent in DHS 1996 to 51 per cent in DHS 2016–18. The share of women who received a Tetanus toxoid injection, which is given to pregnant mothers to prevent neonatal tetanus, a significant cause of early infant death in many developing countries, remained at around two-thirds of pregnant women between 2006 and 2016.⁹⁷

Between 2000 and 2020, a 39.7 per cent decline in maternal mortality ratio was observed, from 312 to 192 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. While a significant improvement, it is far from the SDG target of below 70. Women's access to antenatal care and the proportion of deliveries attended by a skilled health provider has increased, but these indicators remain low overall. The leading causes of maternal deaths have been attributed to post-partum haemorrhage, eclampsia, and unsafe abortions.⁹⁸

PNG has 0.532 nurses and midwives per 1,000 population, which is low compared to neighbouring countries. There are 0.055 physicians per 1,000 people, significantly lower than in neighbouring Solomon Islands (0.191) and Vanuatu (0.186). This statistic is well below the WHO-recommended skilled health worker (physicians and nurses/midwives) density of 2.3 per 1,000 population needed to achieve 80 per cent coverage of essential health services and reduce access gaps (WHO). A shortage of qualified health workers in rural and remote areas is a significant constraint that prevents access to essential healthcare services.⁹⁹

There has been underinvestment in public health sector training, which has resulted in limited capacity concerning the required levels and mix of the health workforce. This issue is at a time when the country is undergoing a demographic and epidemiological transition with a consequent rise in the incidence of communicable as well as non-communicable diseases and with gaps in the provision of essential maternal and childcare services. Community health workers' involvement is one of the government's priorities in strengthening primary health systems to improve maternal and child health outcomes. A focus on increasing the number of community health workers is a critical strategic priority of the government. According to the Department of Health's Sector Performance Annual Review, there has been a lack of comprehensive nationwide provision of essential equipment to health centres and aid posts, including for pregnancy care, since 2001, while regular supplies have been conducted ad hoc.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Nojj Frank, Bardakova Lidia, Lavu Esther, Yamarak Londari, Anton Melkie, Papua New Guinea: Population Situation Analysis, UNFPA Papua New Guinea December 2023 Report

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

High maternal mortality ratios and overall poor maternal health need to be understood from a broader perspective, and different factors affecting women's health, including their status in society, need to be considered. Traditional beliefs and cultural and religious factors will likely affect women's health-seeking behaviour. Women and girls tend to have poorer access to healthcare and education services in the country compared to men.¹⁰¹

Family planning is one of the most cost-effective interventions for global health and sustainable development due to its high cost-benefit ratio. In PNG, there is limited understanding of the everyday practices used to prevent, reduce the risk of, avoid, cope with, or mitigate the impact of pregnancy. The use of vasectomy proved limited, with the need for more male involvement in family planning programming. Stockouts of one or more contraceptive methods by service delivery providers ranged from 91 to 57 per cent, respectively, and meant a vital constraint to contraceptive use. Data at the subnational level show that contraceptive use varied considerably amongst the districts of each of the two provinces for which data were available.¹⁰²

The findings of the DHS 2016-2018 demonstrated that among women in PNG who had a live birth during the three years preceding the survey, 36 per cent of deliveries had complications, including prolonged labour of more than 12 hours, which may cause an obstetric fistula. The prevalence of delivery complications has increased from 24 to 36 per cent since 2006. No data on the incidence of obstetric fistula in PNG is available. Fistula prevention has two main focus areas: prevention of early pregnancy and improving access to primary healthcare and essential obstetric services. Obstetric fistula is a devastating childbirth injury with tremendous consequences for the women and girls concerned, though nevertheless often neglected.¹⁰³

The HIV Epidemic

With an expanding HIV epidemic of more than 1 per cent of adults aged 15-49, PNG has the highest HIV prevalence in the Pacific.¹⁰⁴ STI transmission is uncontained and represents some of the highest rates globally.¹⁰⁵ HIV prevalence is higher in a set of key populations (sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender people, their clients and partners) as well as a growing mixed epidemic among priority populations (adolescent girls, young women, and their sex partners, pregnant and breastfeeding women, their children and partners). HIV prevalence is estimated to be over 16 per cent among sex

workers¹⁰⁶ and over 8 per cent among MSM and transgender people¹⁰⁷. Among young people aged 15-24 years, the prevalence is 10% (n=7,300).¹⁰⁸ Vertical transmission is estimated to be 34 per cent and growing. At the same time, the volume of HIV testing has decreased by half since 2018, and 40 per cent of PLHIV are lost to follow-up to the health system.¹⁰⁹ Mortality rates have largely remained stable, but mortality rates in children are alarmingly high. ART initiation remains too low in children and adolescents. While PNG has made some progress, for example, the rapid introduction of DTG-based ART, which diverted a severe drug resistance crisis, PNG's epidemic is not on track to achieving global elimination targets, and the epidemic is instead worsening.

HIV Treatment Cascade Data 2022 offers targeted information on where gaps are most serious along the continuum of prevention, treatment, and care for PLHIV.

- ◆ 72,140 estimated PLHIV in 2022; of these,
 - 17,382 do not yet know their HIV status
- ◆ 48,188 PLHIV have already been diagnosed with HIV; of these,
 - 6,519 are estimated to not yet have initiated ART
- ◆ 41,669 on ART, and of these,
 - 36,472 are virally suppressed.

Between 12-17 per cent of all PLHIV are coinfecting with TB.¹¹⁰ WHO reported that 1,249 PLHIV were newly initiated TB treatment in 2020. These numbers reveal catastrophic gaps across the TB/HIV treatment cascade. Mortality rates were reported at 330 coinfecting people in 2020 (n=330) but could be much higher.¹¹¹ Referral pathways and cooperation between TB and HIV programs remain extremely weak according to the TB NSP, and, at least at the national level, there appears to be little appetite to improve this.¹¹² TRP feedback emphasizes the need to strengthen integration that closes gaps along the TB/HIV treatment cascade, and this will be most effectively achieved through Provincial Health Authorities and working at local levels in the response to TB and HIV.

A 2022 data synthesis carried out by NDoH and WHO found gonorrhoea (11 per cent), chlamydia (14.8 per cent), and active syphilis (3.91% per cent) among the adult female population (15-49 years). High levels of bacterial STI among critical populations, including female sex workers, high-risk MSM, and transgender, were seen on the only IBBS among Key Populations. e-NHIS trend program data for urethral discharge amongst males indicated a high level of Gonorrhoea prevalence among pockets/

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ 85

¹⁰⁴ Snapshot – HIV Epidemiology and Response. (2023). Presented at HIV Technical Working Group meeting, April 2023. Port Moresby, PNG.

¹⁰⁵ PNG National Department of Health. (2024). PNG National STI & HIV Strategy 2024-2028. Port Moresby, PNG: p11.

¹⁰⁶ Kelly-Hanku, A., Willie, B., Weikum, D., A., Boli Neo, R., Kupul, M., Coy, K., Hou, P., Aeno, H., Ase, S., Gabuzzi, J., Nembari, J., Narakobi, R., Amos-Kuma, A., Gare, J., Dala, N., Wapling, J., Toliman, P., John, L., Nosi, S., Worth, H., Whiley, D., Tabrizi, S.N, Kaldor, J.M., Vallely, A.J., Badman, S.G. & Hakim, A. (2018). Kauntim Mi Tu: Multi-Site Summary Report from the Key Population Integrated Bio-Behavioral Survey, Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney:

Goroka, PNG. pp 53-55

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. (2018); pp 53-55.

¹⁰⁸ Snapshot – HIV Epidemiology & Response. (2023). Presented at HIV Technical Working Group meeting, April 2023. Port Moresby, PNG: p2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. (2023): p3.

¹¹⁰ PNG National Department of Health. (2023). National Tuberculosis Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: p14.

Ibid. (2023): p2.

¹¹¹ Ibid. (2023): p2

¹¹² PNG National Department of Health. (2023). National Tuberculosis Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: p27

districts where there are mining and industrial enclaves. Lifting human rights barriers for key and priority populations, including PLHIV, remains an intractable problem in PNG.

The Marape government recently confirmed it “will not be seen to be legitimizing gay or lesbian rights in PNG.”¹¹³ Sex between men remains criminalized, and any oral or anal sex between heterosexual couples is also criminalized. Sex work remains illegal, and the transmission of HIV by PLHIV is a criminal offence. Transgender people’s rights are not yet enshrined in the Constitution. For this reason, HIV programs operate in a hostile environment, and advocacy for sociolegal change is fraught with animosity and resistance.

Men who have sex with men (MSM)

The latest population size estimate (PSE) for MSM is that there are 77,675 MSM in the country. However, over the past decade, the largest PSE for MSM was 109,602 (Tingim Laip social mapping exercise), and the lowest 52,500¹¹⁴ National MSM prevalence estimates HIV prevalence among MSM as 8 per cent¹¹⁵ Kauntim Mi Tu Integrated BioBehavioural Survey (2018) returned an HIV prevalence rate of 8.5 per cent in Port Moresby and 6.9 per cent in Lae.¹¹⁶ MSM reported that they (1) only had sex with women, (2) mostly had sex with women (and sometimes with men), or (3) had sex equally with men and women (79.3 per cent in Port Moresby and 89.2 per cent in Lae).¹¹⁷ In terms of TB, unexplained weight loss was reported in 52.7 per cent of the sample in Port Moresby and 39 per cent in Lae.¹¹⁸ Unexplained cough in the last two weeks was reported at 40.1 per cent and 24.6 per cent, respectively.¹¹⁹ PNG has some of the highest estimated STI rates globally, and the presence of at least one STI in the IBBS was reported in 34 per cent of MSM/TG people in Port Moresby and 42 per cent in Lae.¹²⁰

Predominant in terms of safer sex, only one-in-three MSM and transgender people reported using a condom at last anal sex.¹²¹ Note that few respondents in the IBBS identified their gender as transgender (6.1 per cent in Port Moresby and 7.4 per cent in Lae), and few were ‘only attracted to men’ (6.4 per cent and 11.4 per cent respectively).¹²² Papua New Guinea’s Criminal Code continues to criminalize sex between men. Significant social

stigma and discrimination toward MSM make these populations very hard to reach. Therefore, many MSM do not identify as such and actively resist this label, requiring a nuanced approach to MSM outreach.

Sex workers, their clients, and male partners

The latest PSE for female sex workers (FSW) estimates 195,363 in the country, and national FSW HIV prevalence is at 16 per cent.¹²³ PNG has some of the highest estimated STI rates globally, and more than half of all FSW returned positive STI results in the last IBBS (any STI: 52.1 per cent Port Moresby, 60.8 per cent Lae and 53.4 per cent Mt Hagen, respectively).¹²⁴ The main contraception used by sex workers was implemented, followed by injection/depo, with condom use low (7 per cent Port Moresby, 6.4 per cent Lae, and 11.1 per cent Mt Hagen).¹²⁵ In terms of TB, unexplained weight loss in the last two weeks was 56.2 per cent, 37.9 per cent, and 37.3 per cent, respectively.¹²⁶ 35.5 per cent, 25.7 per cent, and 25.4 per cent had a cough in the last two weeks. However, rates of active tuberculosis were rare. High rates of gender-based violence require gender transformation and GBV reduction embedded in prevention messages.¹²⁷ PNG’s Criminal Code continues to criminalize sex work. Sex outside marriage, selling or exchanging sex for money, goods, or safety, carries a significant social stigma. ‘Bride price’ undermines treating women and girls equally and respecting their human rights—negative attitudes of health providers to FSW limit empowered access to health services.

Transgender people and their sexual partners

There is no epidemiological data specifically on transgender people that is separate from MSM, and there is no documented knowledge about how TG choose to identify (based on sex/gender or sexual positioning?) or what they need from this package (however, discussions have been held as part of our country dialogue). Until now, 95% of global HIV services have been delivered in clinical, conventional facility-based services. Centralized HIV testing and treatment has shown limited success in reaching transgender people. The strategies outlined in this module emphasize WHO recommendations for decentralized service delivery for key and priority populations through

¹¹³ Government of Papua New Guinea. Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Council. (2023). No LGBTQ Bill Before Parliament. Loop Online News. June 9, 2023

¹¹⁴ McCallum, L., Burrows, D., Parsons, D., Falkenberry, H. & Uhrig, J. (2018). Assessment of HIV Service Packages for Key Populations in Papua New Guinea. APMG Health. Washington, DC: p15.

¹¹⁵ Bozicevic, I. & Mirzazadeh, A. (2023). The Provincial and National Population Size Estimation of Female Sex Workers, Men Who Have Sex with Men, Transgender Women, and Clients of Female Sex Workers in Papua New Guinea in 2022. Port Moresby, PNG: p4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. (2018): p74.

¹¹⁷ Kelly-Hanku, A., Willie, B., Weikum, D., A., Boli Neo, R., Kupul, M., Coy, K., Hou, P., Aeno, H., Ase, S., Gabuzzi, J., Nembari, J., Narakobi, R., Amos-Kuma, A., Gare, J., Dala, N., Wapling, J., Toliman, P., John, L., Nosi, S., Worth, H., Whiley, D., Tabrizi, S.N, Kaldor, J.M., Vally, A.J, Badman, S.G. and Hakim, A. (2018). Kauntim mi tu : Multi-Site Summary Report from the Key Population Integrated Bio-Behavioral Survey, Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney: Goroka, PNG: pp 53-55.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. (2018): p74

¹¹⁹ Ibid. (2018): p75.

¹²⁰ Ibid. (2018): pp 72-73

¹²¹ Ibid. (2018): pp 61-63.

¹²² Ibid. (2018): pp 54-55.

¹²³ PNG National Department of Health. Strategic Information Technical Working Group (2023). 2023 HIV Brief – Epidemiology and Response Papua New Guinea, June 2023. Port Moresby, PNG: p2.

¹²⁴ Kelly-Hanku, A., Willie, B., Weikum, D., A., Boli Neo, R., Kupul, M., Coy, K., Hou, P., Aeno, H., Ase, S., Gabuzzi, J., Nembari, J., Narakobi, R., Amos-Kuma, A., Gare, J., Dala, N., Wapling, J., Toliman, P., John, L., Nosi, S., Worth, H., Whiley, D., Tabrizi, S.N, Kaldor, J.M., Vally, A.J, Badman, S.G. and Hakim, A. (2018). Kauntim mi tu : Multi-Site Summary Report from the Key Population Integrated Bio-Behavioral Survey, Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research and Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney: Goroka, Papua New Guinea: p43.

¹²⁵ Ibid. (2018): p40

¹²⁶ Ibid. (2018): p75

¹²⁷ Ibid. (2018): pp 24-26

differentiated HIV services delivered in the community.¹²⁸ This package adopts recommendations from the Enhanced Outreach Project undertaken in the National Capital District in 2019 and 2020 to enhance success.¹²⁹

Expectant and Nursing Mothers

PNG has an estimated vertical transmission rate of 34 per cent. At the same time, only 51 per cent of all pregnant women with HIV are receiving ART for their wellness and to prevent transmission to their unborn infants.¹³⁰ ANC attendance is low at 42 per cent, and of the pregnant women who attended an ANC in 2022, only 33 per cent received an HIV test.¹³¹ PNG's epidemic is not on track to eliminate vertical transmission. The country has an estimated total of 800 ANC and delivery facilities. However, only about 350 provide either full or partial EMTCT services.¹³²

Mixed epidemic of growing concern

In conclusion, the HIV epidemic in PNG is characterized as a mixed epidemic of growing concern. The epidemic is moving from a concentrated epidemic among key populations at risk for HIV to a more generalized epidemic among the general population. This phenomenon is different from the experience in Asia. HIV epidemic modelling demonstrated that concentrated epidemics in Asia were unlikely to become generalized epidemics. However, PNG appears to be now in the middle of a transition from a concentrated to a generalized HIV epidemic, revealing how important the next few years will be to interrupting the transmission of HIV and preventing a more widespread epidemic.

The NSHS 2024-2028 highlights the need to direct attention to young people and young women, in particular in hotspots or potentially high HIV incidence settings. The strategy identifies a 'population-location' approach to HIV outreach that balances (1) identifying sites of higher HIV risk; (2) serving everyone in those sites with HIV prevention outreach services, including screening and testing; (3) using HIV case finding outcomes to determine whether to stay or leave a site; (4) determining through hotspot

mapping when to return to older sites and identifying new/emerging places that key and priority populations are gathering.

UN work programme on social challenges

The UN projects and programs addressing these social challenges include:

- ◆ Advocated for increased government expenditure on essential services, leading to greater financial commitments from provincial governments towards health and gender-based violence initiatives.
- ◆ Advanced gender equality, including training programs to empower women leaders and promote their participation in political and community spheres,
- ◆ Implemented programs targeting gender-based violence prevention and response, including community awareness campaigns and support for survivors.
- ◆ Implemented programs to improve access to education and vocational training and enhance educational outcomes, including improved secondary school completion rates
- ◆ Supported the development of the National Health Plan 2021-2030, facilitating the development of strategies to improve health service delivery and access, particularly in rural areas.
- ◆ Supporting the mid-term review (MTR) of the National Education Plan (NEP) 2021-2029 to determine the performance of the PNG education system and subsequent update of the NEP to reflect potential changed priorities and adjusted targets. By leveraging data and evidence, the MTR will provide an opportunity to strengthen the robustness of the NEP, leading to more evidence-informed decision-making and effective implementation of education policies in PNG.
- ◆ Supporting the assessment of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) capacities/maturity and strengthening organizational and individual capacities in data management.

¹²⁸ WHO. (2022). Consolidated guidelines on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations..

¹²⁹ World Vision PNG. (2020). Accelerating Knowledge of Status and Linkages to Care among Key Populations in NCD. Port Moresby, PNG.

¹³⁰ Snapshot – HIV Epidemiology and Response. (2023). Presented at HIV Technical Working Group meeting, April 2023. Port Moresby, PNG.

¹³¹ Ibid. (2023).

¹³² 350 sites include 56 ART for PPTCT and 294 ANC testing sites.

1.4 Environment and Climate Change

1.3.1 Environmental Governance

Both PNG's Constitution and its strategic Vision 2050 include significant pillars, promoting the conservation of the environment and culture for the benefit of future generations. Vision 2050 provides the overarching guide to the Development Strategy Plan (DSP) 2010-2030, focusing more on economic and social development. The five-year MTDPs provide the finer details of the government's sectoral plan to increase or improve the economic and social services and development. In 2023, GoPNG passed the MTDP IV with eight goals and twelve SPAs, where SPA 10 focuses on Climate Change and Environment.

PNG is a signatory to other international agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Paris Agreement.

Some components of PNG's environmental legislation and policy are substantial, including the National Oceans Policy, Policy on Protected Areas, National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development (STaRS) 2015, the Climate-compatible Development Policy and the Timber Legality Standard (TLS) 2023. However, implementing these has been challenging and lacking, and much legislation is old, requiring review and updating (for example, biodiversity and wildlife conservation, forestry management, sustainable land use, chemical and waste disposal, and mining).

Despite their importance within the economy, mining, oil, and gas extraction in PNG has had weak environmental regulation, environmental degradation, adverse social impacts, and limited community gains. An important issue is the disposal of mine tailings, which constitute up to 99 per cent of the material mined. Tailing dams are prone to failure in high seismic activity and extreme rainfall events. Three mines in PNG and one in Indonesia are the only places in the world where mine tailing is licensed to be discharged into rivers, and this has had severe consequences for places such as the Fly River.

Management of waste of all kinds in PNG is limited. The report from the February 2020 SPREP meeting of the Pacific Waste Program (PACWASTE) recorded that PNG had:

- ◆ outdated legislation governing waste and chemical management
- ◆ limited sustainable financing mechanisms

- ◆ limited institutional and human resource capacity at national/ municipality levels
- ◆ a lack of national policies or strategies on waste management.

Wastewater and sewage are primarily released as stormwater drainage, even in larger cities where sewerage treatment plants may exist. Wastewater from commercial premises contains high concentrations of pollutants.

Rapid population growth outpaces investment in WaSH and waste infrastructure and services in urban, peri-urban, and rural areas. Improvements are required to reduce the exposure of vulnerable populations to health risks from poor quality WaSH and impacts on the environment from unmanaged or poorly managed waste disposal. Significant multilateral (World Bank, EU, ADB) and bilateral (Japan, Australia) investments are needed to improve WaSH and waste management in PNG. These investments are guided by multilateral, national, and institutional frameworks and strategies and are accompanied by technical guidance, project monitoring and evaluation, and capacity building. PNG has embraced eco-industrial development, aiming to create a node of industrial sustainability, and is currently developing its first National Waste and Chemical Management Policy.¹³³

No legislation specifically deals with solid waste management, but the Public Health Act 1973 (Sanitation and General Regulations) 1973 and the Environment Act 2000 cover some aspects of waste management. CEPA is currently drafting the National Waste Management Policy 2024-2034, which provides the framework for solid waste management and other chemical waste according to the Minamata Convention (2014), Basel Convention on the Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1995), Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2003), Rotterdam Convention (work in progress), Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1992), Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone Layer (1992), and Convention to Ban the Importation in Forum Island Countries of Hazardous Waste and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention), 2001. Most of these Multilateral Environment Agreements are not fully implemented by the government.

¹³³ Department of National Planning and Monitoring, PNG's Voluntary National Review 2020: Progress of implementing the SDGs, Port Moresby.

Mining, oil, and gas extraction in PNG has had weak environmental regulation, environmental degradation, adverse social impacts, and limited community gains. Environmental and social impacts of mining, oil and gas extraction include:¹³⁴

- ◆ gendered inequality and inequity
- ◆ fraudulent consent
- ◆ displacement
- ◆ benefit sharing disagreement and disparity
- ◆ social breakdown
- ◆ land alienation
- ◆ pollution (from tailings runoff, including increases in heavy metals, sedimentation, and lowered water quality)
- ◆ biodiversity loss and changes
- ◆ greenhouse gas emissions (for example, gas flaring)
- ◆ poor health
- ◆ social conflict.

An important issue is the disposal of mine tailings, which constitute up to 99 per cent of the material mined. Tailing dams are prone to failure in high seismic activity and extreme rainfall events. Three mines in PNG and one in Indonesia are the only places in the world where mine tailing is licensed to be discharged into rivers,¹³⁵ and this has had severe consequences for places such as the Fly River.¹³⁶ In March 2020, the NEC recommended banning all riverine tailings disposal for all future mines. The ban is not retrospective, and changes to legislation have yet to be introduced. Deep-sea disposal is an alternative practised in sixteen mines in six countries. It is now banned in most of the world due to its environmental impacts, but it may be a viable alternative in a few countries, including parts of PNG where deep water is close to the shore, provided strict conditions are followed.^{137 138}

The Mining Project, Rehabilitation, and Closure Guidelines recognize that mine closure and reclamation need to be planned early in the mining process to maximize the beneficial outcomes following mine closure.¹³⁹ However, due to the uneven distribution of benefits from this sector and the breakdown of traditional culture associated with mining, many mines and oil and gas sites are witnessing opposition from associated landowning communities.

Given that the PNG economy relies heavily on the extractive resource industry, interventions must improve the industry's economic, environmental, and social performance.

1.4.2 Climate Change Vulnerability

Adaptation

The impacts of global climate change are driving vulnerabilities associated with more extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and potential changes to biodiversity, including loss of livelihoods. Over 80 per cent of the country's population is susceptible to climatic extremes due to their direct dependence on natural resources, subsistence agriculture, and limited adaptation capacity. According to the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2019b), over half a million people live in coastal villages exposed to rising sea levels, coastal degradation, and storm surges. These diverse risks have implications for human rights as the negative impact on lives and livelihoods may fuel social unrest and increase vulnerability for marginalized populations.

The PNG National Adaptation Plan (NAP) outlines several key strategies to enhance the country's resilience to climate change. Key habitats like coral reefs and mangroves must be restored and preserved to combat climate change. Additionally, sustainable water management systems must be created. In addition, the NAP highlights the necessity of community-based adaptation programs that enable local populations to take an active role in decision-making and carry out tailored adaptation strategies. The NAP emphasizes how crucial it is to combine scientific research and traditional knowledge to develop adaptation strategies that are both more successful and culturally relevant. The plan also calls for an enhanced institutional framework and higher financial investments to facilitate the implementation of these adaptation measures and guarantee that they reach the most vulnerable populations.

Mitigation and REDD+

Climate change is at the forefront of PNG's agenda. PNG has been leading the international process of advocating for a program to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). PNG has identified the Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector as key to its climate mitigation agenda through its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC, 2015¹⁴⁰). Since the first NDC submission, PNG has accelerated its REDD+ readiness process and significantly improved its National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS), comprising remote sensing-based assessment of forests and land use and comprehensive field inventories on biodiversity, carbon, and social aspects of its forests. Papua New Guinea's monitoring system also includes

¹³⁴ Mudd, G.M. et al, Mining in Papua New Guinea: A complex story of trends, impacts and governance', *Science of the Total Environment* 741, 140375, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.140375>

¹³⁵ Kwong, Y.T.J. et al, 'Comparison of Environmental Impacts of Deep-sea Tailings Placement Versus On-land Disposal'. *Water, Air, Soil Pollut.* 230, 287, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11270-019-4336-1>

¹³⁶ Busilacchi, S. et al, Chapter 8, Ok Tedi Mine, in: M. Moran & J. Curth-Bibb (Eds). *Too Close to Ignore: Australia's Borderland with PNG and Indonesia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Australia, 2020.

¹³⁷ GESAMP, 2016. 'Proceedings of the GESAMP International Workshop on the Impacts of Mine Tailings in the Marine Environment'. International Maritime Organisation, London, 2016.

¹³⁸ Kwong et al, 2019

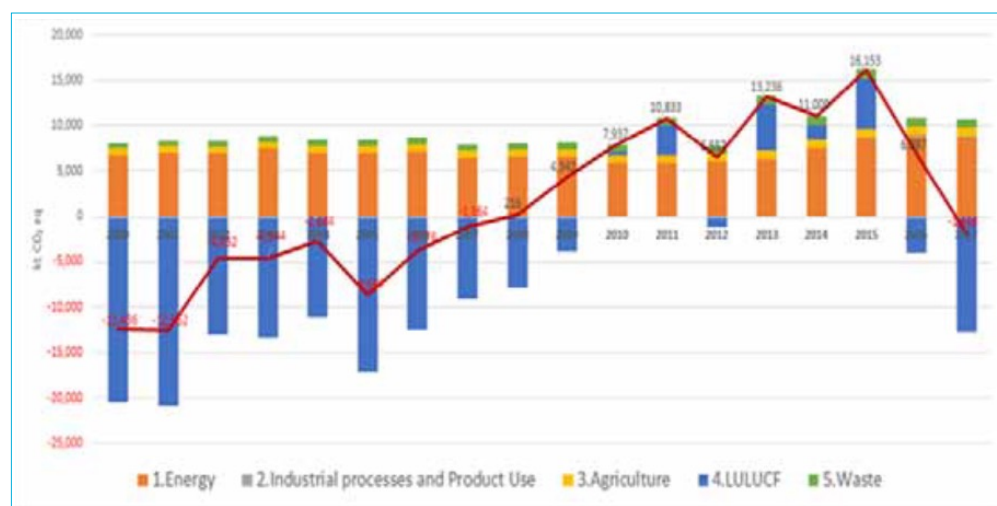
¹³⁹ Mineral Resources Authority of PNG, International Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development, Mining Project Rehabilitation and Closure Guidelines Papua New Guinea, 2019.

¹⁴⁰ https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Papua%20New%20Guinea%20First/PNG_INDC%20to%20the%20UNFCCC.pdf

the PNG Forest and Land Use Monitoring Geo-Portal¹⁴¹, which provides geo-referencing information on forest and land use to the public in an interactive and user-friendly format, and the PNG Near-real Time Deforestation Alerts and Monitoring System¹⁴². In 2017, PNG established its first Forest Reference Level¹⁴³ and completed the National REDD+ Strategy 2017-2027¹⁴⁴. The government submitted its First Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC in 2019, containing REDD+ results during the 2014-2015 period. With the submission of its Safeguard Information System documents^{145 146} to the UNFCCC in 2020, PNG has completed all four REDD+ design elements outlined in the Warsaw Framework. In 2020, Papua New Guinea submitted its second (enhanced) NDC with the target of reducing the area of annual deforestation and forest degradation by 25 per cent compared to the 2015 level by 2030. In its second BUR, which was submitted in 2022, PNG reported that the country has achieved NDC2's reducing deforestation and forest degradation target and has achieved its net zero emission status. PNG updated the FRL and submitted the second FRL in 2023.

Such achievements enhance the opportunities for PNG to access REDD+ Results-Based Payments (RBP). The country submitted a concept note to access funds under the GCF RBP Pilot Programme in 2019, claiming payment for the 6.6 million tCO₂e emission reduction achieved in 2014 and 2015¹⁴⁷. Papua New Guinea has also completed initial screening by the LEAF Coalition for results-based payments for the estimated potential of over 100 million tCO₂e emission reduction during the 2017-2026 period¹⁴⁸. If funded, Papua New Guinea is committed to re-investing the proceeds for sustainable community development and will increase its NDC ambition to achieve zero deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. There is a massive opportunity to reduce emissions by conserving the Papua New Guinea forests. It also conserves the rich and unique biodiversity. It safeguards the livelihood of the communities that rely directly on the forest ecosystem services, as 15,193 Gg CO₂ eq compared to the emissions in 2000 at -14,179 Gg CO₂ eq¹⁴⁹.

Figure 10: Total estimated emissions of greenhouse gases, 2001-2017



Source: Government of Papua New Guinea, 2022

Sustainable land use planning

In PNG, up to 97 per cent of the land is in customary ownership. The land is central to an individual's and group's sense of social identity and belonging, and this knowledge is passed on verbally from one generation to the next. The PNG Constitution recognizes customary land tenure; hence, exclusive individual land ownership and inheritance of land are limited.

The Physical Planning Act 1989 (as amended) provides land use planning for any resource development and urban planning executed through the Physical Planning Board. However, little influence exists because the government focuses only on planning alienated land (3 per cent of State land). Most land is customarily owned, which hinders development and proper planning, resulting in negligence or lack of strategic planning, budget allocation, and program coordination.

In September 2023, the National Sustainable Land Use Policy (NSLUP) was launched. It provides the legislative framework that defines the powers, roles, and responsibilities of all levels of government in delivering public services. The policy is synchronized with the physical planning and spatial definition and covers three major themes or zones, namely: (i) development promotion, (ii) conservation, and (iii) sustainability.

¹⁴¹ <http://png-nfms.org/portal/>

¹⁴² <https://my.gfw-mapbuilder.org/v1/latest/index.html?appid=c8e4162ef1dd4891aad9b560ac88e55b>

¹⁴³ https://redd.unfccc.int/files/png_frl_resubmission_modified_201700710_final.pdf

¹⁴⁴ https://redd.unfccc.int/files/4838_1_papua_new_guinea_national_redd_2b_strategy.pdf

¹⁴⁵ https://redd.unfccc.int/documents/index.php?file=4838_3_png_sis_framework.pdf

¹⁴⁶ https://redd.unfccc.int/documents/index.php?file=4838_2_png_soi.pdf

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/papua-new-guinea-redd-rbp-results-period-2014-2015>

¹⁴⁸ PNG's proposal to the LEAF Coalition (2021): https://leafcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Papua-New-Guinea_CFP.pdf

¹⁴⁹ Climate Change and Development Authority (CCDA) (2020). Papua New Guinea's enhanced Nationally determined contribution 2020. CCDA, Port Moresby.

1.4.3 Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation

Biodiversity Conservation

PNG has outstanding biodiversity values. New Guinea hosts 13,634 plant species, which is significantly higher than Madagascar and Borneo¹⁵⁰. Plant endemism in New Guinea is also remarkably high, and about 2/3 of the plants in New Guinea do not grow anywhere else. The diversity of vertebrate animals is among the highest on the planet, with at least 1,786 species of amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, between five and nine per cent of the world's total¹⁵¹. The number of species will likely increase as research finds new and undescribed plants and animals. PNG is among the world's top ten countries where conserving its natural environment can contribute to saving biodiversity¹⁵².

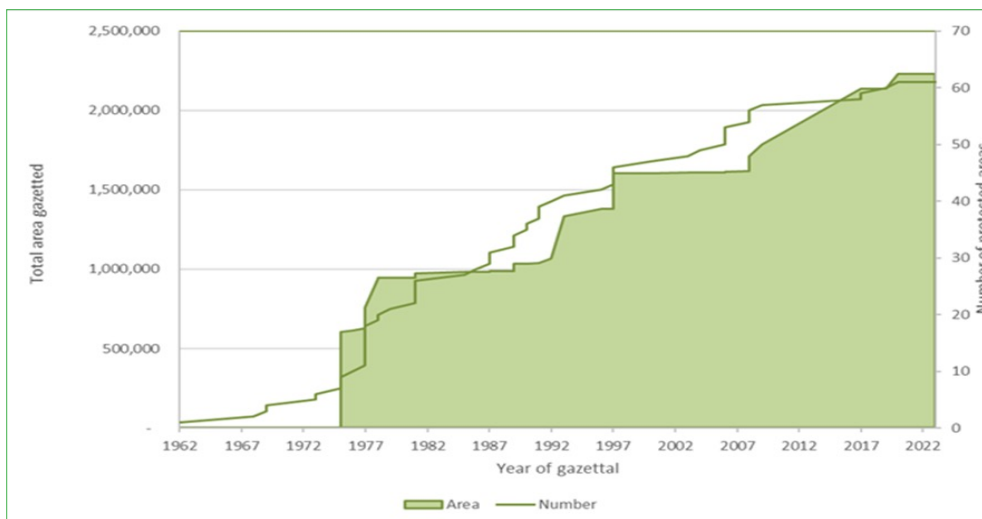
Threats to wildlife and biodiversity include wildlife trade, unsustainable hunting or fishing and resource use, invasive species, use of modern technology to hunt or fish, clearing and habitat loss (for example, rough extractive industries including agriculture, logging, mining, oil, and gas extraction), invasive species, loss of biocultural knowledge, climate change, and pollution and sedimentation.

Protected Areas

In 2022, there were 61 formally gazetted protected areas (PAs) in PNG, totalling just over 2.2 million hectares (ha) (4.8 per cent of the land area), well below the agreed 17 per cent for terrestrial protected areas as stated in the CBD Aichi targets and PNG's Policy on Protected Areas. Since 2010, four protected areas have been gazetted, and one has been substantially expanded. The total marine protected areas formally registered is less than one per cent. Not all locally managed marine areas are recorded in CEPA's central PA database. Representation of ecosystems and species falls well short of the agreed targets. Priority areas for future reservations have been identified, but the time required to create new protected areas is significant.

In February 2023, Parliament adopted the Protected Areas Act, which aims to establish a national system of protected areas to achieve the conservation target of protecting 30% of PNG's territory by 2030.

Figure 11: Papua New Guinea's Protected Area Network 1962-2022



Source: Drawn from data from the protected area database provided by CEPA, Government of PNG

Forests

New Guinea, the largest tropical island in the world, boasts the third-largest tropical rainforest, following the Amazon Basin and the Congo Basin. Papua New Guinea (PNG) comprises the eastern portion of New Guinea Island as well as numerous islands and archipelagos. Most forest land in PNG is owned by customary landowners who depend on forest resources for subsistence and income. With 78 per cent of the country covered by forests (amounting to 35.95 million hectares), PNG remains among the nations with the highest forest cover, with three-quarters of these being primary forests¹⁵³.

Between 2000 and 2019, a total of 352,805 hectares (0.97 per cent) of forest was cleared. Compared to other tropical nations, the scale of deforestation in PNG is relatively small. However, the average annual area deforested increased significantly from 10,066 hectares

¹⁵⁰ Ca'mara-Leret R, Frodin DG, Adema F et al. New Guinea has the world's richest island flora. *Nature*. 2020; 584(7822): 579-583.

¹⁵¹ CEPA & SPREP (2021). Papua New Guinea State of the Environment Report 2020. Apia, Samoa.

¹⁵² Dinerstein, E. et al., "A 'Global Safety Net' to reverse biodiversity loss and stabilize Earth's climate'.

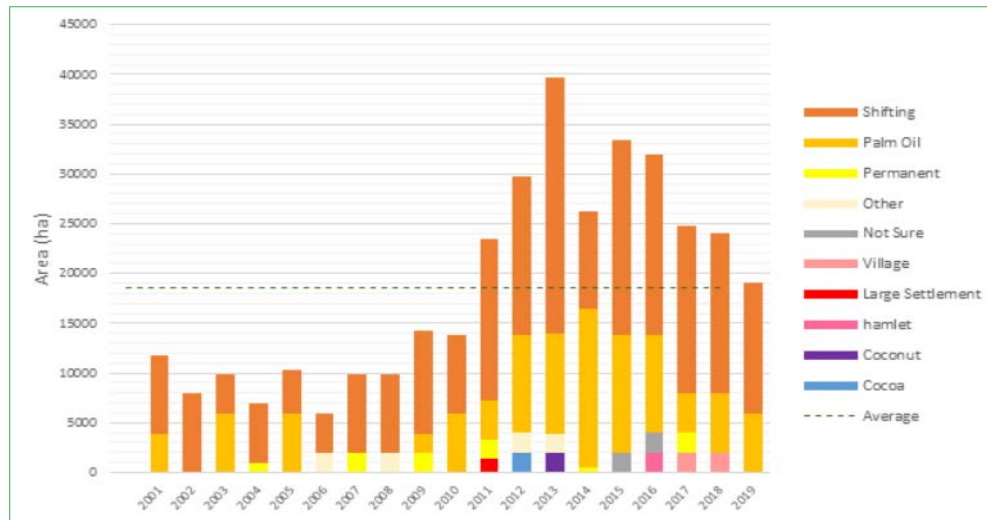
Sci. Adv. 6, eabb2824, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abb2824>

¹⁵³ PNG Forest Authority (2023) Forest and land use change in Papua New Guinea 2000-2019. <https://pngreddplus.org/document/png-forest-and-land-use-change-assessment-2000-2019/>

per year (2001-2010) to 28,016 hectares per year (2011-2019). The primary drivers of deforestation include subsistence agriculture and oil palm development. Approximately 28 per cent of forests are under logging concessions. Commercial logging has resulted in forest degradation on a much larger scale than deforestation, with about 2.8 million hectares of forests logged between 2000 and 2019.

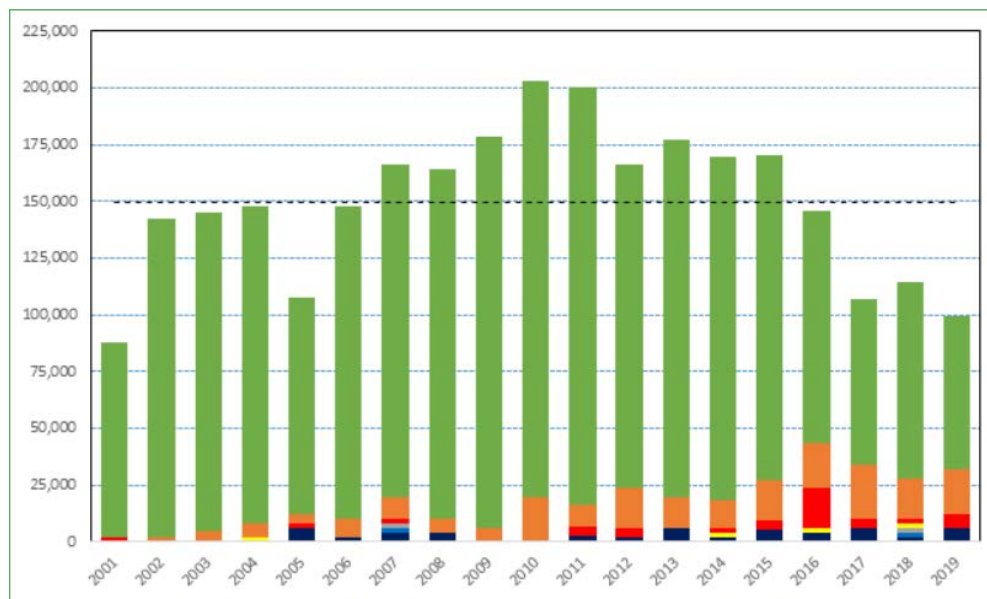
PNG has been the world's largest tropical timber exporter in recent years¹⁵⁴. However, in 2021, it supported the Glasgow Climate Pact and the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, which commits to halting and reversing forest loss by 2030.

Figure 12: Estimated annual rates of deforestation in PNG (2001-2019)



Source: Global Green Growth Institute and CCDA, 2021 from draft LULUCF Assessment 2016-2019

Figure 13: Annual rate of forest degradation 2001-2019 (area in ha)



Source: Global Green Growth Institute and CCDA, 2021

Marine Conservation

PNG's marine environment is vast and diverse, globally significant in its ecosystem structure, function, and biodiversity. It is also locally significant for thousands of PNG residents relying on its resources for subsistence and income. Most of PNG's threatened and highly biodiverse marine and coastal ecosystems and species are poorly protected, leaving them potentially vulnerable to conflicting resource use and over-exploitation.

In about 4,000 rural coastal communities throughout 14 maritime provinces, most people survive on artisanal fishing, hunting, and gardening, with few opportunities to earn money for essential services. Coastal populations are expanding rapidly, placing pressure on coastal and marine resources. Pressures on marine and coastal areas include changing and intensifying weather patterns and other effects of climate change, impacts from land-based activities, as well as artisanal over-fishing and destructive fishing practices in some areas.

¹⁵⁴ ITTO. 2012. Biennial review and assessment of the world timber situation 2021-2022. https://www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics_pdf_download/topics_id=7590&no=1

UN work programme on environmental challenges

The UN work programme to address environmental challenges includes:

- ◆ Assisting Papua New Guinea (PNG) in its REDD+ readiness efforts. PNG has successfully developed all four key REDD+ design elements outlined in the Warsaw Framework: the National REDD+ Strategy, the National Forest Monitoring System, the Forest Reference Level, and the Safeguards Information System. PNG holds significant potential in utilizing REDD+ to access funding for promoting sustainable forest management, which will enhance climate change mitigation and adaptation while also conserving biodiversity.
- ◆ Supporting the country's GHG inventory and climate reporting in alignment with the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement. PNG has submitted its first Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1) in 2019 and BTR2 in 2022.
- ◆ Providing technical assistance to enhance PNG's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to ensure transparency in implementing climate actions in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use sectors.
- ◆ The Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Program (PICAP) actively supports the development of climate and disaster risk financing and insurance (CDRFI) instruments in Papua New Guinea. This instrument includes the promotion of parametric insurance solutions to help shield vulnerable communities from the economic and financial impacts of climate-induced disasters. PICAP aims to enhance financial resilience by offering quick payouts to affected households and businesses, ensuring they recover swiftly from climate-related shocks. The program also focuses on building local capacity, fostering partnerships with financial institutions, and raising awareness to promote sustainable and inclusive insurance solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by PNG.
- ◆ Providing technical assistance to enable PNG to deliver the Pacific region's first climate National Adaptation Plan, which includes measures to protect vulnerable populations from climate change impacts.
- ◆ Assisting in the formulation of the Climate Response Roadmap, which lays out an action plan to achieve the enhanced NDC and supports PNG's aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2050, as well as technical assistance for climate-related policies.
- ◆ Providing training and resources to local communities and civil society organizations to address climate change impacts and promote sustainable practices. The UN has also expanded educational resources to teach the next generation about climate change and sustainable development, developing country-specific secondary education materials.
- ◆ Strengthening legislative and policy frameworks related to natural resource management, climate change adaptation, and environmental data collection.
- ◆ Conducted Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments and developed Investment Priority Plans for 21 atoll/island communities under the Building Resilience to Climate Change (BRCC) Project. Out of these Investment Priority Plans, Small Grants Facility proposals were developed for these communities, including Gender-responsive Disaster Response Strategies and Emergency Response Plans.
- ◆ Initiating several renewable energy projects, including solar infrastructure development in West Sepik Province, with the goal of connecting 70% of the population to renewable energy by 2030. The UN has also supported the implementation of renewable energy solutions in various districts, including feasibility studies for hybrid mini-grid power systems using solar energy.
- ◆ Supported the launch of PNG's first independent Biodiversity and Climate Fund, which manages financial resources for protected areas and communities affected by climate change. This fund has already raised \$20 million in commitments from development partners and philanthropic organizations.
- ◆ Developed a conservation project aimed at mainstreaming biodiversity, supporting sustainable agriculture, and improving livelihoods in the Eastern and Western Highlands provinces, as well as the East and West New Britain provinces.
- ◆ Supported the creation of a National Protected Area Finance and Investment Plan to identify financial solutions for managing PNG's protected areas, potentially generating up to \$75 million annually.
- ◆ Supported the revision and finalization of the National Protected Area Bill.
- ◆ Supported the development of the Biodiversity Offsets Policy and a Biodiversity Fund concept note to enhance conservation efforts and funding mechanisms for biodiversity protection.
- ◆ Initiatives like the "Lukim Gather" mobile application empower community rangers to report conservation issues, enhancing local engagement in biodiversity protection.
- ◆ Assisted in expanding protected conservation areas, with over 2.125 million hectares designated as protected.

1.5 Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus

1.5.1 Conflict and Peacebuilding

Internal conflicts and natural disasters lead to displacement, particularly affecting vulnerable populations such as women, children, and the elderly. The lack of effective disaster management and response mechanisms exacerbates these issues. The lack of durable solutions for displaced persons exacerbates their vulnerability.

The Highland provinces are most at risk for violence that would result in displaced and affected populations with humanitarian needs. Hela, Southern Highlands, and Enga provinces are considered very high risk based on historical precedence. The remaining Highlands provinces – Eastern Highlands, Western Highlands, Chimbu, and Jiwaka – are considered high risk. Outside the Highlands region, parts of East Sepik, Madang, and Morobe provinces in the Momase region, Oro and Milne Bay urban centres in the Southern region, and West New Britain in the New Guinea Islands region are also considered at risk for violence.

The emergence and re-emergence of violence is mainly unpredictable, can occur with little warning, and rapidly escalate. Over the last two years, the security landscape has been shaped by crime in urban centres and clashes among tribes and clans, particularly in the Highlands region.¹⁵⁵ There has also been an increasing influx of high-powered small arms¹⁵⁶ originating from numerous sources, including the security forces circulating amongst fragile, combative communities in the Highlands and other regions, which has sparked widespread instability.¹⁵⁷

In most provinces, inter-communal violence is driven by a practice of retribution, which, for women and girls, often manifests as sexual violence. There is a high correlation between alcohol misuse and intimate partner violence. The interruption of livelihoods from protracted events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and violence further increases pressure on families and, thus, the risk of intimate partner violence for women and girls inside the home, along with other negative coping strategies. The interruption of education will likely increase girls' risk of early pregnancy and linked to this, child, early and/or forced marriage. Some customary conflict resolution practices involve child, early, and forced marriage, which is of concern, especially in the Highlands. As elsewhere, crisis and displacement will likely increase the risk of trafficking, sexual exploitation, and abuse, especially for women and girls.

In response to concerns about gun violence, in the May parliamentary sitting, Prime Minister Marape tabled the Firearms Amendment Bill 2022, which was unanimously supported by all MPs. Under the new legislation, those found to be in unlawful possession or manufacturing firearms now face a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. However, it is uncertain how much of a difference this Act will make, mainly when political leaders can influence and direct the nation's security forces and direct them. Legislation passed in 2018 introducing penalties for illegal or misuse of legal weapons arguably did little to curb gun violence. It is believed that there are over 50,000 illegal firearms in PNG, either manufactured, smuggled, or traded by gangs or tribal groups.¹⁵⁸

Bougainville conflict analysis

Over the past twelve months, the situation in Bougainville has been incredibly dynamic, with the start of the post-referendum consultation process between the National Government and the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) on the future political status of the ARoB.

In December 2019, the successful and peaceful completion of the referendum saw 97.7 per cent of voters opting for independence, with an 85 per cent voter turnout. Like the referendum, one of the three pillars of the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) was non-binding. The future status of Bougainville will be determined through consultation between the two governments, with the outcome of such consultation to be ratified by the National Parliament, which has the final decision-making authority.

The two governments met formally on three occasions in 2021 (May, July, and December). The United Nations Resident Coordinator is the chairperson of the post-referendum consultation, and former Prime Minister of Ireland Bertie Ahern, who had been supporting the process remotely, was appointed by the two parties as international moderator.

In the meantime, the ABG has progressed through internal consultations concerning developing a constitution for an independent state. As a result, the Bougainville Executive Council has appointed a Bougainville Constitutional Planning Commission. Its members have been inducted, and commissioners are expected to start convening public consultations across Bougainville soon.

Since the referendum, Bougainville has progressed its economic empowerment agenda, aiming to achieve fiscal self-reliance.

¹⁵⁵ UNDSS reports

¹⁵⁶ Defined as revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns, and light machine guns.

¹⁵⁷ Alpers, P., Gun-Running In Papua New Guinea: From Arrows to Assault Weapons in the Southern Highlands, 2005

¹⁵⁸ https://devpolicy.org/too-little-too-late-securing-pngs-2022-national-election-20220513/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=too-little-too-late-securing-pngs-2022-national-election-20220513 | 49

Ishmael Toroama, who replaced John Momis as President of the ARoB in September 2020 after the fourth presidential and parliamentary elections in the region, is leading the process of engaging the landowners of Panguna Mine, one of the largest copper and gold open-pit mines in the world, to sustain Bougainville's aspirations to economic independence. It has been assessed that mine issues/resource management contributed to the armed conflict. Also, women were primarily excluded from management pre-conflict. However, women have recently become more involved.¹⁵⁹

With the independence vote and the start of the post-referendum consultation process, Bougainville is an environment where complex challenges remain and may contribute to additional risks to sustaining peace. The post-referendum period will ultimately determine Bougainville's political future, requiring an aware and engaged population capable of making well-informed decisions.

The UN's Conflict Analysis and the Lessons Learned report broadly identified the following key risks to peace going forward, which are very much in line with the trends identified by PaCSIA and the Perception survey:

1. Post-Referendum Process: that is, the legitimacy of the consulting group by the population; the management of information; awareness of the process/progress; and the importance of inclusion, with a broad spectrum of meaningful participation across Bougainville's society.

2. Outlier groups: two large outlier groups remain in Kon'nou and Tonu (South Bougainville), and both are crucial issues preventing Bougainville from moving forward in a united manner. Although this is not a priority for ABG, it will require accompaniment and support from the international community.

3. Influence of resource extraction and sustainable livelihoods for families: Bougainville will remain constrained without livelihood opportunities for most people. The 2018 PDA review workshop also identified this. There remains a strong demand for investment in the non-mining sector, where most Bougainvilleans get their livelihood, to develop the region's weak economic base.

4. Loss of institutional memory: turnover rates of sitting MPs in PNG elections are high, above 50 per cent. The 2022 General Elections are not expected to break this trend. Turnover could lead to a loss of knowledge and momentum during the post-referendum periods, leading to a build-up in community frustration. The BPA and the post-referendum consultation process can help to contribute to this memory loss.

5. Communal violence and social cohesion: the lack of awareness and understanding of the BPA/post-referendum process due to illiteracy is a significant driver of negative mentalities and feelings of disconnection. The two governments have tried to reach populations without formal education and fully sensitize them to the issues. Protection and human rights monitoring during the post-referendum process is essential to maintaining social stability.

Table 6: Risk Analysis for Bougainville

Main Risks	Likelihood of occurrence (high, medium, low)	The severity of risk impact (high, medium, low)	Mitigating Strategy
Lack of will to progress BPA and the post-referendum process because of shifting government priorities and high turnover of MPs in the National Parliament	Medium	High	A regular risk assessment conducted by the UN (PDA, LO) and engagement with both governments on critical activities that require progression;
Lack of trust between GoPNG and ABG at political, administrative, and financial levels may affect project outcomes.	Medium	High	Hold regular meetings with heads of administration (Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and NEC, and ABG Chief Secretary) to share risk analysis on bottlenecks to project implementation.
Limited access to quality information/informed discourse at the community level	Medium	High	Strengthened engagement throughout PNG, including Bougainville; Reinforced dialogues at the community level through PaCSIA's network of facilitators.
UN faces allegations of partiality or being blamed for delays in implementing the post-referendum process.	Medium	Medium	The Peace and Development Adviser/Liaison Officer will conduct regular political analyses, engaging with both governments to manage public expectations over the UN's role.

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Women%27s%20Inclusion%20in%20the%20Post-Referendum%20Consultations%20between%20the%20National%20Government%20of%20Papua%20New%20Guinea%20and%20the%20Autonomous%20Bougainville%20Government.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ This report was informed by the Peace and Development Analysis (PDA) 2014, with various inter-governmental fora (such as the UN-facilitated review workshop of the PDA 2018) and a UN-facilitated workshop on implementing the Peacebuilding Fund Project, 'Sustaining Peace in Bougainville' (2020), helping this analysis' findings. This desk review also benefited from findings of the 2021 Progress Dialogues conducted by Peace and Conflict Studies Australia (PaCSIA) and the "Perception Survey of the Bougainvillean Population Under Post-Referendum Support and Sustaining Peace and in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea", commissioned by the UNDP.

Due to entrenched, unequal social norms and a lack of substantive engagement with women and young people	Medium	High	A specific program to enhance women and youth engagement is to be designed.
Increase incidents of violence during the implementation of the project	Medium	High	Use existing early warning/early response systems to detect and mitigate violence.
Capacity limitation of partners to engage, including the various ABG departments that may affect program implementation	Medium	Medium	Capacity assessment and reinforcement of implementing partners to support projects. Inclusion and engagement of partners in project activities to build their capacity.
Projects are not able to attract and retain qualified staff	Medium	High	Consider detailed assignments/ consultancies, including expediting salary scale surveys for national staff.
Lack of will to progress BPA and the post-referendum process because of shifting government priorities and high turnover of MPs in the National Parliament	Medium	High	A regular risk assessment conducted by the UN (PDA, LO) and engagement with both governments on critical activities that require progression; Use the UNDP Parliamentary Support Project to raise awareness.
Lack of trust between GoPNG and ABG at political, administrative, and financial levels may affect project outcomes.	Medium	High	Hold regular meetings with heads of administration (Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and NEC, and ABG Chief Secretary) to share risk analysis on bottlenecks to project implementation.
Limited access to quality information/informed discourse at the community level	Medium	High	Strengthened engagement throughout PNG, including Bougainville; Reinforced dialogues at the community level through PaCSIA's network of facilitators.
UN faces allegations of partiality or being blamed for delays in implementing the post-referendum process.	Medium	Medium	The Peace and Development Adviser/Liaison Officer will conduct regular political analyses, engaging with both governments to manage public expectations over the UN's role.
Due to entrenched, unequal social norms and a lack of substantive engagement with women and young people	Medium	High	A specific program to enhance women and youth engagement is to be designed.
Increase incidents of violence during the implementation of the project	Medium	High	Use existing early warning/early response systems to detect and mitigate violence.
Capacity limitation of partners to engage, including the various ABG departments that may affect program implementation	Medium	High	Capacity assessment and reinforcement of implementing partners to support projects. Inclusion and engagement of partners in project activities to build their capacity.
Projects are not able to attract and retain qualified staff	Medium	High	Consider detailed assignments/ consultancies, including expediting salary scale surveys for national staff.
Lack of will and institutional memory to progress BPA, including the post-referendum process due to change in leadership (both political and bureaucratic levels)	High	High	Being flexible and responsive to these changes quickly builds relationships and provides briefings with new leaders.
Safety of all project staff, including non-Bougainvilleans	Low	High	Build internal security measures, then orient staff on these measures.
COVID-19	Low	Medium	COVID-19 presents an external threat to the post-referendum consultation process and the implementation of UN programs. Therefore, adhere to the "Niupela Plasin" protocols.

Highlands Conflict Analysis

Both Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces experience violent internecine conflicts of varying scales. These conflicts are underpinned by similar causal factors ranging from intense demographic pressures to a lack of economic opportunities, rent-seeking behaviour, widespread proliferation of firearms, and lack of access to an effective formal justice system. While service availability and weak public institutions can fuel grievances, these issues also permit violence to continue within an authority vacuum.

The observed trends suggest that these conflicts can manifest differently in each province. For instance, inter-group conflict in Southern Highlands can often be attributed to the competition for power, i.e., the goal of political influence and provincial power. However, in Hela, inter-group conflicts are often crudely characterized as "tribal" conflicts, linked to intensified resource competition and also connected with land, women, and pigs.

Since 2014, when the PNG LNG project has been operational (primarily in Hela and where the pipeline to the Papua Gulf traverses Southern Highlands), incidents of violent conflict have arisen along the project impact areas, owing to the perceived lack of/unequal distribution of benefits from the gas project (such as royalties, equity, and development grants) or disputed land ownership of project-impacted locations. However, conflicts directly attributable to benefits distribution/sharing remain predominantly localized in project impact areas. They do not account for conflicts beyond these locations triggered by other conflict factors. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the implications (if any) of the close association between extractive companies and agents of the PNG state, operating against a backdrop of the persistent challenge of widespread instability and communal divisiveness observed in both provinces. The complex relationship between root and intermediate causal factors (as well as the triggers of conflicts in the Highlands) are summarised below.

Figure 14: Summary of Conflict Triggers and Causes: Context Analysis of the Provinces of Southern Highlands and Hela

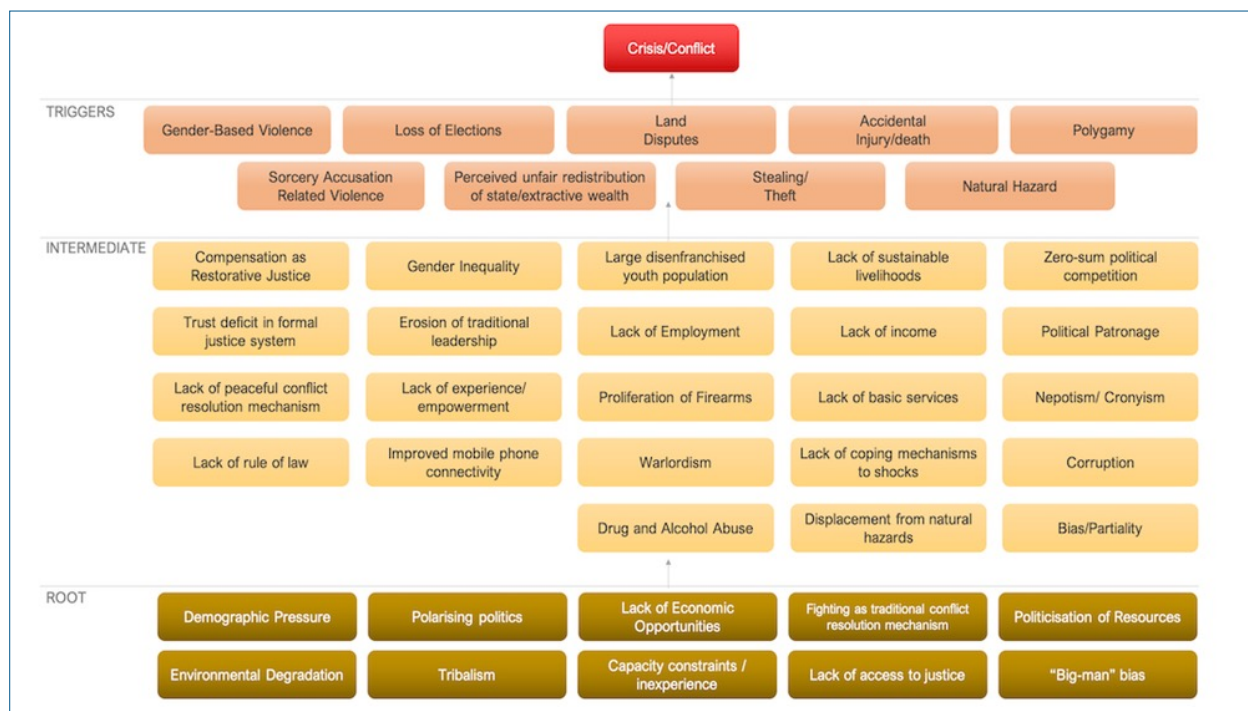


Table 7: Risk Analysis for the Highlands

Main Risks	Likelihood of occurrence (high, medium, low)	The severity of risk impact (high, medium, low)	Mitigating Strategy
Occurrence of significant man-made or natural hazards affecting either/both provinces leads to negative humanitarian impact; increase in accusations of sorcery/witchcraft and associated violence, including delay in implementing planned PBF activities.	High	High	Seek the support of donors to re-program or review the implementation timeline of activities; Reprogramming of planned activities to respond to immediate humanitarian needs;
Increase in violence due to unresolved local political tensions or escalation in unresolved issues around extractive royalties.	Medium	High	Interventions to have built-in capability to pivot, re-program, or absorb delays; Comprehensive pre-crisis safety and security plan to be developed, exercised, and maintained; Establishment of local early warning networks; Close coordination with local security forces. Proactive community engagement campaign to explain causes of hazards and impacts.
Loss of national and subnational government support due to evolving priorities or changes in government	Low	High	Establish and actively maintain broad-based support from political stakeholders; Formalizing government support through integration into the UN's joint annual workplan; Encourage government co-financing of complementary activities.
Loss of community trust and community access	High	High	Implement planned community engagement activities, drawing broad-based support from influential stakeholders.
Neutrality and impartiality are perceived to be compromised	High	High	Deliberate program to initiate all UN personnel deployed in the Highlands on UN's values and expected appropriate behaviour; All UN personnel are to sign the code of conduct individually.
Attempts by local stakeholders to inappropriately influence program implementation	Medium	High	Maintain appropriate checks and balances in program implementation; Communicate that the UN operates strictly principled, neutral, and impartially (under mutually agreed criteria based on evidence).
Activities implemented to urgently demonstrate results are not adequately carried out, leaving the most vulnerable groups in beneficiary targeting	Medium	High	Project design, beneficiary selection, and implementation principles to guide work planning; Monitor risk and oversight by the programme steering committee.
Reinforcement of clientelism practised by local implementing partners	Medium	Medium	Careful selection of potential implementing partners; Capacity building of local implementing partners, in particular, the socialization of UN's values and operating mode, expected appropriate behaviour; Design and structure activities to mitigate the opportunity for potential clientelism; Closely monitor activities.
Women and youth experience backlash (e.g., violence, community exclusion) from men and the community at large due to involvement in empowerment activities	Medium	Medium	Empowerment activities to be implemented in an inclusive, well-paced manner and sensitive to community acceptance; Communicate to communities that empowerment is not a zero-sum but a positive-sum exercise.
Expectations for cash compensation from participants implementing project activities (e.g., community mobilizers due to past experiences during the humanitarian response phase)	Medium	Medium	Awareness activities are needed to ensure a better understanding of the terms of participation in the project's activities and to manage expectations.

1.5.2 Cross-border issues

In the past three decades, the country has seen violent progress from using sticks, stones, arrows, spears, and knives to munitions, including automated weapons. The illicit trade of marijuana and other drugs for weapons has increased along the porous border with Indonesia, in particular.

There have been reports of Malaysian and Chinese logging companies and foreign business people arranging for foreign women – from countries such as China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand – to enter PNG with fraudulent business or tourist visas voluntarily. Following their arrival, many of these women are turned over to traffickers for transport to fisheries, entertainment sites, and mining and logging camps, where they are exploited and forced into domestic servitude and sex work, which is associated with considerable health and safety concerns. In addition, Chinese, Malaysian, and local men are reportedly subjected to forced labour at logging camps and commercial mines, with some coerced into working for indefinite periods due to debt bondage schemes.¹⁶¹

PNG ministers and authorities have commented on the high incidence of criminal activities across the land border between PNG and Indonesia. The Solomon Islands' unmonitored border with Bougainville also enables relatively free movement of goods and people by small vessels, making it susceptible to the trafficking of illegal commodities and facilitating the development and maintenance of illicit markets. Significant reporting of small arms trade between Bougainville and the Solomon Islands has occurred. Criminal cases in recent years indicate that large concealments of methamphetamine have been shipped from PNG into Australia.

1.5.3 Natural Disasters and Internal Displacement

PNG's rural and remote communities are vulnerable to shocks from extractive industries (including mining, oil, gas, commercial fishing, and logging), primarily where people depend on the local environment for their livelihoods. Environmental shocks include:

- ◆ land clearing, loss of farmlands and forests
- ◆ pollution of rivers, streams, and marine areas, and land and soils
- ◆ entry of toxins, including heavy metals, into the environment and food chain, causing health impacts

- ◆ decline in fish catch and loss of marine food sources
- ◆ siltation with resultant loss of farmlands and healthy aquatic systems, blocking of waterways, and changes in water flows
- ◆ flow-on effects relating to increased mobility and migration, where people are displaced and have to venture further into the field to seek livelihoods.

The remoteness of many of PNG's rural communities can create immense challenges for responding to disasters effectively, and a lack of local infrastructure and health services can have long-lasting impacts on communities following catastrophic events.¹⁶² Climate change already affects the most disadvantaged and will result in many more people being 'left behind' unless actions are taken. Women and children suffer most adversely, and it was reported that "women...(are) often most vocal about dimensions of vulnerability (for example, population growth) and their links to social issues (i.e., alcoholism, domestic violence, and petty crime) that they viewed as likely to be heightened through ecosystem decline".¹⁶³

A landslide engulfed villages in Yambali Ward, Maip Mulitaka Local Level Government of Lagaip-Porgera District, Enga Province of Papua New Guinea on May 24, 2024. The landslide resulted in substantial damage to numerous residences, livelihoods, and even lives. An estimated 1,680 individuals have been displaced because of the devastation, while an estimated 3,979 individuals are at risk of displacement and have been affected. Additionally, the catastrophe is anticipated to have a direct impact on 9,952 individuals. It is essential to implement immediate emergency response and long-term recovery plans to mitigate future risks and vulnerabilities and address the requirements of these affected populations¹⁶⁴.

The Yambali ward has been devastated by the landslide, which has also resulted in significant instability in the adjacent area. The soil continues to be highly unstable, as evidenced by the visible fissures that suggest that there are imminent threats to both lives and property. The risk is further exacerbated by the ongoing geoseismic activities in the area as the land continues to shift. The landslide obstructed waterways and elevated the probability of additional slides by encasing two streams in detritus and boulders. The already vulnerable community is at risk of further disasters due to the critical risk of inundation posed by the obstruction of these tributaries¹⁶⁵.

The 2025 INFORM Risk assesses the three categories of natural and human hazards: exposure, vulnerability, and coping capacity concerning disasters. PNG, a lower-middle-income country, has a risk class of "high," the second highest risk class, and ranks 29

¹⁶¹ United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime and Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (2016)- Transnational Organised Crime in the Pacific : A Threat Assessment, UNODC, September 2016 2016.09.16_TOCTA_Pacific_web.pdf (un.org)

¹⁶² UNDRR, Disaster Risk Reduction in Papua New Guinea: Status Report 2019. Bangkok, Thailand, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 2019)

¹⁶³ McKenna, K. et al, 'Community responses to the effects of climate change in PNG'. Devpolicy Blog Dev. Policy Central, 2019, <<https://devpolicy.org/community-responses-to-the-effects-of-climate-change-in-png-20190703/>>

¹⁶⁴ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/papua-new-guinea-rapid-assessment-report-enga-province-round-2-27-july-2024>

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

out of 191 globally; it ranks first among Pacific island countries and second only to Myanmar among the combined Pacific and Southeast Asian regions. It ranks 19 globally for natural hazard risks and 66 for human-induced risks. The country also ranks 28 in terms of socio-economic vulnerability and 78 in terms of vulnerable groups. Finally, the country's lack of coping capacity mainly affects its overall ranking: 25 out of 191 countries lack institutional capacity, and 12 lack infrastructural capacity. PNG ranks 37 out of 191 countries on the INFORM Risk Index for epidemic risk. Again, it ranks first among countries in the Pacific region.

Notably, the INFORM natural hazard risk assessment excludes volcanoes. According to the Rabaul Volcanological Observatory, there are 15 active volcanoes in PNG,¹⁶⁶ five of which erupted in 2021 and two others within the last decade.¹⁶⁷ Its most active volcanoes include Bagana (which erupted in 2023), Kadovar, Langila, Manam, and Ulawun. More than a million people – 17 per cent of the population – live within 30 km of an active volcano.¹⁶⁸ It also does not consider sorcery, low-intensity, and recurrent tribal conflicts, which have significant humanitarian impacts in PNG.

A series of earthquakes in Madang Province affected around 25,000 people, the most recent being a 6.7 magnitude earthquake on 7 October 2023. The earthquake caused two substantial aftershocks within an hour, affecting over 150 villages and causing widespread power outages. Humanitarian partners worked closely with provincial and national authorities to monitor the situation and with other local actors to ensure the safety of the affected communities.

Since 2013, PNG's global ranking in all three categories has remained relatively constant, with an overall gradual improving trend in coping capacity and worsening for vulnerable groups, while social-economic vulnerability has oscillated. Overall, hazards and exposure have remained unchanged.

PNG is among the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Prevalent hazards include earthquakes, cyclones, storms, volcanic eruptions, riverine and coastal flooding, coastal erosion, tsunamis, epidemics, and droughts. In addition, climate-related hazards are expected to become increasingly severe due to climate change (i.e., droughts and sea-level rise).

Climate change and environmental degradation impact many human rights, including the right to life, health, food, adequate housing, safe drinking water, preservation of culture, and more. Natural and environmental disasters disproportionately negatively

impact the most vulnerable in the community, including children, women, older persons, PWD, and the rural poor.

The health, livelihoods, and food security of PNG's majority rural population are particularly vulnerable to the impact of disasters.¹⁶⁹ Rural communities that are dependent on natural resources, including subsistence farming, are often left without shelter or any form of livelihood and are highly exposed to disease and hunger. Vulnerability is further increased by the distribution and socio-economic circumstances of the population and the lack of capability for governments and communities at all levels to plan and respond to events, in addition to the implications of natural disasters for access to livelihoods, education, health, water and sanitation, among others, significant issues related to physical safety, security, and dignity, in particular GBV, after disasters are a widespread concern.

According to UNDRR's damages and losses database,¹⁷⁰ historically, earthquakes (33 per cent), volcanic activity (20 per cent), and tsunamis (17 per cent) are the most significant causes of disaster-related deaths, followed by tropical storms (9 per cent), landslides, flooding, and epidemics (3 per cent each) in PNG. However, displacement for the same period indicates that more people were displaced by flooding (55 per cent), storm surges (24 per cent), and earthquakes (11 per cent). If we look at the total number of people affected, historically, drought and frost affected the most – nearly 3.7 million people – followed by all floods and earthquakes captured in UNDRR's database.



¹⁶⁶ https://www.preventionweb.net/sites/workspace/37131_candidateinformation%5B8%5D.pdf

¹⁶⁷ https://volcano.si.edu/volcanolist_countries.cfm?country=Papua%20New%20Guinea

¹⁶⁸ Op cit UNDRR (2019)

¹⁶⁹ UNDRR (2019)

¹⁷⁰ https://www.desinventar.net/Desinventar/profiltab.jsp?bookmark=1&countrycode=pac&maxhits=100&lang=EN&logic=AND&sortby=0&_level0=PNG







The financial cost of insufficient attention to resilience-building and disaster risk reduction is high. If we look at total absolute losses caused by the various natural hazards that most affect PNG, in 2015 – the most recent data available from UNDRR – average annual losses by flooding ranked highest:¹⁷¹

Hazard	Absolute (US\$ million)
Multi-Hazard	169.84
Flood	94.23
Earthquake	73.59
Volcano	13.70
Wind	0.87
Tsunami	0.59
Storm Surge	0.56

Probable maximum losses (US\$ million) for the mean return period (in years) are as follows

Hazard	20 yrs	50 yrs
Earthquake	212	380
Wind	6	15
Storm Surge	2	13
Tsunami	1	3

Figure 15: Hazards that require adaptive measures

Hazard	Risk Exposure
 <p>Coastal Flooding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change will exacerbate the issue due to rising sea levels and occurrence of coastal storms Damages infrastructure Affects ~6,000 and displaces ~400, several deaths on an annual basis
 <p>Inland Flooding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurs multiple times per year Damages buildings and infrastructure Affects ~26,000 annually, including the displacement of ~8,000 people and several deaths.
 <p>Land Slides</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affects 500-600 and kills several people in remote, mountainous areas Damages infrastructure, particularly roads, causing transport issues
 <p>Malaria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already affects half of the population, with climate change impacting ~200k more in the Highlands as conditions become more tolerable for the disease Highlands cases are becoming more severe
 <p>Agricultural yield loss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 million people depend on climate-sensitive crops Climate change may reduce yields: adaptation measures are needed
 <p>Coral reef decay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70,000 people earn a living from reefs Bleaching events and decay will reduce the livelihood and subsistence opportunities

Source: Dartmouth Flooding Database; EM-DAT; Reliefweb.int; press clippings; academic journals; Reefbase; WHO; PNAS; World Bank; FAO; IMF; WRI; TEEB; ANU; Internet research; interviews; Adaptation technical working group.

¹⁷¹ UNISDR (GAR) (<https://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2015/en/home/>)

The humanitarian consequences of natural disasters and human-caused crises in PNG are exacerbated by pre-existing development-related conditions that increase the impact of even minor events and have protracted effects, including displacement, for individuals, households, and communities already struggling to meet basic needs, with limited access to nutritious food sources, clean water, primary education, health and social services, safety, and security.

Women, children, the elderly, PWD, and other vulnerable persons are more at risk because of more limited coping capacity stemming from social marginalization, lack of access, lower education, less likelihood of stable income, and many other factors leading to the erosion of resilience to recover from crises. Local populations affected by any crisis in PNG would first look to their family, relatives, neighbours, and the diaspora for immediate assistance, followed by political leaders and the local church they are affiliated with, or which provides social and economic support services in their community.

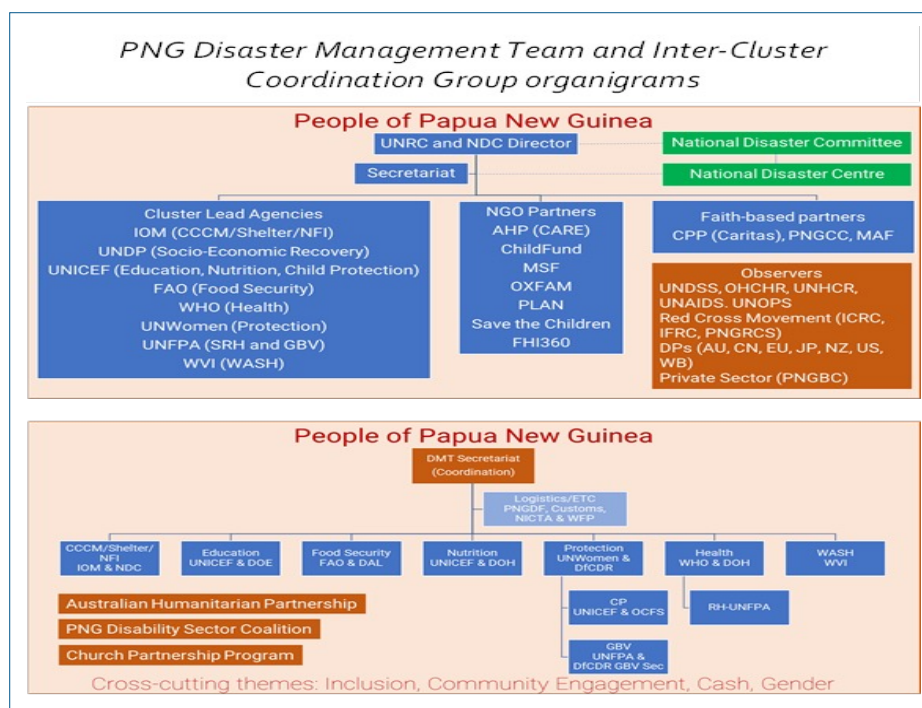
The immediate needs of the displaced population will likely be food, health, protection, shelter, and WaSH. These needs would be higher in urban centres and peri-urban communities, where populations are concentrated and where displacement in evacuation sites is likely higher. With a prolonged displacement, education, nutrition, livelihoods, and food security will also become issues. Over time, people living in unaffected rural areas may move to evacuation sites in urban areas for relief goods and services.

Investment in disaster planning, response, and recovery is primarily funded by external development assistance. UNDP and other development partners continue to fund activities to strengthen disaster prevention, response, and recovery, including expanding early warning systems and local area preparedness, response, and recovery. The investment is coordinated through the National Disaster Centre, which requires additional capacity and capability building. The critical issue is the lack of capacity for sustained implementation at the national, provincial, and local levels and more excellent status and authority across government.

Identified priorities include:

- ◆ Expanding early warning systems
- ◆ Systematic data collection, analysis, and management (including appropriately disaggregated data) required for risk analyses, situational assessments, projection of future scenarios, and planning for effective disaster risk reduction and response measures
- ◆ Further localization to increase the capacity of local actors and operators in disaster preparedness and recovery
- ◆ Improving the ability of local communities to effectively manage and lead response and recovery through resilience and capacity building
- ◆ Improving and reinforcing disaster finance, including investment in increasing community resilience, poverty reduction, and environmental protection, responding to mechanisms for alleviating loss of livelihoods, and addressing shelter and access to safe water/sanitation in the aftermath of disaster events.

Figure 16: Summary of Conflict Triggers and Causes: Context Analysis of the Provinces of Southern Highlands and Hela



Nearly every year since 2016, in response to requests from the national government, the DMT has mobilized global resources for at least one disaster or crisis. This mobilization of global resources began with 2016's El Niño-related drought and food insecurity and has since continued for mobilization for the Kadovar volcanic eruption, the Highlands earthquake displacement and polio outbreak in 2018; early action planning for El Niño-related drought; Ulawun volcanic eruption displacement and a small refugee emergency in 2019; COVID-19 in 2020 (ongoing); and king tide storm surges in 2021.

In 2021, the DMT monitored at least 36 other small-scale emergencies, including La Niña, African Swine Fever, Fall Army Worm infestation, movement of West Papuan asylum seekers, local flooding, king tide and storm surges, landslides, earthquakes, minor volcanic eruptions, and conflict-related displacement

1.5.4 Food Insecurity:

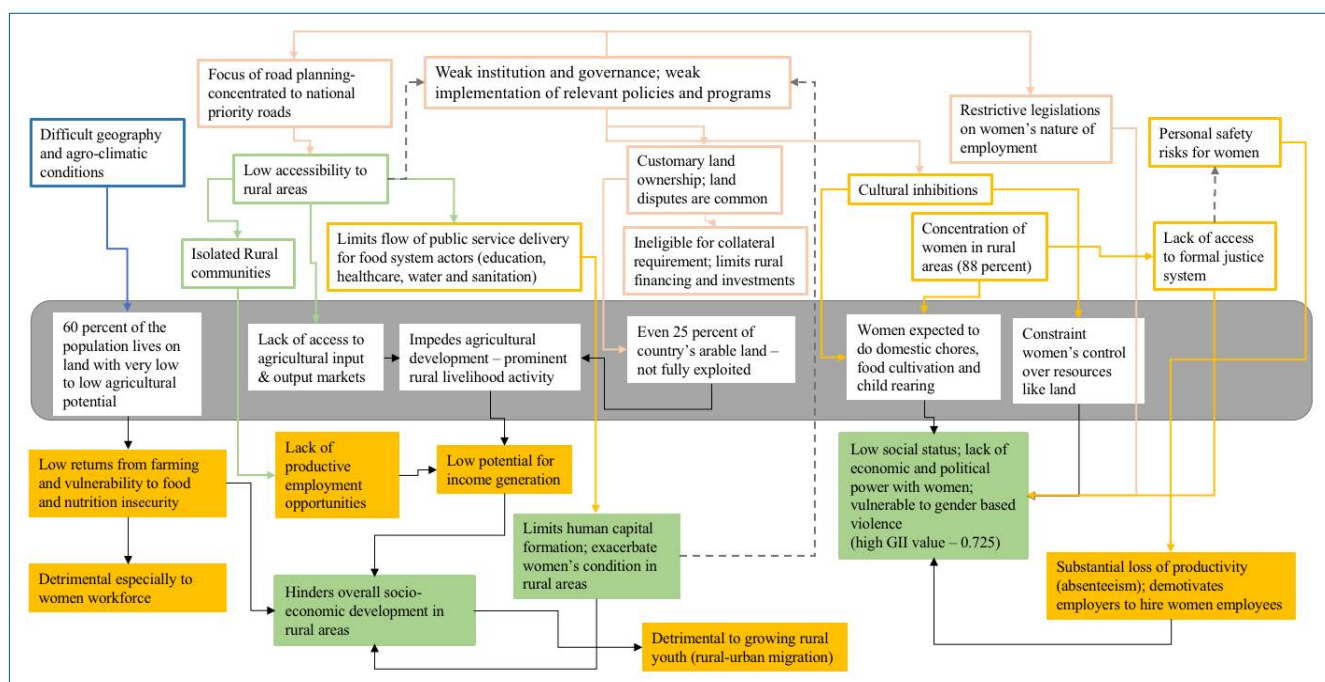
Approximately 56 per cent of households worry about food shortages, with 49.5 per cent of children under five being stunted and 14.1 per cent suffering from wasting.

The current agri-food systems cannot address food insecurity, which will triple the burden of malnutrition. As per the government's Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of 2016–2018, more than 56 per cent of households were worried about not having enough to eat. About half of the children (49.5 per cent) were stunted (very high category), 14.1 per cent suffered from wasting, 13.7 per cent were overweight, and 48 per cent were anaemic (FAO et al., 2021).

The rate of chronic malnutrition (stunting) in children under five has remained unchanged since 1983, while the prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults has risen from 42 per cent in 2000 to approximately 53 per cent in 2016 (FAO et al., 2021). This increase has contributed to a higher incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), making the country vulnerable to the triple burden of malnutrition (Papua New Guinea Food Systems Profile, 2022).

The current agri-food systems in PNG are also highly vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change impacts, ranking 10 out of 171 countries in 2016 (World Bank Group, 2021). In the case of climate-related hazards, the extent of impact and the coping strategy of the populace is highly based on their socioeconomic status, access to resources, sociocultural norms, poverty, as well as gender (World Bank Group, 2021).

Figure 17 - Systemic representation of the drivers and impacts of the current patterns of territorial and gender disparities in Papua New Guinea's food systems



Source: Food Systems Profile, 2021.

Gender-differentiated domestic work burdens affect the ability of women to allocate their labour to the cultivation, harvesting, and processing of coffee and cocoa (World Bank et al., 2012). While women comprise over half of the agricultural workforce (ADB, 2016a), crops typically cultivated by women tend to be valued at only half as much as crops typically cultivated by men. Examples of the crop types cultivated by women are food crops such as sweet potato, banana, taro, yam, edible greens, vegetables, and fruits. Women and youth complain about what they perceive as the unfair distribution of coffee income by the male head of the household, in which benefits are not shared equally. Women's work is geared more towards other agricultural activities, such as running their businesses as possible, which provides them with a more direct gain.

In contrast, men tend to focus on cocoa or coffee production (World Bank et al., 2012). Women's access to knowledge and skills is limited, as gaps in education, literacy, skills, safety and security issues, and participation in extension and training activities persist (World Bank et al., 2012). The 2009–2010 Papua New Guinea Household Survey reported that women do not like to work far from home, late at night, or even engage in such ordinary activities as shopping, driving, or fetching water due to personal safety concerns and security threats (NSO, 2012).

Components of the right to food, including adequacy, accessibility, and availability, are yet to be fully realized. In addition, the progress toward realizing the right remains dependent upon wealth. Rural residents are more likely to experience moderate to severe food insecurity than urban residents (58 per cent versus 52 per cent). The population experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity ranges from a high of 73 per cent in Western Province to a low of 35 per cent in Madang Province. The proportion of the population experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity decreases as household wealth increases. For instance, 68 per cent of the population in the lowest wealth quintile experienced moderate to severe food insecurity compared with only 42 per cent in the highest wealth quintile.¹⁷²

According to an IFPRI study (Carrillo et al., 2022), women are strongly involved in vegetable and poultry value chains and generally feel that this allows them to be more independent and empowered. However, at the same time, they are still expected to maintain the household (e.g., cooking, cleaning, childcare, gardening), which substantially extends their workday. Further, in Papua New Guinea, while women have ample responsibilities in managing and utilizing non-land assets, they have relatively limited agency, as social norms influence the ownership and control of these assets. Given this, though women are already active in most of the livestock value chain activities, they lack the right to make decisions about investments in and income from production and marketing. In another case of the fresh vegetable value chain, while women are the primary producers and sellers,

they are almost absent from the midstream activities of the value chain. Given this, they face significant challenges and safety risks with transportation and price negotiation and have less authority over the use of income generated from fresh vegetables. Further, since fresh vegetable value chains have specialized packaging and processing needs, it could be a potential area for greater women's employment. Also, women must have better access to price information, decent market infrastructure, and an enabling environment to negotiate formally, efficiently, and safely to contract other service providers to transport, package, and store the produce.

High rates of poverty, inequality, and concentration of population in rural areas: In case of climate-related hazards, the extent of impact and the coping strategy of the populace is highly based on their socioeconomic status, access to resources, sociocultural norms, poverty, as well as gender (World Bank Group, 2021).

There are high levels of territorial and gender inequities in Papua New Guinea. About 80 per cent of the population is concentrated in rural areas, with poor access to infrastructure and essential services. Poverty rates are about 40 per cent as per available estimates, with the populace engaged in agriculture likely to be poorer than other sectors.

Low accessibility to rural areas due to the country's rugged geography and poor connectivity infrastructure is one of the major contributing factors to high disaster risk, given the high cost of providing logistics support. The lack of healthcare facilities, especially in rural areas, which are crucial to dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters, is also of grave concern (UNDRR, 2019). With many rural communities living in flood and landslide risk zones, exposure to natural hazards is substantial and likely to escalate. The projected climate change impacts are expected to affect the poorest sections of the country disproportionately. For instance, productivity losses due to heat stress are maximum in the case of heavy manual labour jobs that are also the lowest paid. It is a challenge for poor communities and farmers to afford local water storage, irrigation infrastructure, and technologies for adaptation (World Bank Group, 2021). Not only the rural poor but the urban poor are equally vulnerable to climate change impacts. Climate-driven food shortages in 2015 and 2016 left over 0.3 million people in need of food aid. They led to a sharp rise in the prices of some staple foods in urban areas, putting considerable pressure on the poorest and the most vulnerable (World Bank, 2018). The situation is worse for women, given the very high level of gender-based differences in the country. Women are highly concentrated in rural areas, victims of sociocultural norms, vulnerable to personal safety risks, and lack access to resources and economic opportunities. These factors significantly undermine their adaptation capacity to climate change in comparison to men.

¹⁷² PNG Demographic and Health Survey 2016-2018

UN work programme on HDP nexus challenges

- ◆ Engaged in peacebuilding efforts, particularly in the Highlands Region and Bougainville, facilitating dialogues and agreements to resolve conflicts and promote community resilience.
- ◆ Conducted training programs to empower local leaders in conflict resolution and community engagement.
- ◆ Improve access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare through various initiatives, including the WASH in Schools Policy and community-based health programs.
- ◆ Facilitated enhanced disaster preparedness and response in PNG through the development of community-based disaster risk management plans, empowering vulnerable populations to identify and mitigate climate risks.
- ◆ Supported the government in enhancing disaster preparedness and response capabilities, including training in the Displacement Tracking Matrix.
- ◆ Collaborated with the PNG National Disaster Centre to develop provincial disaster risk management strategies, train local authorities, and enhance community resilience to climate-related disasters.
- ◆ Supported the development of national frameworks for disaster risk reduction, including plans to address slow-onset events like El Niño and sudden-onset disasters.
- ◆ Conducted training on Gender-responsive Disaster Response for 21 island communities, contributing to trained Disaster Management Committees.
- ◆ Finalized the design of the Highlands Joint Program Phase 2, with proposed areas of intervention in development planning, social services, community empowerment (with a focus on women and youth), law and justice, natural disasters and climate change, and agriculture and livelihoods.
- ◆ Conducted the National Workshop on Coordination Mechanisms and Comprehensive National Strategy on Small Arms Control in April 2024.
- ◆ Commenced field activities for a small arms survey and participatory research on the impact of armed violence on women and girls and on social and gender norms that fuel the prevalence of toxic masculinity.



2. Impact of PNG Challenges on SDGs progress

Internal conflicts and natural disasters lead to displacement, The challenges faced by Papua New Guinea (PNG) are multifaceted and interconnected, impacting several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ESCAP 2024 report on SDG progress indicates that PNG is significantly off track to meet many of the 17 SDGs by the 2030 deadline. Projections indicate that full achievement may not occur until 2062, representing a 32-year delay¹⁷³.

Like many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, PNG's progress towards the SDGs has been uneven and inadequate. While some positive strides have been made, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction (Goal 1) and sustainable industry (Goal 9), these efforts are insufficient to meet the 2030 targets. The report emphasizes that the average progress towards achieving all SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region has only reached 17 per cent, with PNG likely reflecting similar trends¹⁷⁴.

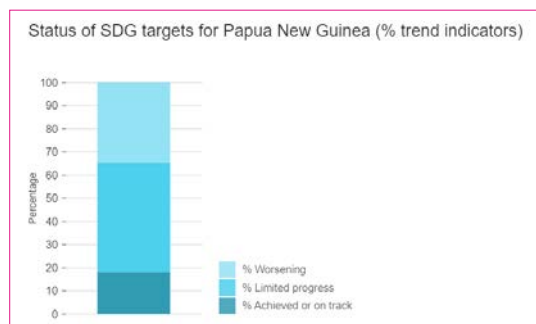
The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities in PNG, pushing many into poverty and disrupting essential services. The pandemic's impact has been particularly severe on marginalized groups, including women, children, and rural populations, who face significant barriers to education and employment. The report underscores the need for targeted interventions to address these disparities and ensure that no one is left behind¹⁷⁵.

PNG has made some progress in improving access to clean water and sanitation (Goal 6) and enhancing health and well-being (Goal 3). However, challenges remain, particularly in achieving food security (Goal 2) and ensuring quality education (Goal 4). The report notes that while school enrollment rates have improved, gaps in access and quality of education persist, particularly for girls and those in rural areas. Data availability is necessary for effective policy implementation. In PNG, as in other countries, data gaps hinder the assessment of progress towards the SDGs. Enhanced data collection and management are crucial for informed decision-making and tracking the impact of policies aimed at achieving the SDGs. A concerted effort from all stakeholders, including government, civil society, and international partners, is required to accelerate progress and ensure that the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda are met¹⁷⁶. As shown in the table below, progress towards the SDGs is stagnating for many SDGs, declining for SDG 11 and moderately progressing for SDG 12 and SDG 13. Data is unavailable for SDG 4 and 10, so progress towards these two SDGs cannot be assessed.

Figure 18 – Papua New Guinea - Progress towards the SDGs, 2024



Figure 19 – Status of SDG targets for Papua New Guinea (% trend indicators)



Source: <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/papua-new-guinea>

¹⁷³United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2024). Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2024: Showcasing transformative actions. United Nations. <https://data.unescap.org/stories/escap-database>

¹⁷⁴Ibid

¹⁷⁵Ibid

¹⁷⁶United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (2024)

Figure 20 -PNG SDG indicator changes

SDG 1: No poverty

- → Poverty headcount ratio at \$2.15/day
- → Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.65/day

SDG 2: Zero hunger

- ↓ Prevalence of undernourishment
- ** Prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age
- ** Prevalence of wasting in children under 5 years of age
- ↓ Prevalence of obesity, BMI ≥ 30
- ↑ Human Trophic Level
- ↑ Cereal yield
- ↓ Sustainable Nitrogen Management Index
- ** Exports of hazardous pesticides

SDG 3: Good health and well-being

- → Maternal mortality ratio
- → Neonatal mortality rate
- → Mortality rate, under-5
- → Incidence of tuberculosis
- → New HIV infections
- → Age-standardized death rate due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease in adults aged 30 to 70 years
- ** Age-standardized death rate attributable to household air pollution and ambient air pollution
- ↓ Traffic deaths
- → Life expectancy at birth
- ** Adolescent fertility rate
- ** Births attended by skilled health personnel
- ↓ Surviving infants who received 2 WHO-recommended vaccines
- ↓ Universal health coverage (UHC) index of service coverage
- ** Subjective well-being

SDG 4: Quality education

- ** Participation rate in pre-primary organized learning
- ** Net primary enrollment rate
- ** Lower secondary completion rate
- ** Literacy rate

SDG 5: Gender equality

- → Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods
- → Ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received
- → Ratio of female-to-male labor force participation rate
- → Seats held by women in national parliament

SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation

- → Population using at least basic drinking water services
- → Population using at least basic sanitation services
- ↑ Freshwater withdrawal
- ** Anthropogenic wastewater that receives treatment
- → Scarce water consumption embodied in imports

SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

- → Population with access to electricity
- → Population with access to clean fuels and technology for cooking
- → CO₂ emissions from fuel combustion per total electricity output
- → Renewable energy share in total final energy consumption

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

- ** Adjusted GDP growth
- ** Victims of modern slavery
- ** Adults with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider
- → Unemployment rate
- ** Fundamental labor rights are effectively guaranteed
- → Fatal work-related accidents embodied in imports
- ** Victims of modern slavery embodied in imports

SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

- ** Rural population with access to all-season roads
- → Population using the internet
- → Mobile broadband subscriptions
- → Logistics Performance Index: Infrastructure Score
- ** The Times Higher Education Universities Ranking: Average score of top 3 universities
- → Articles published in academic journals
- ** Expenditure on research and development

SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

- ** Gini coefficient
- ** Palma ratio

SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

- ** Proportion of urban population living in slums
- → Annual mean concentration of PM_{2.5}
- ↓ Access to improved water source, piped
- ** Population with convenient access to public transport in cities

SDG 13: Climate action

- → CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement production
- ↑ GHG emissions embodied in imports
- ** CO₂ emissions embodied in fossil fuel exports

SDG 14: Life below water

- → Mean area that is protected in marine sites important to biodiversity
- ↓ Ocean Health Index: Clean Waters score
- ↑ Fish caught from overexploited or collapsed stocks
- ↑ Fish caught by trawling or dredging
- → Fish caught that are then discarded
- ** Marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports

SDG 15: Life on land

- → Mean area that is protected in terrestrial sites important to biodiversity
- ** Mean area that is protected in freshwater sites important to biodiversity
- ↓ Red List Index of species survival
- ↑ Permanent deforestation
- ↑ Imported deforestation

SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions

- ** Homicides
- ** Crime is effectively controlled
- ** Unsentenced detainees
- ** Birth registrations with civil authority
- → Corruption Perceptions Index
- ** Children involved in child labor
- ** Exports of major conventional weapons
- ↓ Press Freedom Index
- ** Access to and affordability of justice
- ** Timeliness of administrative proceedings
- ** Expropriations are lawful and adequately compensated

SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

- ** Government spending on health and education
- ** For high-income and all OECD DAC countries: International concessional public finance, including official development assistance
- ↓ Other countries: Government revenue excluding grants
- ** Corporate Tax Haven Score
- → Statistical Performance Index
- ** Index of countries' support to UN-based multilateralism

Table 8: Summary of SDG progress

	<p>A significant proportion of PNG's population still lives in poverty. The social protection system is inadequate, and most people do not have access to essential services. Economic loss from disasters has increased.</p>
	<p>Undernourishment and stunting persist. However, plant breeds and agriculture as a share of GDP have increased. GoPNG has reduced subsidies for agriculture exports while reducing its expenditure on agriculture.</p>
	<p>PNG health indicators are improving, as shown by the decreasing maternal and infant mortality rates. However, government expenditure on health has declined, and the progress on universal health coverage has stagnated while rates of non-communicable diseases have increased.</p>
	<p>Enrollment in primary and early education has increased. However, very few students complete secondary education, and official spending on education has declined.</p>
	<p>While the female-to-male labour force participation rate is almost 1:1, women are not equally participating in political, business, and public service leadership. Despite the excellent policy to address discrimination against women, many women experience gender-based violence (GBV).</p>
	<p>While spending on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH) has more than doubled since 2000, most of the population does not have access to WaSH facilities.</p>
	<p>While access to electricity has increased and energy efficiency has improved, access to renewable energy has declined.</p>
	<p>PNG's economy continued to expand except when the country experienced the 2018 earthquake and the 2020 pandemic. Unemployment remains low, but approximately one-third of young people are not in work or education. Access to banking institutions remains low.</p>
	<p>The PNG mobile network (from 2G to 4G) is widespread, but few people use the internet. The high-tech industry is a tiny proportion of value-added (manufacturing sector), with zero expenditure on research and development. Small-scale industries received one-third of loans, and manufacturing value-added to GDP declined. Higher education and published articles receive low scores, and there are few full-time researchers.</p>
	<p>Labour accounts for one-third of GDP, and one-fifth of the population lives below the median income. Non-performing loans have increased. Development assistance has almost doubled, and three-quarters of imports are zero-tariff rated.</p>
	<p>The annual mean concentration of particular matter exceeds the WHO max safety level.</p>
	<p>Domestic material consumption decreased while electronic waste generated per capita increased.</p>
	<p>The impacts of global climate change are driving vulnerabilities associated with more extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and potential changes to biodiversity, including loss of livelihoods. Over 80% of the country's population is susceptible to climatic extremes due to their direct dependence on natural resources, subsistence agriculture, and limited adaptation capacity.</p>
	<p>The National Adaptation Plan (NAP), launched in 2022, provides a clear stepwise sectoral framework for the government's intervention in partnership with sector agencies, academic institutions, development partners, and private sector entities to plan, build synergies, and make decisions for resilience and adaptation from the adverse effects of climate change. The NAP addresses nine priority areas for adaptation, namely: i) coastal flooding and sea level rise; ii) Inland flooding; iii) food insecurities; iv) cities and climate change; v) climate-induced migration; vi) damage to coral reefs; vii) malaria; viii) vector-borne diseases; and ix) landslides.</p>
	<p>PNG's vast and diverse marine environment is globally significant in terms of its ecosystem structure, function, and biodiversity, and it is locally significant for the many thousands of PNG residents who rely on its resources for subsistence and income. Most of PNG's threatened and highly biodiverse marine and coastal ecosystems and species are poorly protected, leaving them potentially vulnerable to conflicting resource use and over-exploitation. Coastal populations are expanding rapidly, placing pressure on coastal and marine resources.</p>
	<p>PNG has not met its SDG 14 and Aichi Target 11 (17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas to be effectively and equitably managed), including a need to protect and manage deep water habitats and reefs and to adequately protect commercial fish stock spawning aggregations, marine turtles, seabirds and cetaceans. Only 4.8% of the country's terrestrial area is formally gazetted as protected areas, while less than 1% is recognized as marine protected areas. The Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) proposed that governments conserve 30% of land and water by 2030, which GoPNG will ratify.</p> <p>The National Oceans Policy 2020, launched in 2021, aims to achieve a sustainable blue economy.</p>
	<p>PNG's forests are globally significant in terms of ecosystem structure and function, carbon storage, carbon dioxide sequestration, and biodiversity. Most forest land is owned by customary landowners who rely on forest resources for subsistence and income. Annually, PNG raised over K400 from log export, but by 2025, no more round logs will be exported, and downstream processing will be promoted.</p>
	<p>Approximately 75.1% of the forest is still intact or not disturbed by anthropogenic activities. Human impacts on the forest constitute logging (11.5%), gardening (8.7%), fire (3.1%), other (1.4%), portable sawmill (0.2%), infrastructure (0.02%) and mining (0.01%), totally up to 25%. Nearly three million ha of forest was mapped as becoming "degraded" between 2000 and 2019, representing about 10% of PNG's forests, primarily due to logging. The annual area of forest degradation more than doubled from 2001 (87,600 ha) to its peak in 2011 (200,050 ha). Since its peak, the rate slowed to 100,000ha in 2019. Between 2000 and 2019, just over 352,804 ha (0.98%) of forest was cleared and converted to other uses. Between 2000 and 2010, almost 100,662 ha (0.28%) was deforested. The average annual area of deforestation between 2011 and 2015 (30,700 ha) was significantly more than between 2001 and 2005. It increased by 154,361ha (0.42%) between 2011 and 2015. The annual deforestation rate slowed to under 20,000 ha by 2019 due to government policies and the cancellation of some Special Agricultural Business Leases. From 2016 to 2019, deforestation decreased to 99,780ha (0.28%). Forest and land use contributed a net GHG emission of 21,654Gg CO2-eq in 2020 compared to 1,716 CO2-eq in 2015.</p> <p>The National Sustainable Land Use Policy was launched in 2023 and aims to provide comprehensive guidance on land use and land management across PNG.</p>
	<p>Un-sentenced detainees have increased over the past decade. Corruption perception remains. Registration of children remains low – birth registrations with civil authority were only 13.4% of children under the age of 5 years.</p>
	<p>PNG's high corporate tax haven score means corporate tax cannot be avoided. Foreign direct investment (FDI) has increased.</p>

3. Vulnerable populations

This section examines the impact of the PNG development context on vulnerable populations. The 2023 UNSDCF consultations identified the twelve categories of vulnerable populations within PNG in 2023, outlined in the diagram below.

Figure 21: Most vulnerable populations in PNG, 2024



3.1 Asylum seekers and refugees

Since the 1960s, due to heightened tensions between the Indonesian authorities and the West Papuan separatist movement, West Papuans have been forced to flee, with a significant influx of 15,000 refugees into PNG in the 1980s. GoPNG established a refugee settlement site known as lowara (or East Arwin Relocation Camp) in Western Province, the largest and least developed province in PNG. Significant hardships are confronted by some 2,500 West Papuan refugees who reside at lowara, including tensions with local landowners, road access issues, WaSH concerns, limited livelihood opportunities, challenges with accessing justice mechanisms, and food security concerns.¹⁷⁷ Despite these challenges, West Papuan refugees are required to relocate to lowara if they wish to obtain Government assistance.

In terms of recent developments, since 2018, Indonesian forces have been reinforced in the Papua and West Papua provinces of Indonesia, as West Papuan separatist groups have become more coordinated and targeted in their attacks. In late 2019, 197 asylum-seekers arrived in Western Province and relocated in January 2020 to a temporary site. After delays, gaps in the provision of food rations, and denial of freedom of movement, the asylum-seekers were relocated to lowara in July 2020.

In 2021, as the conflict in Indonesia intensified further,¹⁷⁸ mass displacement (mainly internal) occurred for West Papuans caught in the middle of the conflict. On 13 October 2021, 106 West Papuans arrived at the Star Mountains, Sandaun Province, where they remained in a dire humanitarian situation without government support. There were reports that around 1,000 West Papuan civilians were hiding in the bush along the PNG side of the border to evade being targeted by the Indonesian authorities. In November 2021, 27 asylum seekers arrived near Vanimo, Sandaun Province. A significant proportion of humanitarian assistance has been provided by the host communities, faith-based organizations, and the UN, with limited coordination or response from the GoPNG.

In the coming years, the likelihood of displacement movements into PNG from Indonesia is expected (in the hundreds to thousands), with an ongoing challenge being the need for enhanced coordination and a reliable humanitarian response despite the small numbers dispersed along the border, significant concerning the remote border locations, such as the Star Mountains, which have significant logistical and security challenges, meaning that access and the provision of core relief items and the ability to relocate asylum seekers away from the border are challenging to secure.

¹⁷⁷ Other challenges include road access issues, seasonal drought, flooding, food insecurity, inadequate access to clean water, lack of education and economic opportunities, poor living standards, malnutrition, and health concerns relating to waterborne diseases, drug resistant tuberculosis and malaria

¹⁷⁸ After separatists assassinated the head of Indonesia's intelligence agency on 25 April 2021, the Indonesian government designated West Papuan separatists as "terrorists", deploying thousands of troops to remote parts of Papua and West Papua provinces. See Richard C. Paddock and Mukhita Suhartono "Indonesian General Is Killed in Rebel Ambush, Sparking Fears of Retaliation" New York Times, 27 April 2021 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/world/asia/indonesia-general-papua.html> (paywall).

3.2 Children

The child protection system in PNG suffers from limited financial and human resource capacity. Over the last five years, PNG has made significant progress, strengthening the foundation for a national child protection system by improving the legal and policy framework.

The Department for Community Development and Religion (DfCDR) is the lead national agency and anchor for family and children's well-being. It received a funding allocation for the National GBV Secretariat for the first time in the 2022 national budget. The Royal PNG Constabulary, including their Family and Sexual Violence Units, are also a part of the child protection referral system. Together, these government entities access a Primero joint database system for case management; in 2022, this was still in the early stages of use.

Although institutional mechanisms at the sub-national level remain very limited, the National Office of Child and Family Services established the first provincial Council in Enga in 2021, in line with the provisions of the Lukautim Pikinini Act of 2015 to protect and promote the rights of children regardless of race, nationality, religion, sex, ability or disability.¹⁷⁹

The Juvenile Justice Act and its regulations, the Lukautim Pikinini Act and its regulations, together with other enabling legislation, and the National Juvenile Justice Plan 2018-2022/2023 and Child Protection Policy 2017-2027, provide the framework for promoting the rights and well-being of children in the justice system of PNG, as well as the protection of children in general. The Juvenile Justice Act 2014 states that the age of criminal responsibility begins at ten years of age. This determination falls below the international standard of 14 years. However, during the recent Universal Periodic Review, GoPNG indicated its willingness to amend the law and policy to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years. In 2019, the Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a General Comment on Children's Rights in the Justice System that, among other things, promotes critical strategies for reducing the especially harmful effects to children of contact with the criminal justice system.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrined the right to identity. The PNG Civil and Identity Registry¹⁸⁰ is mandated and empowered by the Civil Registration Act 1963, Amended 2014, to record and maintain registers of births, civil marriages, adoptions, civil divorces, legitimation, and deaths. There is no obligation on the Provincial Registrars to ensure that all births are registered, except in compulsory registration areas or 'prescribed premises.' There is no explicit requirement for birth registration for non-nationals.

The Adoption Law is outdated (1968), and many gaps exist. There is no designated competent authority to oversee the adoption system and processes. There are no detailed standards of care for different forms of care, such as guardianship, foster care, and adoption.

In PNG, detailed guidance and tools for evaluating alternative care providers do not currently exist. In addition, there is no mechanism for legal complaints regarding children in care and no system for assessing prospective adopters.

PNG has ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which provided the framework of action to abolish the worst forms of child labour and ensure that special programs were introduced for children who were at a heightened risk of exploitation. However, gaps in the framework exist. Laws and regulations that meet international standards include Article 103 of the Employment Act, which stipulates the minimum age (16) for work; Articles 23 and 43 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea; and Section 208 of the Criminal Code that prohibits forced labour; and Section 30 of the Defence Act that establishes a minimum age for voluntary state military recruitment.

GoPNG also established the National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour 2017-2020 and the Decent Work Country Programme 2018-2022 to commit to protecting human dignity and working conditions. However, due to the lack of substantive data, the measure of progress in implementing those policies remains unclear. A review of the Employment Act and the Informal Sector Control Management Act is underway to address all forms of child labour explicitly.¹⁸¹

Children in PNG are vulnerable to some of the worst forms of child labour, including dangerous tasks in mining. Some children from rural areas live with relatives or "host" families in cities, where they are coerced to carry out domestic work to pay off family debts.

PNG is also one Pacific Island nation where local and foreign women and children are subjected to trafficking for sexual exploitation. In the context of indications of child sex work increasing in PNG, the U.S. Department of State recently reported that around 19 per cent of the country's labour market is comprised of child workers, including some who are subjected to child sex work and forced labour.¹⁸² PNG is on the Tier 2 Watchlist on the US TIP (Trafficking in Persons) report, which states that approximately 30 per cent of PNG sex trafficking victims are children under the age of 18, with some as young as ten years old. An ILO study¹⁸³ found that 34 per cent of children involved in sex work in Port Moresby began at 15 years, and

¹⁷⁹ Other challenges include road access issues, seasonal drought, flooding, food insecurity, inadequate access to clean water, lack of education and economic opportunities, poor living standards, malnutrition, and health concerns relating to waterborne diseases, drug resistant tuberculosis and malaria

¹⁸⁰ PNG Civil and Identity Registry, Vital Events Booklet (2019)

¹⁸¹ UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

¹⁸² United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime and Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (2016)

¹⁸³ ILO, Child Labour in Papua New Guinea: A report on the rapid assessment in Port Moresby on commercial sexual exploitation of children and children working on the streets (2011). https://www.ilo.org/suva/publications/WCMS_178379/lang-en/index.htm

approximately 41 per cent began sex work before the age of 15 years. Around 61 per cent of the children involved in commercial sex exploitation were living with immediate or extended family members.

PNG's ban on dangerous work is not compliant with international standards, necessitating that all children under the age of 18 be safeguarded from jobs that jeopardize their health and safety, as well as from securing or advancing illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.

Additional government policies related to child labour include the PNG Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2015–2020), Universal Basic Education Plan (2010–2019), National Child Protection Policy (2017–2027), and Tuition Fee-Free Policy.

The intersection between violence against women and violence against children is borne out in the PNG context. According to the 2016–2018 DHS, approximately 60 per cent of women with one or two children have experienced physical violence in contrast to 41 per cent of women not living with any children, showing an increased risk of violence for women with children. Available data also suggests that violence against women and children in the home often co-occurs. For instance, around 60 per cent of children who went to a women's shelter in Port Moresby had been abused.¹⁸⁴

In PNG, children experience high levels of violence, severely impacting their health, well-being, and development. While comprehensive data is lacking, estimates suggest that rates of violence against women and children are among the highest globally. The 2016–2018 DHS reported that 56 per cent of women aged fifteen to nineteen had experienced physical violence since the age of fifteen, and 28 per cent had faced sexual violence.

There is a well-studied relationship between childhood experiences of violence and other criminal behaviours displayed by children. In PNG, a 2015 UNICEF study estimates that children who come into contact with the law – as victims, witnesses, or offenders – rarely enjoy the benefits of child-focused justice, including diversion and alternatives to detention. Moreover, little is known regarding the extent to which children with mental and/or physical disabilities have equitable access to justice in PNG. In addition, humanitarian disasters have the potential to disrupt development gains and render women and children further at risk of violence due to scarce resources. The COVID-19 pandemic has represented a threat to not only the physical health of children in PNG but also to their protection.

GoPNG launched the National Youth Development Policy 2020–2030 to address gaps identified in the legislative environment and programming for young people. The rights of the child, enshrined in the Constitution as human rights of citizens, were

also protected through the enforcement of the Family Protection Act. Having noted that a lack of knowledge and information on human rights legislation often marred effective implementation, awareness-raising programs in the referral pathways were conducted in 2017 for child welfare service providers.

Between 2018 and 2019, awareness-raising was explicitly focused on village court officials, including magistrates, clerks, and peace officers, to inform them of the additional powers under the Family Protection Act and the Family Protection Regulations to issue interim protection orders. The regulations criminalized all forms of violence within the family unit, recognizing domestic violence as a crime punishable by law with a fine of up to K10,000 (\$2,900) or six months' imprisonment. That created a regime for issuing family protection orders to deter and prevent violence at all levels of society. As a result, statistics from the Family Sexual Violence Action Committee alone indicated a total number of 414 cases reported in 2017, of which 318 involved female adults, 48 were adult cases, and 47 involved children. Actual recorded cases for the same year totalled 600. However, unreported incidents might push the records higher.

Under the Family Protection Act awareness-raising program, 360 village court officials in the Southern Highlands, Morobe, Oro Provinces, and Bougainville received basic training. In 2020, refresher training was conducted, ensuring village court officials were familiar with appropriate documentation for addressing domestic violence complaints. In addition, the Department of Justice and Attorney General developed information, education, and communication materials on the provisions of the Family Protection Act for partner agencies and the public, using simple English.¹⁸⁵

3.3 Internal displacement and migrants

As the entity primarily responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of those in PNG, the Government needs to do more to prevent and avoid conditions that lead to internal displacement. Displacement in PNG occurs primarily because of natural hazards, tribal fights, violence over land, and the economic situation of families. Tribal fights over land are common and driven by the complexity of tenure relationships, overlapping land rights, migration due to economic or environmental factors, and cultural differences. Land and resource rights management, conflict prevention, mitigation, and peacebuilding, law and order provision in line with international human rights standards, along with addressing the root causes of conflict and violence and ensuring accountability for human rights violations and abuses, are all areas that need strengthening and which potentially drive displacement in some instances.

¹⁸⁴ Kirsten Anderson and Bruce Grant, Coram International (2022). Analysis of frameworks for addressing VAW and VAC in PNG at the national and provincial levels: Discussion paper for UN agencies

¹⁸⁵ UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

Displacement appears to be protracted, with households often living temporarily for over a year. These populations are more vulnerable to development challenges as they have less access to essential services, which increases the risk of human trafficking and people smuggling, as well as the psychosocial impacts of their displacement. Women and girls are especially susceptible to violence and abuse during displacement, from both within their communities and outside.

In PNG, internal displacement has also ignited conflicts. In a context with no policy or legislation addressing the needs of internally displaced persons, host communities react violently to displaced populations competing for resources and land. The under-resourced and overstretched nature of the institutions providing for justice and the rule of law contributes to impunity, which can fuel further violence.

The IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (2021) identified 44,547 internally displaced persons (51 per cent females and 49 per cent males) in PNG, of which the highest percentage was in the Highlands region (43 per cent). The Matrix found that 32,125 individuals (72 per cent) were displaced by natural hazards such as flooding and volcanic activity, and 12,423 individuals (28 per cent) due to the effects of human-induced hazards such as tribal and ethnic clashes. This number is estimated to be higher (approximately 75,000) due to the limited coverage of assessments because of inadequate resources and accessibility challenges to remote locations.

More must also be done to ensure an adequate standard of living for migrants. The rapidly rising proportion of those living in urban centres has aggravated the proliferation of unplanned squatter settlements where some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged landless urban citizens live.¹⁸⁶ Because of the inflow of rural poor, the chronic and severe shortage of affordable rental housing in PNG's major cities exacerbates the vulnerability of the landless people to being left behind in development. Squatter and informal settlements on vacant state, private, and/or customary land are deemed illegal and unwanted.¹⁸⁷

As a result, the settler communities with poor households with no certainty of land security, housing, clean water, or sanitation live a precarious existence vulnerable to demolitions, evictions, and removals, which can further exacerbate vulnerability, legal marginalization, and lack of access to essentials and government services. According to DNPM (2010, 2020), GoPNG is committed to catering to urbanization and socio-economic progress to deliver a quality of life for urban dwellers, including those living in the settlement areas. Public spending on settlement improvement on a modest scale to extend infrastructure

(electricity, water, and sewerage) is one of the major initiatives to upgrade settlement areas. Nevertheless, as ADB suggested, allowing squatters to regularise their dwellings with a commitment to end evictions while also introducing some form of settlement housing finance would go a long way in ensuring that no one is left behind in development.

3.4 LGBTIQ+ community

Significant violence and discrimination are faced by the LGBTIQ+ community in PNG. Same-sex sexual relations remain a crime, although it is understood that the law is not rigorously enforced. Most communities in PNG are intolerant toward LGBTIQ+ members of the community, and individuals can face challenges, hostility, and attacks for revealing their sexual/gender identity. Due to widespread discrimination and stigma, potential impunity for such attacks is high and also results in low access to services such as health care for the LGBTIQ+ community.

3.5 Older persons

The Constitution does not include age as a basis on which discrimination is prohibited. According to the NPSP 2015-2020, approximately 4.6 per cent of the population is over 60. However, no standard definition of "older persons" is used in PNG.¹⁸⁸ The DfCDR is the office responsible for Government policy on older persons. In 2017, at least one survey was reportedly conducted on the rights of older persons, covering one area of Central province, to develop a National Policy on the Elderly.¹⁸⁹ However, the progress or status of this policy is not clear.

Based on this, comprehensive data on the situation of older persons in PNG is not readily available. Older people often rely on an extended family system of support for their care, and this can result in their being left behind, especially in economic downturns when household resources might have increased constraints. The National Social Protection Policy indicates an unspecified but likely increasing number of vulnerable older persons in the country.

Youth unemployment and general household income constraints would also disproportionately impact older persons relying on their younger family members for survival. Based on a 2015 World Bank analysis of the 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, older persons 55 years and above are the most vulnerable to illness but the least likely to seek treatment.¹⁹⁰ This statistic also illustrates the vulnerability of older persons. Older persons, particularly women and specific categories of widows, have been reported to be groups among the most targeted for SARV, although this can vary.

¹⁸⁶ DNPM, 2010; DfCDR, no date

¹⁸⁷ ADB, 2012; Chand & Yala, 2006

¹⁸⁸ Papua New Guinea National Policy on Social Protection 2015-2020, available in https://www.dfcd.gov.pg/images/pdf_files/Social-Protection-Policy.pdf, at page 14.

¹⁸⁹ Press Release, "First Ever Elderly Data Survey Conducted in Central Province," Department of Community, 27 April 2017, available in https://www.dfcd.gov.pg/images/pdf_files/Press-Release---First-Ever-Elderly-Survey-Conducted-in-Central-Province.pdf, at 1.

¹⁹⁰ World Bank Group, HNP GP Knowledge Brief, A Snapshot of Health Equity in Papua New Guinea: An Analysis of the 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, available in <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23497/A0snapshot0of00d0expenditure0survey.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, at page 2.

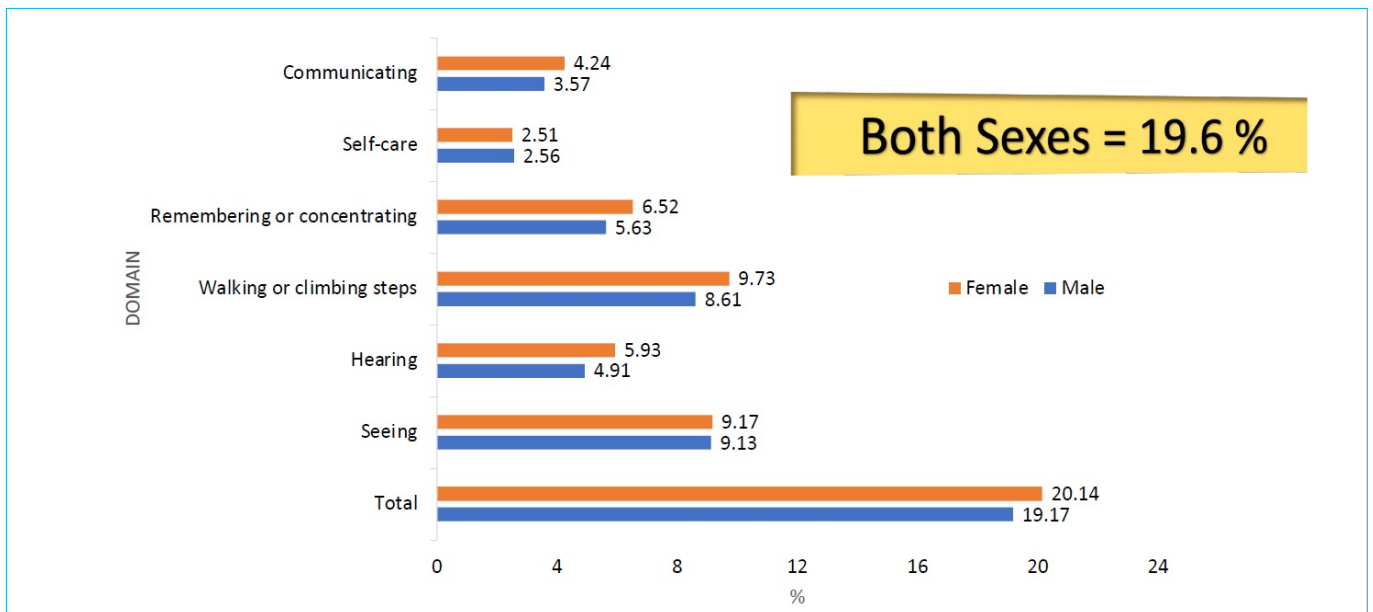
3.6 People living with HIV/AIDS

This group often faces stigmatization from the community where they live, making them unwilling to disclose their status and, as such, making it difficult for them to access health care and other resources that people with HIV/AIDS need to survive. This difficulty has contributed to the spread of the virus in some communities. The 2016-2018 DHS shows that 44 per cent of women and 43 per cent of men expressed discriminatory attitudes towards people living with HIV. Stigma is further increased due to a perceived overlap between LGBTIQ+ communities and those who are HIV+.

3.7 Persons living with disabilities

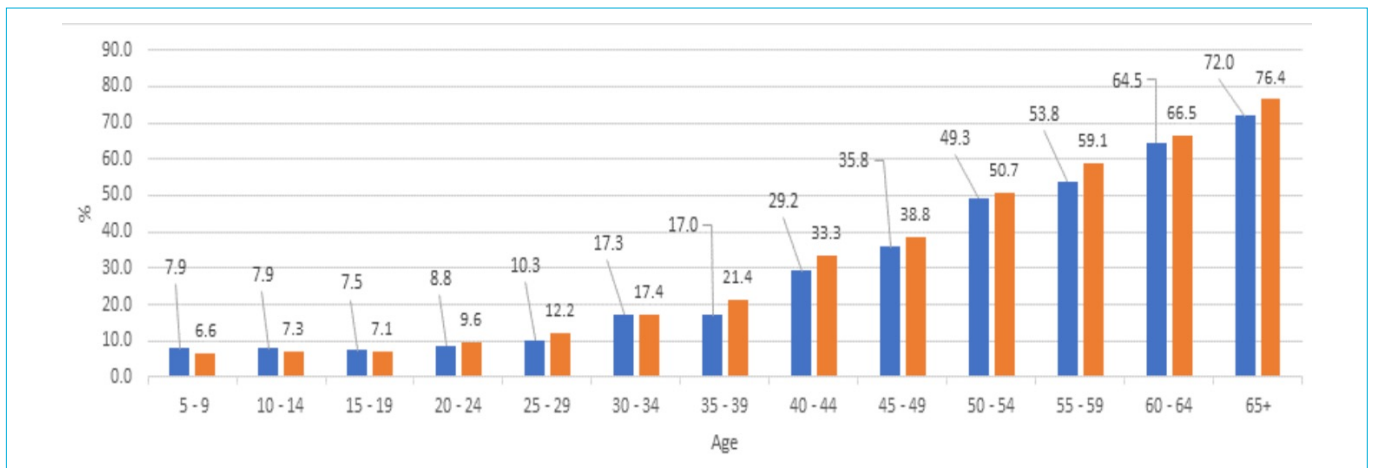
In PNG, 19.6 per cent of people aged five and over have functional difficulties. These difficulties involve communication, self-care, remembering or concentrating, walking or climbing steps, hearing, and seeing. More women (20.14 per cent) than men (19.17 per cent) have a functional disability. Most difficulties are seeing, walking, or climbing steps and remembering or concentrating. Most of the people with functional difficulties live in rural areas. A school attendance review shows that 67.8 per cent of people with functional difficulties (74.8 per cent male, 60.8 per cent female) have attended school. Approximately 7.3 per cent of people with functional difficulties are age 19 and below, and 61.5 per cent are age 50 and above.¹⁹¹

Figure 22: Proportion of population five years old and over with a functional difficulty by sex and domain, 2002



Source: PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2002

Figure 23: Proportion of population five years old and over with a functional difficulty by age group and sex, 2002



Source: PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2002

¹⁹¹ PNG National Statistical Office Socio-demographic and Economic Survey, 2002

After PNG ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013, the National Policy on Disability 2015-2025 was established. The overall aim of the Policy was to improve the welfare of PWD, realize their rights, remove barriers, and implement the Convention at the national level. Notable developments in PNG that address the needs of PWD include designing accessible infrastructure and facilities, including ramps for wheelchair access, dedicated toilet facilities, designated parking spots, and accessible banking facilities. PNG is also finalizing a draft Disability Authority Bill and working towards its adoption in 2022, which aims to ensure all PWD's full and equal enjoyment of human rights. A Disability Authority Office has been established to implement the provisions of both the Policy on Disability and the Convention.

Sign language was made the official fourth language of PNG in 2015 and used in conferences and televised news programs. It is also taught in some private schools and by the PNG Red Cross for children with special needs. Other support for PWD include hearing aid services provided by Callan Services and disability prevention through health care and rehabilitation, inclusive education, and social support services for persons with special needs provided by Cheshire Disability Services.¹⁹²

Despite the establishment of the Disability Policy, many issues remain in its implementation. As highlighted by civil society during the Universal Periodic Review process, there is currently no national disability data management system, leading to a lack of comprehensive data on the situation and issues faced by PWD in the country. In addition, the draft National Disability Authority Bill, which had been in preparation for several years, still had not been finalized or enacted at the time of the dissolution of the 10th Parliament in April 2022. Many PWD in PNG face significant barriers to accessing services, including quality and inclusive education. In addition, impunity for violence against PWD remains high, with PWD more vulnerable to the impacts of practices, including family violence, a situation compounded by the increased prevalence of such violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. PWD is also likely to be disproportionately impacted by issues surrounding access to the voting process for the National General Elections, given overall access challenges.

3.8 Persons living with mental health issues

Children and adolescents aged 0-18 years in PNG experience a substantial burden of poor mental health. There are minimal personnel with mental health training and skills, which creates a significant barrier to the implementation of mental health and psycho-social support. Moreover, there is a lack of available

services responsive to the needs of children and adolescents, particularly at the primary health care and community levels.¹⁹³

3.9 Sex workers

Sex workers in PNG continue to be victims of physical and sexual violence, with limited legal protection. Training to sensitize law enforcement officers to investigate cases of abuse of sex workers is insufficient. This issue is compounded by stigma, discrimination, lack of services, and limited access to the services available for sex workers.

Sex workers in PNG face sexual violence, discrimination, and stigma and are at risk of not accessing essential services such as health care. Sex workers encountering violence committed by law enforcement agents are reported to have difficulty seeking redress due to the stigmatized nature of their work and the criminal legal provisions relating to sex work. However, prostitution itself is not directly criminalized. In addition to difficulties accessing health care, many sex workers struggle to access legal protections and support services due to fear of disclosing their identity, facing criminal charges, and the perception that they are responsible for the spread of STIs.¹⁹⁴ Thus, sex workers tend to be one of the groups most left behind in the achievement of a range of SDGs.

3.10 Victims of Trafficking

Data on trafficking in persons are scarce, rendering it challenging to assess the scale of the crime in PNG, particularly the trafficking of men for forced labour, women for forced labour and sex trafficking in logging camps and mines, and the trafficking of children for child labour in agriculture, fishing, logging, and extractive industries, the informal sector, and for forced marriage and sex trafficking. A lack of capacity and corruption challenges the ability of law enforcement to detect and investigate trafficking. Victims' access to legal and psychosocial services is limited due mainly to the lack of targeted services for trafficking victims. The added social stigma of abuse (sexual and physical) and the pervasive culture of silence and violence discourage self-identification or assistance for victims.

3.11 Women and girls

The incidence of domestic and GBV in PNG is one of the highest globally. Factors such as cultural and socio-economic elements, restricted access to education, and entrenched gender norms contribute to the elevated rates of GBV. Additionally, there is insufficient training for law enforcement and social service

¹⁹² UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

¹⁹³ Nojj Frank, Bardakova Lidia, Lavu Esther, Yamarak Londari, Anton Melkie, Papua New Guinea: Population Situation Analysis, UNFPA Papua New Guinea December 2023 Report

¹⁹⁴ Amnesty International, Outlawed and Abused, Criminalising Sex Work in Papua New Guinea, Executive Summary, available in <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ASA3441292016ENGLISH.pdf> (2016)

professionals in addressing GBV, leading to inadequate responses to such cases.

The full realization of women's and girls' rights requires significant additional investment and efforts by PNG. The rights of PNG women and girls were boosted by establishing a bipartisan Coalition of Parliamentarians Against GBV following the high-level meeting on combating GBV held in August 2020. The coalition includes 20 of the 111 (all male) MPs active on social media and declaring their commitment to support change. The inaugural GBV Summit was held in November 2020, and a special parliamentary committee to inquire into related issues was subsequently established. The committee comprised seven MPs and opened its inquiry in May 2021, with a call for written submissions and two days of public hearings at APEC Haus in Port Moresby. It held judicial hearings from April to June 2021 on combating GBV in the country. The committee presented a report to parliament on 12 August 2021, containing more than 70 recommendations for immediate action by the Government. One of the recommendations was the implementation of a quota of five seats reserved for women in parliament.

An ongoing major challenge relates to empowering and promoting women's inclusive and equal participation in the political arena at the parliamentary level. The quota of five reserve seats recommended by the special parliamentary committee is expected to enable one woman representative for each national geographical region and the NCD. While this arrangement was discussed as being passed for the National General Elections 2022, it was not agreed in time.

The number of women standing for election at all levels of political representation is increasing. Several women have been elected as ward councillors locally and serve a three-year term. Of the 18,480 village court officials, 1,500 are women, who are reportedly very effective in their roles and as advocates for social order, human rights, and peace within their communities.¹⁹⁵

Regarding bureaucratic leadership, in the Public Service Commission's Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy, a framework had been set out to promote gender equity and socially inclusive practices across the Commission. The policy had been developed to address several issues regarding individuals who were directly or indirectly being disadvantaged or discriminated against, including PWD and HIV/AIDS, and discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, or other personal attributes.

Few women-owned established businesses; most were operating in the informal sector. In 2018, 200 village women were trained by the DfCDR in processing coconuts into marketable products

such as virgin oil. Five hundred women across PNG were invited to showcase their products at the regional exposition organized to build their product development, improvement, and marketing capacity. In September 2021, at the national dialogue held in the lead-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit, more women from the informal sector shared their experiences and success stories in agriculture and food security entrepreneurship.

3.12 Youths and adolescents

The burgeoning youth cohort, who have limited employment opportunities and who may consequently engage in criminal activities and substance abuse, is a significant risk to inclusive growth and poverty reduction. PNG youth find themselves at a crossroads, increasingly frustrated with traditional decision-making processes that exclude them and unable to take full advantage of the opportunities a growing economy offers. Relationships between the generations have historically been rigid, with decision-making power consolidated with the clan elders. New opportunities to circumvent traditional processes and move up the social ladder more quickly are generated by the influx of natural resource projects and increased mobility that allows youth to migrate to urban areas.

However, such opportunities are in short supply. Growth in recent decades has not been sufficiently inclusive in providing decent jobs for the number of young new entrants to the labour force. Opportunities for youth are severely limited. The youth unemployment rate is higher than that of the overall population, and there is stigmatization and exclusion of youth from urban formal labour markets. Economically active youth are primarily engaged within the informal economy, where their activities can be subject to intense competition and violence.

That this large, dynamic, education-hungry demographic cohort might not have the opportunity to live up to its enormous potential would be an extraordinary waste of PNG's human capital. At the same time, this creates a large pool of disaffected and available youth, for whom political action in support of patrons may seem among the few options available for improvements in their circumstances. Political disappointment often seems inevitable and, as seen in recent elections, can erupt into local violence.¹⁹⁶

Limited opportunities for youth in the rural economy have driven large rural-urban migration flows, increasing their social and economic vulnerability. The social capital that young people have in their ties with family, village, and tribe is an often overlooked yet important asset that can be eroded during this migration. Subsequent generations born and raised in these urban centres

¹⁹⁵ UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

¹⁹⁶ World Bank, PNG Country Diagnostic, 91-92

must also confront related challenges: they may be unfamiliar with their mother tongue and tribal affiliations, may not know the extended family in the rural areas, and may consequently have no means of accessing customary land and associated resources. On the other hand, while community dynamics governing urban settlements differ from those in the village, familiar kin and groups provide some dimension of support, especially in times of sickness, financial, or law and justice difficulty. Affiliation patterns in urban contexts are incredibly flexible, with Tok Pisin, school, church, and sporting activities providing new forms of association.¹⁹⁷

Participation in criminal activities can present a potentially attractive avenue for income generation for many young, economically inactive males living in urban settlements. The youth are routinely depicted as being at the root of PNG's violence and social order issues. Anecdotal and some limited survey evidence suggest that most of the relatively severe

criminal offences in Port Moresby are committed by young males between the ages of 15 and 20. Violent and armed youth gangs that have in the past gained notoriety throughout urban centres in modern PNG constitute influential organizing entities for engaging in such activities. They may also provide an essential sense of group identity to disenfranchised urban youth disconnected from their cultural roots and traditional communities.

Prominent contentious views hold that when youth are denied the opportunity for meaningful economic and social advancement in societies with very young populations, this can become a source of broader instability and civil unrest. At the same time, urban youth make considerable contributions to family economies in PNG, primarily through informal marketing. Moreover, there is evidence that urban youth gangs have failed to institutionalize and may have entered decline.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ UN 49th session of the Human Rights Council

¹⁹⁸ Ibid



4. Unlocking SDG Acceleration and Addressing Critical Capacity Gaps

The challenges faced by PNG are closely linked to several SDGs, and addressing them can create a ripple effect, accelerating progress across multiple goals. By focusing on integrated solutions that promote social inclusion, economic development, and environmental sustainability, PNG can enhance its resilience and improve the quality of life for its citizens, ultimately contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The government can implement a whole government approach to implement actions that impact ecosystem services, including aligning the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets, incorporating biodiversity values in national and subnational accounting, improving governance of the forestry industry, and making mining company annual environmental reports publicly available. Regulatory agencies or independent bodies should oversee regulation, enforcement, and accountability, while CEPA will conduct independent monitoring and regulatory work on environmental conditions. The National Adaptation Plan for climate change adaptation is being implemented, and a draft biodiversity offsets policy is being finalized, emphasizing avoiding and mitigating damage wherever possible.

The Environmental Impact Assessments should incorporate ecosystem service valuations to ensure the environmental impact of resource development projects. Mining waste must be contained and managed for new mines and extensions of existing mines. A ban on unprocessed timber exports and an exit strategy for existing permits and agreements should be supported. Monitoring and surveillance of logging practices should be improved through TLS and forest certification. Mitigation action for the transport sector should be implemented, and infrastructure resilience should be strengthened to climate impacts. Emissions from the LULUCF sector should be reduced through the national REDD+ Strategy 2017-2027 and the impacts of commercial logging, subsistence agriculture, and oil palm plantations. Afforestation and reforestation projects should be implemented to boost carbon sequestration and rehabilitate degraded lands. Secure funding is needed to transition to 78 per cent renewable power generation by 2030.

The government is implementing measures to improve environmental impact studies, expand protected areas, improve partnership and management, and support sustainable practices. They are increasing financial support for environmental protection from 0.5 per cent to 1.8 per cent of government

budgetary support, addressing invasive species, updating national and provincial forest plans, and increasing wildlife conservation awareness programs. These measures aim to enhance sustainable management and protect the environment.

It is essential to employ and support environment staff at national and provincial levels, ensuring transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures. Also, there is a need to support environmental research, particularly PNG-based organizations and researchers, and enhance protected area management. Further, national NGOs and community-based organizations for environmental and social benefits should be supported, as well as capacity building for on-ground management, such as enforcement of protected area and biodiversity laws, invasive species control, and clean water and waste systems. Further, funding is needed for the National Forest Monitoring System and National Forest Inventory, as well as for enhancing waste management and recycling. A third-party 'assessor' to report on the environmental activities of mining companies and governments, ensuring equal representation of women and vulnerable groups, is also needed. In addition, PNG's greenhouse measurement, reporting, and verification system should be strengthened, community-based early warning systems for climate-related hazards should be enhanced, and local responder teams should be developed.

PNG is shifting towards a 'blue' and 'green' economy to stimulate long-term economic prosperity and community inclusion. Strengthening the National Forest Management System (NFMS) is crucial to maintaining carbon credit from REDD+ activities. Implementing benefit-sharing agreements and livelihood support for conservation initiatives, including ecosystem services, is also recommended. Supporting marine and coastal tourism is also suggested. New models for providing clean water and waste services are being explored. Fair compensation payments are enforced. PNG plans for future migration and increased mobility into rural and urban areas due to mining, oil and gas exploration, forest operations, natural disasters, and climate-related issues. Programs addressing 'those left behind' and environmental matters are also being strengthened.

The strategic objectives for transforming agri-food systems for women and youth include investing in education, technology, skills, and capacity building to improve food security, strengthen the existing value chain, and increase downstream processing of agricultural products; this will also lead to market diversification.

Government and UN investment in agriculture will be increased to create a sector that benefits youth with greater employability. Resource allocation will be increased for gender-sensitive policy, legislation, and initiatives to increase women and youth's capacity for inclusive access to land, shared decision-making, and equal benefit from agri-food systems. Improved regulatory systems and infrastructure will also be crucial. Price volatility and market competition can make it difficult for small-scale producers to survive.

Human resources and training are also critical issues in PNG. There is a shortage of skilled professionals in key sectors such as health, education, and law enforcement, which affects service delivery. Local-level governments often lack the necessary skills and resources to manage services effectively. Training programs for local officials and community leaders are essential to enhance their capacity to deliver services.

Infrastructure development is also crucial, with inadequate infrastructure limiting access to essential services, particularly in rural and remote areas. Investments in transportation, energy, and communication infrastructure are needed to improve connectivity and service delivery. Renewable energy sources and improved energy infrastructure are also crucial.

Data and information systems are also essential, with a lack of comprehensive data being essential for informed decision-making and effective policy implementation. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are necessary to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) faces numerous challenges that can significantly enhance its development trajectory. These challenges include economic growth and diversification, social

inclusion and empowerment, environmental sustainability, strengthened governance and institutional capacity, enhanced infrastructure and connectivity, community engagement and resilience, and disaster preparedness and response.

Efficient agricultural productivity can be achieved by improving food systems and agrivalue chains, leading to increased agricultural productivity, reduced food insecurity, and better nutrition outcomes. Investment in renewable energy resources can create a sustainable energy sector and attract investments in green technologies. Supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can foster entrepreneurship and local economic resilience, especially in rural areas.

Social inclusion and empowerment can be achieved through improved access to education and health, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and supporting vulnerable populations. Environmental sustainability can be achieved through biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation strategies. Strengthened governance structures can lead to more transparent, accountable, and effective public administration, fostering trust in government and enhancing service delivery. Anti-corruption initiatives can improve resource allocation for development projects.

Enhanced infrastructure and connectivity can be achieved through investments in transport, communication, and utilities, as well as digital connectivity, promoting digital inclusion and access to information, education, and economic opportunities. Decision-making processes can foster community engagement and resilience, and disaster preparedness and response can enhance community resilience to natural disasters.



Country Analysis 2024



Annex 1 - Overview of selected national indicators

Economic Indicators	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Automated teller machines (ATMs) (per 100,000 adults)	..	3.6	5.3	7.4	8.2	7.9	..
Bank capital to assets ratio (%)	..	..	10.5	13.3	14.5	13.5	9.1
Bank liquid reserves to bank assets ratio (%)	..	28.8	64.5	37.0	28.9	38.1	42.7
Bank nonperforming loans to total gross loans (%)	..	..	1.9	3.1	5.3	6.2	4.8
Current account balance (% of GDP)	10.0	13.4	-4.5	8.7	14.3	17.2	..
Debt service (PPG and IMF only, % of exports of goods, services and primary income)	8.0	5.9	1.4	1.1	10.7	5.5	2.6
Deposit interest rate (%)	8.5	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.9	0.5	0.3
Domestic credit provided by financial sector (% of GDP)	..	..	23.7	40.5	41.7	38.8	32.7
Domestic credit to private sector (% of GDP)	..	..	21.1	22.6	18.8	17.4	15.1
Domestic credit to private sector by banks (% of GDP)	17.1	14.1	18.0	17.6	15.4	14.2	12.5
External debt stocks (% of GNI)	70.4	41.3	45.4	100.5	78.1	78.9	62.8
Foreign direct investment, net inflows (% of GDP)	2.7	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.5	-0.0	1.5
GDP growth (annual %)	-2.5	6.3	10.1	6.6	-3.2	-0.8	5.2
GDP per capita (current US\$)	639.3	748.7	1,879.2	2,502.1	2,446.1	2,624.6	3,115.9
Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)	15.6	1.8	6.0	6.0	4.9	4.5	5.3
Labor force participation rate, total (% of total population ages 15+) (national estimate)	72.5	..	48.3	..	..	..	52.0
Labor force participation rate, total (% of total population ages 15-64) (modeled ILO estimate)	73.2	62.1	49.5	48.8	48.2	48.0	48.8
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	47.2	47.3	47.4	47.4	47.6	47.9	47.7
Net bilateral aid flows from DAC donors, Australia (current US\$) millions	198.2	233.7	386.9	416.5	363.5	586.2	489.7
Net bilateral aid flows from DAC donors, New Zealand (current US\$) millions	6.7	9.5	23.9	19.6	24.2	23.8	17.9
Net bilateral aid flows from DAC donors, Total (current US\$) millions	270.9	257.6	490.8	477.2	547.2	1,042.3	610.0
Net domestic credit (current LCU) millions	2,741.0	3,355.2	6,992.9	18,398.5	25,118.1	25,598.7	25,742.9
Net financial flows, IBRD (NFL, current US\$) millions	14.5	-2.9	-10.6	-15.7	-9.8	-4.0	-4.1
Net financial flows, IDA (NFL, current US\$) millions	-2.7	-3.6	4.6	20.3	26.0	100.0	13.9
Net financial flows, IMF nonconcessional (NFL, current US\$) millions	18.7	-61.1	-	-	366.7	-	-
Net financial flows, multilateral (NFL, current US\$) millions	13.9	-7.0	-2.1	102.8	670.1	390.1	289.9
Net financial flows, RDB concessional (NFL, current US\$) millions	0.3	-1.3	-5.5	50.2	54.1	-7.9	-16.1
Net financial flows, RDB nonconcessional (NFL, current US\$) millions	0.0	3.5	13.1	50.8	569.5	276.6	300.7
Net flows on external debt, private nonguaranteed (PNG) (NFL, current US\$) millions	-45.3	220.7	2,425.6	-132.2	-250.0	-2,164.5	-2,020.1
Net ODA received (% of central government expense)	26.0	..	..	13.5	21.2	22.9	10.7
Net ODA received (% of GNI)	8.3	5.9	3.9	2.9	4.6	4.7	2.2
Tax revenue (% of GDP)	19.0	..	..	15.2	11.9	12.1	14.8
Total reserves (includes gold, current US\$)	304.2	750.4	3,121.2	1,758.6	2,686.2	3,240.1	3,982.6
Total reserves in months of imports	1.8	2.8	5.4	3.4	5.3	5.2	..
Unemployment, female (% of female labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.6	2.1	2.3	2.2
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)	3.9	3.2	2.7	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.1
Unemployment, male (% of male labor force) (national estimate)	..	..	2.7	..	..	..	3.1
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)	2.9	2.4	2.0	2.5	2.8	2.9	2.7
Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (national estimate)	2.9	..	2.0	..	..	..	2.7
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate)	4.1	3.4	2.9	3.0	3.4	3.2	2.9
Unemployment, youth female (% of female labor force ages 15-24) (national estimate)	..	..	3.0	..	..	..	3.0
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate)	6.3	5.2	4.3	5.2	5.1	4.9	4.5
Unemployment, youth male (% of male labor force ages 15-24) (national estimate)	..	..	4.3	..	..	..	4.6
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate)	5.2	4.3	3.6	4.1	4.3	4.1	3.7
Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (national estimate)	5.3	..	3.6	..	..	..	3.8

Source: World Bank Development Indicators, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators#>

Social Indicators	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking (% of population)	5.4	6.1	7.7	8.9	9.6	9.8	10.0
Access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking, rural (% of rural population)	0.1	0.8	2.6	4.2	5.1	5.2	5.3
Access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking, urban (% of urban population)	39.3	40.3	39.8	38.2	35.6	35.2	34.2
Access to electricity (% of population)	12.4	14.1	19.5	18.4	20.5	20.9	19.0
Access to electricity, rural (% of rural population)	4.4	6.5	11.8	11.3	13.6	14.0	14.2
Access to electricity, urban (% of urban population)	65.0	64.8	71.2	66.1	65.2	65.2	65.1
Birth rate, crude (per 1,000 people)	34.2	32.5	30.4	28.2	26.0	25.5	25.1
Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people)	7.5	7.6	7.1	6.6	6.4	6.7	6.5
Domestic general government health expenditure (% of current health expenditure)	84.3	65.9	61.7	75.8	68.7	50.0	..
Domestic general government health expenditure (% of GDP)	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.2	..
Immunization, DPT (% of children ages 12-23 months)	59.0	72.0	55.0	49.0	39.0	31.0	36.0
Immunization, HepB3 (% of one-year-old children)	57.0	63.0	55.0	49.0	39.0	31.0	36.0
Immunization, measles (% of children ages 12-23 months)	69.0	82.0	63.0	57.0	47.0	38.0	44.0
Individuals using the Internet (% of population)	0.8	1.7	1.3	7.9	24.4	25.7	27.0
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	63.8	63.9	65.3	67.8	68.8	68.4	69.2
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	60.1	60.1	61.3	62.3	63.4	62.9	63.4
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	61.7	61.8	63.0	64.7	65.8	65.4	66.0
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	53.9	49.9	45.3	40.6	35.4	34.5	33.4
Mortality rate, infant, female (per 1,000 live births)	50.3	46.4	41.8	37.2	32.4	31.4	30.5
Mortality rate, infant, male (per 1,000 live births)	57.3	53.3	48.5	43.6	38.4	37.3	36.3
Mortality rate, neonatal (per 1,000 live births)	30.8	28.5	26.7	24.2	21.7	21.2	20.7
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	71.6	65.4	58.4	51.5	44.2	42.9	41.4
Mortality rate, under-5, female (per 1,000 live births)	67.6	61.5	54.6	47.7	40.6	39.3	38.0
Mortality rate, under-5, male (per 1,000 live births)	75.4	69.2	62.1	55.0	47.6	46.2	44.7
People practicing open defecation (% of population)	12.8	13.0	14.1	15.1	16.1	16.1	16.1
People practicing open defecation, rural (% of rural population)	14.1	14.4	15.6	16.8	18.0	18.0	18.0
People practicing open defecation, urban (% of urban population)	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1
People using at least basic drinking water services (% of population)	31.8	32.7	37.9	43.0	48.1	49.2	50.2
People using at least basic drinking water services, rural (% of rural population)	23.9	25.1	31.0	36.6	42.1	43.3	44.5
People using at least basic drinking water services, urban (% of urban population)	83.2	83.2	83.8	85.4	87.0	87.0	86.9
People using at least basic sanitation services (% of population)	18.1	18.2	18.6	18.9	19.2	19.3	19.3
People using at least basic sanitation services, rural (% of rural population)	12.2	12.4	13.3	14.0	14.7	14.7	14.7
People using at least basic sanitation services, urban (% of urban population)	57.3	56.9	54.4	51.6	48.8	48.8	48.8
People using safely managed sanitation services, urban (% of urban population)	31.5	31.2	29.8	29.1	28.3	28.3	28.3
People with basic handwashing facilities including soap and water (% of population)	..	..	..	29.6	29.8	29.8	29.9
People with basic handwashing facilities including soap and water, rural (% of rural population)	..	..	..	24.7	24.7	24.7	24.7
People with basic handwashing facilities including soap and water, urban (% of urban population)	..	..	..	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5
Population, female (millions)	2.6	3.1	3.6	4.2	4.7	4.8	4.9
Population, female (% of total population)	47.8	47.9	47.9	48.1	48.3	48.4	48.4
Population, male (millions)	2.9	3.4	3.9	4.5	5.0	5.1	5.2
Population, male (% of total population)	52.2	52.1	52.1	51.9	51.7	51.6	51.6
Population, total	5.5	6.5	7.6	8.7	9.7	9.9	10.1
Prevalence of stunting, height for age (modeled estimate, % of children under 5)	36.9	43.0	47.3	49.1	50.7	51.0	51.2
Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	..	28.0	26.1	22.5	23.1	23.4	..
Rural population (% of total population)	86.8	86.9	87.0	87.0	86.7	86.5	86.4

Source: World Bank Development Indicators, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators#>

Annex 1 – Overview of selected national indicators

Environmental Indicators	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021	2022
Carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions (total) excluding LULUCF (% change from 1990)	51.5	159.8	103.6	187.5	111.0	118.8	123.7
Carbon dioxide (CO ₂) emissions (total) excluding LULUCF (Mt CO ₂ e)	3.2	5.5	4.3	6.1	4.4	4.6	4.7
Carbon intensity of GDP (kg CO ₂ e per constant 2015 US\$ of GDP)	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Forest area (% of land area)	80.1	80.0	79.9	79.5	79.2	79.1	..
Total greenhouse gas emissions excluding LULUCF (% change from 1990)	69.9	148.8	81.3	189.5	130.9	137.2	136.4
Total greenhouse gas emissions excluding LULUCF (Mt CO ₂ e)	6.5	9.6	7.0	11.1	8.9	9.1	9.1
Total greenhouse gas emissions excluding LULUCF per capita (t CO ₂ e/capita)	1.2	1.5	0.9	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.9
Total greenhouse gas emissions including LULUCF (Mt CO ₂ e)	-14.3	-7.7	7.3	13.8	-4.0	..	..

Source: World Bank Development Indicators, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators#>





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