



## **PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH**

On the occasion of the  
Launching of National Land Reform Program Phase II.

*Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019*

---

Thank you, Facilitator, (Acting Deputy Secretary Minato or Dr. Charles Yala)

Let me take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of;

- Minister for Lands & Physical Planning: Hon. John Rosso, and other Economic Ministers
- Diplomatic Corps
- Landowners and Land users (or developers)
- The Heads of Government Departments & Statutory Organizations
- And others esteemed guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Tonight, is one of the special occasions to inform you and the people of this country, especially the landowners and land developers concerning the decision by Marape-Steven Government pertaining to land development matters. I am proud to announce that my government has approved the 17 Resolutions that were adopted during the National Land Summit in May 2019. These resolutions were adopted consensually by both Landowners and developers to allow new opportunities for development and improve the livelihood of the citizens and also to encourage business activities to flourish.

Ladies & Gentlemen, Land in PNG is part of our life, culture and is the centerpiece of everything to us Papua New Guineans. Every Papua New Guinean is a land owner. We all own land which is most valuable and central asset to our societies. Addressing land matter for development affects lives of every individual landowners hence, responsible policy makers need to cautiously approach this reform to ensure that reforms and policy interventions directly improve livelihood of the landowners and for the



better. Development of land will trigger direct impact on peoples' livelihood. Successful Government intervention on the land reform with robust and concrete mechanisms will ensure that this reform delivers its noble intentions.

Ever since taking the office as Prime Minister, I have been very vocal on ensuring that our people benefit from their resources as landowners. My Government's intention is not to take land rights of the customary landowners away but help and empower the landowners to use their land for their benefit and to grow our economy. The ownership rights of our customary land will be secured, protected and vested on the landowners themselves under my government at all costs. While preserving their ownership rights, we need to find a way that can help us to use our land as only asset to some of us for our benefits. Doing nothing with our land will not help us as the land owners and we will continue to live the same way we have been living.

The Marape-Steven Government believes that the land reform is a vehicle for ordinary citizens of PNG to constructively engage in the opportunities that will be provided through successful implementation of this reform. At the same time, the land reform program will incentivize the land developers including investors in the resource sectors for both non-renewable and renewable sectors to engage in businesses with clear policy and legal certainties with the land matters. Perhaps, Land reform would foster a win-win solution to both the land owners and the land users or developers.

My government is well aware of the legacy issues that we inherited from and this underlying concerns about land administrations, conflicting land uses, non-existence of policy frameworks, legislative constraints, land grabbing and disadvantaging the landowners are some of few that Marape-Steven government will not stand and watch them continue to occur. This will be history under my watch. The land reform program through implementing these 17 resolutions, those issues mentioned will be addressed for the good of our land owners and users as well as for growing our economy.



My Government has been vocal about ensuring the natural endowments of our country are harvested for the uttermost benefit of the ordinary Papua New Guineans whilst at the same time, the investors benefit on the fair share of the investments. This means that the landowners, policy makers, investors and other relevant stakeholders need to work collaboratively and earnestly to put together such policies and legislative reforms a success and release the benefits that are for all and ensure no one is left behind. Thus, land reform is such a key policy intervention that will have broader and massive impact on the bigger scale throughout the country and subsequently contribute to overall economic growth and create pathway to seeing PNG becoming a rich nation and a favorable place for increased foreign investments.

I have talked about my Government's priority on Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) based on agriculture and others including forestry, tourism, and even downstream processing for logging, mining and petroleum must flourish with land matters being dealt with properly to allow these investments to come in with ease.

Let me give an example, among others, my government through 2020 budget will also focus on the SMEs by providing the funding to credit facility to every citizen of this country and allow them to access the funds to assist them engage in the business opportunities. In order for you to involve in this, you need to secure your land to engage in agriculture, tourism, fisheries, forestry and others. My government will provide the funding to assist you but you have to prepare and work on your land to reap these benefits. Those days when people depending on government to do everything for them are long gone. Now Marape-Steven government will surely work with people and investors to help ourselves and build our economy. The Government and investors will put the resources and the landowners have the land and time to invest. Together, we can build a nation that is safe, secure and wealthy.

In economics, Land is one of the critical factors of production. Making secure land available for commercial developments complimented through better land administration underpins strong broad-based economic growth. Consequently, this increases government revenue and contributes to

improved economic and social developments which includes the reduction of poverty and improved welfare of every Papua New Guinean. It is evident that the effective and efficient administration of the land has played vital role in the growing of economy and improving welfare of the citizens. The Land Reform will be the pathway to help achieve this for both the customary and state land.

My government through the cabinet (NEC) has approved K15 million annually for next five years for the land reforms and endorsed the implementation of the National Land Reform Program Phase II to effectively implement the 17 Resolutions so that these will then help us to achieve the noble intentions of the landowners, land users, and the government. This commitment demonstrates that Marape-Steven Government is steadfast in ensuring that land reform works for the benefit of all landowners and investors and to grow the economy.

Mobilizing customary land with effective administering of state land will ensure we are on path to achieve the decent aim of this reform. I am certain that successful implementation of these land reforms will help build a sustainable economic development and serves as a credible means to take back PNG and make PNG the richest black Christian nation on earth.

Thank you, Ladies & Gentlemen,

**Honorable Prime Minister, James Marape, MP**

Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea