



22nd AUSTRALIA PAPUA NEW GUINEA BUSINESS FORUM
Novotel Palm Cove Resort, Cairns, 14 to 16 May 2006
"PAPUA NEW GUINEA: ON THE MOVE"

COMMUNIQUE

The 22nd Australia Papua New Guinea Business Forum was held at Novotel Palm Cove Resort, Queensland, from 14 to 16 May 2006 with the theme "Papua New Guinea: On The Move".

The Forum was addressed by a range of political leaders and expert speakers including the PNG Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Petroleum and Energy, the Hon Sir Moi Avei, the PNG Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Hon Sir Rabbie Namaliu, the PNG Minister for Treasury Hon Bart Philemon, the PNG Minister for Lands, Hon Dr Puka Temu, the PNG Minister for Justice, Hon Bire Kimisopa, the PNG Minister for Internal Security, the PNG Minister for Internal Security Hon Alphonse Willie, and the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Mick Keelty, and the Australian Foreign Minister, Hon Alexander Downer by video. The Australian Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Hon Theresa Gambaro, also participated in the meeting.

The Councils welcomed the Papua New Guinea and Queensland governments holding the 14th annual meeting of their Business Co-operation Group during the Forum.

The Forum made the following resolutions which it requested governments to note and implement in order to continue the process of creating a business enabling environment.

Commended the PNG government for its sustained commitment over the last five years to sound fiscal and economic management which had positioned the PNG economy for further future growth.

Encouraged the Australian and international investment community to review positively current economic developments and political environment in PNG and to not be discouraged from investments in PNG through misleading perceptions about the investment environment.

Welcomed and endorsed the expressed commitment of the PNG government that the current responsible approach to fiscal discipline would be maintained through the 2007 election process.

Called on the Australian and Papua New Guinea governments to quickly resolve outstanding issues which are preventing implementation of the ECP which can assist the PNG government with improving law enforcement, the judiciary, and the penal system to the benefit of the business environment and society.

Noted the progress made by Papua New Guinea in developing improved visa and work permit policy, and urged both governments take further measures to strengthen people to people links between Australia and Papua New Guinea including by facilitating greater bilateral access to each country's labour market to assist meet skilled and unskilled labour shortages.

Urged the PNG government and business to work in partnership to develop strategies for managing the economic and social impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Acknowledged the work which has been undertaken by the PNG government, which is ongoing, to design and implement appropriate land and administrative reforms to enable sustainable economic use of land in PNG.

Sought the PNG government's commitment and actions to:

- manage exchange rate policy to ensure that the non-resources sector of the PNG economy is not compromised by foreign currency inflows in the resources sector.
- improve the services and competitiveness of PNG government public business enterprises including through partnerships with the private sector.
- strengthen the role of the PNG Ministry of Trade and Industry in supporting manufacturing industry.
- develop and implement in PNG appropriate legislative and administrative processes to protect the integrity of trade marks, copyright and other intellectual property issues, and to ensure a high standard of consumer protection from sub-standard products including appropriate product labeling and border enforcement.
- accelerate in PNG the refurbishment and expansion of roading and other infrastructure to support the growth of the agricultural sector, and provide tax relief to companies which contribute to national economic development through developing and maintaining national infrastructure from their own resources.
- restructure Papua New Guinea's commodity boards to improve their effectiveness in promoting and marketing agricultural products.

The Business Co-operation Group agreed on a number of joint agricultural and training activities to advance business co-operation between Queensland and Papua New Guinea. A significant joint activity will focus on commercial opportunities arising from major projects including the proposed Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas pipeline project, in areas such as equipment and technologies, environment and other specialist services and vocational training.