



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

# **INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE**

*FROM*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Greetings, to the people of this country as Papua New Guinea celebrates its Independence Anniversary.

This is a day all Papua New Guineans must be proud of as we embrace our freedom and national identity. Education has played a very important role in developing this nation to ensure progress is made in the last 35 years.

We must all unite as one people to build this country with patriotism. We must be proud of our diverse cultures and traditions and of our more than 850 languages.

## **PROGRESS**

Education has played an important role in the preserving of our cultures and identity. We in Education have made changes to existing reforms and have also introduced new reforms to cater for the needs of the country. Our reforms are focused on making education more accessible to the people of this nation.

I must commend all the stakeholders who have contributed to the implementation of the education reforms.

Access to Education has improved over the last twenty years at all levels of the system. This has been a direct result of the education reforms. We have moved education closer to where the people are rather than expect the people to travel great distances to access education services.

With the launch of the Universal Basic Education Plan 2010 to 2019 in October 2009, the National Government for the first time is attempting to introduce a fee free education in a measured and sustainable way.

The progress made under the reform has been possible because of the hard work and commitment of many people including education managers, national and provincial politicians, churches, NGOs, and overseas donors. I salute our teachers who are the implementers of the reforms in our schools. I thank them for their dedication and their perseverance during the critical stages of the reforms.

Papua New Guinea's 40 year plan – Vision 2050 – has the dream of a Smart, Wise, Fair, Healthy and Happy Society by 2050. Our National Education Plan of 2005 – 2014 is guided by the National Goals and Directive Principles in the Constitution. The first priority as stipulated in the Education Reforms is to provide the opportunity of nine basic years of education for all which provides them with life-long skills in order to contribute to the development of the country.

The UBE Plan 2010 to 2019 builds on the progress made in the National Education Plan 2005 to 2014.

We must be proud that education has produced highly skilled people who hold very important jobs in the country and overseas. We have trained doctors, lawyers, scientists, accountants, policy makers, engineers and our leaders.

## **CHALLENGES**

We have reformed the basic education curriculum and put strong emphasis on our cultures, values and attitudes, skills education and training, and self-reliance. The reform curriculum is being implemented from elementary to grade 12.

Independence means self reliance. We in education have adopted self reliance as the main theme for the next 10 years. We encourage all schools and institutions to initiate self-reliance activities and projects to help with operational costs.

The Government will not have the finance all the time to support education and with the development of the School Learning Improvement Plans (SLIPs) it has and will help to foster local ownership and community support for schools.

Despite the progress we have made in the last couple of years there are still more challenges ahead. These include:

- Improving access to education and training at all levels
- Improving the retention rate in primary education
- Increasing the opportunities for relevant vocational skills training
- Re-training teachers on the new curriculum
- Improving the efficiency of the management and administration of the system, including the payroll system
- Providing teachers for schools in remote areas
- Improving law and order problems and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

## **WAY FORWARD**

The Department of Education seeks to achieve Integral Human Development through an affordable education system that appreciates Christian and traditional values.

Our goal is to prepare literate, skilled and healthy citizens by concentrating on the growth and development of each individual personal viability and character formation while ensuring all can contribute to the peace and prosperity of a nation.

On this note, I would like to say that we have made significant progress since Independence in 1975 and we are continuing to improve access and quality in all levels of education.

We owe our successes to the continued support and contribution from our stakeholders especially, all the levels of the Government, teachers, parents, community, churches, non-government organizations, and donor agencies.

I challenge our stakeholders to continue to assist us in our aim to provide quality and relevant education and training for the children of Papua New Guinea. With that continued support from the stakeholders and the National Government I believe education will be the way forward for our country.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, I would like to congratulate all the citizens of this country for their anniversary. I encourage all Papua New Guineans in every corner of the country to celebrate this special event as One People and One Nation.

We must be proud of our achievements and we must continue to work together and make full use of the limited resources we have available to make a living for ourselves, our families and our nation. Our children are our future.

On behalf of the Department of Education, staff, teachers, parents and students, I wish all Papua New Guineans a happy and safe celebrations. God Bless our nation.

**DR JOSEPH PAGELIO**

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