



*Papua New  
Guinea*

*Speech*

*By*

*Jacqui Badcock,*

*UNDP Resident Representative,*

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*on the Occasion of the*

*National Launch of the*

*Asia Pacific Regional Human Development Report  
2007, titled: Tackling Corruption, Transforming  
Lives;*

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*Port Moresby*

**Your Excellency, The Grand Chief, Sir Paulius Matane, The Governor General of Papua New Guinea, and Lady Karina,**

**Honorable Ministers and Members of Parliament,**

**Heads of Government Departments and Statutory Organizations,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corp,**

**Members of the Media,**

**Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is with great pleasure that I am presenting to you, on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme, the latest Asia Pacific Regional Human Development Report, titled: Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives, and acceleration Human Development in the Asia Pacific.**

**This Report is highly significant because the issue of corruption is at the heart and minds of many**

**and is an issue we all agree is high on the international as well as the national agenda.**

**The report was regionally launched in July in Jakarta by the President of Indonesia, and of course today is the national launch.**

**Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, before I continue, please allow me to offer my sincere gratitude to his Excellency, the Grand Chief, Sir Paulius Matane, for graciously accepting our invitation once again to this UN occasion. We acknowledge and appreciate your wonderful support and we trust that you will continue to grant us that support in the coming years.**

**Let me also thank everyone for making the time to participate in this occasion.**

**Rather than speak about corruption on the national scene, which I believe his Excellency the Grand Chief will most certainly do, let me speak on corruption from the perspective of a development organization, and it's impact on development, particularly in relation to the Millennium Development Goals.**

**Today's launch of a report on Corruption is taking place against the backdrop of an ever-increasing consensus among international organizations, world leaders and the general public. Corruption is not just about good governance. It is a development issue that everyone including the general public is obligated to respond to.**

**In October of 2003, after many years of collaboration by world leaders of the different regions, the UN Convention Against corruption – the UNCAC - was adopted. The UNCAC is the first legally binding international anti-corruption instrument that provides a unique opportunity to mount a global response to a global problem.**

**However having such a convention and ratifying to it is one thing, but, the implementation of this convention at the national level is yet another thing.**

**Using the analogy of the saying in the field of law that 'justice delayed is justice denied', I want to say that, 'implementation of the fight against corruption delayed is progress of human development denied,**

particularly for marginalized members of society – the women and children.

### Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eight years ago the world came together and committed to tackle poverty in all its forms and work to build a better world for everyone. This vision was encapsulated in the Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals that emerged from it. This includes halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; reducing child and maternal mortality; combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases and ensuring environmental sustainability.

We are now at the half-way point in this great global campaign to address the unacceptable divide between rich and poor. Where do we stand on the MDGs? Some progress has been made in the last eight years. 15 years ago one in three people lived on less than a dollar a day. We are now at one in

**five. More children have enrolled in primary education and child mortality has declined globally.**

**But this is not enough. We have only 7 and a half years left and one billion people still live in extreme poverty. More than one billion people lack access to safe drinking water. About 2 billion people have no regular access to reliable energy services, and about 6,000 people die of AIDS each day. 750 million adults cannot read. And one of the most striking statistics is that the odds that a woman will die from complications in pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa are 1 in 16 over the course of her lifetime, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world. And those who carry almost zero responsibility for climate change are bearing the brunt of its effects, while the gap between the haves and the have-nots is widening.**

**Similar scenarios can be said of Papua New Guinea. Whilst there has been encouraging economic growth in the last few years, social and economic indicators have remained rather stagnant and I am**

confident the Governor General will elaborate more on this.

### Ladies and Gentlemen

Over the last decade several threats to Progress of Human Development have come to the fore on the global front: threats such as HIV/Aids and climate change. In recent years, corruption has also been recognized as another major threat to the progress of Human Development.

People in the Asia Pacific region are becoming increasingly concerned about corruption, including Papua New Guinea, and Governments and Civil Societies are starting to react. Hauling the rich and the powerful before the courts is one way of tackling corruption and may grab the headlines, but the poor benefit more from efforts to eliminate corruption that plagues their every day lives. As Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General said, *corruption is an insidious plague, it eats away opportunities and undermines human development.*

**Let me give a quick snapshot of some of the areas highlighted in the report.**

**According to the report, all forms of Government are vulnerable to corruption, but some are more vulnerable than others. In the Asia Pacific region, the least trusted are the police, followed by the Judiciary, and tax offices. Education and medical services come next while the least corrupt sectors are the utilities and registry or permit services, although perhaps in the case of Papua New Guinea corruption in these areas are higher.**

**For instance in education, the report finds corruption at the level of procurement of materials and labor for school constructions, as officials sign off funds for school buildings. Corruption is also prevalent in the purchase of text books, desks, blackboards, in the tendering of cleaning contracts, and other service providers. And one that is more familiar also in PNG, the creation of ghost names on payrolls.**

**These same corrupt practices I believe also occur in the other sectors as well.**

**So how do we combat corruption?**

**According to the report, if countries are to tackle corruption, they will need to address the issue at all levels of government as well as in the private sector. From top to bottom and from the bottom up by reforming institutions and processes so as to reduce opportunities for corruption while creating effective systems to detect malpractice and punishing offenders.**

**In Asia and the Pacific, most countries have established formal anti-corruption agencies of one form or another. Unfortunately these agencies are often quite weak, and lack political and financial independence.**

**In Papua New Guinea the Ombudsman Commission and the Public Service Commission are two oversight institutions that play a role in the combat of corruption. And I understand that at one stage, some years back, legislations were drafted to**

**establish an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Perhaps it's worth revisiting that given the current reactions in the public domain.**

**People now believe they have a right to see how Government works and what it is doing. Eight countries in the Asia Pacific region, including China, India and the Cook Islands, now have Right to Information (RTI) legislations.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Tackling corruption is not just the Government's job, civil society too must play its part – by monitoring and reporting on standards of government and also refusing to take bribes or collude with corrupt officials.**

**Earlier this year, I recall the Prime Minister, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, saying that fighting corruption is everybody's business, not just the Government. How true that is.**

**The report emphatically stresses that one of the principle watch dogs monitoring and exposing corruption should be the media – the press, radio,**

**and TV. As well as exposing corruption, the media can provide an environment for an open and transparent flow of information and fostering a climate of opinion that is intolerant of corruption. But having said that the media itself is susceptible to corruption with media personal taking bribes and colluding on the stories.**

**Every citizen through the ballot boxes and civil society organizations can play a major role in the fight against corruption. Civil Society Organizations must be forthright about corruption but where possible should also seek cooperative relations with the Government to oppose corruption.**

**And in that context it is pleasing to note the efforts taken by civil society organizations in recent weeks, such as the Coalition Against Corruption, the Environmental Law Center, Transparency International, and the Divine Word University.**

**The media and the civil society organization can keep up the pressure on politicians and public services and hold them to account.**

**The report recommends a few options in terms of an agenda for action. While acknowledging that tackling corruption will depend on national circumstances, the report proposes that all countries in the region should join the UN Convention Against Corruption. From the Pacific only Fiji and PNG have ratified to the convention.**

**And on that I would like to inform this forum that UNDP is planning to host a Pacific sub-regional workshop on anti-corruption in early 2009, and is currently talking with the appropriate government agencies to sanction and take the lead in this initiative.**

**The report also proposes the establishment of the right to information legislations, to encourage creation of codes of conduct for the private sector, and support citizen's actions.**

**Finally, I want to close by acknowledging the work done by the donor community in Papua New Guinea on this front in our respective bilateral and multilateral relations.**

**The support rendered by donor partners in the areas of law and justice through the Law and Justice Sector program should be commended. It certainly is a model for other sector programmes.**

**I also want to commend partners that are contributing to making public procurement and management of public finances more transparent and accountable, including assistance in public reporting mechanisms.**

**And of course I commend partners who are providing support to civil society participation in fighting this insidious plague. And last but not the least, I want to commend partners who are providing assistance in preventive anti-corruption policies and practices, and assistance to support anti-corruption bodies.**

**There is still much more ground to cover and I believe it is time we all get together to map what we all are doing in this specific area in our programmes, and to see where the gaps are, and to fill in these gaps. And the UN and UNDP in particular**

**is willing to play that Coordinating role under the banner of the UN Convention Against Corruption.**

**Your Excellency, distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen, it has indeed been a real privilege to have you all here this afternoon to this special occasion, and for me to present this milestone report to you. I am certainly sure that, if you take the time to read the report, you will find it enriching as a developmentalist or as an academic. I invite you all to take a copy, after all you and I are either residents or citizens of this country, and we have a role to play in the fight against corruption.**

**Happy reading and I wish you all well...**

**Thank you.**

