



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Office of the Minister

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MEDIA STATEMENT

NEC APPROVES WORK TO START ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S 50 YEAR VISION FOR EDUCATION SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

PNG's education system has expanded significantly since independence. Reforms in the broader public service under the *Organic Law on Provincial Government* (1976) and the amended *Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Government* (1995) have seen an increase in education service delivery decentralised to the sub-national governments.

This resulted in over 2.3 million school-aged children enrolled in 12,800 registered schools with close to 65,000 teachers in the national education system in the country. Consequently, this results in an increase in the number of school leavers at various levels of education system each year.

However, the expansion of the education system over the last 50 years has not resulted in the desired outcomes specifically in improving quality and relevance. PNG's low Human Development Indices (HDI), low productivity and service delivery outcomes, and a decline in moral and ethical conduct, and high levels of corruption among other major challenges, highlight the country's dire need for reformation to adapt to changing demands and uncertainties. These calls for a major relook at how we educate our people to be productive and responsible citizens.

Education shapes the destiny of a country. Papua New Guinea's education system has been shaped by various historical, colonial, political, and structural developments in the last 48 years, going to 50 (1975-2023/2025). Since the first missionary school was established by the European missionaries in German New Guinea (Duke of York Island in 1875) up to the establishment of the first colonial school systems in the territory (Papua & New Guinea) in the 1900s, PNG's education system has evolved incrementally. The problems and achievements of PNG's current education policy (NEP) can only be appreciated in relation to the history of educational development in the

country. Tracing the development of our education system in the last 50 years and reflecting on the gaps, limitations and findings is important in understanding the current and future direction of education in this country. Papua New Guinea's modern education system has undergone four major school structure shifts between 1962 and 2023. 1) 7-4-2 structure (1962 – 1972); 2) 6-4-2 structure (1973-1991); 3) 3-6-4 (1993-2016); and 4) 1-6-6 (2016-2023). The rationale for the first three shifts was that each of these structures had failed to deliver on the promises of successive governments. The fourth structure still has some underlying deficiencies. To address these deficiencies, an NEC Policy submission on the **PNG Education Transformation Vision 2075 (PNETV 2075)** by the Education Department was approved and endorsed by the Cabinet on 27 July 2023.

The PNETV 2075 is a holistic 50-year education strategic roadmap that will span five decades of continuous planning, management, implementation, and evaluation through short-term plans such as the MTDP IV, sector and agency plans, provincial plans, district plans, LLG plans, and ward plans. The PNETV 2075 highlights prevailing and/or perennial challenges and propose potential remedies that the Education Department and its partners at the national, provincial, district, LLG, and ward levels could employ to address these challenges. The PNETV 2075 is about reforming the entire education system by overhauling and restructuring what does not work and maintaining what works.

The PNETV 2075 complements the PNG Vision 2050, especially Pillar number 1 on human capital development, gender, youth and people empowerment, the MTDP IV Strategic Priority Area (SPA) number 4 on Quality Education and Skilled Human Capital, and the National Goals and Directive Principle number 1 of the National Constitution on Integral Human Development.

To date, a Steering Committee has been commissioned on the task and we hope to have the PNETV 2075 launched in 2025. The Steering Committee is made up of eminent citizens, which include Ms. Winnie Kiap, Mr. Peter Aitsi, Rev. Joseph Rogers, Dr. Osborne Sanida and others. A Taskforce and a Secretariat have also been established to support and advise the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee has met, NEC has given its approval, and Provincial Education Advisors (PEAs) and other stakeholders have progressively been consulted. Others who will be involved with the PNETV 2075 will be consulted in the process.

Going forward, the PNETV 2075 has identified and will address seven key focus areas (KFAs) including 1) Curriculum, 2) School system structure, 3) Teacher education, training, and development, 4) Digitalisation, 5)

Infrastructure and inclusive learner-friendly environment, 6) Governance, leadership, and management, and, 7) Education services delivery system.

The first PNGETV Taskforce technical workshop was convened at Crown Hotel on the 27 and 28 of July 2023 in Port Moresby. Some of the key challenges and findings that emanated from the workshop under each KFA are outlined below.

Under curriculum, there was a serious need to bridge the curriculum gap between the national and sub-national levels (national-provincial-district-ward levels). Our curriculum lacks compatibility, adaptability, and transferability nationally, regionally, and globally. PNG's curriculum must be aligned to its national qualifications framework, which must be compatible, comparable, and transferable to other international frameworks and standards. In terms of skilled labour, we need a curriculum that not only encourages labour mobility but develops a robust labour mobility both regionally and globally. The Vision should accommodate academic, intellectual, professional and personal development, and practical based curriculum that promotes lifelong skills. There is also a need to decentralise certain curriculum functions down to the sub-national education structures.

Under the school system structure, the taskforce recommended that the present 1-6-6 structure should be converted to 2-1-6-6 structure to include an early childhood education (ECE) component of two years, which would be moved from the Department of Community Development to the Department of Education. The ECE must be included as part of the mainstream education system because the first five years of a child's life are very important for his/her cognitive/ intellectual development.

In terms of teacher education, training and development, the main challenge is lack of specialised teacher training institution that offers degree programs, especially in primary school teaching. The Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) is a key sectoral agency in teacher education, training and development. The DHERST and the Teaching Services Commission (TSC) can collaborate on a system that addresses the quality aspect of teacher training while having in mind these fundamental questions: What quality of teachers do we want to produce in the next 50 years? How do we hold teachers accountable? The taskforce recommended that all primary school teachers must have degrees in order to be able to teach and be remunerated at appropriate levels. Currently we have a problem where certificate and diploma level teachers teaching grades and subjects. Teachers GPA and qualifications must be at first degree, masters and PhD at relevant levels and remunerated according to their qualifications. Teachers must be accountable to the students, parents, and the community.

Under digitalisation, there is lack of clear visibility of ICT status in schools; teachers and students lack digital skills especially in rural areas; and poor ICT infrastructure at all levels. We need to adequately invest in digital technology and ICT infrastructure for a digital transformation go for both learning and administration.

A school's infrastructure is central to the development and transmission of knowledge. Currently, infrastructure systems for most schools are not user friendly and inadequate in meeting the demands and needs of an ever-increasing number of students. Critical infrastructure that aid teaching and learning would capture our dreams of making the PNGETV a reality. To achieve this, we must be ready to spend. By policy, at least 20 % of public expenditure must be spent on education. Currently, the PNG government only invests 13 % on education. Therefore, more infrastructure investment is needed to boost curriculum development, teaching, and learning to make knowledge accessible to all regardless of their status.

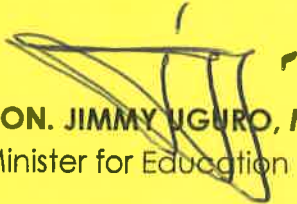
Governance, leadership, and management in most schools lack accountability, honesty, and integrity. Corruption is rife in the management and administration of education services at all levels. The taskforce recommended that a comparative analysis of selected developing and developed country governance models be studied, and where relevant adopt best management and governance practices that are compatible and transferable to our context. We must have a uniform school management system, but schools should have autonomy in running their own affairs. In the next 50 years, it is envisaged that schools should become more autonomous in such practices as teacher recruitment.

Finally, the taskforce acknowledged that there is a growing collapse of the education services delivery system countrywide. Some practical solutions are found at the school and community (ward) levels, particularly in the rural areas. In order to make the PNGETV 2075 plan more people-centred and community-oriented, it is relevant to visit the schools and communities, and hear from them. We must be sensitised to the realities on the ground. These are important data sources that will inform our thinking as we progress forward in framing the narratives of the PNGETV 2075. If we can find out what the needs and problems of the schools and communities are, we could be in a better position to tailor-make policies and intervention plans suited to their needs and context. But we must also be mindful of political patronage and political influence, which are the key concerns.

The above descriptive of each KFA is the start of work in progress and will lead to the final document once we have extensively consulted with all relevant individuals and groups at large.

It is our hope that the PNGETV 2075 will transform our dreams into reality in the next 50 years. I invite all partners, stakeholders and fellow Papua New Guineans to submit your suggestions so we build a relevant, robust and a compatible, and a competitive education system for our country. Please, send your views/suggestions to: The Task Force – PNGETV, Department of Education, P O Box 446, WAIGANI, NCD or email: Geua_Kone@education.gov.pg.

Authorized for release by:



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