



SPEECH BY

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On the Occasion of the

***26th Annual Graduation of the
UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA***

14TH APRIL, 2023

***“Transformation of Citizens is essential for Nation
Building”.***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SALUTATION

Good Morning All!

Before, I proceed to deliver my keynote address on this most esteemed occasion, let me firstly acknowledge some of the very important people that are here to witness the 26th Graduation of the University of Goroka.

- Hon. Don Pomb Polye – Minister for Higher Education and Sports
- The Chancellor of the University Council– Mr Joe Wemin,
- The Council Members,
- Vice-Chancellor – Dr. Waninga and your Managment,
- Heads of Faculties and Departments
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen and,
- Graduands,

INTRODUCTION

Let me on the outset thank the Vice Chancellor Dr Waninga and the University Council for inviting me to be the Guest of Honour on this special occasion, the 26th Graduation of the University of Goroka. I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to address the graduands and inspire them to become better citizens of this country as they all will join the workforce in their respective fields of expertise in the near future. Those who are committed to teaching our children in high schools and secondary schools are strongly urged to uphold the teaching code of ethics in this noble profession of teaching our children to be leaders of tomorrow.

To the graduands, this is your day. You deserve to be here today

arrayed in your gowns to celebrate your accomplishments in this

phase of your education. You have worked so hard despite all the

frustrations and anxieties in the course of your studies at this

university. The parents, the academic staff, the Council Members

and myself we are all here today to celebrate with you on your

achievements. For myself, I recall the overwhelming sense of

excitement, accomplishment and high hopes that accompanied my

own graduation at the University of Papua New Guinea Guinea

twenty (24) years ago. I felt sense of victory at that moment that I

had made it through successfully. And I am certain that you all have

that sense of accomplishments today.

I have been very privileged to have met with your Vice Chancellor Dr

Waninga on number of occasions in my office in Port Moresby and discussed wide range of issues affecting the University and of course our country as a whole. In one of the many discussions that we had, I told the Vice Chancellor that if I can be the Guest Honor for this year's Graduation of the University of Goroka. The Vice Chancellor promised me that I will officially invite you through the University Council to address the graduands. And indeed, my presence on this occasion today demonstrates our commitment, friendship and support to this great university going forward in to the future. I felt obligated as a senior citizen of this country and in my capacity as the Secretary for the Department of National Planning & Monitoring to

speaking to our graduands on the many challenges we face as a country and the future ahead of us. I see no challenges greater than our collective commitment to achieve the vision that our fore fathers have dreamt of in those formative years of our independence. I stand here being reminded of many of our great men and women who have gone before us, who have made the ultimate sacrifice to the greater cause for our nation. They have contributed immensely in their time and left their footprints behind for us to take the fight on. Today, I bring the same inspiration and conviction to the graduands, the academic staff, the management, the parents and the guardians who have come to see our children graduate. We are at the threshold of a new Chapter in our country as we will be turning 50

years as a country in 2025. We will all be up in arm celebrating the 50th Independence Golden Anniversary. But we must have reasons to celebrate. I have always said that whether we make or break this country remains in the hands of Papua New Guineans starting from our political leaders right down to the senior public servants and all Papua New Guineans including our graduands. We must take bold steps to change the status quo and we expect our young and vibrant Papua New Guineans to take the lead in championing this cause. I see all our graduands today and I am confident of the future ahead of us.

And today on this occasion, to our proud graduands, I say

CONGRATULATIONS and WELL DONE for staying on course and

finishing the “race”; you have earned the right to celebrate this important achievement and by all means do so in moderation. There is no doubt that having come this far, you have burnt thousands of the mid night candles; you strictly abide by the rules of the university to successfully complete your programmes. I know you will take the same level of commitment to the workforce with renewed vigor and commitment and make the difference we expect from you all.

Despite many challenges that you faced in your student life, would have prepared you well for the bigger challenges out there in the world.

We remember the destruction caused by the earthquake in 2022.

We must be grateful to our good Lord that no lives have been lost. I

must commend the University Council, the Staff, the Management and the students for your resilience, patience and understanding during this period and allowed for the normal resumption of the classes and the successful conclusion of the academic year 2022.

I note the theme for this graduation is **“Transformation of Citizens is essential for Nation Building”**.

I see this theme as relevant in the context of national development. I

have always affirmed and reaffirmed in many of my speeches and

discussions that Papua New Guineans are going to build this nation.

Every single Papua New Guineans must take possession of this

country and equally commit to transform this country. For our graduands sitting here this morning, let me say this, transformation is not just about obtaining your Diplomas or Degrees. It is about conviction that you have for the love of your country.

It is about embracing new ideas, new mindsets, new attitudes. It is about new ways of doing things. It is about empowering people and unlocking their potential. The transformation has to be holistic and must permeates into fabric of our society and create the positive impacts in our country. I have seen the basic fundamental building blocks of our society fast eroding with no respect for the sanctity of human lives, respect for other people, respect for public properties, honesty and the highest degree of concerns for humanity has

basically collapsed. There is no where we can push on to build a better and secure society for our people if the current trend continues. I challenge the graduands, the management, the staff and the parents that are here today to seriously rethink our commitment to nation building and must embrace those basic fundamental building blocks of our society. And only and then, I am very confident that we can set the course of our nation on progress and attain prosperity every step of the way moving into the future.

It has been 47 long years and we continue to struggle in all

development fronts. Our development indicators are still low in many of the sectors. As we reflect on the past that we have come, and the many development challenges we face today, it is incumbent

on all Papua New Guineans to support our Government to make that change. There were many opportunities we had in the last 20 years or so for us to have capitalized on and transformed this nation to be in better shape than it is today. However, I am still optimistic today with greater resolve and conviction that we can change the course of our nation and build a better Papua New Guinea for ourselves and our children. I acknowledged the many efforts of the Marape -Rosso Government to continue to ensure that the quality services are delivered to our people. Many of you will recall, Our Prime Minister Hon. James Marape has made a succinct statement when he became the Prime Minister in 2019 to **“Take Back PNG and Make PNG become the Richest Black Christian Nation.”** While this statement

resonates in all development planning across the country, I do not see this as a simple task. It will require absolute commitment from all Papua New Guineans including all our graduands today. We got to work hard; we must not falter along the way. We have to give the best firstly to ourselves, our families, our communities and our country. I have seen brilliant Papua New Guineans, who scored As and Bs, with highest IQs gone into the graves too early, some went into complete oblivion and no where to be seen. We are losing many highly educated Papua New Guineans to the streets, who have lost their way through their career because of bad choices and are totally disorientated as to what they want to do with their future. Some of them have retired prematurely and have become liabilities to the

society. I do not want to see any one of our graduands sitting here today going down that path. I want you all to rise up and be countered amongst the best and agents of positive change in our country. You all have a responsibility to your families, your communities and to your country. The expectations will be big and you have learnt what it takes in this university to be able to respond to those expectations successfully. Your journey is just beginning and I must say that it is not going to be anywhere easier than you think. You must be committed; you must be honest and you must work hard. You got to shape your own destiny and it all starts now. If you make the wrong choices today and you are going to regret for the rest of your lives.

[Nation Building must be a personal responsibility. I see the urgency](#)

of our time and it demands absolute commitment from every single Papua New Guineans. The baton has been passed down on to you and me. There is no better time and moment in our country's history than today to call upon its citizens to be more responsible.

Transforming the attitudes of our citizens must remain our number one agenda. We are more equipped today to enable this transformation in our attitudes, our thinking, in our relationship with others and the environment. We have the resources; we have the technology and the necessary qualifications to bring about those transformations. If we are in a position to impact changes for better,

and if don't then we will maintain the status quo and that will further hurt our progress.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AFTER GRADUATING

FROM UPNG IN 1998, THAT WAS 24 YEARS AGO.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself that may

possibly inspire some of you graduands. Going back to

my humble beginning. I grew up in one of the most

notorious settlements in East New Britain Province

called Red Light. It was a breeding ground and haven

for criminals. There was no running water and no

electricity. We have to carve out our lives the hard way. My world view was limited to my settlement life and never thought my future will unfold in a big way to where I am today. I thank God in particular for those achievements and my own sheer hard work, commitment and determination to excel in life. I was never settled for mediocre. I wanted to be the best in everything that I did.

I graduated from the University of Papua New Guinea 24 years ago.

Equipped with bachelor's degree, I marched out into the world,

thinking that I will have a good job with good pay, have a car and a house just like that. My hopes were shattered after nine (9) months and I could not even get a job. I started doing odd jobs in helping families to buy empty cans and smelt it and sell it. I thought having bachelor's degree was good enough to lend me a good job. I was totally disillusioned. I prayed and ask God to help me with a job and eventually after 9 months of searching for job, I got a teaching job at Badiahgwa Secondary School, Badiahgwa High School then in National Capital District. It was only a short stint. I walked out of teaching just merely two months into teaching. I was given a position at the Department of National Planning & Monitoring (then National Planning office (NPO) as a Junior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer

on the 2nd of October 1999. Since then, I have never looked back. I have to work hard and by God's grace it paid off after 18 years when I got appointed by the Government as the Secretary for the Department of National Planning & Monitoring. It is not all doom and gloom. You have every opportunity out there to build your carrier, build your future and build your life. It's all in your hands. You just have to have a right mindset; positive attitude and you can go anywhere in the world. What is important to you today is that you have the qualification but you need to develop the positive attitude and mindset that will be your pathway for the future. If you don't, you will not go too far. Remember, globally, only about 13% of

college age students are able to go to universities and graduate.

Count yourself lucky and blessed.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE AS A COUNTRY.

I think it is important for me today to have some discussions with you all about our future as a country. What does the future holds for us and where are we heading. There is no better person to inform you today about your future than myself as the National Planning Secretary. As we plan for the future of our beautiful country, what are our expectations from all our graduates and everyone else in this country? How do we take this country forward?

The PNG Vision 2050 Goals remains the most likely future we would like to attain as a country. By 2050, we will become a smart, wise, fair, healthy and happy society. But how do we get there? What do we do to get there? Those are the fundamental questions that I have discussed throughout my speech. The Department of National Planning and Monitoring continue to champion this cause. It is our duty to continue to ensure all Papua New Guineans must understand the Vision, align and take possession of this country. We cannot achieve the Vision 2050 if you all our graduands, the management and the Staff, including all our parents, guardians and our people do not understand the Vision and contribute meaningfully. If you all embrace the Vision of our country, and collectively pursue the

Vision, I strongly believe we can achieve the progress needed to achieve Vision 2050 in the next 5 to 10 years. That is why this call is urgent for everyone to act now. For you graduands, remember, you are now armed with Diplomas and Degrees to forge not only your individual path but for the whole country. You have been chosen to deliver and to contribute to the Nation Building. Do not shy away, we will need you every step of the way as we perceive the enormity of the task facing to be daunting and no individual can deliver on it but the collective.

Our development pathway has been clearly cut out in PNG Vision 2050, the PNG Development Strategic Plan (DSP) 2030 and the current and past Medium-Term Development Plans.

CONCLUSION

Graduands, as you graduate out of this university and join the workforce whether in the public or private sector, the call to build this nation for better depends on each of you. If you are successful in personal life off course the nation will be successful. If you are going to be a problem and then you will drag this country back. Think big and think positive. I am very optimistic that we can build this country together and make it better place for ourselves, our children and their children. I am personally committed to this cause until the end of my days on this earth.

I extend my best wishes to you one of you for a brighter future and
congratulations once again on your achievements. May the good

Lord bless each one of you.

Thank You!!!