

COUNTRY YOUTH

CALL TO ACTION 2025

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Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science and evidence based solutions for the 2030 agenda and its SDGs for leaving no young person behind in Asia and the Pacific



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Situational Analysis

Papua New Guinea (PNG), a diverse and resource-rich nation in the Pacific, faces unique development challenges exacerbated by its rugged terrain, dispersed population, and cultural diversity. With over 800 languages spoken and significant disparities in access to services, PNG grapples with addressing core Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite progress in some areas, challenges such as limited infrastructure, economic dependency on extractive industries, and vulnerability to climate change continue to hinder its sustainable development. However, its abundant natural resources, traditional knowledge systems, and increasing international support provide a foundation for progress.

Health challenges in PNG remain critical with high maternal and child mortality rates, widespread communicable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, and increasing non-communicable diseases. Geographical barriers, limited healthcare infrastructure, and a shortage of trained medical professionals hamper access to healthcare services. While the government and international organizations have made strides in expanding immunization programs and community health initiatives, significant gaps in rural healthcare access persist. Climate-related health risks, such as vector-borne diseases and malnutrition from food insecurity, are also exacerbating health vulnerabilities.

Despite cultural barriers, PNG is making gradual progress toward gender equality. Women and girls still face significant challenges, including high rates of gender-based violence, limited access to education, and underrepresentation in political and economic spheres.

Legislative measures, such as the Family Protection Act and initiatives promoting women's entrepreneurship, have been introduced to address these issues. However, deeply rooted patriarchal norms and inadequate enforcement of laws remain major barriers. Grassroots movements and international partnerships are increasingly driving awareness and advocacy for gender equality in PNG.

PNG's economy is shaped by its reliance on extractive industries, agriculture, and fisheries. However, unemployment, underemployment, and informal labour are pervasive, particularly among youth. Efforts to diversify the economy through sustainable tourism and small-to-medium enterprise (SME) development are gaining traction. Yet, corruption, weak governance, and limited access to financial services hinder broader economic participation. Investments in infrastructure and education, alongside regional trade agreements, are gradually creating pathways for more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

PNG's vast marine ecosystems are critical for the livelihoods of its coastal communities and global biodiversity. The country faces mounting threats from overfishing, marine pollution, and climate change-induced coral bleaching. Efforts to strengthen marine conservation include the establishment of protected marine areas and international collaborations under frameworks like the Coral Triangle Initiative. Despite these efforts, enforcement remains a challenge due to limited resources and capacity. Empowering local communities and fostering partnerships with the private sector are vital for safeguarding PNG's marine resources.

Co-convoked by:



In collaboration:



In partnership:



Partnerships play a pivotal role in PNG's progress toward the SDGs. The country benefits from regional and global partnerships that provide technical expertise, funding, and capacity-building support. Collaboration with organizations such as the United Nations, regional Pacific alliances, and donor agencies has facilitated advancements in healthcare, education, and environmental conservation. However, effective implementation of these partnerships is often hindered by governance challenges and a lack of coordination among stakeholders. Strengthening institutional capacities and fostering inclusive partnerships at the local level are critical for sustainable development in PNG.

Recommendations

Our recommendations for PNG on selected SDGs to achieve optimum target are as follows-

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

- Invest in building and upgrading healthcare facilities in rural and remote areas to improve accessibility.
- Provide training and incentives to retain healthcare professionals, particularly in underserved regions.
- Scale up vaccination campaigns, malaria control efforts, and tuberculosis treatment programs, integrating technology for improved disease surveillance.
- Develop contingency plans for climate-sensitive diseases and strengthen nutrition programs to combat malnutrition.
- Implement community-based health education initiatives focusing on hygiene, nutrition, and reproductive health.
- Increase investment and funding for youth friendly, affordable, high-quality medical facilities and services, including mental health, Sexual and reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services, for young people particularly in rural, and hard to reach areas.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

- Enhance the enforcement of laws addressing gender-based violence and promote gender-sensitive judicial systems.
- Introduce policies that mandate quotas for women in political, corporate, and local governance roles.

- Provide scholarships and financial support for girls in rural areas to complete secondary and tertiary education.
- Expand access to credit, training, and markets for women entrepreneurs, particularly in agriculture and SMEs.
- Collaborate with traditional leaders and communities to challenge patriarchal norms and promote gender equality.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Encourage investment in sustainable tourism, renewable energy, and agro-processing industries to reduce dependence on extractive industries.
- Provide vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities for young people, aligning skills with market needs.
- Expand access to financial services and digital banking, particularly in rural areas, to empower SMEs and informal workers.
- Strengthen governance frameworks and transparency mechanisms to attract foreign and domestic investments.
- Develop programs to create sustainable employment opportunities in conservation, renewable energy, and climate adaptation sectors.

SDG 14: Life Below Water

- Increase the number and effectiveness of marine protected areas, ensuring community involvement in their management.
- Implement strict regulations on plastic waste and runoff from industries, and promote community-led waste management initiatives.
- Develop sustainable fishing practices and enforce stricter regulations against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.
- Invest in coral reef restoration projects and initiatives to protect mangroves and coastal ecosystems.
- Collaborate with international institutions to strengthen research on marine biodiversity and its sustainable use.



SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

- Foster collaboration between government, private sector, civil society, and traditional leaders to ensure inclusive development.
- Engage with Pacific regional alliances to address shared challenges such as climate change and health crises.
- Invest in government institutions to improve project coordination, monitoring, and evaluation for effective use of resources.
- Diversify funding sources through partnerships with international donors, development banks, and private investors.
- Collaborate with tech partners to improve data collection, analysis, and sharing for informed decision-making and SDG tracking.

The APFSD country and sub-regional briefs were developed through collective discussions and engagements between youth advocates at the APFSD Youth Forum in Bangkok on 19-21 February, 2025. The PNG Call to Action was drafted by Joshua Lato. Overall supervision was provided by the ARROW Call To Action team.
