

A Critical Analysis of Papua New Guinea Vision 2050

*Vision 2050 is our government's long-term development plan.
But is this plan consistent with our Constitution and National Goals?*

National Goals and Directive Principles

The National Goals and Directive Principles (NGDP) in the Constitution are supposed to guide all activity taking place in Papua New Guinea.

They are based around the principles of human development, equal participation, national sovereignty and self-reliance, wise use of natural resources and reliance on Papua New Guinean forms of social, political and economic organisation.

The NGDP were developed by the Constitutional Planning Committee. The Committee was set up by the House of Assembly in 1972.

Over 22 months, the committee members toured the country, visiting almost every sub-district and holding over one hundred public meetings attended by an estimated 60,000 people. They published two interim reports during 1973 and a final report in 1974.

Our National Constitution is based on the report and recommendations from that Committee.

Vision 2050

Vision 2050 was launched in 2009 as the government's long-term strategic vision for Papua New Guinea. The Vision is described as a forty-year strategy to map our future direction and guide the nation's socio-economic development.

The Vision includes the intention that all other medium and short term government strategies and plans should align to the Vision.

When launched, the Vision was described as embracing the five National Goals and Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution and as using them as its framework to set the future strategic vision for the Nation. Vision 2050 even quotes from the report of the Constitutional Planning Committee on its front cover.

But does Vision 2050 really embrace the work of the Committee and reflect the intent and meaning of our National Goals?

ACT NOW! commissioned a study and report from Patrick Kaiku at the University of Papua New Guinea to find out.

A Critical Analysis

Patrick's report, "*A Critical Analysis of Papua New Guinea Vision 2050*", reveals that although Vision 2050 repeatedly refers to the National Goals and Directive Principles, the development strategies in the Vision are completely inconsistent with the spirit of our National Constitution.

"The expressed intentions of the NGDPs and the visionary thinking of the Constitutional Planning Committee are grossly misinterpreted in the Vision 2050".



As an example of this misinterpretation the report cites the land reform strategies proposed in Vision 2050 which disregard the Constitutional safeguarding of our traditional land tenure system.

The report finds that taking customary land from rural people will compromise economic sovereignty and the spirit of self-reliance and put further stress on our cultural resilience, which are all key features of the NGDPs.

The report also finds Vision 2050 facilitates a potentially disastrous export orientated economic model.

The economic strategies in the Vision promote outward expansion at the expense of the consolidation of local ownership, which is detrimental to our political sovereignty and inhibits local entrepreneurial capacity; both key features of the NGDPs.

Other Key Findings

Other key findings from the study include:

- Vision 2050's use of global development yardsticks such as the Human Development Index is a disempowering exercise as these yardsticks do not reflect Papua New Guinean realities and disregard alternative indigenous Melanesian definitions of "development" and individual well-being;
- The role of cultural education and the benefits of culture as tools for development are omitted from any practical strategic considerations in Vision 2050. PNG is an agrarian society, steeped in its cultural heritage, but Vision 2050 does not factor this aspect into development priorities;
- Though equalization and broad-based development is suggested in the Vision, there are no specific measures to phase out of the extreme dependence on the mining sector which will therefore continue to compromise political sovereignty and economic self-reliance;

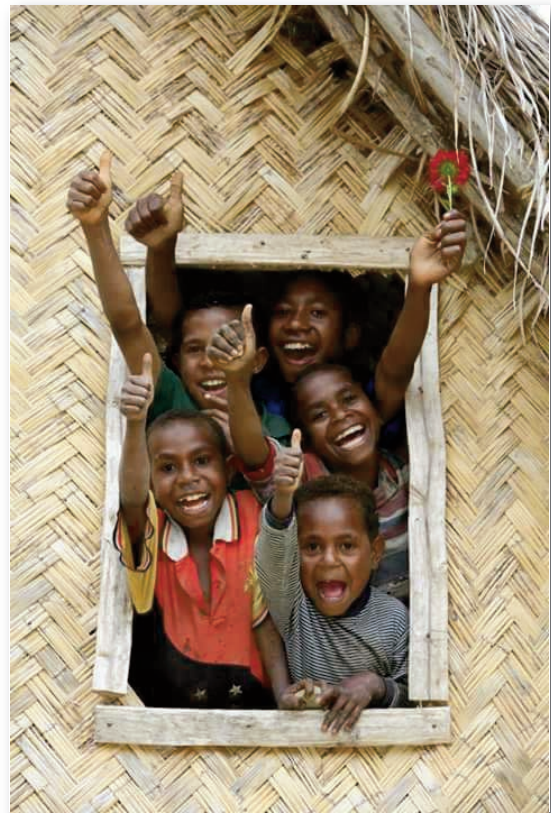
- The report concludes that Vision 2050 is not sustainable and will not authoritatively become the "philosophy of life" in PNG as intended given that it suffers from a lack of legitimacy and institutionalization.

Recommendation

Instead of a focus on the implementation of Vision 2050, the Report recommends a revisitation of the National Goals and Directive Principles should be undertaken as a matter of national priority.

This should include reforming the content of PNG's education curriculum which should be enriched with the NGDPs to ingrain at an early age the principles and values that should be activated for national development.

'This will assist all sectors of PNG to incorporate the NGDPs into the national life of our society and an informed citizenry can play a proactive role in ensuring that future government plans do not deliberately misinterpret them'.



Copies of the full report can be downloaded from the ACT NOW! website.