



Department of Pacific Affairs

National Development Plans in PNG — How They Measure Up Against the National Goals and Directive Principles

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Executive Summary

In the absence of any coherent framework guiding the implementation of the National Goals and Directive Principles (NGDPs) in the preamble of Papua New Guinea's (PNG) constitution, their interpretation is left to PNG's public officials. These officials will not always agree on the intentions of the NGDPs. When left open to various interpretations, the NGDPs can be used to promote development strategies substantively antithetical to those very national goals. This case study of PNG Vision 2050 and the Papua New Guinea Development Strategic Plan 2010–2030 (PNGDSP) will illustrate this point. These plans promote rapid economic growth as the means to achieve development in PNG. Their versions of development are staked on a range of policy options: trade liberalisation, land reforms and the redistribution of petroleum-related wealth channelled through economic corridors.

This paper will illuminate the disconnect between PNG's public policy thinking and the NGDPs. When the National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development (StaRS) was developed in 2013, it was critical of some core assumptions of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. StaRS seems to suggest that there is no consensus on what the NGDPs mean to policymakers in PNG today, hence the competing narratives of these three development blueprints. This paper revisits the development models promoted in recent national plans, the influences that framed their ambitious visions and their compatibility with the earlier NGDPs. Learning from the failed attempts at implementing the NGDPs, this paper suggests making them justiciable and institutionalised — as suggested by the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) — for the purpose of vetting development policies and programs.

Introduction

Post-independence development discourse in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has been about the challenges of translating the vast potential of the country into improved standards of living for all Papua New Guineans. This quest is reflected in the work of the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) prior to independence in 1975. The CPC's recommendations fed into the National Goals and Directive Principles (NGDPs) in the preamble to [the constitution](#). The NGDPs are mostly aspirational. They will have practical relevance to the citizenry if they are used to guide policy planning and applied in decision-making processes. The five NGDPs are: integral human development; equality and participation; national sovereignty and self-reliance; natural resources and environment; and Papua New Guinean ways (see Annexure 1).

However, the consultative CPC efforts were not done in isolation from the range of opinions and ideas generated in the context of that period. PNG's post-independence development prospects allowed for a rigorous input of views from officials in the Australian administration, multilateral organisations, academic think tanks, expatriate planters, Indigenous Papua New Guinean thinkers and a range of personalities, providing the conceptual framework for how the development priorities of the country were envisaged.

In 2009 and 2010, two national development blueprints were introduced into PNG's development discourse: [Papua New Guinea Vision 2050](#) (Vision 2050) was launched in 2009 and the [Papua New Guinea Development Strategic Plan 2010–2030](#) (PNGDSP) officially introduced in 2010. According to the National Strategic Plan Taskforce — the framers of Vision 2050

— Vision 2050 will guide PNG to build a ‘smart, fair, wise, healthy and happy nation’ (GoPNG 2010:xv). It anticipates that by the year 2050, PNG should bring its developmental indicators, notably the United Nations Human Development Index, well into the top 50 of the defined ranking, the category of a middle-income country.

The PNGDSP followed Vision 2050 and sought to ‘translate the focus areas of PNG Vision 2050 into concise directions for socio-economic development, spelling out sector interventions with clear objectives, quantitative targets, and baseline indicators’ (GoPNG 2014:16). Under the PNGDSP, PNG aspires to be ‘a prosperous, middle-income country by 2030’ (Department of National Planning and Monitoring 2010:4). Unlike Vision 2050, the PNGDSP seeks to achieve this goal within a 20-year period. There is a curious lack of consensus about the time differentials in these two documents. How the intended end point of development is determined by PNG policymakers demonstrates the contradictory narratives at play. If the PNG writers of these policy blueprints have different timeframes to attain their visions for the country, how incongruous are their interpretations of the NGDPs — the national ideals they both cite as starting points? In addition to their differing timeframes, the PNGDSP is far more detailed in its implementation agenda. One of the policy interventions in Vision 2050 — the concept of economic corridors — is given prominence and expanded upon in the PNGDSP. Economic corridors are envisaged as distributional hubs in impoverished regions of the country which will be integrated into the mainstream economy through targeted investments.

This paper is organised into four parts. The first explores the background of the NGDPs in the pre-independence period and the reason for their enduring importance. It covers the CPC’s terms of reference and intentions and identifies core elements of the *Final Report of the Constitutional Planning Committee*. Also discussed is the Overseas Development Group’s *A Report on Development Strategies for Papua New Guinea* (1973), from which the NGDPs distilled a range of policy recommendations. This report, usually referred to as the ‘Faber Report’ was the basis for what became the ‘eight aims’, which in large part framed the discussions that went into the NGDPs.

The second part of this paper challenges common assumptions about Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. A discussion on the relationship between these plans

and the earlier NGDPs ensues. Through development blueprints such as Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP, policy planners seek the legitimising authority of the NGDPs. As will be argued in this section, Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP, much like any future blueprint, should be subjected to rigorous testing of their alignment to the NGDPs. Such exercises give credibility to national aspirations and reinforce their practical application in national development. The third part of this paper addresses the specific manner in which both Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP deviate from the framework set out by the CPC. Though Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP both came about during the tenure of the National Alliance-led government of Sir Michael Somare in the period 2009 to 2010, there are critical points of departure between the two documents. Somare was also chief minister (during self-government) when the CPC was doing its work, including drafting the NGDPs.

Since their conception, these two policy documents have been more rhetorical than substantive. With the failure of PNG to attain any of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, and the much-talked-about infusion of LNG revenues into the economy from that multi-billion kina project, now is the time to examine the role of both Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP in the development process.

The fourth and final part of this paper highlights possible areas to begin a serious rethinking of development planning. The introduction of the National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development (StaRS) by the Department of National Planning and Monitoring for PNG offers the opportunity to reconsider some ideas around sustainable development and policy planning without dependence on extractive sector projections in development outcomes. The major takeaway message of this paper is the relevance of the NGDPs in national discussions and the critical roles that policymakers ought to play in enhancing the practical value of the NGDPs. As Ben Scott observed:

A new series of consultations would allow the population to return to fundamental questions about their political system with the benefit of greater education and 30 years’ experience of what works and what does not’ (2005:65).

A national conversation on the relevance of the NGDPs should be part of this process.

This paper calls upon Papua New Guineans to agree to a coherent application of the principles contained in the NGDPs and, more importantly, implement the recommendations of the CPC. A body is needed to vet national development initiatives according to set standards in furthering the NGDPs. Additionally, the political socialisation processes at the heart of the CPC recommendations are fundamental to acquainting younger generations of Papua New Guineans with the NGDPs. Contrary to Conroy's characterisation of the NGDPs as 'a dead letter' (2015:2), the NGDPs are superior to other development goals. Because of their constitutional status, the NGDPs are legitimately aspired to standards in guiding planning exercises and a yardstick 'against which governments [performance] are still measured' (Denoon 2012:124). The NGDPs, even with the challenges present at the time of their creation, are identified as the outcome of a legitimate process of popular consultation undertaken by the CPC (see Ritchie 2003). The NGDPs need to be given their rightful place in the development thinking of PNG through specific guidelines for implementing their constitutive principles in national policy development.

Part I: PNG's Pre-Independence Development Debate

The NGDPs in the PNG constitution's preamble serve as a guiding framework for development planning. Instrumentalities of government have a duty to encourage compliance with the NGDPs. The PNG Law Reform Commission (PNGLRC), reflective of the ambivalent mood of the post-independence failure to implement the NGDPs, defined the characteristics of the NGDPs as: 'The National Goals and Directive Principles are legal norms, of a non-justiciable nature, cast at a higher level of abstraction than is normally found in statute law' (1990:5). The PNGLRC further added that: 'What is missing is a middle-level or intermediate group of legal norms that would enable the values of the National Goals and Directive Principles to be transmitted into statutory form' (*ibid.*). But is it necessary for the creation of enabling legislations to compel implementation of the NGDPs?

There are sufficient recommendations and provisions in the CPC report and the constitution 'to apply and give effect to' the NGDPs (see Sch.1.7 of the constitution of PNG). For instance, sections 25 and 63 of the PNG constitution acknowledge the NGDPs as visions that should guide development thinking and decision-making processes in PNG. The constitution

permanently asserts the presence of the NGDPs for purposes of governing in PNG. Though it is argued that the NGDPs are non-justiciable, the acknowledgement of the NGDPs in the PNG constitution gives credibility to their existence as an encompassing and timeless point of reference in development planning in PNG.

Legislating to implement what are essentially a set of ideals is a perennial problem in PNG. For example, the failure of the political engineering of political parties and voter systems in PNG attests to the inability of legislation to induce appropriate political behaviour (see Baker 2005; Reilly 2002). Attempts must be exhausted to enable the NGDPs to be a 'philosophy of life' in PNG, as intended by the CPC (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/1). Revisiting the recommendations of the CPC is insightful in this instance, especially their call for the NGDPs to be mainstreamed in every facet of PNG's political socialisation institutions.

Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) terms of reference

In August 1974, PNG's CPC completed one of the most comprehensive exercises in nationwide consultations. It had specific terms of references (TORs) to undertake the process of consultations. It was also given unlimited powers beyond the TORs to consult widely. The TORs for the consultative process had been announced by then-chief minister Michael Somare two years earlier on 23 June 1972. The CPC was to set PNG's post-independence priorities. The committee's report covered an array of themes ranging from the system of government to the rights of citizens, the powers of constitutional offices, external relations and so forth.

The NGDPs and the eight aims

But perhaps the most profound insight in the visionary thinking of the CPC was the inclusion of the NGDPs in chapter two of the 1974 Constitutional Planning Committee Report. Reflective of the challenge of creating a post-colonial society where common national narratives were drawn from amongst the diverse cultures and peoples who would make up the nascent PNG nation-state, the NGDPs were to serve as a benchmark to guide decision-making and the national discourses and practices of PNG.

The eight aims, distilled from the Faber Report, informed the subsequent development of the NGDPs. They called for:

- (1) a rapid increase in the proportion of the economy under the control of Papua New Guinean

- individuals and groups as well as the proportion of personal and property income that goes to Papua New Guineans;
- (2) more equal distribution of economic benefits, including movements towards equalisation of income among people and towards equalisation of services among different areas of the country;
 - (3) the decentralisation of economic activity, planning and government spending, with emphasis on agricultural development, village industry, better internal trade and more spending channelled to local and area bodies;
 - (4) an emphasis on small-scale artisan, service and business activity, relying where possible on typically Papua New Guinean forms of activity;
 - (5) a more self-reliant economy, less dependent on imported goods and services and better able to meet the needs of its people through local production;
 - (6) an increasing capacity to meet government spending needs from locally raised revenue;
 - (7) a rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity;
 - (8) government control and involvement in those sectors of the economy where control is necessary to achieve the desired kind of development.

The work of the CPC, the origins of the NGDPs and the development model of the CPC have been subjects of scholarly re-examination in the recent decade (see Kari 2005; Narokobi 2016; Ritchie 2003). Autobiographical accounts by some members of the CPC reveal the initial agreements on the likely content of the constitution and the NGDPs. Much of the debate centred on its likely constitutional status and whether it was truly reflective of the collective identity of Papua New Guineans and an instrument of national ideology. In most instances, the discussions about development went into the framing of the NGDPs. Therefore, it is incorrect to suppose that the newly independent PNG government had a unified approach to development policy and planning in the 1970s. This explains the divergent interpretations of the NGDPs in the current context of policy blueprints. But the formalisation of the NGDPs through their addition to the preamble to the PNG constitution indicates their superior status in the guiding of national development and, more importantly, the outcome of serious consensus-building in the process of creating the NGDPs.

What came out of this nationwide consultation process was a report containing detailed

recommendations for the Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974). The CPC included the NGDPs in chapter two of their report and these were later included in the preamble to the constitution. It was envisaged that constitutional bodies should work within the framework of the NGDPs ‘to apply and give effect to’ the NGDPs (see Sch.1.7 of the constitution of PNG). The NGDPs acquired a Papua New Guinean character, resonating with a political elite who maneuvered the transition to nationhood.

The CPC envisaged the creation of a ‘Permanent Committee to review laws and policies for compliance with the Human Rights and Obligations and National Goals and Directive Principles set out in the Constitution’ (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:5/1/20). Since independence, the indecisiveness to give effect to this CPC proposal is one obvious reason for the lack of substantive implementation of the NGDPs. How the NGDPs are interpreted has been more or less at the whim of political leaders and public policy officials.

Intentions and ideals of the CPC

In the final report of the CPC, an enduring question is posed: What kind of society do we want? The CPC framed the NGDPs with this question in mind. Provisions were also included to periodically undertake a stock-take of the actualisation of the NGDPs (see General Constitutional Commission 1983:19–20). There are crucial points in the intentions of the CPC that are relevant to contemporary planning efforts. The critical question is whether, left to their own devices, policymakers are guided by the intentions and values of the NGDPs in decision-making situations.

Firstly, the CPC’s report urges Papua New Guineans to use their own initiatives in development, but with the NGDPs as their constant point of reference. Secondly, the presence of the NGDPs in the preamble to the PNG constitution signifies their permanent character and allows them to permeate the ‘hearts and minds’ of institutions of state and the citizenry, ensuring that they become ‘the philosophy of life by which we want to live and the social and economic goals we want to achieve’ (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/1). Though the NGDPs framework was established to guide Papua New Guinean thinking on development, it does not prescribe specific strategies to guide implementation. Much of that initiative was left to decision-makers

to make sense of in their respective positions in the community and in public service. Understandably, Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP sought to deal with this void and clearly articulate specific strategies for individual development sectors in PNG. The question is whether decision-makers are guided by the NGDPs, or are even knowledgeable of the NGDPs to assess national development priorities (Kari 2005). Invariably, the track record in the misapplication of the NGDPs demonstrates that they are not.

The World Bank report

Two additional important reports framed deliberations about the PNG post-colonial economic model. Firstly, *The Economic Development of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea* report by the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development appears to have guided the efforts of the Australian colonial administration to encourage large-scale foreign investment in primary industry. This state-led development discourse traces its origins to a report by the first World Bank mission (WB/IBRD 1965). The concern with smallholder agriculture was consistent with the bank's framework in countries decolonising and gaining independence during the 1960s and early 1970s. Investing in the expatriate-managed agriculture sector would serve as the economic foundation for political independence (*ibid.*). Mining and large-holding agriculture were to be the means by which governments with limited revenues would gain the resources needed to promote smallholder agriculture.

The Faber Report

The second report was by the Overseas Development Group — the Faber Report (1973). The recommendations in the Faber Report were later distilled and formed the key points of the eight aims. For instance, the Faber Report espoused 'increased local, indigenous control of the economy, and indigenisation of many forms of economic activity' and the exhortation to curtail dependence on 'foreign grants-in-aid and, ultimately, upon foreign investment capital'. Sam Sirox Kari (2005:12) suggests that the origins of the eight aims even predated the work of the CPC, beginning with official policy positions of the Australian administrations (1965–71). This demonstrates that the origins of the NGDPs are the result of a consensus-formation processes and were

the distillation of a range of experiences with ideas and programs.

Ideals drawn from the aspirations of some members of the CPC emphasised a Papua New Guinean-oriented conception of development thinking, inspired in part by the decolonisation narrative of other post-colonial states around the world. In the final report of the CPC, there is an emphasis on 'obligations to our community', noting how '[m]ost of our societies are classless and egalitarian' (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:18). References to egalitarianism and the village as the sub-unit of the nation were idealised by CPC members such as John Momis (1975) and Bernard Narokobi (1983). And yet, whilst members of the CPC were adamant about egalitarianism and the need for the inclusion of rural communities in national development, the reality was that the emergent urban-based political leadership of PNG were themselves aspiring commercial and business persons.

Predating the work of the CPC, the Faber Report cautioned that the Indigenous politicians and bureaucrats were poised to control the state machinery. The Faber Report's observation was made in the context of the evolution of an Australian policy transition from uniform development to accelerated development. What emerged was an Indigenous capitalist bloc — 'Indigenous bourgeois and would-be bourgeois' — seeking 'to press claims for preferential treatment' in post-independence PNG (MacWilliam 2013:211). The decentralisation of government power was proposed as necessary to counteract this potentially uneven distribution of power, but was also premised on the diffusion of development outward into non-urban areas of the country. Such was the logic of decentralisation, predating even the present idea of economic corridors: 'growth points in less developed areas' (ODG 1973:92).

The Faber Report, and later the CPC report, sought to define development as a holistic and inclusive process. Predating the CPC report, the Faber Report recognised that economic growth is not exclusively the end of development, but rather an equitable process of opportunity enhancing the pathway to participation through the localisation of Papua New Guinean efforts and initiatives (ODG 1973:11). Given the influence of the Faber Report in pre-independence development discourse, it is not surprising that the NGDPs emphasise 'the value of human rights and dignity, democracy and participation, egalitarianism,

self-reliance and autonomy' (Ghai and Regan 1992:6) over economic growth. However, this level of idealism is open-ended. At the heart of understanding how subsequent national development strategies should be framed is the practicality of their implementation.

The Constitutional Planning Committee report

The CPC report recognised the need for an Indigenous entrepreneurial sector. The Faber Report supported the view that state action was necessary in supporting local entrepreneurship. This view was embraced by the CPC, which advocated for creating room for Indigenous capitalism through state action. The CPC recognised the direct correlation between Papua New Guinean control over their economic affairs and the preservation of PNG's sovereignty. It urged caution in dealing with foreign investment (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:1/16–19) and recommended strict measures be applied in safeguarding local ownership of economic enterprise. According to the CPC, PNG's global economic competitiveness should be reflective of the domestic strength of its Indigenous entrepreneurial capacity.

The CPC envisaged local ownership of economic activities and a thriving domestic market as a realistic indication of economic sovereignty (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/8). It recognised that local ownership and control of the economy enhance self-reliance, economic sovereignty and economic empowerment. This pursuit of self-reliance expressed by the CPC did not simply spontaneously enter the national discourse. It was with this ideal in mind that the National Investment and Development Authority was established in 1974 with the intention of regulating foreign investment and promoting Indigenous participation in economic ventures. The post-independence development of PNG was premised on the assumption that a strong state would play the role of regulator to foreign capital and investment, be an investor in its own right and promote Indigenous ownership of the national economy.

Land and mining

Two further areas need elaboration here. The first is the holistic appreciation of land in a traditional PNG society. The second is the impact of mining and extractive sectors on the economy. In the CPC report, the control of customary land is seen not only as a source of sustenance, but also as intrinsic to the social and cultural identity of Papua New Guineans.

For the most part, this was also the prevailing view of the Australian colonial administration in the pre-independence period — that Papua New Guineans' attachment to the land should be protected (MacWilliam 2013). Then-territories minister Paul Hasluck tried to ensure Indigenous control over land resources, supported by academic research by the Australian National University's Research School of Pacific Studies. It was in this context of the official discourse on the ideal development of PNG society that the CPC concluded that 'since we [Papua New Guineans] are a rural people, our strength should be essentially the land and the use of our innate artistic talents' (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/15). The CPC merely reinforced the belief that land, notwithstanding its economic potential, should continue to provide a safety net for the vast majority of Papua New Guineans (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/6) and must be protected to ensure the continuity of the socio-cultural identities of Papua New Guineans.

PNG's predominantly agrarian society (as PNG relies on communal control of land) has prevented 'the emergence of a class of landless people as has occurred in so many other developing countries' (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/6–7). The agrarian lifestyle of Papua New Guineans, as in other parts of Melanesia, has been the basis of communal societies' social security in times of uncertainty in the formal economic sector.

Mining, and the extractive sector of the economy in general, also features in the CPC report. Of particular concern is its direct effect on PNG's economic sovereignty and the economic empowerment of PNG's citizens. The fourth goal of the NGDPs is explicit: 'The natural resources and the environment of Papua New Guinea should be conserved and used for the collective benefit of the people and should be replenished in the interest of future generations'. Whilst the NGDPs' emphasis was intended to guide sustainable exploitation of PNG's natural resources, the reality is that today PNG is considered a 'mineral-dependent economy' (Filer and Imbun 2009:76) whose fortunes are perilously 'vulnerable to fluctuations in the global markets' (Asian Development Bank 2012:iv). PNG's 'commodity currency' — the case highlighted by the 'vulnerability of the Papua New Guinea economy to external shocks' (Kauzi and Sampson 2008:43) — entails the PNG economy's attendant preoccupation with diversification efforts. One can therefore understand why the diversification of the economic base is emphasised in

Vision 2050 and PNGDSP. How the diversification agenda is undertaken, however, is framed at the discretion of public policy officials.

There is another insidious effect of the dependence on extractive-related activities, especially in informing national development blueprints. The economic fortunes of PNG are inextricably tied to and made to depend on mining revenues. Vision 2050 and PNGDSP reinforce the belief that the windfall gains from the mining sector will finance the implementation of their programs. Interestingly, there is an overly optimistic projection of revenues from the extractive sector by PNG policy planners. These revenue projections are unrealistically forecasted into supporting development plans such as Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. The risk of relying on the mining and petroleum sectors as the basis to initiate national development is perhaps best illustrated by the lack of economic benefits from the PNG LNG project (Flanagan and Fletcher 2018). The rhetoric of the windfall gains from the present PNG LNG project and the shortfall in anticipated government revenue are impacting PNG's government expenditure priorities in other sectors of the economy. Windfall revenues from the extractive sector are an extremely unreliable indicator on which to frame development plans, yet the PNG government is ambitiously relying on them. National plans such as Vision 2050 and PNGDSP simply reinforce unsustainable demands for growth bankrolled by the natural resource extraction (see GoPNG 2014:121).

Global trends and PNG's development planning

In the years after independence, major setbacks to the economy became apparent. The 1980s saw a decline in agricultural and metal prices, volatile oil prices and, most significantly, the 1989 closure of the Bougainville copper mine in the face of an armed insurgency. Between 1988 and 1992, PNG experienced an economic (and political) crisis initiated by the Bougainville rebellion. The situation was further exacerbated by the withdrawal of direct budget support from the Australian government. One of the government responses to this crisis was an appeal for assistance from the World Bank, which was provided in the form of three adjustment loans (1990, 1995 and 2000).

The conditions attached to these tranches of loans involved efforts to privatise state assets or functions, deregulate the national economy, remove trade barriers and more. A gradual move was underway

from regulation to investment promotion. The fact that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP exhort the rapid and uncritical liberalisation of the PNG economy to the global economy directly conflicts 'with the third national goal and directive principle of the constitution, which cautions against "dependence on imported skills and resources"' (Chand and Yala 2012:48). Even the current *Papua New Guinea National Trade Policy 2017–2032* interprets the NGDPs to mean 'a broad-based economic growth that will ensure integral human development and the attainment of national [economic] sovereignty, among others' (Department of Trade, Commerce and Industry 2017:39). Again, it is demonstrably evident that policy documents in PNG are left to public officials' interpretations as to how the NGDPs are advanced. PNG's integration into global trade agreements is justified by vaguely ascribing loose citations of the NGDPs. In the absence of any coherent standards on how the NGDPs are defined in policy outcomes, it is simply taken at face value that development plans or trade policies are compatible with the ideals of the NGDPs.

After 35 years of independence, Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP merely reinforce commonplace rhetoric of development planning. Some of the development agendas promoted in these recent policy documents have been in the foreground of development planning in PNG since the late 1980s. Presently, the emphasis on the liberalisation agenda is perceived as a policy choice to advance the development aspirations in the CPC report and the preamble to the constitution, and is used to promote the development strategies of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. Far from advancing the ideals of the CPC and the NGDPs, Vision 2050 and PNGDSP, when scrutinised, actually promote strategies directly incompatible with them.

Part II: Vision 2050, PNGDSP and the Foundational National Goals And Directive Principles

Two assumptions about Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP

After almost a decade (2009–19) of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP informing policy planning in PNG, it is worth assessing their two central assumptions. Firstly, the idea that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are 'homegrown' is inaccurate. By tracking the place of these two policy documents in PNG's development thinking, it is possible to see the influence of global trends, which tend to be at odds with the core values of

the NGDPs.

Since at least the 1990s, the creation of a globally competitive PNG economy and the liberalisation of the domestic PNG economy have been commonly articulated in policy documents. Russell Hangatt's statement that for the 'first time PNG has taken a long-term focus on development planning and is the first time planning has been fully home grown with donors shut out of the formulation of the PNGDSP' (2011:1) requires qualification. The argument that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are homegrown policy documents is untenable. Both Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are a culmination of the notion that economic growth and improved standards of living are best undertaken through enhancing the competitiveness and investor-friendly appeal of the domestic PNG economy. This paper argues that recent development blueprints are driven by PNG's increasing conformity to global policy trends, rather than the realistic pursuit of the aspirations contained in the NGDPs. The NGDPs are merely referenced as an afterthought in policy documents for the express purpose of giving the documents a veneer of legitimacy. Evidently, any document that claims its conformity to the NGDPs in the preamble to the constitution passes the flimsiest of tests without the need for rigorous scrutiny.

Secondly, the argument that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are consistent with PNG's NGDPs is one public officials simply evoke in seeking to legitimise policy documents. The writers of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP claim that the documents are complementary to the ideas of the Constitutional Planning Committee and the NGDPs — but are they?

It is usually taken at face value that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP espouse the same ideals as the Constitutional Planning Committee report and the NGDPs. For instance, Sam Koim asserts that 'the aims of Vision 2050 do not seem different from the National Goals and Directive Principles cherished in our Constitution' (2014:28). By all appearances, invoking the NGDPs is a post-independence routine in policymaking; a convenient ploy at cloaking national development plans with an authoritative stamp of approval. At best, the referencing of the NGDPs is a careless endeavour without any substantive commitment to understanding how the actual principles or goals of the NGDPs are enhanced in national development blueprints. When a thorough reading of the development plans is undertaken, some

of the development strategies blatantly contradict the intentions of the NGDPs. Rather than furthering the NGDPs, the complete opposite outcome ensues.

Hence, there is nothing radically novel about Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. The development programs in these documents are no different from programs already making the rounds under the auspices of multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. For instance, the PNGDSP envisages that economic growth will be 'undertaken through facilitating competition, enhancing the operation of markets, improving the effectiveness of government services relied upon by the private sector and removing impediments' (Department of National Planning and Monitoring 2010:30). These all-too-familiar prescriptions are the modes of domestication from the economic policies of the multilateral bodies PNG is party to.

Development plans and neoliberalism

Domestic competitiveness and the unfettered operationalisation of the markets are the overall objectives of neoliberal policy prescriptions. The assumption is that openness to trade is a key determinant of positive economic growth (see Waciarg 2002). In this context, neither Vision 2050 nor the PNGDSP are motivated by the genuine intention of furthering the goals of the NGDPs and PNG's national interests. Rather, both documents pre-empt the positioning of PNG to capture whatever benefits from greater global economic integration.

What is evident from the development strategies of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP is the shrinking of what Kevin P. Gallagher (2008) refers to as a country's 'policy space'. A policy space is 'the flexibility under trade rules that provides nation states with adequate room to manoeuvre to deploy effective policies to spur economic development' (Gallagher 2008:63). PNG's integration into the global economy may be with the intention to attract investments and capital. But if this is the only motivation in the framing of national development blueprints, it overlooks domestic guidelines for policy thinking — in PNG's case, the pre-existing NGDPs.

The relationship between Vision 2050/the PNGDSP and the NGDPs

For all the grandiose claims of conformity to the NGDPs, no attempt has been undertaken to cross-examine the very nature of the relationship between

Vision 2050 or the PNGDSP and the NGDPs. Papua New Guineans are naturally accepting of what is deemed legitimate when the NGDPs are referenced in official policy documents. Vergil Narokobi noticed this anomaly:

Vision 2050 did not consider how the Constitution, either in its present state or through reforms, could effectively respond to developmental challenges using the NGDP and BSO [Basic Social Obligations]. Nor did it take up the CPC's proposal to create a permanent parliamentary committee to review laws and policies to determine their alignment with the NGDP and BSO (2016:62).

In essence, policies and official intentions of governments are created with little scrutiny as to whether they conform to the expectations of the NGDPs.

Interestingly, the available literature on Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP only iterates the preconditions needed for the successful implementation of these national development strategies. For instance, Tabian Ambang assessed the initial implementation of Vision 2050 since its inception in 2009. Ambang argues that 'human development has been largely ignored' (2012:85) in the six years since the introduction of Vision 2050, with institutional constraints such as infrastructure, law and order, political instability and corruption serious problems. Whilst there has been interest in creating a supportive environment towards the implementation of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP, there has been little coverage of the link between these two policy documents and the NGDPs.

Uncovering the relationship between Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP and the NGDPs should enable Papua New Guineans to determine how the aspirations enshrined in the constitution are being conveniently used as rhetorical justification for development planning in PNG. Through a concerted effort to revisit the NGDPs and the evolution of policy planning experiences in PNG, Papua New Guineans are urged to critique the kinds of development agendas promoted in national development plans, but more importantly revisit the idea of creating the institutional framework to implement the NGDPs as recommended by the CPC.

When StaRS was formulated in 2013, it was critical of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. StaRS demonstrates how incongruous Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are to the idea of sustainable development and the unmanageable dependence on the extractive

sector of the economy for national development. The StaRS blueprint also implies an almost blatant misrepresentation of the fundamental principles of the NGDPs in both Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. If these national development blueprints have different ideas about how development is attained, then the very process of deciphering the intentions of the NGDPs is a free-for-all task for anyone writing national development policies. There is no standard or official criteria for assessing the compatibility of development initiatives and the NGDPs. In that vacuum, the NGDPs have become a mere rubber-stamp for national development plans, rhetorically applied without any consideration of the intended outcome.

Part III: How Do Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP Misrepresent the Intentions of the NGDPs?

Some notable features of both Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are antithetical to the ideals of the CPC and the NGDPs. Further, the implementations of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are premised on an effective government system. Though Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP claim to align themselves to the NGDPs, this section argues that the NGDPs are cited in them without any thorough conviction or concern for their intentions. Moreover, the blatant misrepresentation of the NGDPs is a self-defeating exercise in giving these national aspirations practical meaning in the lives of Papua New Guineans. The fact that the StaRS document points this out means that national policy planning is not guided by any standard adherence to the NGDPs.

Domestic development and global competitiveness

Firstly, the language of Vision 2050 promotes an unrestrained, open-ended liberalisation of the economy of PNG. In explicit terms, Vision 2050 states: '[T]aking into account the emerging global economic trends, Vision 2050 seeks to position Papua New Guinea in the global environment in order to maximise its comparative and competitive advantages' (GoPNG 2010:2). Vision 2050 is specific when it states that:

Trade liberalisation, preceded by domestic structural reforms, will result in lowering the cost of doing business and will lead to efficiency and higher productivity. Local industries, and the manufacturing industry, in particular, have been vocal about this. This is a challenge that needs to be urgently addressed' (GoPNG 2010:23).

The Directional and Enabling Statements of Vision

2050 provide key prerequisites for the PNG economy to compete globally through ‘tariff reduction’, ‘increased trade’ and ‘land reform’ (GoPNG 2010:4).

Opening the PNG market in an attempt to stay globally competitive will be beneficial in the short term; however, it is at the expense of local development, the dignity of PNG citizens and, even more significantly, the political sovereignty of the country. Ha-Joon Chang cautions that even though foreign direct investment ‘can be a very useful tool for development’, its usefulness is dependent not only on ‘how the host country government regulates it’, but also the kinds of investments ‘made in the host country’ (2007:85–86). Chang’s warning is particularly relevant. When the CPC first addressed the subject of foreign investment, they specifically recommended ‘very strict controls’ and that foreign investment be considered in light of the long-term development it would provide for the workforce and skill sets of Papua New Guineans (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/9).

In the assessment of the CPC, the local economic base that was intended to take off through the insightful integration of planning and decision-making in the years after independence was perhaps a lost opportunity to truly give effect to economic independence and political sovereignty. To be fair, the CPC did not explicitly propose an export-oriented model of economic development, nor did it propose that all aspects of development be tailored towards meeting the expectations of a global economic system. The strength of PNG’s global competitiveness must first be seen in its domestic innovation and capacity to first and foremost protect the welfare of its citizens.

StaRS, on the other hand, is critical of unceasing dependence on capital-driven economic development. Further, StaRS concedes that previous policies:

have been more concerned with improving the rate of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) led and financed growth in ways which helped government revenue but had further exacerbated the dependency and rent seeking culture as well as disempowered people from meaningfully participating in commerce and business and economic development (GoPNG 2014:27).

‘Economic corridors’ and the disempowerment of sub-national levels of government

Whilst Vision 2050 promotes an outward orientation in economic relations, the PNGDSP is even more

disempowering. In its justifications for the redistribution of development, the PNGDSP proposes the use of ‘economic corridors’, to which a whole chapter (Part 2) of the PNGDSP is devoted. Economic corridors are considered the ‘main vehicle through which the PNGDSP will be implemented to improve the standard of living for the disadvantaged in rural areas of PNG’ (Hangatt 2011).

The proposal for the creation of economic corridors must be assessed in relation to the pre-existing sub-national systems of government. The second NGDP states: ‘We declare our second goal to be for all citizens to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, the development of our country’. In principle, the current decentralised system of government under the *Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments 1995* (hereinafter the Organic Law) provides avenues for citizens to have a direct say in the affairs of their communities.

In addition, the Organic Law provides the structure of the local level government, comprising assemblies made up of elected ward members, ward development committees and village planning committees. These are avenues through which citizens participate directly in influencing decisions at the sub-national levels of government, or in framing development initiatives in their communities. Moreover, the mobilisation of local capital, and hence, self-reliance is fostered through direct ownership of decision-making at the local levels of government.

The PNGDSP’s proposal of the creation of Economic Corridor Implementation Authorities (ECIAs) is an indication of policy planners’ distrust of sub-national levels of government established under the Organic Law. This proposal to create additional institutions in direct competition with sub-national governments is not unique to the PNGDSP. Against the backdrop of failed distributional capacities by the national government, resorting to institutional remedies is seen as a quick fix to developmental challenges in PNG (see, for instance, Axline 1993). But while the ECIAs are envisaged as mechanisms to instigate economic growth centres, such entities will further diminish the legitimacy of these constitutionally prescribed tiers of sub-national government. Local level governments already face severe capacity-related deficiencies. Successive failures by the national government in investing in the technical and administrative capacities of the provincial and local level governments has allowed for the deterioration of their leading development initiatives (see GoPNG 1982).

Recognising choices in the path to development

Another dimension of the disempowering aspects of the PNGDSP and Vision 2050 are their use of economic growth as an end. When development is approached exhaustively from this perspective, it denies any creative approach to understanding it on PNG's terms, as proposed by the CPC. Referencing Vanuatu's experiences, Aminio David and Anita Tenkon were rightfully critical of the obsession with economic growth as the sole indicator of development in Melanesia:

We know how important it is for us to protect our land and traditional livelihoods because it is all too easy to follow the Western aim of economic growth like PNG, where they achieved that end but experienced some of the worst development standards in the region. Indeed, indicators have become worse, yet the aim of economic growth using the same failed methods continues unquestioned (2015).

These sentiments by the ni-Vanuatu commentators make sense when one considers how Indigenous and Melanesian world views of well-being are taken as alternative indicators (Malvatumauri National Council of Chiefs 2012). Vanuatu has ingeniously deployed Melanesian-oriented approaches — a critical step to negotiating for sustainable development and humane dimensions in its development discourse. When comparing the alternative models of assessing well-being, factors such as access to customary land, language vitality and social relationships are privileged as starting points in the ni-Vanuatu measure of well-being. On the other hand, Vision 2050, though extolling the 'time-tested cultures' (GoPNG 2010:41) of PNG, omits any practical use of PNG's cultural heritage, even in policy planning exercises.

For PNG, Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP align development to time-bound and quantifiable targets. Ideas about the need for timeframes and set targets have evidently influenced development planning. The most ambitious attempt on a global scale was the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Governments had to commit their countries to working towards domesticating and achieving the eight MDGs by the year 2015 (within a period of 15 years from 2000 to 2015). One gets the impression here of the manner in which 'global targets' effectively put governments on notice in fulfilling their domestic commitments to global developmental goals. Moreover,

the PNG government has adopted the idea that its meeting these developmental priorities has to be assessed in relation to international benchmarks. The issue of whether domestic capacities and alternatives exist in framing development is somehow lost in this linear notion of development.

The PNGDSP and Vision 2050 also assume that income per capita is the most important measure of individual well-being. Higher income levels are equated with improved quality of life for PNG citizens. Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP assume that economic growth will be the panacea for the social and economic well-being of individual citizens. At the macro-level, their references to 'middle-income country' status guide how development is projected and timeframes are used to drastically engineer 'economic growth'.

Land reform

Land reform is another critical area that needs to be assessed for consistency with the spirit of the CPC report and the NGDPs. In Vision 2050, four scenarios are laid out for the first 10 ten years, from 2010 to 2020, that seek to diversify the economic base. These four scenarios are: (1) The Base Case; (2) Land Reform; (3) Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project and (4) Cumulative Scenario.

In scenario two, Vision 2050 directs that 'land reform is undertaken starting in 2010' with the aim of freeing up 'three per cent more of customary land' into the formal sector. More importantly, the assumption is that land reform will induce 'people to participate in income-generating activities through cultivation of their land', leading to 'broad-based economic growth and ensure balanced development in rural and urban areas' (GoPNG 2010:26). Thus, 'decision-makers should not relent in their push for land reform, as the multiplier effects of such a reform would reverberate throughout the country past the life-span of the LNG project' (*ibid.*). An open-ended proposal is denoted in the tone of this relentless program of land reforms.

The anticipated land reforms are projected to contribute to a growth in PNG's real gross domestic product (GDP) from 'K9.7 [in 2010] to K12.5 billion [in 2020], which is an increase of K2.8 billion' (GoPNG 2010:4). Mass participation in economic ventures by citizens is the anticipated outcome of the land reform exercise. Land reforms are premised on the:

need to ensure that all land with formal titles, either on land owned by customary land-owning

social units or by the State was secure enough to be utilised as collateral for loans from the mainstream financial sector (Yala 2010:2).

On the other hand, the PNGDSP is markedly more ambitious in its land reform agenda. While Vision 2050 proposes a further three per cent of customary land comes into production in the formal sector between 2010 to 2020, the PNGDSP sets a 2030 target to ‘increase land use within the formal administration system to over 20% of PNG’s land mass’ (Department of National Planning and Monitoring 2010:43). The PNGDSP predicts ‘the introduction of tenure security and transparent land markets … will lead to higher rates of investment and higher productivity in land intensive industries such as agriculture’ (*ibid.*). The PNGDSP estimates that a total of ‘682,000 extra jobs will be generated by 2030’ and an ‘additional K18 billion of GDP’ will be added to the economy as a direct result of the land reform exercise (*ibid.*).

The reality, however, is that the practice of land acquisition for agricultural purposes has been fraught with serious problems. Colin Filer (2011) provides alarming details about the total amount of land now in the hands of national and foreign corporate entities, illustrating the nexus between foreign and Indigenous commercial interests (see also Hambloch 2018). It is becoming clear that if political power is misapplied in the advancement of the NGDPs, they do not appear as guiding principles in the day-to-day operations of instrumentalities of the state and political leaders.

Since 2003, ‘more than 10% of Papua New Guinea’s landmass has been handed over to foreign and national corporate interests under 99-year Special Agricultural and Business Leases (SABL)’ (Pacific Institute of Public Policy 2011:2). Whilst Vision 2050 designates a timeframe of 10 years for the freeing up of three percent of land for development purposes, the SABL scheme have seen to it that this goal is already ‘ahead of schedule’, with 12 per cent of the country (5.5 million hectares of land) now in the hands of foreign corporations (Mousseau 2013:3). Elaborate schemes for boosting an export-based agriculture sector will be at the expense of local food security if monocultures are the expressed agriculture production choice.

Consider also that the economic modelling used in Vision 2050’s projection, labelled flawed by Anderson (2013), throws into question the integrity of the projected economic growth rate estimated in Vision

2050’s Scenario Two. It is this same economic modelling that was at the centre of the overly optimistic projections of the PNG LNG project in 2008 (see Flanagan and Fletcher 2018). The track record of this economic modelling tool is questionable in the case of the PNG LNG project, even though it continues to ‘produce very unreliable and upbeat results’ (Flanagan and Fletcher 2018:42).

Moreover, the control of land that has persisted for generations allows for a diversity of food crops and other agricultural commodities to be produced towards sustaining PNG’s predominantly rural-based communities. While land-based agriculture provides nutrition and an abundant choices of food sources, arable land is a fast disappearing commodity for the subsistence agriculture sector to thrive.

As the experience with SABL demonstrates, land alienation compromises economic sovereignty and self-reliance in a predominantly agrarian PNG setting. Land, including local labour, is the main mode of production completely in the hands of Indigenous Papua New Guineans. Having access to land is the basis on which economic self-reliance and some semblance of economic sovereignty are guaranteed. Customary control of land and the promotion of subsistence-based land use need to be considered for their associated non-monetary benefits (Mousseau 2013). A study conducted by Tim Anderson (2015) supports the view that one need not register land to engage meaningfully in the cash economy. The agriculture sector can sustain ‘hybrid livelihoods’, where the diversification of food crops and cash crops can enhance the income-earning opportunities of Papua New Guineans.

Papua New Guineans having access to their customary land and using it for their collective benefit is an expressive element of the sense of control Papua New Guineans have over their options for development. However, it is ironic that a program of land reforms is not subjected to the NGDPs framework of vetting. Unscrupulous behaviours in terms of land grabbing were described as a ‘time bomb’ by Sir Leo Dion, a former deputy prime minister of PNG (*The National* 29 June 2015:7). In land administration alone, there is a disconnect between the commitment to the principles of national sovereignty and self-reliance and the actual practices of mostly foreign investors.

The resource sector and the longevity and impact of development strategies

Finally, the projected economic growth (demonstrated through data) spurred on by the mining and petroleum sectors is one factor in the framing of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. The development of the LNG project is at the heart of the elaborate interest in their creation as long-term development master plans. Clearly these two national policy documents were developed in anticipation of ‘capturing and utilising’ the revenues from the LNG project. In PNG, mining and petroleum traditionally tend to create inflated expectations, and it is no coincidence that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP do the same.

Moreover, it is unlikely that Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are enduring because they are not institutionalised in statutory provisions — they are simply political expenditure plans or vague visions of development envisaged at the whim of political leaders and public officials. The record of PNG policy planning is replete with examples of the inability of national plans to make a difference to the pattern of public expenditure. What used to be called the ‘development budget’ in the first two decades after independence is now largely allocated to national MPs in the way of ‘slush funds’ — DSIPs (District Services Improvement Program funds) and PSIPs (Provincial Services Improvement Program funds) — none of whom are apparently obliged to justify their spending by reference to these planning documents. Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP face the same prospects.

The PNGDSP acknowledges that out of the K4.2 billion in foreign equity investment in 2007, ‘73.6 per cent of this foreign equity investment was accounted for by the large mineral sector’ (Department of National Planning and Monitoring 2010:34), indicating the significant role of the mining and petroleum sectors on the economy. PNG has adopted an investor-friendly regime for its extractive industry and the associated dilemmas of being dependent on the extractive sector are rife.

As a consequence of its dependence on mining and resource extraction, PNG is still faced with ‘uneven development and few local linkages between the extractive industry and local communities, thus rendering PNG politics and economy dominated by transnational companies’ (Roche 2015). National development plans depend on rent from mining, petroleum and foreign aid for their implementation.

Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP reinforce this logic. Any serious efforts by PNG to extricate itself from unfulfilled expectations will include limiting the pinning of development plans to projected windfalls from the extractive sectors. This is not in any way a novel proposal (see, for instance, GoPNG 1997). The final part of this paper dissects areas of departure from the NGDPs in StaRS. The argument then is to see StaRS as a convenient starting point in a national conversation on alternative models to Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP.

Part IV: The Way Forward

The National Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development for PNG (StaRS)

In 2013, the Department of National Planning and Monitoring was tasked with revisiting the development thinking of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP. The review of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP was timely, as it elevated development priorities that are ‘truly strategic in a rapidly changing world’ (GoPNG 2014:17). This effort led to the creation of StaRS.

The introduction of StaRS is considered a catalyst for the examination of the ‘very development paradigm itself — the underlying values and belief system that underpin the model’ (GoPNG 2014:9). As highlighted previously, Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP promote an unsustainable development paradigm. But simply revisiting the idea of development will not suffice. Bringing the NGDPs into this discourse is fundamental because they are, after all, the enduring guiding philosophy for development, hitherto uncritically cited in development policies and plans in post-independence PNG. In natural resource development, for instance, the PNG Law Reform Commission recommended the building ‘into legislation, wherever possible, justiciable guidelines for resource licensing and development which take into account the National Goals and Directive Principles’ (1990:3). Essentially, the idea of translating the NGDPs into specific guidelines is not a radical proposition.

StaRS provides a good starting point for the national conversation about the intentions of the NGDPs because it challenges the model espoused by development blueprints like the PNGDSP and Vision 2050 (GoPNG 2014:21). Under StaRS, the notion of inclusive development is embraced. StaRS seeks to integrate economic, social and environmental challenges into national planning efforts. It is a middle-

ground approach between the growth-oriented outlook of the PNGDSP and Vision 2050 and the NGDPs.

The inclusive growth strategy

Firstly, StaRS introduces the notion of inclusive growth as a development strategy, which is a process that allows for 'equal access of all on health, education, employment and increased social knowledge' (GoPNG 2014:37). Inclusive growth is 'aimed at achieving equity between women and men and between rural and urban areas' (*ibid.*). Vision 2050, and similarly the PNGDSP, envisage that economic growth naturally allows for increased income-earning opportunities for Papua New Guineans, resulting in a higher quality of life (*ibid.*). In contrast, StaRS acknowledges that economic growth incurs costs that have irreversible effects on ecology, social structures of society and long-term well-being of peoples. Economic growth in PNG has historically been premised on the performance of the extractive sector.

Where Vision 2050 perceives economic growth and its flow-on effects as the measures of development, StaRS promotes a development approach that considers the natural ecology and social context in which Papua New Guineans relate to their natural environment. StaRS gives formal recognition to the relationship between the development aspirations of Papua New Guineans and their possible effects on the natural environment. In this, StaRS is consistent with the broader agendas of the NGDPs and less consistent with the stated outcomes of Vision 2050. According to StaRS:

PNG's development will follow the path of inclusive and innovative green growth which helps improve income and employment through the creation of innovative green jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, improve environmental sustainability, and enhances the quality of life of the people (GoPNG 2014:34).

With PNG's experiences of unequal distribution of wealth and destructive practices in the extractive sectors of the economy, StaRS has identified the realities of resource governance. Unaccountable and mostly weak public institutions have been implicated in both the lack of translation of wealth into overall improved standards of living as well as the destruction of the natural environment.

The United Nations Development Program diagnosed this policy-making paradox: 'Despite the importance given to natural environment in the

constitution and policy documents such as Vision 2050, the institutions of governance for the environment are relatively weak' (2014:65). While multinational corporations involved in the extractive industries use international best practices in their activities in PNG, this is not complemented domestically given the weak regulatory framework of the PNG government. The NGDPs are treated as a rhetorical attitude rather than as guiding principles in decision-making.

PNG economic growth in a global environmental context

Secondly, StaRS acknowledges the global challenges of planetary survival, where relentless demands for finite resources affect ecological stability and the natural environment. In PNG, StaRS claims to be a 'new thinking' that 'challenges the view that economic growth [be] built on the back of the extraction and export of raw natural resources' (GoPNG 2014: 28).

StaRS 'introduces an alternative development paradigm and redirects the focus of planning towards economic development that is more appropriate and responsible in a future that is changing' (*ibid.*). Clearly, StaRS is a serious attempt to integrate environmental concerns and natural resource use into development planning. With primary commodity-producing economies such as PNG, the sustainability of the natural environment is not guaranteed when development is pinned to finite non-renewable resources and unrestrained growth (GoPNG 2014:21). StaRS makes a case for the 'responsible management and use' of natural resources (GoPNG 2014:16).

StaRS presents an opportunity to not only interrogate PNG's development paradigm but, more importantly, generate the political will to bring the NGDPs into practical usage in guiding policy development thinking. So far, the implementations of the PNGDSP and Vision 2050 have been hampered by a lack of attention by the government to create enabling legislations. In the same vein as Vision 2050, the ambitious timeframe earmarked for the implementation of the PNGDSP is seriously undermined by the absence of its statutory relevance and the political will to implement sustainable models of growth (Baloiloi 2016). Corruption and the misallocation of resources in the implementation of national plans must also be accounted for. That corruption and the wasteful mismanagement of public resources are not treated as constraints to development is a disservice to these development blueprints. Corruption does not even

appear as an important planning variable in these supposed national development blueprints. The overly optimistic plans operate on the assumption that public resources will be equitably and efficiently allocated in their implementation.

Trade policy

Finally, striking a balance in PNG's outward economic relations is vital to protecting the economic sovereignty and well-being of PNG citizens. In official circles:

Papua New Guinea remains committed to a trade policy focused on economically viable downstream processing and value added production of its natural resources, as well as economic diversification to utilise international trade for economic growth and development
(World Trade Organization 2010:11).

However, in keeping with the CPC's recommendations, 'very strict controls' (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:2/9) are necessary in PNG's trade policy.

Trade policies that favour these strategies will induce productivity and innovation. The manufacturing sector is recognised as 'the most important, though not the only, route to prosperity' (Chang 2007:201). One way to protect PNG's economic sovereignty and diversify the economy beyond its commodity-driven status is to invest in downstream processing, more specifically, manufacturing. Whilst StaRS has committed PNG to 'green innovation' (GoPNG 2014:45), the intended beneficiary of green innovation is PNG's nascent manufacturing sector.

Conclusion

This paper provides an examination of Vision 2050, the PNGDSP and claims that they advance the ideas contained in the NGDPs. Because the trend has been to ascribe the conformity of development blueprints to the NGDPs, it is usually taken at face value that these blueprints are consistent with the aims of the NGDPs. But as this paper reveals, a careful reading of the strategies in these developmental plans shows that they do not necessarily correlate with the ideals of the NGDPs.

Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP are not original in the development paradigm they espouse. Both national policy documents simply iterate commonplace development thinking—even from policies initiated through the various phases of structural adjustment programs since the 1990s. Global competitiveness is the motivation and inspiration for the creation of Vision

2050 and the PNGDSP. The NGDPs are incorrectly ascribed as being represented in Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP when they have been simply used to rubber-stamp them.

Interpretation of the NGDPs is ultimately placed in the hands and wisdom of policymakers, who may be well-intentioned, but at liberty to devise and interpret the purpose of the NGDPs at their own discretion without any consistent scrutiny and vetting. Encouraging informed discussion on the NGDPs is critical in generating greater awareness of their merits (or otherwise) and the possibility of their relevance to development thinking.

The introduction of StaRS is a timely starting point to revisit the relevance of the NGDPs in development plans today. Whilst StaRS is critical of Vision 2050 and the PNGDSP, it ultimately demonstrates that there is no consensus on how the NGDPs are understood by public officials. In the domestic politics of PNG, there is also a political dimension to the failure of implementing the NGDPs. It creates a legitimacy deficit that over the long term compounds lack of confidence in those national goals envisaged on the eve of PNG's independence, and prolongs the obscurity of the NGDPs in the consciousness of PNG citizens. When national programs are couched in the legitimising effect of the NGDPs, but are detrimental to the principles and goals in the NGDPs, it creates a level of public disillusionment about the relevance of the NGDPs.

This paper advocates for a national conversation on agreed-upon standards for how the NGDPs are understood and their place in the decision-making processes of PNG. The CPC proposed the creation of a 'Permanent Committee to review laws and policies for compliance with the Human Rights and Obligations and National Goals and Directive Principles set out in the Constitution' (Constitutional Planning Committee 1974:5/1/20). This body could ultimately be mandated to review the laws and policies of the PNG government to determine their consistency with various development plans and policies. The official recognition and promotion of the spirit of the NGDPs is a practical approach to reminding PNG citizens of the relevance of pre-independence aspirations and, more importantly, the legitimacy of the constitution as a timeless document.

Author notes

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Annexure 1: National Goals and Directive Principles – Extract of the Preamble to the Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea

WE HEREBY PROCLAIM the following aims as our National Goals, and direct all persons and bodies, corporate and unincorporate, to be guided by these our declared Directives in pursuing and achieving our aims:

1. Integral human development.

We declare our first goal to be for every person to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination or oppression so that each man or woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relationship with others

WE ACCORDINGLY CALL FOR—

- (1) everyone to be involved in our endeavours to achieve integral human development of the whole person for every person and to seek fulfilment through his or her contribution to the common good; and
- (2) education to be based on mutual respect and dialogue, and to promote awareness of our human potential and motivation to achieve our National Goals through self-reliant effort; and
- (3) all forms of beneficial creativity, including sciences and cultures, to be actively encouraged; and
- (4) improvement in the level of nutrition and the standard of public health to enable our people to attain self fulfilment; and
- (5) the family unit to be recognized as the fundamental basis of our society, and for every step to be taken to promote the moral, cultural, economic and social standing of the Melanesian family; and
- (6) development to take place primarily through the use of Papua New Guinean forms of social and political organization.

2. Equality and participation

We declare our second goal to be for all citizens to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, the development of our country.

WE ACCORDINGLY CALL FOR—

- (1) an equal opportunity for every citizen to take part in the political, economic, social, religious and

cultural life of the country; and Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea Preamble

- (2) the creation of political structures that will enable effective, meaningful participation by our people in that life, and in view of the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of our people for those structures to provide for substantial decentralization of all forms of government activity; and
- (3) every effort to be made to achieve an equitable distribution of incomes and other benefits of development among individuals and throughout the various parts of the country; and
- (4) equalization of services in all parts of the country, and for every citizen to have equal access to legal processes and all services, governmental and otherwise, that are required for the fulfilment of his or her real needs and aspirations; and
- (5) equal participation by women citizens in all political, economic, social and religious activities; and
- (6) the maximization of the number of citizens participating in every aspect of development; and
- (7) active steps to be taken to facilitate the organization and legal recognition of all groups engaging in development activities; and
- (8) means to be provided to ensure that any citizen can exercise his personal creativity and enterprise in pursuit of fulfilment that is consistent with the common good, and for no citizen to be deprived of this opportunity because of the predominant position of another; and
- (9) every citizen to be able to participate, either directly or through a representative, in the consideration of any matter affecting his interests or the interests of his community; and
- (10) all persons and governmental bodies of Papua New Guinea to ensure that, as far as possible, political and official bodies are so composed as to be broadly representative of citizens from the various areas of the country; and
- (11) all persons and governmental bodies to endeavour to achieve universal literacy in Pisin, Hiri Motu or English, and in “tok ples” or “ita eda tano gado”; and
- (12) recognition of the principles that a complete relationship in marriage rests on equality of rights and duties of the partners, and that responsible parenthood is based on that equality.

3. National sovereignty and self-reliance

We declare our third goal to be for Papua New Guinea

to be politically and economically independent, and our economy basically self-reliant.

WE ACCORDINGLY CALL FOR—

- (1) our leaders to be committed to these National Goals and Directive Principles, to ensure that their freedom to make decisions is not restricted by obligations to or relationship with others, and to make all of their decisions in the national interest; and
- (2) all governmental bodies to base their planning for political, economic and social development on these Goals and Principles; and
- (3) internal interdependence and solidarity among citizens, and between provinces, to be actively promoted; and Preamble Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea
- (4) citizens and governmental bodies to have control of the bulk of economic enterprise and production; and
- (5) strict control of foreign investment capital and wise assessment of foreign ideas and values so that these will be subordinate to the goal of national sovereignty and self-reliance, and in particular for the entry of foreign capital to be geared to internal social and economic policies and to the integrity of the Nation and the People; and
- (6) the State to take effective measures to control and actively participate in the national economy, and in particular to control major enterprises engaged in the exploitation of natural resources; and
- (7) economic development to take place primarily by the use of skills and resources available in the country either from citizens or the State and not in dependence on imported skills and resources; and
- (8) the constant recognition of our sovereignty, which must not be undermined by dependence on foreign assistance of any sort, and in particular for no investment, military or foreign-aid agreement or understanding to be entered into that imperils our self-reliance and selfrespect, or our commitment to these National Goals and Directive Principles, or that may lead to substantial dependence upon or influence by any country, investor, lender or donor.

4. Natural resources and environment

We declare our fourth goal to be for Papua New Guinea's natural resources and environment to be conserved and used for the collective benefit of us all, and be replenished for the benefit of future generations.

WE ACCORDINGLY CALL FOR—

- (1) wise use to be made of our natural resources and the environment in and on the land or seabed, in the sea, under the land, and in the air, in the interests of our development and in trust for future generations; and
- (2) the conservation and replenishment, for the benefit of ourselves and posterity, of the environment and its sacred, scenic, and historical qualities; and
- (3) all necessary steps to be taken to give adequate protection to our valued birds, animals, fish, insects, plants and trees.

5. Papua New Guinean ways

We declare our fifth goal to be to achieve development primarily through the use of Papua New Guinean forms of social, political and economic organization.

WE ACCORDINGLY CALL FOR—

- (1) a fundamental re-orientation of our attitudes and the institutions of government, commerce, education and religion towards Papua New Guinean forms of participation, consultation, and consensus, and a continuous renewal of the responsiveness of these institutions to the needs and attitudes of the People; and
- (2) particular emphasis in our economic development to be placed on smallscale artisan, service and business activity; and Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea Preamble
- (3) recognition that the cultural, commercial and ethnic diversity of our people is a positive strength, and for the fostering of a respect for, and appreciation of, traditional ways of life and culture, including language, in all their richness and variety, as well as for a willingness to apply these ways dynamically and creatively for the tasks of development; and
- (4) traditional villages and communities to remain as viable units of Papua New Guinean society, and for active steps to be taken to improve their cultural, social, economic and ethical quality.



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