



Papua New Guinea

KEY FACTS

Joined Commonwealth: 1975

Population: 7,321,000 (2013)

GDP p.c. growth: 1.9% p.a. 1990–2013

UN HDI 2014: World ranking 157

Official language: English

Time: GMT plus 10 hrs

Currency: Kina (K)

Geography

Area: 462,840 sq km

Coastline: 5,150 km

Capital: Port Moresby

The Independent State of Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific shares a land-border with Indonesia; its other near neighbours are Australia to the south and Solomon Islands to the east.

Papua New Guinea includes the eastern half of the world's second biggest island, New Guinea, bordering the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya to the west. The rest of the country is made up of about 600 small islands, the chief of which are the Bismarck Archipelago, the Trobriands, the Louisiade Archipelago, the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, and some of the islands in the Solomons group, including Bougainville.

The country comprises 22 provinces including the National Capital District (greater Port Moresby) and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Topography: The centre of the main island is a rugged mountainous ridge, with several wide valleys, and foothills north and south. The rivers Sepik and Ramu drain the foothills to the north, and the rivers Fly, Kikori and Purari those in the south. Though fast-flowing, many rivers are navigable. There are active volcanoes along the north coast, and some volcanoes and warm pools in the south-east islands.

Climate: Tropical monsoon. Hot and humid all year, though somewhat cooler in the highlands. Rainfall occurs chiefly December–March. High mountains receive occasional frost, even snow.

Environment: The most significant environmental issues are rainforest deforestation as a result of growing



commercial demand for tropical timber; pollution from mining projects; and severe drought.

Vegetation: Rich and very varied: five kinds of lowland, and 13 kinds of mountain rainforest, five kinds of palm and swamp forests, three differing mangrove forests, and the world's greatest variety of orchid species. Forest covers 63 per cent of the land area, having declined at 0.5 per cent p.a. 1990–2010. Arable land comprises one per cent and permanent cropland less than two per cent of the total land area.

Wildlife: There are no large mammals but a rich variety of marsupials, reptiles and some 700 species of birds, including 38 species of the spectacular bird of paradise and related bower-birds. Papua New Guinea also has many thousands of unusual species of insect including the world's largest species of butterfly, the Queen Alexandra birdwing, and brilliant green scarab beetles which are used for jewellery. Indigenous marsupials include tree kangaroos, wallabies, bandicoots, cuscus and spiny anteaters. Dugongs live in the waters near the coast. The creation of national parks was a slow process, the government being reluctant to interfere with traditional methods of land tenure, but there are now four national parks, and protection measures have been introduced, banning the export of birds of paradise. Some 39 mammal species and 32 bird species are thought to be endangered (2014).

Main towns: Port Moresby (capital, pop. 364,125 in 2011), Lae (Morobe, 155,000),

Arawa (on Bougainville, 38,600), Mount Hagen (Western Highlands, 29,176), Madang (Madang, 29,100), Wewak (East Sepik, 27,031), Goroka (Eastern Highlands, 16,700), Kimbe (on New Britain, 16,004), Daru (Fly River, 14,373), Vanimo (Sandaun, 13,357), Alotau (Milne Bay, 12,628), Kundiawa (Simbu, 11,455), Popondetta (Oro, 10,200), Kavieng (on New Ireland, 9,900), Bulolo (Morobe, 9,850), Mendi (Southern Highlands, 8,500), Kokopo (on New Britain, 6,300), Wau (Morobe, 4,950) and Rabaul (on New Britain, 3,945).

Transport: Construction of roads is hampered by the rugged mountainous environment and the total national road network extends to 19,600 km, 3.5 per cent paved. Port Moresby is perhaps the only capital city that is not linked by road with the rest of the country. There is no railway.

Principal ports are Alotau (on the southern tip of New Guinea), Port Moresby (on the south coast), and Lae, Madang and Wewak (on the north coast), Rabaul (in New Britain), Kieta (Bougainville) and Momote (Manus Island). As there are relatively few roads, river transport is important, for both freight and passengers, and particularly on the River Sepik.

The international airport is Port Moresby at Jackson Field, 11 km from the city. Domestic air services run to all centres of population and industry.

Society

KEY FACTS 2013

Population per sq km: 16

Life expectancy: 62 years

Population: 7,321,000 (2013); 13 per cent of people live in urban areas; growth 2.5 per cent p.a. 1990–2013; birth rate 29 per 1,000 people (42 in 1970); life expectancy 62 years (43 in 1970).

The people are of mixed (mostly Melanesian) race, with small communities of Polynesians on outlying atolls. There is a declining non-indigenous population (several thousand Australians and a small Chinese population).

Language: The official language is English, but Tok Pisin (an English-based Creole) is more widely used, and Hiri Motu is spoken around Port Moresby; there are over 800 indigenous languages.

Religion: Christians 90 per cent (predominantly Protestants), though Christian beliefs often coexist with traditional beliefs.

Health: Public spending on health was four per cent of GDP in 2012. State- and church-run hospitals, dispensaries and clinics, with charges low and related to ability to pay. Some 40 per cent of the population uses an improved drinking water source and 19 per cent have access to adequate sanitation facilities (2012). Infant mortality was 47 per 1,000 live births in 2013 (143 in 1960). In 2013, 0.7 per cent of people aged 15–49 were HIV positive.

Education: There are 12 years of school education comprising six years of primary and six of secondary, with cycles of four and two years. The school year starts in January.

There are four public universities: the University of Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby); Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Lae); University of Goroka (Goroka), which trains teachers; and University of Natural Resources and Environment (Kerevat, East New Britain), which trains people for agriculture and natural resource management. The longest-established private universities include one founded by the Roman Catholic Church, Divine Word University at Madang; and one by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Pacific Adventist University at Boroko, Port Moresby. The National Polytechnic Institute at Lae is one of several tertiary institutions offering courses in technical and vocational education. Literacy among people aged 15–24 is 68 per cent (2010).

Media: Two daily papers, *The National* and *Post-Courier*, are published in English.

In such a large and sparsely populated country radio is the most important information source for most people. The National Broadcasting Corporation provides national and provincial radio stations; and there are several private radio stations.

The private TV service, EMTV, and public National Television Service are only received in and around Port Moresby and the provincial capitals.

Some ten per cent of households have TV sets (2006). There are 64 personal computers per 1,000 people (2005).

Communications: Country code 675; internet domain '.pg'. Mobile coverage is limited. Internet access is generally slow.

For every 1,000 people there are 19 landlines, 410 mobile phone subscriptions and 65 internet users (2013).

Public holidays: New Year's Day, Queen's Official Birthday (Monday in June), Remembrance Day (23 July), Independence and Constitution Day (16 September), Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Regional festivals are held at various times during the year.

Religious festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Economy

KEY FACTS 2013

GNI: US\$14.6bn

GNI p.c.: US\$2,010

GDP growth: 7.2% p.a. 2009–13

Inflation: 5.4% p.a. 2009–13

Though the country is rich in mineral, agricultural, forestry and fisheries resources, development is still in the early stages, and has been hampered by volatile prices for agricultural and mineral exports. In addition, the main population centres are separated by ocean or inhospitable terrain. GDP grew by 1.9 per cent p.a. 1980–90 and 3.8 per cent p.a. 1990–2000.

Government policy has been to aim for steady, sustainable growth with an even sharing of the benefits throughout the country. To this end, it took minority shareholdings in most major industrial and mining developments (up to a maximum of 30 per cent in mineral projects and 22.5 per cent in petroleum projects).

GDP growth was uneven during the 1990s, registering 15 per cent in 1993 as new mining investment came on stream, but falling to –3.6 per cent in 1995, –3.9 per cent in 1997 and –3.8 per cent in 1998. By 1998 the country was in the most serious financial

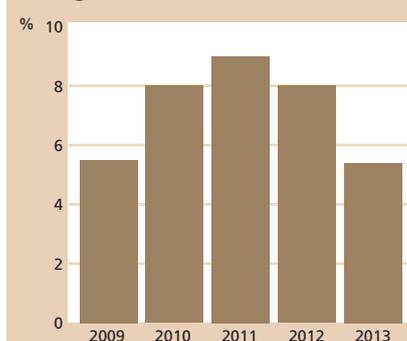
crisis since independence due to a prolonged drought, the continuing Bougainville crisis, the Asian economic downturn and the falling value of the kina. With the support of the World Bank and IMF, the government embarked on economic reforms including a programme of privatisation.

The economy recovered strongly during 1999 but then stalled, with good growth returning from 2003, as new mining and hydrocarbon projects came on stream, recording 4.9 per cent p.a. over 2005–09. There was strong growth in 2007–08, moderating slightly to 5.5 per cent in 2009, in response to the global downturn and collapse of world demand, before strengthening again to eight to nine per cent p.a. in 2010–12, slowing in 2013–14 before surging to an estimated 20 per cent in 2015, driven by exports of natural gas.

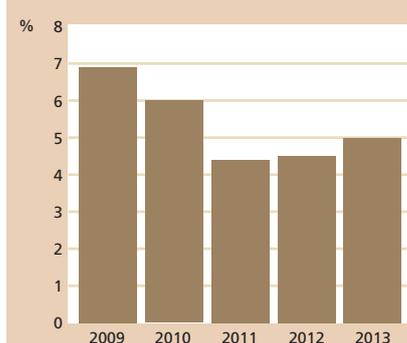
Mining and energy

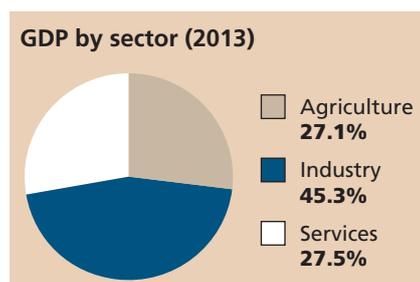
The country is richly endowed with mineral and hydrocarbon resources. Since commercial gold-mining began in 1989, mining and oil and gas production have made a significant contribution to GDP. Oil production started in 1992. There are two oil refineries: one in the Gulf of Papua; and one at Port Moresby. A liquefied natural gas project linking fields in the Southern Highlands and Western Province with an LNG plant at Port Moresby began production and exports in 2014. Reserves of natural gas were estimated in January 2014 to be 200 billion cubic metres.

Real growth in GDP



Inflation





The principal copper mine at Ok Tedi in Western Province was developed and operated by an Australian company and then abandoned. Another important mine on the island of Bougainville closed in 1989 at the outbreak of political instability and, after political resolution in Bougainville, rehabilitation needed huge investment. There are substantial reserves of nickel/cobalt at Ramu in Madang Province. Nickel and cobalt exports – from the new plant at Ramu – started in November 2012 and the plant was due to be producing at full capacity by 2016.

History

Melanesian people inhabited the area from 3000 or 2000 BCE, living in groups isolated by dense forest. In consequence, no larger social order developed, and even today, around 800 languages are spoken. Spanish and Portuguese sailors sighted the land in the early 16th century. There was some limited exploration in the 19th century, and a few settlements made. In 1884, Germany annexed the northern parts and Britain proclaimed a protectorate over the southern parts (which were formally annexed by Britain in 1888 and became British New Guinea). In 1906, Australia took over British New Guinea, renamed a year earlier as the Territory of Papua. The Australian army occupied German New Guinea in World War I and in 1920 Australia received from the League of Nations a mandate for the government of New Guinea, as it was then called.

In 1942 the Japanese army occupied parts of New Guinea and Papua; the Australian

military administered the rest. Under the Papua and New Guinea Act of 1949, the two parts were united for administration as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea and put under United Nations International Trusteeship.

The Act also set up a legislative council, under an administrator, with 28 members, of whom three were elected, nine appointed and 16 official. There had to be at least three Papua New Guineans among the appointed members. Under the Papua and New Guinea Act of 1963, the council became a House of Assembly, with 64 members, ten of them nominated official members.

Consequently, at its opening in June 1964, the House had a majority of elected Papua New Guineans. The following year, the House set up a Select Committee on Constitutional Development, whose recommendations were put into effect in 1967, when the number of elected seats in the House was increased to 84, and in 1968, when a new ministerial system was adopted and an administrator's executive council set up.

In 1970 an appointed spokesman for this council was recognised as the House's leader for government business. In 1971 the select committee recommended that the Territory prepare for self-government. Elections were held in April 1972. The House had 100 elected members, with an additional three appointed and four official members, and Michael Somare became Chief Minister of a coalition government. Self-government was granted at the end of 1973 and in the spring of 1975 Australia gave up certain remaining powers over defence and foreign affairs.

In September 1975 Papua New Guinea proceeded to full independence, becoming an independent sovereign state as a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state, represented by Governor-General, Sir John Guise, a Papua New Guinean.

Sir Michael Somare, the Prime Minister at independence, was returned at the 1977

elections, but a parliamentary defeat in 1980 led to his replacement as Prime Minister by Sir Julius Chan, leader of the People's Progress Party, until 1982 when Parliament re-elected Somare. The 1987 elections brought in another coalition government, headed by Paias Wingti. Somare resigned as leader of the Pangu Pati in May 1988 and a month later his successor, Sir Rabbie Namaliu, became Prime Minister, after Wingti had lost a vote of no confidence in the Parliament. Paias Wingti was returned at the elections of 1992. Sir Julius Chan again became Prime Minister in 1994, following a leadership challenge and Supreme Court ruling. In early 1997 the government dispatched foreign mercenaries to Bougainville. The defence force rounded up and expelled the mercenaries and called for the Prime Minister's resignation. Chan dismissed the defence force chief, but the army refused to recognise his successor and Chan himself resigned in March 1997. The cabinet appointed a caretaker government headed by the Minister for Mining and Petroleum, John Giheno.

In the elections held in June 1997, 16 ministers (including Chan) lost their seats and Bill Skate, the Governor of Port Moresby, was elected Prime Minister by Parliament after a month of negotiations. He headed a four-party coalition comprising his People's National Congress, the People's Democratic Congress and the two constituents of the previous ruling coalition, the People's Progress Party and the Pangu Pati. Beset by corruption scandals and an acute financial crisis, by mid-1999 Skate found his political support, which had at best been fragile, dwindling rapidly. In June 1999 he could no longer count on a majority in Parliament, he resigned as Prime Minister in July shortly before Parliament started its new session, and Sir Mekere Morauta emerged as his successor.

Bougainville

The greatest threat to stability since independence has been the attempted secession of the island of Bougainville, the site of the Panguna copper mine and one of the underpinnings of Papua New Guinea's economy in the 1980s. In 1990, a group calling itself the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) led a movement for secession by the island from Papua New Guinea. This act followed a period of violent political upheaval centred on the copper mine, and then spread through the island's society. Initially, the revolt was focused on the environmental damage caused by the mine and the lack of royalties being paid to the Bougainvilleans.

Numerous attempts were made to solve the problem, which damaged Papua New

Papua New Guinea on the international stage

Former Papua New Guinea politician Dame Carol Kidu, born in Queensland, Australia in 1948, was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2005, and a knight of the Légion d'honneur by France in 2009 for her dedication to helping women and young girls, and her commitment to fighting discrimination.

On the sports front, several Papua New Guineans have played rugby for major clubs abroad. Adrian Lam, born in 1970, played rugby league football professionally in Australia for the Sydney Roosters and the Queensland Maroons, and in the UK for Wigan Warriors, and has gone on to coach the Papua New Guinea national rugby league team. Marcus Bai, born in 1972, played for English rugby league club Bradford Bulls and the Australian side Melbourne Storm, and was the first man to have played in the winning side in the World Club Challenge for three different teams.

Guinea's economy and destroyed Bougainville's, and led to years of violence with many atrocities and the destruction of the mine and other infrastructure.

By 1994 some secessionist leaders were becoming dissatisfied with the hard-line stance of the BRA. At a meeting with the Prime Minister in November 1994, after which the Mirigina Charter was established, they agreed to the setting up of a transitional administration for the North Solomons Province (the Bougainville Transitional Government – BTG), which would have a council of chiefs nominating members of the provincial assembly. This administration was established in early 1995, with Theodore Miriung as its Premier and talks on increased autonomy continued.

In October 1996 Premier Miriung was assassinated. Miriung was replaced by Gerard Sinato, who immediately called for tripartite talks between the BTG, the BRA and the Papua New Guinea government. The government, however, had decided on a military solution and in early 1997 it contracted a group of foreign mercenaries to impose a permanent resolution of the Bougainville crisis. However, Papua New Guinea's defence force immediately took to the streets and detained and then expelled the mercenaries.

In October 1997, following talks in Christchurch, New Zealand, a truce was signed between the new government and many of the Bougainville separatists, though not the BRA led by Francis Ona. After further negotiations, in January 1998 a permanent peace and amnesty were agreed with all the secessionists, taking effect after an official signing ceremony at the end of April 1998, and ending a nine-year conflict which had claimed the lives of some 20,000 people.

A process of negotiation on greater autonomy was initiated: a Bougainville assembly was established in January 1999; the Bougainville Reconciliation Government (BRG) was elected in May 1999 and Joseph Kabui voted President at its first sitting; and he then appointed a team to conduct the negotiations.

In March 2000, the 'Loloata Understanding' was concluded between the BRG and the Papua New Guinea government, setting up the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government.

The Bougainville Peace Agreement was signed in Arawa in August 2001, providing for special autonomous status for Bougainville, with a gradual draw-down of substantial self-government powers from the Papua New Guinea government, and the

promise of a referendum on independence to be held between 2015 and 2020. These terms were enshrined in Bougainville's constitution, which was approved by the Papua New Guinea Parliament in December 2004. The first Autonomous Bougainville Government was elected in May/June 2005, and a former leader of the pro-independence movement, Joseph Kabui, was elected President. James Tanis was elected President of Bougainville in a by-election held in December 2008, following the death of President Kabui in June that year.

The second Autonomous Bougainville Government elections were held in Bougainville in May 2010. Former Provincial Governor John Momis was elected President with 52.4 per cent of the votes, while a large proportion of new members representing various political factions were elected to the House of Representatives.

Constitution

Status: Monarchy under Queen Elizabeth II

Legislature: National Parliament of Papua New Guinea

Independence: 16 September 1975

Papua New Guinea is a constitutional monarchy recognising Queen Elizabeth II as head of state, represented by a Governor-General who is nominated by Parliament and serves for a term of six years.

Government is by parliamentary democracy, with a unicameral National Parliament of 111 members (increased from 109 before the 2012 general election). Elections are held every five years, with universal adult suffrage.

After a general election Parliament elects a Prime Minister who heads the national government. Parliament can only hold votes of no confidence in the Prime Minister when more than 18 months has elapsed since an election and there are at least 12 months before a new election is due.

Politics

Last elections: June–August 2012

Next elections: 2017

Head of state: Queen Elizabeth II, represented by Governor-General, Sir Michael Ogio (2011–)

Head of government: Prime Minister Peter O'Neill

Ruling party: Coalition led by People's National Congress Party

Women MPs: 3%

The political life of Papua New Guinea is one of diversity and is characterised by a tradition of fluid coalitions. A large number of candidates (more than 2,700 in 2007) contest the 111 seats at general elections, and the consequent low number of votes required to win seats means there is a high turnover of MPs. Allegiances are fragile and MPs often change parties more than once during the life of a Parliament. Prime Ministers have tended not to serve out a full term between elections, though they have often returned to power later.

The general election that commenced in mid-June 2002 was chaotic and violent, with the loss of at least 25 lives, and had to be extended for four weeks beyond the scheduled two-week voting period. Even then six Southern Highlands constituencies could not be declared because of missing ballot boxes. The National Alliance party (NA) won 19 of the declared seats, Sir Mekere Morauta's People's Democratic Movement 12, People's Progress Party eight, and Pangu Pati six, giving the National Alliance and its multiparty coalition a parliamentary majority and Alliance leader Sir Michael Somare once again became Prime Minister.

Following the parliamentary elections held in June–July 2007, in which NA won 27 seats and independents 21, Somare secured the agreement of a further 59 MPs to join his coalition, and in mid-August was duly re-elected Prime Minister by Parliament.

Further information

National Parliament of

Papua New Guinea:

National Statistical Office:

Bank of Papua New Guinea:

Tourism Promotion Authority:

Commonwealth Secretariat:

Commonwealth of Nations:

www.parliament.gov.pg

www.spc.int/prism/country/pg/stats

www.bankpng.gov.pg

www.pngtourism.org.pg

www.thecommonwealth.org

www.commonwealthofnations.org/country/Papua_New_Guinea

Media

Islands Business:

Post-Courier:

National Broadcasting Corporation:

www.islandsbusiness.com

www.postcourier.com.pg

www.nbc.com.pg

In December 2010 the Supreme Court ruled Governor-General Sir Paulias Matane's re-election in June 2010 had been unconstitutional. At the National Parliament's next session in January 2011 Michael Ogio was elected Governor-General, defeating the opposition candidate, Sir Pato Kakaraya, by 65 votes to 23.

In the same month Sir Michael Somare stepped aside in order to face a Leadership Tribunal hearing on allegations of financial mismanagement, and his newly appointed deputy, Samuel Abal, became acting Prime Minister. Following a two-week suspension from office by the Tribunal in April 2011, Somare began a long period of medical treatment in Singapore. In August 2011, amid increasing concerns that Somare would never be able to resume office, a parliamentary vote declared the office of Prime Minister vacant, and the People's National Congress Party (PNCP) leader and Transport and Works Minister, Peter O'Neill, was elected Prime Minister, receiving 70 of the 94 votes cast, with support from both government and opposition members. Several parties filed a challenge against Parliament's actions in the Supreme Court that month; these were joined by Somare following his return to Papua New Guinea in September.

O'Neill won another parliamentary vote of confidence in December 2011, after the Supreme Court had ruled that Somare be

reinstated, and Parliament then passed retrospective legislation to legitimise O'Neill's position. In January 2012 there was a further move to enforce the Supreme Court ruling by some members of the Defence Force loyal to Somare. This was quickly halted by the majority of the force. In May 2012 the Supreme Court made a further unsuccessful attempt to reinstate Somare.

Parliamentary elections were held from 23 June to early August 2012, in the presence of a Commonwealth observer group led by Vanuatu's former Prime Minister, Nipake Edward Natapei. O'Neill's PNCP won 27 of the 111 seats, independents securing 16, the second largest bloc. The rest of the seats were shared among some 20 other parties, including the Triumph Heritage Empowerment party (12 seats) and NA (seven). Some 60 per cent of members of the last Parliament were not returned to office. Turnout was 77 per cent.

When the new Parliament assembled on 3 August 2012 O'Neill was re-elected PM with the support of 93 members, including Sir Michael Somare whose NA had joined the coalition led by O'Neill, ending the political stalemate that had endured since August 2011. In its final report the observer group said that: 'Some benchmarks for democratic elections were met, but significant challenges need to be addressed in election management, good electoral practices and strengthening the culture of democracy.'

International relations

Papua New Guinea is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Non-Aligned Movement, Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

Traveller information

Immigration and customs: Passports must be valid for at least 12 months from the date of arrival. Visas are required by all Commonwealth nationals. Prohibited imports include animal products that are not canned and all animals and plants from countries other than Australia and New Zealand.

Travel within the country: Traffic drives on the left. A foreign driving licence can be used.

Scheduled flights connect Port Moresby with main towns and islands. Taxis are available in the main urban areas and, although taxis are metered, fares should be agreed in advance.

Travel health: Prevalent diseases where appropriate precautionary measures are recommended include cholera, dengue fever, diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, malaria and typhoid.

There were 164,000 tourist arrivals in 2012.



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