

Warm greetings from the South Pacific.

Civil society welcomes the PNG government's decision to participate in this, its second VNR. We also welcome its attempt to integrate SDGs into its Medium-Term Development Plans. Unfortunately, there is insufficient budgetary detail to allow us to fully understand how it is achieving its targets or measuring progress.

PNG is in a debt crisis – with debt servicing currently running at 11% of the budget, greater than the entire spending for the health sector. Meanwhile, the country's major hospitals are facing a shortage of medicines, and an inability to offer quality care.

**Question:** what are the government's plans to provide better support to hospitals, and increase the health budget?

PNG has performed poorly on tackling corruption, with a dysfunctional Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) bringing only a single high-profile case to court.

**Question:** what are government plans to review and support a truly independent ICAC to bring more cases to court?

Following COVID and a cost-of-living crisis, the government funded a SME programme through financial institutions. This favoured organisations most able to pass stringent bank lending requirements.

**Question:** what plans does the government have to ensure this and future development programmes reach the poorest?

The education system is in crisis - recent education reform has meant the dismissal of elementary school teachers. Infrastructure has been neglected for years, with an insufficient number of classrooms for expanded enrolment leading to student-teacher ratios of 50-1 or worse.

The government has done virtually nothing to make inclusive education happen, passing responsibility to private institutions and NGOs.

PILNA and local CSO PEAN's reviews have found a nationwide shortage of learning materials experienced by 80% of students, two thirds of learners suffering from absentee teachers, and only 20% of students with their own literacy materials.

**Question:** What is the government doing to tackle the funding crisis in education, and when will the budget be increased sufficiently to tackle these problematic areas.