



EMBARGOED AGAINST DELIVERY

PRIME MINISTER

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ADDRESS AT PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON FOR THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Your Excellency, on behalf of the Australian people may I offer the warmest welcome to our country. We are delighted and honoured to have you and your wife in Australia.

Australia and Papua New Guinea are not just neighbours, but countries which have formed the closest links, at all levels. Today, Australians are very much aware of the links between our Governments. They know and understand that this relationship is a close and strong one. But the relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea has a special quality - and that is the bond based simply on the friendship between people. It is on this friendship, this closeness that the foundation of our total relationship is based, and surely it is the friendship between people that is the measurement of the real depth and worth of any relationship.

Your visit to Australia, Your Excellency, reminds us of the relationship we have on a government-to-government level. Before your visit is completed, I am sure you will also see at first hand how Australians express warmth and goodwill to our friends from Papua New Guinea.

Your Excellency, just over 12 months ago, my wife and I were privileged to visit your country. At a dinner for your Prime Minister I referred to the relationship between developed and developing nations - and the economic gap between rich and poor countries. Michael Somare and I agreed that the need to bridge the gap between developed and developing nations was most pressing. Today, that need is stronger than ever before.

Access to the great markets of the developed work is a critical and central problem now facing the governments of every developing country. The major developed countries have a responsibility - and an obligation - to open up markets for commodities. Until that happens, how can there be equality of opportunity for developing countries. Australia is concerned that a Common Fund comes into operation as soon as practicable. We have long supported the idea of commodity agreements to provide exporters with reliable markets and importers with secure supplies, at prices which are fair and equitable to both.

Surely that is not too much to ask in a world where a third of its people have an average income of less than \$200 a year. I know that Papua New Guinea has had particular problems in gaining access for some primary and processed products in the developed world, and has been adversely affected by instability in international commodity trade.

Australia too has had similar problems, particularly as a result of the restrictions placed on trade in some commodities by the major industrialised countries. In the coming months a series of meetings - the M.T.N. in Geneva, and Common Fund discussions with Commonwealth Ministers and within UNCTAD - will be crucial to a dilemma that faces the developed and developing world. It is vital that fair and reasonable solutions are found to the problem of greater access to markets.

Your Excellency, at the Commonwealth Regional Meeting Papua New Guinea not surprisingly made a most practical contribution to debate on the problems facing the developed and developing nations. Papua New Guinea was able to do just this because of practical experience in tackling the problems of organising development at a village level.

Your Prime Minister emphasised the need for greater efforts towards self reliance in developing countries. This theme was endorsed by other leaders and was reflected in the Communique. Papua New Guinea also outlined its distinctive experience in aid matters.

I know that Michael Somare is convinced that there is a need for donor countries to provide assistance to developing countries in ways that will avoid adding to the debt burden. Australia has a long-standing commitment to extend our aid to developing countries in grant form. Clearly, if all the developed countries had followed the lead provided by the Australia/Papua New Guinea relationship, the enormous third world debt burden would not have emerged. If our lead were followed now, the magnitude of the debt problem would be greatly reduced.

Your Excellency in a world beset by many problems - where conflict and tension remain - our relationship is proof that two nations of vastly different backgrounds can work and live together as friends. That we can achieve this without dampening one another's personal identity and aspirations is further evidence of our special friendship.

Your Excellency, on behalf of everyone in this room today may I again welcome you and your wife to Australia. Your visit is the first official visit by a Papua New Guinean Governor-General to Australia. We are privileged to have you with us. We hope you will return.