STATEDMENT BY

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IN GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE.

59TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Thank you Mr Chairman,

1. Please allow me to join other speakers to congratulate you and your Bureau on your elections to lead our Committee this year. I assure you of my delegations support in ensuring a productive session.

2. We are living in unpredictable and trying times. On the one hand, we are witnessing the great advances in high technology, especially information technology making it very easy to instantly communicate globally, the overwhelming effects of globalization bringing about many positive changes but on the other hand, we are also seen negative forces including new threats and greater vulnerabilities.

3. The First Committee provides a multilateral forum to deal with all these issues amongst many others. My general statement today, will however focus on a limited number of issues including terrorism, the weapons of mass destruction, the illicit use of light small arms and weapons and the improvements in the working methods of the Committee.

Mr Chairman,

4. As stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, the Rt Hon Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Papua New Guinea joins others in condemning in the strongest terms the recent killings of 330 people in cold blood in a school in Besian- more than half of them innocent children and women. This followed closely after the loss of hundreds of others in the bombing of the Australia embassy in Jakarta, suicide bombings in Israel and Palestine, Madrid, Bali, Paris, and of course not to forget the horrendous incidents of September 11 2001 in Washington, and New York.

5. It is now more certain than ever that we live in an unsafe and unpredictable world where terrorists seem to roam at will. The International Community through the First Committee and the General Assembly need to find ways to minimize these threats and make our world more safer again.

6. The threat of terrorism is further exacerbated by the risk of the Weapons of Mass Destruction. It is indeed worrying also to see evidence of terrorists seeking to obtain chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

Mr Chairman,

7. As a Small Island country, lacking capacity and open to many of these growing security concerns, the increasing incidences of terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction are of great concern.

8. In addition, however apart from these two major issues, Papua New Guinea is also very much more concern about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These arms are actually of more danger to the general population in Papua New Guinea than the larger Weapons of Mass Destruction. In fact, one could say “this category of weapons are our
weapons of mass destruction.

9. These cause our people more harm and kill and injure more people than the weapons of mass destruction.

10. Papua New Guinea therefore fully supports the UN Programme of Action to trace and monitor the illicit trade in these category of weapons.

11. We also fully support the moves to negotiate a Global Convention to trace and monitor the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Our small delegation is looking at ways in which we could effectively participate and contribute to this end. We need to also perhaps reduce the production of these weapons.

Mr Chairman,

12. On the issue of the improving the working methods of the First Committee, very small delegations like our have been greatly assisted by changing the way we organize our meetings, alternating times between the First and the Fourth Committee, reducing the number of resolutions and/or combining others and doing away altogether with those deemed superfluous.

13. We are also heartened by the valuable recommendations submitted to the Secretary General on practical ways to improve the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee.

14. Our delegation will endeavor to consult and work together with like minded delegations in this regard. We also believe that this is a joint effort would make our work more effective and participatory, after all the negative effects of war, violence and destruction is felt by all around the world .

I thank you.