13 February 2026

TRADE POLICY REVIEW OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

11 AND 13 FEBRUARY 2026

Concluding Remarks by the Chairperson,
Ambassador H.E. Mr Kairat Torebayev
(Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan)

1. The TPRM has provided an important forum for the 4th Trade Policy Review of Papua New Guinea, which examined the developments in Papua New Guinea's trade and related policies since its previous Review in 2019. For this Review, I would like to thank the Papua New Guinea delegation, headed by Ambassador H.E. Ms Michelle Hau'ofa, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the WTO and the UN, the discussant, Ambassador H.E. Mr Nur Rakhman Setyoko of Indonesia, and the 23 delegations who took the floor during the two-day meeting.

2. Many Members acknowledged that Papua New Guinea had performed well, with growth in trade and its economy over the 7-year review period, including a strong recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. There was progress in alleviating inflationary pressures, addressing foreign exchange shortages, and restoring fiscal discipline. The extractive sector, i.e. minerals, oil, and gas, as well as agriculture and fisheries, remain key sectors for economic growth, trade, and development for Papua New Guinea.

3. Members recognized that Papua New Guinea is a trade intensive economy with exports accounting for about 42% of GDP, and they were concentrated in the extractive sector, accounting for about 77% of total merchandise exports in 2024. They noted that diversifying exports, at least in part by promoting downstream processing of finished goods, was an important policy of the Government that was expected to strengthen export resilience as well as promote employment.

4. As an island country in the Pacific, Papua New Guinea faced several challenges such as geographic fragmentation and vulnerabilities due to natural disasters, climate-related events, and external shocks. Infrastructure development remained a key goal and important enabler for trade and connectivity. Through the Connect PNG Infrastructure Programme, the authorities were committed to improving transport, e.g. ports, roads, and airports; access to electricity; and the telecommunications network.

5. Some Members noted that foreign investors faced uncertainty in Papua New Guinea's market in recent years and as a result FDI has been volatile. In their view, it was important that policies and practices applied to the business community be stable and transparent, as well as reduce the costs of doing business. They expected that tax policy, incentives, exemptions, and the regulatory environment be fair and have legal clarity to promote investor confidence. Certain improvements to the investment climate were achieved through the recently established Special Economic Zones (SEZs), thus offering new opportunities.

6. There was appreciation for Papua New Guinea's commitment to the WTO as exemplified by its active participation in the fisheries subsidies' negotiations, as well as the Joint Initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development. Members appreciated the recent establishment of Papua New Guinea's Mission in Geneva, and its first WTO Ambassador; they expected this would further facilitate and deepen Papua New Guinea's engagement with the multilateral trading system.

7. Members asked Papua New Guinea about its interest to join plurilateral initiatives or agreements, e.g. the Agreement on Government Procurement, the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arrangement (MPIA), and Electronic Commerce. Papua New Guinea was also encouraged to ratify the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies as soon as possible.

8. Papua New Guinea's notification track record to the WTO and transparency of its trade regime were key themes in these discussions. Members sought improvements in this area, perhaps with the aid of technical assistance.

WTO - Internal

9. Trade facilitation was another area where Members were interested in hearing about implementation progress over the last 7 years. There were queries about the status of the Electronic Single Window and uniform application of customs procedures across entry ports. Members urged Papua New Guinea to continue its work to fully implement TFA commitments by 2030 as envisioned.

10. There was interest in Papua New Guinea's progress in the intellectual property area. Several questions were posed regarding Papua New Guinea's intentions in protecting traditional knowledge, joining WIPO treaties, and on the status of legislation to protect geographical indications (GIs).

11. Appreciation was expressed for Papua New Guinea's relatively open trade regime where tariffs were low, averaging 4%, and a large percentage were duty-free. Nevertheless, it was noted that applied MFN rates exceeded the corresponding bound rates on a number of tariff lines and Papua New Guinea was encouraged to bring these discrepancies in line with its WTO commitments.

12. Development and inclusive growth policies were key initiatives integrated into Papua New Guinea's trade and investment policies during the review period. Many of these were further expanded upon in Papua New Guinea's National Trade Policy 2017-2032 which remained its overarching trade policy during the review period. Some Members hoped the policy would bring about trade simplification and reduce costs and barriers to trade for Papua New Guinea. It was also suggested that Papua New Guinea could implement gender-responsive policies and promote gender inclusion through trade.

13. Improving financial inclusion, financial literacy and the digital financial infrastructure was also noted as important for Papua New Guinea's continued development and as an enabler for trade. Expanding the access to finance for SMEs was also a key issue in the view of some Members.

14. The implementation of its digital infrastructure and the move to digital trade was important for Papua New Guinea as uneven digital access could shape development outcomes. Certain positive steps were achieved in digital transformation over the period with the adoption of the Electronic Transactions Act, the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce, and the Digital Government Act.

15. In the view of many Members, Papua New Guinea was a valued Member and leader in the Pacific region. Pursuing further regional integration was viewed as beneficial and there were inquiries as to whether Papua New Guinea would join PACER Plus or other regional trade agreements.

16. In conclusion, Members were appreciative of Papua New Guinea's active engagement in this Review, which further demonstrated its commitment to the multilateral trading system. Over 170 questions were submitted as part of this Review and Members look forward to receiving answers to any outstanding or follow-up questions within the customary one-month period.

WTO - Internal