

## News: PNG Development/UPNG Research Mission

There is a new section in our website's "Resources Tab". It is called "Papua New Guinea Strategic Development". In here you will find copies of PNG Vision 2050 and the PNG 2010-2030 Development Strategic Plan. These constitute PNG's most recent roadmap for development as the country anticipates its GNP to double from around 10 Billion Kina in 2010 to over 20 Billion Kina by 2020. This increase in GDP will be even more dramatic if projected income from the single largest development project, the LNG project in the Southern Highlands, comes online. Income from the LNG project alone has the potential to double PNG's GDP in one year!

The seven pillars proposed in the Vision 2050 embody ideals that are universally appealing. And even though the current government is in transition with the illness of Grand Chief Somare, the 2010-2030 Development Strategic Plan is proceeding. It lays out an aggressive development scheme that will transform Papua New Guinea forever. The Development Strategic Plan specifically proposes development corridors based around road building, and expanded industry and commercial agriculture (these latter two in Papua New Guinea are currently synonymous with raw material export and plantation agriculture). While many of these proposed developments will no doubt improve the lot of some local residents, some of the envisioned transformation will come with significant drawbacks.

While business interests have contributed significantly to the current development vision, other constituencies, such as Higher Education, are gaining their voice. UPNG is the leading center for learning and knowledge in Papua New Guinea and the professional residence of many leaders of governmental committees. As such, UPNG is in a position to represent points of view that encompass a more comprehensive and long-term vision of successful development.

Recently, UPNG has been tasked with reevaluating its current Strategic Plan (2008-2017), in order to reflect within that plan the larger government initiatives. Professor Matainaho, as Dean for Research, is heavily involved in this process, as are other faculty at UPNG and other participants of the PNG ICBG. A first step in the reevaluation of UPNG's Strategic Plan was addressed at the UPNG Research Agenda Workshop held in September, 2010, in Port Moresby. Principle among the topics discussed were the benefits that research activities conducted at flagship educational institutions bring to the academic mission, the students, the institution and the larger community of Papua New Guinea. The collaborative activities of the ICBG, and the benefits in terms of training support and infrastructure development, were particularly singled out for praise and as a prototype for future collaborative research activities. The UPNG Research Agenda Workshop Resolution specifically acknowledged the University of Utah as a time tested and trusted partner institution. The University of Utah administrative structure and its programs that promote scientific research are currently being examined as possible models for adoption at UPNG.

As UPNG expands its research and leadership roles, it and its individual faculty will grow concomitantly in national and international stature. This in turn will increase the rational and evidence-based influence UPNG faculty have on committees that oversee Papua New Guinea's strategic development in near future.