

**LSPNG 2022
POM**



LSPNG ZOOM CONFERENCE 2022

Hosted by the University of Papua New Guinea
21-22 September 2022, Port Moresby PNG

Conference Theme:

**Preserving and Promoting the Indigenous Languages of the
South Pacific in IDIL 2022-2032**

LSPNG 2022 CONCEPT NOTE

LSPNG: the Road Travelled

The Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea was founded at a meeting of University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) staff and students on the 11th of October 1967, with the aim of promoting the languages of Papua New Guinea through research and advocacy of literacy and language education. LSPNG achievements in these and many other areas of Papuan, Austronesian and general linguistics have raised the visibility and awareness of Papua New Guinea on the world stage. Going back over half a century, the archives of our OA online journal, *Language & Linguistics in Melanesia* (LLM) at www.langlxmelanesia.com, are an invaluable resource for linguists, anthropologists, and education specialists - nationally and all over the world.

LSPNG: ANSWERING UNESCO'S IDIL 2022-2032¹ CALL

Papua New Guinea, the "Land of a Thousand Tongues," is rapidly transforming into a modern multilingual and multicultural nation, united in its desire for social progress, justice and prosperity. There are fears [1], however, that the colourful tapestry of its indigenous languages and cultures may fade, diluted by unstoppable socio-economic integration and the national English-based education system. LSPNG researchers have described hundreds of previously unwritten indigenous languages, breathing new life into them through orthography development, descriptions of their structures, and the promotion of vernacular literacy in remote communities. Working with the last remaining speakers of many endangered languages, they have preserved for posterity a record of these languages.

LSPNG2022 will be our first fully virtual conference. Zoom will bring together researchers and policy makers from PNG and from around the world, creating an opportunity for exchange of ideas on how to best promote Tok Ples languages and cultures of the South Pacific region, while at the same time meet the demands of the 21st century. 'Unity in Diversity,' the long-celebrated ideology of the Independence era in PNG, will again be the focus of academic deliberations and public debate. How can the unique linguistic and cultural diversity of the South Pacific survive the leveling convergence of human cultures in our Global Village?

It is often said that linguistic diversity is an obstacle to social contact. This is not necessarily the case, since humans have always been able to learn their neighbors' languages and to even create new languages out of existing tongues when the need arose. Yet, the use of internationally shared languages ensures more effective communication and, thus, faster national development in our Global Village. How can the acquisition of the 'bigger' languages such as English go hand in hand with the preservation of indigenous, ancestral languages that reflect important local identities? This is the challenge that PNG must face. By providing a forum for an exchange of ideas between scholars and policy makers on language education and language-related issues,

¹ <https://en.unesco.org/idil2022-2032>

LSPNG 2022 will help find optimal strategies for long-term survival of indigenous languages and cultural and historical knowledge, while at the same time ensuring that the goals of **Vision 2050**² become reality.

Outstanding linguists and long-time members of LSPNG, such as Malcolm Ross (ANU) and Bernard Comrie (UCSB) will be invited to address the Plenary Session of the Conference, sharing with us their views regarding the road ahead. Leading International and National educators and language policy makers, whose names will be announced in our soon-to-be-released Call for Papers, will also address the Plenary Session, presenting their vision of the best way forward in addressing the seemingly contradictory national needs to

1. Preserve our languages and cultures, as well as
2. Meet the Strategic Development Goals of Vision 2050 (Fig. 1: SDG 1).

PNG Vision 2050 National Strategic Plan [3] focuses on seven broad strategic areas (or pillars):

1. Human capital development, gender, youth and people empowerment;
2. Wealth creation;
3. Institutional development and service delivery;
4. Security and international relations;
5. Environmental sustainability and climate change;
6. Spiritual, cultural and community development; and
7. Strategic planning, integration and control.

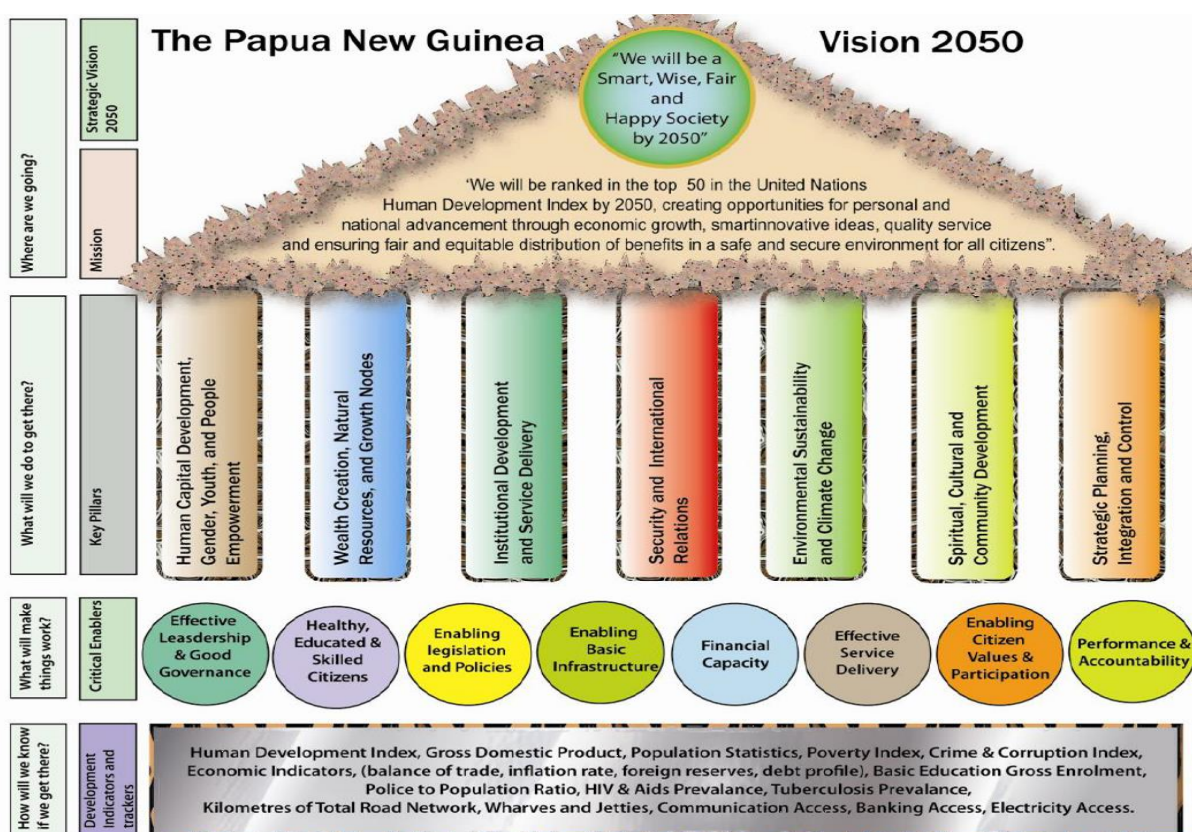


Fig. 1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Vision 2050

² Actively participating in the United Nations development agenda, Papua New Guinea launched a long-term national development strategy, Vision 2050, which is ‘the most ambitious planning document in the country’s history,’ according to the Oxford Business Group website [2].

Amongst the Strategic Policies designed to position PNG globally, the Population Policy comes first, even before the Strategic Food Security Policy and the Strategic Energy Security Policy; this is because PNG policy makers recognize that all social development hinges on knowledge, which we acquire only through language. In partnership with UNESCO and other international and national organizations and stakeholders, this conference will focus public attention on the importance of producing national linguists to document their native languages and ancestral memories.

LSPNG 2022 theme, **“Preserving and Promoting the Indigenous Languages of the South Pacific in IDIL 2022-2032”** cuts to the core of the interrelated, cross-disciplinary issues that determine all socio-economic and cultural development. While papers on any topics related to the languages of the South Pacific and general linguistics are welcome, the focus of this conference will be primarily on issues pertaining to the role of indigenous languages in PNG society, to the many issues (and opportunities) arising from the ongoing socio-economic national integration, as well as to the impact of an effective national language education policy on sustainable socio-economic development of Papua New Guinea and beyond. Language change in the changing world, the impact of modern technologies on the way we communicate, and the use of the Internet and digital devices in language education will also contribute to the fabric of fascinating discussions.

Conference Objectives:

1. Support the PNG Government in its long-term national development strategy (Vision 2050) by highlighting the crucial role of human resource development in attaining all other Strategic Development Goals (SDGs)
2. Stimulate research and exchange of ideas in the areas of language education, sociolinguistics, cultural studies and anthropology
3. Develop programs to describe and document endangered languages
4. Define and help shape an effective language education policy for sustainable development
5. Advocate adult literacy programs and the implementation of an effective language education policy for sustainable development
6. Present research findings in the areas of language education and literacy in PNG that will help shape PNG Sustainable Development (SD) policies
7. Create national educators’ networks, promoting awareness of the importance of indigenous languages and cultural knowledge
8. Contribute to the work of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development by promoting indigenous languages in the national language education policy
9. Showcase successful programs and projects in literacy / language education
10. Forge important partnerships for development between LSPNG and the Department of Education (DoE), government and private sector organizations, international agencies and research institutions.

Expected outcomes:

- Fruitful exchange of ideas on the best way forward in the preservation of indigenous languages of Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific region
- Important interaction with international and national stakeholders with respect to documenting, maintaining, and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the region
- Suggestions and recommendations with regard to shaping an effective language education policy in PNG

- Publication of conference proceedings on the website of *Language & Linguistics in Melanesia* (the Open Access online LSPNG journal: www.langlxmelanesia.com)
- Successful realization of Vision 2050 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), primarily that of human resource development, through implementing an effective language education policy.

REFERENCES

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3. The Papua New Guinea Vision 2050 National Strategic Plan. Accessed 20/03/2022
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