Readdressing labour and migration issues within the PNG-Australia partnership

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PNG population and labour

- PNG’s population is estimated to be 6.25 million.
- The annual average population growth rate is 2.7%.
- About half of PNG’s population is aged under 20 years.
- 85% of the population live in rural communities and are largely dependent on subsistence agriculture.
- Adult literacy is estimated to be 57.3%.
- The formal sector employs about 15% of the workforce.
- Urban migration is about 4% per annum.
Subsistence agriculture versus the cash economy

• “Instability will continue to threaten Melanesia as long as economic growth fails to significantly outstrip population growth and thus to provide employment opportunities for a younger generation no longer satisfied with subsistence farming and fishing.” Helen Ware, 2004.