



**PAPUA NEW GUINEA STATEMENT TO THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP)
ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE
BY
THE HON RIMBINK PATO OBE LLB MP
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS & IMMIGRATION OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
NUSA DUA, BALI**

6-7 MAY 2014

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS ON BEHALF OF THE SMALL PAPUA NEW GUINEA DELEGATION OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA FOR LOOKING AFTER US SO WELL ON THIS OCCASION AS ALWAYS.

CO-CHAIRS,

THIS YEAR'S THEME OF ***UNLOCKING INNOVATIVE OPENNESS: IMPETUS TO GREATER CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT*** CHALLENGES US TO DEEPEN OUR CONNECTIONS AND COMMITMENTS TO THE OUTSTANDING WORK OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES AND HOW THESE HAVE WORKED DURING THIS PERIOD INTERMS OF MEETING RELEVANT CHALLENGES.

I WILL BRIEFLY OUTLINE THREE AREAS IN WHICH, PNG HAS TAKEN STEPS IN OPENING UP GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE THE CITIZENRY TO ACTIVELY INVOLVE IN THE POLITICAL DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

I. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICULARLY IN THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES FOR GOVERNMENT.

ONLY IN RECENT TIMES THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS APPOINTED KEY LEADERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO MAJOR BOARDS OF KEY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE MAJOR HOSPITAL BOARDS AND THE CENTRAL SUPPLY AND TENDERS BOARD, TO ENSURE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND TO ENSURE QUALITY OUTCOMES.

THE CENTRAL SUPPLIES AND TENDERS BOARD IS THE MAIN PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY OF GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE GOVERNMENT WHICH IN PREVIOUS YEARS WAS ONLY CONTROLLED BY GOVERNMENT OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS WHICH WERE PUBLIC SERVANTS AND ANSWERABLE TO GOVERNMENT.

THROUGH THESE BOARDS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ABOUT TWO BILLION KINA IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC GAMES IN 2015 AND APEC IN 2018. THERE IS OVER K 1 BILLION IN THE HEALTH SECTOR THE ROLL OUT OF WHICH IS BRIEFLY MANAGED BY THE PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP.

THE APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARDS ARE MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT BUT THE LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IS DIFFERENT TO WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST.

II. IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING LEGAL STRUCTURES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

UNDER THE PNG CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, THERE EXIST IMPORTANT INITIATIVES WHICH ENFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY.

I AM SPEAKING OF THE OMBUDSMEN COMMISSION OF PNG AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM. THESE STRUCTURES ARE ENTRENCHED. WE ARE BRINGING IN REFORMS TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE AND FOR THE SPEEDY PROCESSING OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENSURED THAT MECHANISMS FOR MAKING COMPLAINTS FOR PROCESSING COMPLAINTS ARE READILY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

III. PARTNERSHIPS WITH NGOS, CIVIL SOCIETY & OTHER INTEREST GROUPS

IN ENCOURAGING GREATER CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT, THE PNG GOVERNMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KEY INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS LIKE TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL PNG (TIPNG) AND THE CONSULTATIVE IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING COUNCIL (CIMC) IS PROMOTING; TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, AND TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIVENESS.

A NUMBER OF PROJECTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETY INCLUDE:

- **BUDGET TRACKING INITIATIVE**

BUDGET TRANSPARENCY IS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE GOVERNANCE PROCESS LEADING TO BETTER BUDGETARY OUTCOMES AND EQUITABLE RESOURCE ALLOCATION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

THE CONSULTATIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING COUNCIL (CIMC) BUDGET SECTORIAL COMMITTEE THROUGH A TRAINING PROGRAM CALLED “BUDGET TRACING INITIATIVE” IS EMBARKING ON EDUCATING THE MASSES IN RURAL DISTRICTS AROUND THE COUNTRY ABOUT BUDGET PROCEDURES, INPUTS AND PRIORITIES AND BUDGETARY APPROPRIATION AND WHERE FUNDS ARE BEING SPENT.

- **VOTER EDUCATION & DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS**

DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS, WHICH SHOULD ALLOW FOR THE PEACEFUL CONTINUATION OR TRANSFER OF POLITICAL POWER, ARE AT THE HEART OF ANY EFFORTS TO BUILD PNG INTO AN EQUITABLE, RULE OF LAW, SOCIETY FREE OF CORRUPTION.

AS A WAY FORWARD, TIPNG AND THE PNG ELECTORAL COMMISSION HAVE PARTNERED TOGETHER IN CONDUCTING A VOTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR BOTH THE 2012 NATIONAL PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS AND THE 2013 LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND THIS WORK IS LIKELY TO BE CONTINUED.

- **THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT WEBSITE**

IN AN EFFORT TO MODERNIZE AND REFORM ITSELF, THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT HAS LAUNCHED ITS OFFICIAL PARLIAMENT WEBSITE AND SHORT MESSAGING SERVICE (SMS) MECHANISM.

THE WEBSITE PUBLISHES FACTUAL RESEARCH INFORMATION, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT’S (MP) PERFORMANCE AGAINST A SET OF INDICATORS AND INFORMATION ON PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS.

THE OPEN PARLIAMENT PROJECT’S ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO BUILD THE INTEGRITY OF PNG NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AND ENHANCE THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT AS A LAW MAKER, ACCOUNTABILITY AGENT AND PEOPLE’S REPRESENTATIVE THROUGH INFORMATION DISSEMINATION THROUGH THE PUBLIC SO THAT ANYONE CAN ACCESS THE DATA TO PUT IT TO THE USE REQUIRED.

- **EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE**

GIVEN THE COUNTRY’S VAST RESERVES OF NATURAL RESOURCES WHICH IS TAKING ECONOMIC GROWTH TO UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL, PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS JOINED THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO START IMPLEMENTING THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE (EITI).

IN OCTOBER 2013, A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AIMED AT PROMOTING A GLOBAL STANDARD OF TRANSPARENCY IN THE MINERAL AND PETROLEUM SECTORS WAS SIGNED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.

THE EITI MECHANISM ENSURES THAT COMPANIES INVOLVED IN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES DISCLOSE PAYMENTS MADE TO THE GOVERNMENT AND LIKEWISE, THE GOVERNMENT DISCLOSES THE CORRESPONDING RECEIPTS.

PNG WILL IMPLEMENT AND WORK TO MEET THE EITI CANDIDACY STANDARDS BEFORE GAINING FULL EITI MEMBERSHIP STATUS.

KEY CHALLENGES:

1. FOLLOW UP ON WORK ON RECCOMENDATIONS OF COURTS AND THE OMBUDSMEN COMMISSION. THIS HAS REMAINED A HUGE CHALLENGE AND WE NEED SUPPORT OF COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS OGP TO ASSIST.
2. ACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION TO LANDOWNERS IN RURAL AREAS WHERE A VENTURE DEAL IS STRUCT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND MAJOR RESOURCE DEVELOPER COOPERATIONS. MOST CITIZENS, 85% LIVE IN RURAL AREAS AND THE LACK OF ACCURATE DATA AND INFORMATION ON PROJECTS IS ESSENTIAL TO ACCOUNTABILITY. WE HAVE NOT YET FOUND A PERFECT SOLUTION EVENTHOUGH THE LANDOWNER FORUM THAT TAKES PLACE PRIOR TO THE EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS FOR A PROJECT TO COMMENCE.
3. MORE WORK IS REQUIRED ON ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS BY PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. MUCH OF THE BYDGETARY ALLOCATION IS NOW DIVERTED TO RURAL ELECTORATE BUT ENSURING ADEQUATE PEOPLE IN PLACE TO MANAGE SPEND THE FUNDS AND ACCOUNT FOR THEM REMAINS AN ISSUE.

TO ALLEVIATE THESE THE GOVERNMENT ALLOCATED FREE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AS A HEALTHY POPULATION IS GOOD TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROVIDED FREE EDUCATTION UP TO YEAR 12 LEVEL AS A MORE EDUCATED POPULATION IN THE LONG TERM WOULD PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE.

CO-CHAIRS,

MY DELEGATION AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR VIEWS DURING THE INTERACTIVE SESSIONS. WHILST WE ARE NOT ORIGINAL MEMBERS, WE ARE LOOKING TO GREATER NETWORKING WITH THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP SECRETARIAT TO SEE HOW BEST WE CAN LEARN AND PARTICIPATE IN ITS GREAT WORK IN THE FUTURE AND LOOK FORWARD TO LODGING OUR APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP FOLLOWING THIS CONFERENCE.

THANK YOU.