

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2009

Sir Anthony Siaguru Walk Against Corruption

Chairman's remarks

## **Opening**

### *Acknowledge*

The Governor General of Papua New Guinea Sir Paulius Matane, Retired Arch Bishop Brian Barnes, Reverend Samson Lowa, Our Students and Youth, Members of Parliament, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Opposition Leader, Members of the Diplomatic Missions, Corporate Business Leaders and to all of you the Friends of TI.

On behalf of the Board and Staff of Transparency International I want to sincerely thank you for the support you have shown this year's Walk Against Corruption. I extend my sincerest thanks to all the corporate teams, schools and importantly to our organizing committee, staff members and the hard working volunteers who have made this event possible.

The turn out that we have witnessed today is overwhelming.

Since our humble beginnings in 2007 with as little as 40 teams here we are today with over 150 corporate teams and 91 school teams. Let me also acknowledge our supporters in East New Britain Province walking in Kokopo. The Kokopo walk is being led by Mrs. Relly Manning (wife of our late Chairman Mike Manning) and she is being supported by the Kokopo Rotary Club. The Kokopo walk has 32 corporate teams and 12 school teams so close to 500 people walking.

### *Reflect*

When our founding Chairman Sir Anthony Siaguru started TI it was his vision to establish an organisation that would apply effort and considerable focus on the issue of corruption. Even back then in 1997 he understood the tremendous negative impact corruption would have on our young nation and so it was through his leadership that TI PNG was born.

He understood TI PNG can not win the fight against corruption without the full support of the community. That community support is now embodied in the Community Coalition Against Corruption represented in 91 organisations with a membership of some 2 million.

Activities such as the Sir Anthony Siaguru Walk Against Corruption are a vehicle to activate and mobilise our community coalitions.

By your participation and presence today you have signaled that you do not and will not tolerate corrupt practices or corrupt individuals. Look around the oval, we number some 3000 people, think of the impact we have already made by bringing together 3000 people.

For those of us who are not sure what part we can play in the fight against corruption, let this day be the beginning of your true walk with TI. You may think corruption is someone else's problem, I say no it is a problem for all of us.

I ask you the question, why are you here today?

I want you to think about where you have come from to get to this day, the village you grew up in, the settlement you live in, the suburbs that you have grown up in, we have all travelled a long way to get us to this day.

So why are we here today?

I say because we know and have experienced the hardships within our beloved Nation and because we truly care!

We see the effects of corruption in the faces of our many young people without jobs.

We see it in the many uncles and aunties who die as a result of poor health services, the many loved ones who have lost their lives as a result of a failing and corrupted system.

We see it in the hard times trying to survive on a fortnight that is never enough to feed the family and to provide shelter.

This is why we are here today. Sometimes we think corruption is a problem too big for us and the people involved are too powerful and you think that you as one person can not do anything to stop them. When that thought enters your head I want you to remember this day.

Our challenge as concerned citizens is to identify ways to help support and strengthen the watchdog institutions so that we can protect their independence and empower them to fully implement their constitutional responsibilities. Our challenge is to support those leaders who demonstrate a willingness to be accountable to their people. Perhaps our biggest challenge is to speak out and take action when we are confronted with corruption.

Within all of our efforts above all we must not resort to violence.

We the 3000 gathered must mark this day as the true beginning of our Walk Against Corruption. Remember you are not alone. You now have 3000 concerned and caring Papua New Guinean's and friends walking with you.

United our efforts will be multiplied, beyond our families, our communities, our cities, and in to our Nation.

We must continue our walk against corruption beyond today.

Our efforts will be realized when we live in a Nation where prosperity is a reality for all and not just a dream. Our actions will be rewarded when the society we live in provides opportunities for all of its children and not just a few.

Friends it is only through our commitment and unified stand against corruption and corrupt individuals that we will bring positive change to our Nation.

I thank you and ask for your continued support for the work of TI.

Peter Aitsi

Chair

Transparency International PNG

14<sup>th</sup> of June 2009