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TIPNG ANNOUNCES KEYPROJECTS FOR 2009

Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) announced the launch of the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) and the Forest Governance Initiative (FGI) at TIPNG's Annual General Meeting held on Monday 30th of March.

TIPNG says these key projects will bolster the ability of grassroots citizens and government agencies to fight corruption in various sectors and actively challenge corruption in PNG.

The Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre will provide advice and assistance to victims of corruption and help citizens pursue corruption-related complaints, encouraging them to come forward. The ALAC is based on a successful model employed in 16 countries worldwide, and will provide support for PNG's anti-corruption agencies by preparing cases for referral and keeping a database of complaints to be used for anti-corruption advocacy.

TIPNG Chairman Mr Peter Aitsi says "Transparency International received 27 complaints during 2008 from grassroots Papua New Guineans. These are people who bother to register a complaint: we know the real problem is much bigger. Until now TI has had limited ability to handle these matters. With the establishment of the ALAC TI will be providing a complementary facility to receive the concerns of the people and assist anti-corruption authorities with their vital work."

TIPNG also announced the inception of the Forest Governance initiative in 2009. The FGI is an important Asia-Pacific project being implemented by five TI chapters in the Asia-Pacific region to monitor forestry laws and regulations, and conduct research into their effectiveness and abuse.

Mr Aitsi says "The PNG forestry sector is open to abuse, especially since the passing of the Forestry Amendment Act in December 2007. PNG is also establishing an Office of Climate Change and Carbon Trading, making good governance in the forestry sector even more important. The FGI will provide regional research and monitoring and ensure both big producers and consumers of forestry products have rigid anti-corruption mechanisms in place to prevent abuse of the environment and landowner's rights."

The new projects announced at the AGM confirm TIPNG's foremost position in the fight against corruption in PNG. The staff and Directors of TIPNG look forward to implementing these important initiatives and working during 2009 towards a democracy where good governance is the norm.

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