



TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL (PNG) INC.
A national chapter of Transparency International
– the coalition against corruption
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04th May, 2008

Press Release **K1 billion missing from Government coffers**

TIPNG says that it is distressing to see and hear from the new Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee that Officers in the Finance Department and other Government Departments and agencies who are supposed to act in line with the Finance Management Act have failed miserably. This has meant that more than a billion kina has been misused over the years, illustrating a total break down of the public money handling systems.

Chairman of TI Mike Manning said that this was not new as it had first been exposed by the previous Chairman of the Committee in his final report before the election in 2007. TIPNG is more interested to hear what has been done by the Government to stop this theft and misappropriation since then. Mr Manning asked when and if there would be prosecutions of those people who have been exposed during the work of the PAC and referred to various prosecuting bodies.

Mr Manning said that there was no point in continuing to expose fraud and corruption unless action was taken to punish those who stole and to prevent it happening in the future. He said that TIPNG continues to support the systems of Government in the country which are perfectly adequate if only they were followed properly.

These acts of greed and corruption and misuse of funds for personal gain by a few self centred individuals have for too long denied the rights of civil society to services such as health, education and basic infrastructure that otherwise could propel the country forward.

TIPNG says if no records about disbursements of funds were kept as stated in the reports then the actions taken were deliberate and those responsible should be dealt with appropriately after investigations are completed.

For K1 billion to be misused without much trace is very hard to believe as there are people working in this Department, and someone must and should know where that money has gone to.

TIPNG also notes that Departmental Heads have consistently failed miserably to enforce the financial management laws. Accordingly, they have not been able to notice that misappropriations have been taking place under their very noses showing that there is a serious problem in public administration in management and accounting of public monies.

TIPNG believes that if no records about disbursements of funds were kept, as stated in the reports, then the actions taken may be deemed to be deliberate and those responsible should be dealt with appropriately after investigations are completed.

Misappropriation of public monies is tantamount to theft. TIPNG says that the people of PNG cannot tolerate their officials acting in such a manner; they must be brought to account.

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6th May 2008

Press Releases

TIPNG Condemns Fiji Interim Governments deportation of Hannah

TIPNG joins other TI Chapters in the Pacific and the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) in condemning the actions of the interim Fiji government in the expulsion of Evan Hannah publisher of the Fiji Times.

TIPNG supports the calls made by the PNG Media Council and the regional media organization PINA who have condemned the actions of the present regime at a time when the media throughout the world were preparing to celebrate the World Media Freedom Day.

The fact that the interim government willingly ignored a court injunction to have Hannah appear in Court on Friday afternoon is quite disturbing and illustrates that the executive arm of government has ignored the laws and established processes of the land. Further more It was deliberately using this means to gag the media from reporting its activities and strike at freedom of the media in Fiji.

TIPNG says as this is the second time Fiji has deported a journalist and this reflects the Government's intended aim to suppress the freedom of media. This creates an atmosphere in which corruption and mismanagement will be able to thrive because there will be no free press reporting on these issues. It shows that Fiji is ruled by people who have no regard for the fundamental rights of the society to information which is a important pillar of democracy.

TIPNG salutes the Government of Papua New Guinea for its steadfast support for a free press that is enjoyed in the country regardless of the media reporting on very sensitive issues concerning the government of the day.

The Government of PNG has openly supported the freedom of the press in the country and has on numerous occasions supported the staging of the World Media Freedom day when celebrated.

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12th May 2008

Press Release by Mike

TIPNG Confused by Issues Regarding Prime Minister

Transparency International (PNG) Inc is confused by issues surrounding the reported investigation of the Prime Minister regarding failure to lodge returns over a 15 Year period and the counter claims made by the Ombudsman Commission and the Prime Minister's lawyers in court.

TIPNG questions why the referral has taken so long to be made. If the Ombudsman Commission had been doing its job properly the referral should have been made in 1993 or 1994, the first years that it would have been apparent that Sir Michael has failed to lodge his returns.

TIPNG believes that the Ombudsman Commission's has either been inefficient or derelict in its duty to investigate and guide leaders.

Chairman of TIPNG Mike Manning said today that he was amazed that Sir Michael had not filed proper leadership returns. "Sir Michael had introduced the leadership Code in the 1970s at considerable risk to his political future" Mr Manning said "One would think that he, above all leaders, would have ensured that he carefully complied with the code".

TI supports the Ombudsman Commission in investigating the Prime Minister who has to set the example for all other leaders in the country and if he has not lodged these returns it is a grave omission on his part.

Even though the Ombudsman should have brought this to his attention many years ago it is the clear responsibility of a leader to lodge returns in a timely manner.

TI hopes that the matter will be resolved quickly so that the position of Prime Minister is not bogged down with lengthy court proceedings.

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13th May 2008

Press Release

Cycle of costly blunders

The admission in court by government lawyers that lawful procedures were ignored in order to effect Mr Lupari's sacking is cause for great concern.

The Government must take responsibility to ensure that the necessary procedures are fully followed and further more that proper advice is given so that the integrity of the office of the Governor is not brought into disrepute.

TIPNG says that the Government should learn from previous learn experience that the termination of public servants without following proper procedures can become a most costly exercise.

We do not doubt that the Government will give great priority to paying compensation to Mr Lupari for its bungled firing of him from such a senior position as the Chief Secretary. However, if it had done its job properly it could have devoted its resource to the real needs of the people. Such incautious actions and decisions hinder and affect the efficient delivery of services causing further suffering to the people of PNG as a result.

TIPNG notes that we do not have to look far as cases of poor service delivery as this is reported almost daily in the media. A recent example was is the shameful story reported in the National newspaper on May 7th about our premier hospital: the Port Moresby General Hospital running out of basic food items and being unable to feed the children admitted to the hospital.

If such an important hospital is running out of food, one can only imagine what difficulties are being faced by all the other hospitals, health clinics, other health related services and institutions throughout the country.

Is it now time to do things properly and stop wasting the valuable financial resources of the State on fixing up matters that should have been carefully executed in the first place.

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31st May 2008

Press Release Walk Against Corruption (WAC) 2008

His Excellency, the Governor General Grand Chief Sir Paulias Matane again led the 2nd "Walk Against Corruption" yesterday starting at 6.00am. The Walk is an annual fund raising and awareness event organised and staged by the Transparency International PNG (TIPNG)

The walk was held simultaneously with the Kokopo WAC in East New Britain province. Commandeered by TIPNG Chairman, Mr Mike Manning the walk in Kokopo started at Ulaveo and finished at Kokopo market whilst in Port Moresby it started at Ela Beach IEA TAFE College through the main street of downtown Port Moresby down to the Sir Hubert Murray Stadium, through Lawes Road and back to the IEA campus. The activities at both centres were concluded at 8.30am and included warm up exercises and entertainment by the local Watete drama group.

The WAC was inaugurated last year in Port Moresby with the aim to raise greater awareness about corruption and to allow ordinary people express their opposition to this scourge by taking part in the walk.

The other principle aim of the event is to raise funds for the Siaguru Endowment Fund (SEF), a fund which was established by the founder of TIPNG the late Sir Anthony Siaguru to financially secure the operational future of TIPNG over the long term in pursuit of its work in the fight against corruption.

This year's theme for the walk was **"CRUSADE FOR LIFE FREE OF CORRUPTION – IT'S YOUR RIGHT"**

Last year His Excellency the Governor General Sir Paulias Matane led the inaugural walk which attracted 45 teams representing 35 organisations and individuals. The number of teams this year surpassed that number with a record 94 teams. This represented about 67 corporate, NGO and Government organisations.

Since its launch on 18th December 2006 the Siaguru Endowment Fund (SEF) has raised K817, 544.00 and the funds are managed under a Trust Deed by KPMG and will be drawn down once the target of K2 million is achieved. The total amount expected to be raised from these Walks will be over K170,000.

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18th June 2008

Press release

Procurement and Financial Management

TIPNG says that solutions to overcoming corruption in the private and public sectors in Papua New Guinea must be home grown and owned to suit and appropriately deal with situations faced here and not imported.

Also for holistic results the private sector governance regime needs review. There is a growing misconception that corruption exists only in the public sector.

TIPNG says that having appropriate mechanisms in place will strengthen good governance practices at all levels of government. TI stands ready to assist both the Government and AusAID in its endeavours in whatever way it can. It would especially offer the Integrity Pact as a useful tool to be used in procurement at all levels of government.

The Pact would see all parties to a tender committing to a written document undertaking to neither seek nor offer a bribe and would specify sanctions to be applied if it were subsequently shown that the pact had been abused in any manner. This tool has worked well in such difficult countries as Colombia and Pakistan and is something the world movement recommends to governments.

Papua New Guinea should seriously consider utilising this tool and eventually adopt it to suit the needs and conditions of PNG

Our Government and leaders must be committed to take the lead to eradicate corruption by ensuring that officers adhere at all times to established processes and procedures. This is because institutional weaknesses and lack of appropriate process and procedures in the procurement and financial management system has influenced corrupt practices

TIPNG is aware that National Anti Corruption Strategy is currently being worked on by the relevant arms of govt which should complement the work that AusAID is proposing as reported in the National on the 17th of June.

TIPNG further stated that while this is good as part of the solution, more fundamental issues and details needs to made clear as well. There has to be greater buy in from the people using the system, leaders etc to effectively transform the change.

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Thursday 03 July 2008

Press Release

US\$40 million (K145 million kina) Action Now

TIPNG is gravely concerned at the story carried in the Post Courier on Wednesday 2 July in which the newspaper reported the alleged existence of a personal bank account in the name of a government minister holding substantial sums of money in Singapore paid to them by logging interests in return for preferential treatment.

Chairman Mike Manning said that if the allegations are true then it clearly indicates what we have all feared and that is the level of corruption in PNG has risen to another and even grander level.

Mr Manning stated the government must now take real action to ensure we are enforcing an environment within PNG that does not allow for such alleged activities to take place.

TIPNG says news reports such as the Taiwan “cash for diplomacy” scandal reported some months back create real doubt in the minds of the public and the business community on the integrity of their government and its ministers.

The government needs now to come forward and publicly state how it is going to deal with these issues when such activities are reported. While the report may be based on alleged activities, for the greater public good they need to be investigated. Where members of parliament are alleged to be involved it should be the moral responsibility of these members to step down from their offices while such investigations are being carried out.

TIPNG is urging appropriate authorities perhaps led by an independent body to urgently investigate the report and make known the findings in the name of transparency and good governance.

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Press release

04th July 2008

PM's action bad for Nation

TIPNG says that the referral of former Chief Ombudsman Ila Geno to the Parliamentary Privileges Committee was a dangerous and reckless act. The Prime Minister has just broken the most important doctrine of a functioning democracy –the separation of powers, said TI Chairman Mike Manning.

The Executive and the Legislature should always be kept apart and respect each other's independence he said. Mr. Geno held an important position in the Executive of PNG Mr Manning added, "He is one of the people charged with ensuring that leaders keep the highest standards and obey the laws of the land".

The Prime Minister had tested his assertion that the Ombudsman had not followed proper procedures in court and it was dismissed. He then attacked Mr Geno under Parliamentary privilege and referred him to the committee.

The Parliamentary Privileges Committee is designed to protect that institution, not individual office holders. Mr Geno and the Ombudsman Commission did not refer the Parliament to the prosecutor, he did not in any way, reflect on the integrity of the Parliament. He referred the Prime Minister for failing to provide fully completed returns under the Leadership code for a number of years.

In a democracy leaders are under scrutiny whilst they are in public life. In PNG we have a Leadership Code to ensure that Parliamentarians, Departmental Heads and certain Constitutional Office holders keep to the highest standards. Part of that is reporting their financial activities each year so that there can be no conflict of interest and no increases in income that are not accounted for. This is an imposition on a leader but it is necessary to ensure that they do not take advantage of their positions to enrich themselves.

Attacking the outgoing Chief Ombudsman and referring him or anyone else in a position of trust according to TIPNG, constitutes a major obstacle to democracy and the rule of law. In a democratic system, offices and institutions lose their legitimacy when they are misused for private advantage and such should not be the trend for Papua New Guinea.

This kind of attitude is harmful in established democracies and creates climates for the failure of accountable political leadership which hinders development for ordinary people.

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