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MEDIA RELEASE

No response from Wenge's office ...Debate postponed for a week

The Community Coalition Against Corruption (CCAC) has been unable to get a formal response to its invitation to Governor of Morobe Province, Luther Wenge, despite a number of phone calls and formal correspondence, to debate the worthiness of the two Bills currently gazetted and due to go before National Parliament regarding the exemption of Members of Parliament (MPs) from dismissal, and the K1,000,000 increase to MPs electoral support grants.

Current media reports state that Governor Wenge will only debate the Bills on the floor of National Parliament, although previous reports had Governor Wenge challenging critics of the Bills to a public debate. It seems that Governor Wenge and various other MPs are suggesting that public decisions should not be subject to public debate. If this is so, it clashes with everything we know and understand about leadership, parliamentary democracy, good government, and freedom of expression.

The CCAC urges Governor Wenge to place on the public record the evidence he has to prove that the 21 years of electoral support grants ('slush funds') have been a well-governed public investment for the people of PNG. This evidence would be best illustrated by Governor Wenge's own record of expenditure of grants whilst holding public office.

The CCAC believes that good public information results in good public decisions, and will continue to work to bring objective information about public policy into the public domain. Thus the CCAC will work to arrange a debate on the Saturday (October 22) before National Parliament sits (October 25) - further detail will be released as details come to hand.

The CCAC represents about two million people in PNG through its vast network of churches, youth groups, women's groups, and commercial organisations. It is in their interests that the CCAC pursues this matter. The CCAC wants to create debate about the way in which money is used in PNG and whether people convicted of a breach of the Leadership Code should be allowed to remain in office.

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