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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preserve the integrity of the Administrative Inquiry into the Manumanu land case

Port Moresby, 7 February 2018 - It is extremely shameful that the Minister for Lands and Physical Planning has needed to report files, important to an Administrative Inquiry launched by the Prime Minister, are missing. It is simply not acceptable that Prime Minister O'Neill and Minister Tkatchenko are prevented from delivering on promises they have made to the nation and shamed by public servants who fail to secure documents essential to delivering of these promises.

Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) calls on the Prime Minister to preserve the integrity of the process he himself started in February 2017 when he announced an administrative inquiry into the Manumanu Land Deal.

"If the inquiry is deficient due to missing documentation, then it is clear that a much more robust investigation, even a Commission of Inquiry, should be established and the matter reviewed appropriate investigators and by the Judiciary," said Chairman of TIPNG, Mr Lawrence Stephens.

The reported missing Manumanu land files are very likely to have an impact on the ongoing administrative inquiry. TIPNG has been concerned about the upholding of the principles of good governance in the Manumanu case.

Since the case surfaced, TIPNG has been calling on the Prime Minister to revoke his decision to reappoint ministers he stood aside to permit an Inquiry to be conducted. and preserve the integrity of the Administrative Inquiry. TIPNG has constantly called for the tabling of the findings of the Inquiry. It is difficult to see how the inquiry will be effective given the latest disclosure.

TIPNG also calls on the Ombudsman Commission and investigative authorities to take note and strong swift action. The people need assurances that government exists for them, to protect and advance their interests. If the likely evidence of fraud can be tampered with when in the care of public officials, citizens lose trust in the Government system and can even begin to doubt the sincerity of promises made to them.

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What is TIPNG?

TIPNG is a member of Transparency International a global anti corruption movement committed to fighting corruption. TIPNG is an independent organization in PNG known as a Chapter of the international movement. The PNG chapter advocates against corruption and promotes transparency, good governance, honesty and accountability both in private and public sector dealings. TIPNG tries to assist strengthen the integrity systems of our country such as the police, the parliament, the public services and the judiciary.