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## **PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **Maru must act on Koloma to preserve Integrity of NSO & NID**

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*Port Moresby, 01 May 2018* –Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) is calling on the Minister for National Planning Richard Maru to take immediate steps to restore integrity of both the multi-million National Identity (NID) Project and National Statistical Office (NSO) by suspending the acting National Statistician Mr. RokoKoloma who is being investigated by the RPNGC Fraud Squad.

TIPNG has made this call after media reports that Mr. Koloma is being sought by the police in regards to a discrepancy of more than K24m in the NSO accounts after the Department of Finance conducted an audit investigation in 2017.

“To preserve the integrity of the NSO and the NID Project, the Minister for National Planning must suspend Mr. Koloma until the Police have completed their investigations, citizens must not just turn a blind eye at such vast sums of public monies disappearing” said Chairman of TIPNG Mr. Lawrence Stephens.

“The NID is vital to safeguarding our democracy and the NSO is essential to measure the government’s efforts in national development. They are both assets of the people of Papua New Guinea and should be afforded the proper respect by the public servants employed as their caretakers,” said Mr Stephens.

TIPNG launched 3 campaigns for 2018, one of which called for there to be a full audit of the NID so as to restore confidence before the Project was rolled out across the country. At the time the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also the former National Planning Minister, said an independent audit committee would be established by February to quell justifiable public concern, unfortunately there is no indication that committee has been established.

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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.