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**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Deferral of LLG elections is unconstitutional***

*Government knows when elections are due and should prepare adequately*

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Port Moresby, 1 May 2018 – Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) has expressed great concern on constitutionality of the reported deferral of the Local Level Government (LLG) Elections to April 2019.

It is TIPNG's view that the deferral of the LLG Elections is a breach of the Constitution. Deferral of the LLG elections to hold them later is a complete denial of statutory and constitutional responsibilities which is not consistent with the leadership that the people of Papua New Guinea deserve. The spirit of the constitution is that National & Local Elections should have concurrent terms.

TIPNG is seriously concerned that such a move to defer the LLG Elections sets a precedent and denies the people of Papua New Guinea the chance to exercise their democratic right to periodically elect their local level governments. Any dilution of this right, even if for pragmatic reasons is unacceptable. The Government clearly knows when these elections are due and should prepare adequately for it.

"If the deferral was sought by Parliament, we (TIPNG) request bodies such as the Ombudsman Commission of PNG and Constitutional Law Reform Commission (CLRC) to protect our constitutional rights by seeking a Supreme Court Reference, " said Chairman of TIPNG, Mr Lawrence Stephens.

TIPNG also calls on the Minister for Provincial & Local Level Government Affairs to clarify the status of incumbent councillors & presidents and how development grants will be disbursed given the reported status of LLG Elections.

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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.