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## PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Keep the LPV system*

*LPV is better for Papua New Guinean democracy than First-Past-The-Post system.*

Tuesday 5 June 2018, Port Moresby - Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) is gravely concerned by a recent statement by Prime Minister Peter O'Neill on the floor of Parliament, in response to questions by the Opposition. Mr. O'Neill proposed that the country should go back to the *first-past-the-post* system and abandon the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system used for the 2012 & 2017 National Parliamentary Elections.

"The LPV system has increased democratic mandate of elected leaders and any step back to *first-past-the-post* will risk diminishing the voices of the people of Papua New Guinea in our National Elections" said Chairman of TIPNG, Lawrence Stephens. "The voting system is a non-issue in comparison to other more pressing administrative challenges to ensuring the integrity of national elections that should represent the views of Papua New Guineans."

Preferential Voting systems, like LPV, are seen to be more democratic than first-past-the-post as they allow voters the opportunity to spread their votes amongst multiple candidates with the winner of a majority of votes after elimination and redistribution of votes being quantitatively more representative – especially in electorates with many candidates. In PNG, LPV can give minority candidates a stronger chance to present themselves as potential representatives of communities beyond those of their immediate clans and language groups, allow voters to choose candidates outside of their immediate clans, and can reduce the impact of electoral fraud in an election.

"The PNGEC has stated that systems like LPV are seen to be more indicative or reflective of the will of voters" said Mr. Stephens in a statement to the media, "contrary to what has been announced on the floor of Parliament, multiple observer groups, such as the Commonwealth and TIPNG support the use of LPV and instead have been justifiably concerned about more pressing issues such as the updating of rolls, compliance with and enforcement of election laws, PNGEC procurement and financing, PNGEC personnel issues and security during the election periods – it is surprising that the leaders in Parliament seem not to be prioritising and strengthening these areas. Let us do things in accordance with the laws of the country before complaining that they are not fit for purpose."

TIPNG will be submitting its concerns to the CLRC and its calling all elected leaders and concerned citizens who believe that representative democracy requires acceptance and enforcement of agreed rules rather than changing the rules to suit the wishes of individuals who are required to play by the rules established on behalf of the electorate which examines their offers to represent them.

The LPV system was adopted to benefit all voters, has not been as well administered as it should have been but should certainly not be dumped by those who have failed to respect and support its rules and apparently wish to return us to a system which allowed MPs to be elected with as little as 10% of the votes of the electors in local and National Parliamentary 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.