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**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Deferral of LLG Elections unconstitutional and will disrupt delivery of basic services to local communities.***

Port Moresby 27/07/18 – Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) believes the decision by Prime Minister Peter O'Neill to defer the Local Level Government (LLG) elections to 2019 unconstitutional and an assault on Democracy in Papua New Guinea.

"The justification that funds set aside for the conduct of the LLG Election need to be used for settling outstanding allowances to Councilors is deplorable. It indicates that it is the Government's view that Constitutional Rights can be violated on the basis of poor fiscal management by state agencies," said Chairman of TIPNG, Mr Lawrence Stephens .

Deferral of the LLG elections is a complete breach of statutory and constitutional responsibilities and not consistent with the leadership that the people of Papua New Guinea deserve. The spirit of the constitution according to Section 34 of the Organic Law on the Provincial and Local Level Government is that the National and LLG elections should have concurrent terms. Financial matters as outstanding allowances, is an administrative issue and shouldn't be used as an excuse by the government for the delay.

TIPNG is seriously concerned that such a move to defer the LLG Elections sets another bad precedent with disregard for the law being practice with impunity. The move also denies the people of Papua New Guinea the chance to exercise their democratic right to periodically elect their local level governments.

The delivery of basic government services to local communities will be disrupted and ordinary citizens will suffer the most if the LLG elections are pushed to April 2019.

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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.