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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TIPNG presents election observation report at state of the Pacific conference

Port Moresby, 24th September 2018 -TI PNG Presented the Transparency International PNG(TIPNG) observation report on the 2017 National General Elections at the state of the Pacific conference (SOTP) 2018 in Canberra Australia.

Executive Director of TIPNG, Arianne Kassman, was part of a panel focused on the 2017 National General Elections in Papua New Guinea, together with the Australian National University (ANU) Observer team.

According to the report, in 37 percent of polling places observed, observers reported that ballots were used by other people without their consent or presence. In 13.2 percent of those places, many ballot papers were marked by one person or a small group of people and 27 percent of locations reported occurrences of bribery and intimidation of voters.

Voters were also surveyed and it was found that 34 percent of the total number surveyed reported that their voting rights were taken by others and one third of voters reported threats to voters on polling day to vote a particular candidate. Almost half reported being offered bribes and nearly 40 percent said there was a lack of secrecy when voting.

TIPNG made recommendations in the report for a whole-of-society approach to addressing key issues of concern before the next general elections:

- The electoral roll update and verification should be given the highest priority by the government, with the PNGEC utilizing telecommunication, the media and working together with civil societies provincial and local authorities.
- There must be ample time given to the plan for Security and prevention of election related violence whereby the PNGEC should develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to advocate for violence prevention.
- Enforcement of existing laws by agencies through officials being identifiable by their name and unique identification number which must be displayed on their uniforms during the elections to combat bribery and intimidation of voters and officials

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.

- Combating lack of voter awareness through intense awareness campaigns carried out in schools, workplaces and churches. The media also needs to be fully utilized for awareness as well as for reporting election progress.

The biennial conference is a Pacific Research Program flagship event run by the Department of Pacific Affairs (DPA) of the Australian National University (ANU). SOTP2018 brought together leading academics, policymakers, business leaders, civil society representatives and the media to present on, discuss and debate current issues of interest concerning the Pacific Islands region.

The conference aimed to generate discussion on the factors shaping the forward-looking research agenda on the Pacific Islands region.

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Pix Caption: *Pix 1: TIPNG Executive Director Arianne Kassman presenting the election observation report at the ANU, Canberra Australia. Photo Credit: Barbra Thomas.*

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