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## PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### PNG SCORES “HIGHLY CORRUPT” ON THE 2018 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX

*More effort needed from all sectors to protect the democracy of Papua New Guinea.*

Port Moresby, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 - Sincere, honest and real effort is needed by citizens, the public sector, businesses, and political leaders to protect the democracy of Papua New Guinea. This is the message from Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) during the launch of the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).

Papua New Guinea has again been classified as one of the most highly corrupt countries in the world according to the 2018 CPI, a worldwide examination of perceptions of levels of corruption suffered by individual nations. Our nation ranks 138 out of 180 countries with a score of 28 out of 100. The CPI scores countries on a scale of zero to 100, with 100 being perceived to be “very clean” and zero perceived to be “highly corrupt”.

The CPI shows a link between corruption and the health of democracies, where countries with higher rates of corruption, like Papua New Guinea, also have weaker democratic institutions and political rights. Under the theme “*Corruption and the crisis of Democracy*”, the 2018 CPI highlights crucial areas of public sector corruption that are contributing to the weakening of democratic institutions. Stagnation in their performance must be addressed by responsible agencies.

Over the years, Papua New Guinea has seen the deteriorating respect for democratic principles. Simply said: There is massive disrespect for rule of law in Papua New Guinea. Public servants and citizens alike lack the integrity to adhere to proper processes and respectful ways of conduct. This was evident in the 2017 National Elections with discrepancies and electoral roll inaccuracy, bribery and intimidation by voters and candidates, double voting and block voting. There was a lack of enforcement of laws, by official agencies, during the elections, providing an opening for citizens to disregard measures to ensure a free and fair election.

When corruption seeps into the democratic system, particularly at higher levels of power, democratic institutions that keep the government in check suffer. This is particularly so when corrupt leaders work actively to protect themselves from the law and use their power for private gain.

Protecting Papua New Guinea’s democracy also means protecting the people’s freedom of speech and the right to protest and ensuring the independence of the institutions and provide checks and balances such as the judiciary, the police and the media.

#### ***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.

Although the CPI is a measure of the perceived level of corruption in the public sector, Papua New Guinea's low score on the CPI should put greater attention on preventing corruption and promoting integrity in dealings from the business sector. The business sector needs to be part of the efforts to put in place safeguards necessary to protect them from corruption. Apart from the legal risks, companies implicated in corruption face severe reputational damage at home and abroad while others lose lucrative contracts.

For Papua New Guinea to make real progress in improving its CPI score and protecting its vibrant democracy, TIPNG calls on the Government of the day to:

- Fully resource and strengthen institutions responsible for maintaining checks and balances over political power and ensure that these institutions operate without fear or favour;
- Fully implement the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2010 – 2030 and establish the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC);
- Support the Open Government Partnership and create a legal framework for citizens to access information from the Government;
- Ensure a free and independent media for Papua New Guinea journalists to work without intimidation or harassment from political powers.

TIPNG stands ready to work with the Government and other organizations to work on improving our democracy and our score on the Corruption Perceptions Index.

The CPI reflects the views of observers from around the world including experts living and working in the countries evaluated. It is based on a combination of data collected by 13 reputable organizations globally. Papua New Guinea was surveyed by six of the sources. More information can be found on <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi>.

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