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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TIPNG: Make available NID spending Audit report

The NID Project involves vast amounts of public money with almost no accountability says Transparency International PNG as it calls for release of Independent Audit Committee Report.

Port Moresby, 11th February 2019 – It is irresponsible for the state to continue to spend public money on the National Identity (NID) project without completing a full Independent Audit Report, says Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG).

The anti-corruption NGO said this in response to media reports that National Planning Minister, Richard Maru, was disappointed that the K230 million NID registration system was not working. TIPNG shares the Minister's concern and has been calling for explanations of the loss or possible misuse of at least K24m and efforts to hold those responsible accountable.

TIPNG is calling for suspension of funding to the NID until the findings of the Audit Committee on NID spending, established in 2018 and headed by the Chief Secretary, are released for the public, authorities and MP's to examine. With the known inefficiencies and also the allegations of gross mismanagement and corruption in NID implementation it would be unwise for a responsible government to sign off on further money being allocated to NID.

Since January 2018 TIPNG has been insisting that the Government audit the NID Project. The Deputy Prime Minister and former National Planning Minister, Charles Abel, responded with a promise that an independent Audit Committee would review NID expenditure. In late September 2018 a team headed by Chief Secretary Isaac Lupari was appointed to investigate the K24m that allegedly went missing under the watch of the suspended Chief National Statistician Roko Koloma.

The recent release of the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Papua New Guinea 138 out of 180 countries with a score of 28 out of 100. The CPI scores countries on their perceived levels of public sector corruption on a scale of zero to 100, with 100 being perceived to be “*very clean*” and zero perceived to be “*highly corrupt*”. If the government is serious about combating corruption then it must start by ensuring proper accountability in large public expenditure programs such as the NID Project.

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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.