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**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Make public UPNG interim council appointment process**

*Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March, Port Moresby* – The Minister of Higher Education Research Science and Technology, Pila Ninigi, must immediately inform the public on the selection and vetting process used to appoint members to the interim council of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) says anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International PNG (TIPNG).

It is in the public interest that serious allegations of undue influence at the highest level are dispelled. This will also allow the start of the UPNG academic year to be returned to normalcy and ensure the education of UPNG students is not jeopardized. Failure to demonstrate that tests of proper and fit character were applied in the recruitment of the interim council will only exacerbate the anger on campus.

The University of Papua New Guinea as a public institution should be open and transparent in its management, both to the general public and to the staff and students of UPNG.

TIPNG stands by the belief that citizens of Papua New Guinea hold the Higher Education in the highest regard and deserve a clear and open response from the minister with regards to the way in which the interim council was appointed. The minister has been given extra powers that allow him to hire and fire senior officers at will. TIPNG's call is that he make public the appointment process used in the interest of transparency.

According to a public statement released by the HERST Minister in January, interim council members have been selected based on their expertise and their independence of previous involvement in UPNG governance or management.

TIPNG welcomes drawing on this pool of expertise and experience to better manage the university, so long as proper processes that are in place to make such appointments are strictly followed, and more importantly, are made public.

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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.