



## **Papua New Guinea needs vibrant citizens to uphold the integrity of the nation**

*Just a thought by Transparency International PNG for 44<sup>th</sup> Independence*

Each citizen is responsible in building this nation. Papua New Guineans know from experience that the current Government, and previous regimes, could not solve all the problems. Like their predecessors, the current Government vowed to strengthen our democracy and restore the trust of citizens in government and its institutions.

Papua New Guinea's independence is about the people. These 44 years of continuity should inspire you to reflect on your strength as a citizen, so that you can live the values that were first put forward in 1975.

Since our inception in 1997, Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) has existed for exactly half as long as the country. Over those years, we have witnessed the resilience of Papua New Guineans, who in the face of overwhelming impunity for the corrupt, have held the course. As a nation, we have staved off the risk of descending into anarchic 'instability' that was speculated by some commentators to be our inevitable future.

The new Government has just completed its first 100 days in office, with many statements about the agenda and intentions of ridding corruption, changes in ministerial portfolios and some paradigm shift. These new pushes towards transparency, accountability and integrity are a great opportunity to stop the corruption that plagues the daily lives of ordinary people and brings rot to the system. However, the Government efforts to fight corruption are only achievable if public power is monitored by relevant institutions but more importantly a vibrant civil society.

In the great words of US President Barrack Obama who made a call for the protection of citizens:

*"Strong civil societies help uphold universal human rights. They promote good governance by making governments more effective and holding leaders like me to account. And they're critical to economic development, because in our global economy, trade and investment flows to countries that give citizens the freedom to create and develop new ideas and that are protected by rule of law."*

As we celebrate 44 years of our country's independence, we must remind ourselves about the words in the Preamble of Our Constitution:

*WE, THE PEOPLE, do now establish this sovereign nation and declare ourselves, under the guiding hand of God, to be the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. AND WE ASSERT, by virtue of that authority*

- *that all power belongs to the people—acting through their duly elected representatives*
- *that respect for the dignity of the individual and community interdependence are*

*basic principles of our society*

- *that we guard with our lives our national identity, integrity and self-respect*
- *that we reject violence and seek consensus as a means of solving our common problems*
- *that our national wealth, won by honest, hard work be equitably shared by all.*

And together we can make the years ahead the best years our Nation has ever had if we take on our social responsibilities as citizens and rise above cynicism and doubt.

Ends...///