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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRIME MINISTER MARAPE VOWS TO DELIVER ICAC IN 2020

Tuesday, January 28, 2020, Port Moresby - In a welcomed response to a stagnant 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score presented at the official Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) launch last Thursday, PNG Prime Minister James Marape has now vowed to have a fully Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) established before the end of this year.

In his official government response to the CPI findings last Thursday, Mr Marape acknowledged that corruption was a long-standing issue in PNG, which demanded greater cooperation between the government and citizens. He added that his current government is now committed to passing major legislative reforms in the shape of the ICAC enabling legislation, as well as the Whistle-Blowers Act, within the 2020 parliament year.

Mr Marape during the launch, said that the ICAC enabling legislation and the Whistle-Blowers Act would be key vessels in reforming PNG and that these legislations are only two of what Papua New Guineans can expect to be a year filled with reform legislations that the current government plans to introduce.

Although no official study into the costs of corruption has ever been commissioned in PNG, former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta in a press statement in 2017, stated that the PNG Fraud Squad had estimated the cost of corruption to the PNG government at approximately K1.5 billion in 2016 alone (this means approximately K28 million was lost to corruption every week!).

In officially launching of the 2019 CPI last Thursday (which was themed: "Let's Clean Up our Act, Set Up The ICAC"), TIPNG Chairman Peter Aitsi stressed the importance of establishing strong and independent anti-corruption enforcement tools to minimizing leakages in the national budget.

The push by TIPNG for government to establish the ICAC reflected similar trends identified in a 2016 report by multinational finance firm Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC), which cross-referenced CPI scores against International Monetary Fund records of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.

The report highlighted a trend where higher CPI scores correlated with higher GDP per capita; adding that, "Our (PwC) analysis shows that a one-notch increase in perceived corruption levels is associated with a \$380 decrease in GDP per-capita and lower standards of living."

If this formula was applied to our current PNG population of 8.251 million, it would mean a one-point increase in our CPI score would be equal to an estimated K10.857 billion boost to the national economy.

Papua New Guinea's score in the 2019 CPI results showed no improvement or decline from the previous year; scoring 28 out of 100 on the index and ranking 137 out of a total of 180 participating countries.

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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.