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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bougainville Referendum was free, fair and safe *TIPNG launches observation report*

Thursday 20th February 2020, Port Moresby – Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) has released a report outlining findings from its Observation of the Bougainville Referendum last year, to stakeholders and partners.

TIPNG’s Observation of the Bougainville Referendum was across 28 polling sites in North and Central Bougainville with well over a 100 voters interviewed. TIPNG only observed the Polling Process and not the Counting.

“The TIPNG Observers played a critical role in the Referendum by observing the conduct of polling and counting, to ascertain if the process was free, open, transparent, democratic and fair – based on national legislation and according to national and international standards,” said Mr. Yuambari Haihuie, TIPNG Deputy Director (Policy & Advocacy) and coordinator of the Bougainville Referendum Observation (BRO) Project.

“In terms of TIPNG’s overall assessment of the Bougainville Referendum, while there were minor procedural issues, if measured against the standard of previous elections in PNG, the Bougainville Referendum was free, fair & safe and credibly reflects the will of the people of Bougainville. Observers were all welcomed and did not encounter any hostility or violence; in fact most polling stations had a sense of celebration by communities as polling commenced.,” said Mr. Haihuie in presentation at the launch of the report.

Furthermore, all voters that were interviewed by TIPNG Observers were forthcoming in their answers and gave answers freely. The TIPNG Observers were comprised of TIPNG Staff & Directors, and volunteers from partners institutions such as the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), PNG National Research Institute (NRI), Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPCC).

TIPNG thanks the people of Bougainville and the Bougainville Referendum Commission (BRC) Polling Officials for their unanimous support in answering survey questions over the week of polling. TIPNG The BRO Project was funded by the European Union (EU). It is hoped that the report by TIPNG will be of use to the Government of PNG and the Autonomous Bougainville Government in their deliberation on the outcome of the Referendum.

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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.