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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TIPNG Commends Marape Administration on Commitment to Accountability

Thursday 14th May 2020 - TIPNG acknowledges the Marape-Steven Government's commitment to table a full audited report of COVID-19 SOE funding in Parliament when it resumes on June 2nd, 2020. TIPNG Chairman Peter Aitsi has commended the Government on taking the first steps towards breaking a trend of administrations evading public scrutiny that has plagued PNG emergency public procurement in recent years.

"It is very encouraging to note that our Government has now made this commitment to table a fully audited COVID-19 SOE funding report at the earliest available opportunity when Parliament resumes on June 2nd, 2020. This demonstrates that they are taking the responsibility to set a better example in the way that emergency public procurement can be managed," he said.

"During what has been an unprecedented global experience and given our country's recent financial woes, we must take every precaution to ensure the most effective and transparent use of the resources at our disposal," said Mr. Aitsi.

In acknowledging the Government's commitment to table the full COVID-19 SOE funding report, TIPNG recommends that the commitment must be complemented with several key actions over the next 18 days before the report is expected to be tabled in Parliament. To ensure that tangible transparency and accountability is achieved for the current SOE, TIPNG's recommendations include:

1. Publish SOE Procurement tenders, bids & contracts on the COVID-19 Information Website.
2. For the NOC-19 to publicly outline the internal process for receiving donations from development partners, business houses & others so that journalists and the public are aware of what will be done with donations.
3. Publish an online public Donations Registry with the corresponding Kina-value of donations, which is updated daily.
4. Publish a public protocol so that all statements by Government Officials associated with COVID-19 are consolidated and shared through the online website platform (which is free to access on Telikom and Digicel). These statements can then be shared via a link on social media platforms such as Facebook by Government Officials.
5. Resume daily televised media briefings and take questions from the public to instill confidence and trust in the source of information.

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.

Successful implementation of these recommendations would not only boost the credibility of the report on the COVID-19 SOE funding but will increase public trust in the Government's management of the ongoing SOE and enhance the confidence of PNG's international donors and development partners.

TIPNG has pushed for greater accountability on the COVID-19 Funds through the release of timeline consolidating media reports of both internal allocations and external donations since the declaration of the State of Emergency (SOE). This timeline information was supported by a video message from the TIPNG Chairman reminding the Government to respect citizens' right to ask questions and be provided answers on COVID-19 Funds.

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