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PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deferral of Moresby NW By-election Sounds Alarm

Wednesday, 2nd June 2021, Port Moresby – The deferral of the Moresby Northwest is a warning sign for the Government and stakeholders to prioritise coordination of key agencies prior to the conduct of the 2022 National Elections says Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG). The most pressing priority will be the appointment of a permanent Electoral Commissioner and key administrative staff, to ensure continuity and accountability within the PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC).

“Moresby Northwest is an urban electorate, within the capital city and has in its electoral boundary the National Parliament House, if agencies are unable to coordinate here one can only imagine how much more chaotic it will be next year across all 22 provinces. This deferral points to the need for transparent and accountable national coordination through the Inter-Departmental Election Committee (IDEC) and sub-nationally through the Provincial Electoral Steering Committees (PESC). In NCD the PESC was able to bring the Police and the PNGEC together to ensure coordination so that citizens’ right to vote are not infringed,” said Chair of TIPNG Peter Aitsi in a media statement.

“However, the need for leadership by the PNGEC as the constitutionally mandated office to conduct elections cannot be overlooked. The Electoral Commission Appointments Committee chaired by the Prime Minister must convene as a matter of urgency to recruit and appoint a permanent head of the PNGEC, so that there is probity and accountability for decisions such as the deferral of the Moresby Northwest by-election. The people of Papua New Guinea need to have confidence in the PNGEC and its officers if it is to fulfil its essential role in our democracy,” said Mr. Aitsi.

In the National Integrity System Assessment (NISA) PNG 2021 Report launched by TIPNG on May 13th in Port Moresby, it was observed that the Electoral Administration has worsened since the last assessment in 2003 in terms of organising elections with significant shortcomings in application of rules, management of human resources, and the conduct of ballot counting and declaration of seats.

As one of its 5 recommendations to increase integrity over the next 5 years, TIPNG called on the Government to “**Make Every Vote Count!**” Actions under that recommendation included; Prioritise the National Census, register every eligible voter, and implement the electoral laws, to ensure integrity within the electoral process.

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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.