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**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Lack of Collaboration by PNGEC Risks Moresby Northwest By-Election Failure**

**Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021, Port Moresby** – With one-day polling for the Moresby Northwest by-election scheduled to commence 8:00am-6:00pm on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) is calling on the PNG Electoral Commission to prioritise logistical coordination with partner agencies, to ensure that administrative issues do not deprive voters in the electorate from exercising their constitutional rights.

“The PNG Electoral Commission is the mandated body to conduct elections in Papua New Guinea. The right of voters to have free, fair and safe elections must not be diminished either through individual malice or organisational ineptitude, the electoral roll being up to date and current is essential to citizens exercising this right. TIPNG is very concerned there is a significant risk to the successful conduct of the by-election in the Moresby Northwest electorate, because of a lack of coordination and transparency by the PNGEC. This risk of failure could be resolved if the PNGEC prioritizes logistical planning for polling on Wednesday by improving coordination with the Provincial Election Steering Committee and the police force in the National Capital District.” said the Board Chair of TIPNG Peter Aitsi.

“Of further concern is that the PNG Electoral Commission has chosen to conduct primary counting of ballots at the 5 wards before transferring to a central venue for the eliminations if required. This approach may present significant logistical challenges within one day of polling and may increase the likelihood of disputes if ballots are seen not to be properly handled and protected,” said Mr. Aitsi.

TIPNG is making this call in light of updates received through the Provincial Electoral Steering Committee (PESC), with the objective to ensure the public and indeed the candidates are able to have full confidence in the conduct of the by-election.

The PESC is a mechanism developed after the 2012 National Elections for the Provincial Government, the Police, Churches, Civil Society, Media and other partners to coordinate assistance to the PNG Electoral Commission in the conduct of elections. TIPNG is a member of the NCD PESC which was formalised through an MoU signed by the PNG Electoral Commission and the National Capital District Commission earlier this year.

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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.