

FIRST DAY

Tuesday 04 September 2012

DRAFT HANSARD

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FIRST DAY

Tuesday 4 September 2012

The Parliament met at 2 p.m., according to the terms of the Resolution of 21 August 2012.

There being no quorum present, Mr Speaker stated that he would resume the Chair after the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 2.05 p.m. to 2.25 p.m..

Mr Speaker again took the Chair at 2.25 p.m., and said Prayers.

‘Lord God Almighty, God of Abraham, Issac and Israel, we declare you our God as we gather in this House of your people. Father, we come to you in the name of Jesus Christ your Son and our Lord because we realise that none of us here is worthy enough to call on your Name.

We are all sinners and we have fallen short of your glory. Father, we have also realised that among many whom you have called you have chosen only a few. Only 111 of us stand here before you this afternoon.

Lord, we hear the cries of our people, their anguish, frustrations, even their desires and expectations and therefore, Lord, we bring all these to you because we represent them here in this House. And we know that without you, we cannot do anything. We invite you this day being the first formal day of our Parliament to come take your place in this House, take your place in this nation as our people look to us for their answers.

Lord, we look to you as their leaders for we know that only from you is where all our help comes and all the answers to our circumstances.

Lord Jesus, fill the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader with wisdom and strengths in their abilities. Likewise, all the Members of this Parliament and Lord help me to preside over your House with respect to the Chair and for your people with wisdom and directions that comes from you alone.

Lord, I declare this House your House and involve the presence of your Spirit to fill this place. Fill your servants who stand before you this day and Lord, let this Parliament

according to *Isaiah 9:6* and let the Government be upon your shoulder as we recite together the Lord's Prayer. Amen'

**BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS –
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr SPEAKER - Honourable Members, the *National Broadcasting Corporation* will be allowed to broadcast and televise live Question Time and *Em TV* will be allowed to film Question Time for news purposes only for the duration of this meeting.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr JAMES MARABE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – I ask leave of the Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS –
NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF
DEPUTY SPEAKER**

Motion (by **Mr James Marabe**) agreed to –

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Parliament proceeding with the election of the Deputy Speaker.

Mr MAO ZEMING – I nominate the Member for South Fly, Honourable Aide Ganasi as the Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

Mr CHARLES ABEL – I second the motion.

Mr AIDE GANASI – I accept the nomination.

Mr SPEAKER – I declare that the Member for South Fly, Honourable Aide Ganasi has been appointed unopposed as the Deputy Speaker of this Parliament.

02/01

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – I ask leave of the Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Motion (by **Mr James Marape**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Government Business being called on forthwith.

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR –
GENERAL’S SPEECH – PAPER NOTED**

Debate resumed from 27 August 2012 (See Page...)

Mr PETER O’NIELL (Ialibu-Pangia – Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I also thank the Members of the Ninth Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to present my Address to the Nation on the State of the Nation as the head of our new Coalition Government.

But, before that, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the people of Papua New Guinea, on behalf of all of us here on this Floor for their participation in the delivery of a very peaceful election. Despite predictions of chaos and violence by some, our people did our country proud.

I also wish to thank you, Mr Speaker, and all the other Members of this honourable Parliament for the faith and trust that you have bestowed in me to lead our country together.

Today, Mr Speaker, I address our people through this Parliament on the State of our Nation, highlighting the many challenges that are before us whilst putting forward our programmes and work plans for our Government in the years ahead of us.

I know, Mr Speaker, that the Way Ahead is not going to be easy for us but together we have the best possible opportunity in addressing many of these challenges.

Mr Speaker, in terms of the economy, the state of our national economy continues to be very positive. It continues to record unprecedented growth levels despite many global uncertainties and of course, lack of capacity to sustain the growth in our own Public Service machinery.

I want all our people to know what our economic scorecard looks like as we move forward during the tenure of this Parliament.

Our economic policy and finance management team of Ministers are best placed and will provide more detailed statements when each of the Ministers makes their ministerial statements in the days ahead of us.

Mr Speaker, there is nothing to hide and there will be nothing hidden.

It is our Government's desire and commitment to operate openly, transparently and accountably at all fronts in the governance of our country.

We are committed to restoring confidence in Government, both in political leadership and the Public Service machinery.

We are equally committed to working long and hard with diligence and honesty to earn the respect and the trust of all our people, our development partners and the international community as we begin the process of national unity, reconciliation and rebuilding our country.

Mr Speaker, we are also committed to working inclusively with all our people, both directly and indirectly, with businesses, churches, the international community and donor agencies to forge development alliances and secure new windows of opportunity for our country.

As reflected by the 2012 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Report, we have an economy that has been growing at about eight per cent a year over the past 10 years.

Mr Speaker, we expect that growth to continue in the Medium Term. The mid year 2012 Budget performance report card shows that our economy grew at around 11 per cent in 2011. Under the 2012 Budget, the revised economic growth is now expected to increase to around 9.9 per cent. The growth in the non mining sector has also increased to 13.1 per cent in 2011 and is expected to be around 10.4 per cent in 2012.

Mr Speaker, these growth rates are some of the strongest among nations throughout the world. Inflation on the other hand continues to be a problem and it is now estimated that it will be around 8.8 per cent in 2012.

Mr Speaker, on balance, the risks to the Papua New Guinea economy are modest as the internal drivers for growth continues to dominate the external pressures that we have. Immediately though, Mr Speaker, there are short-term challenges as we move from the current budget cycle to the next one.

In the first six months of this year our fiscal outlook has been weakened but there are a number of risk factors which has contributed to that outcome.

These factors include the uncertainties in the global economic recovery and continuing commodity price volatility; strong appreciation of the kina against all other currencies in the first half of 2012, loss of fiscal discipline due to low revenues as a result of declining commodity prices and increasing additional expenditure pressures; and the continued disruptions to the PNG LNG Project construction progress and other major mining projects.

03/01

These external factors have affected projected government revenues.

Projected revenue and grants inflow are expected to be lower than estimated under the 2012 Budget.

This shortfall is estimated to be K392.5 million. Despite this estimated shortfall, total expenditure and net lending continue to be maintained as per the 2012 Budget.

Actual expenditure recorded in the first half of the year indicate a potential overspending of K120.7 million by the end of the year largely due to increase in spending on payroll and election-related expenses.

The combination of these expected revenue shortfalls and overspending indicates a projected budget deficit of K513.1 million.

Our immediate challenge is to impose austerity measures and to maintain fiscal discipline in the second half of the year so that we can be positioned to offset the estimated K513.1 million budget deficit recorded in the first half of the year.

Corrective options are now under consideration to return the 2012 Budget to one that is balanced. These options include deferral of low priority projects and maintaining tighter rein on expenditure.

We are putting controls in place to curb expenditure such as overspending on personnel emoluments, especially by national and provincial departments.

Let me remind all of us again that we are a responsible inclusive Government and we will make necessary adjustments to return the 2012 Budget to be a balanced one at by the years end.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the Government's work program for the next five years and beyond.

Two weeks ago today, His Excellency the Governor-General, Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio, in conducting the Ceremonial Opening of this 9th Parliament, outlined the broad Five-year Development plans, policy thrust and legislative agenda to be pursued by our government.

The thrust of our Government's deliverable programs will be about growing the future.

For too long, we have let opportunities to empower and enrich our citizenship through their fingers.

This will not happen under our watch.

Growing the future means growing, reinvesting and diversifying the economy to maximize opportunities for our citizens.

Policy drivers to achieve the desired future growth include free education and healthcare, infrastructure maintenance and development and strengthening law and order.

These policy drivers are also directed at addressing our lowly rated social indicators of poor literacy levels, high maternal and infant mortality rates, inefficient law and order enforcement, aging public sector workforce and declining state of our country's infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, the policies I have alluded to support our Governments commitment to strengthening the existing Public Private Partnership Policy with new emphasis on growing domestic manufacturing, agri-business and non-mineral sector of our economy.

Our Government is committed to working together with private sector to forge strong development partnership in improving services such as telecommunications and energy by rebuilding institutions like *Telikom* and *PNG Power*, with the aim of turning it into an efficient and reliable service providers.

These service providers are seen in many countries as key drivers of nation's economic and social development.

Successful implementation of these policies, which are to be complimented by the establishment of the Sovereign Wealth Fund, will provide our nation with long-term safeguards and buffers.

Mr Speaker, our nation's mining and petroleum industries may be the source of our nation's wealth but they can also become the curse of our nation's future wellbeing.

Our nation is blessed with some of the world's richest but not fully tapped minerals and hydrocarbon resources.

There are substantial known mineral and hydrocarbon reserves that place our nation firmly in the box-seat as an invaluable raw minerals and processed LNG suppliers to emerging economic giants like India and China, Japan and South Korea as our main export destinations.

Several major mining projects specializing in extraction of gold, copper and nickel are either in full operation or are about to begin operations.

In the petroleum sector, the PNG Liquefied Natural Gas Project is progressing towards the end of its construction phase and will begin commercial extraction of natural gas in the coming months.

InterOil Corporation's Gulf LNG Project is a promising prospect and together with the PNG LNG Project, the two LNG Projects will underpin substantial revenue inflows into the nation's coffers for many years when they are fully operational.

Our Government will assist InterOil to move faster on its LNG development timelines.

We will conclude the development arrangements before this year ends.

On infrastructure development, our Government will create accessibility for all our citizens to reliable and safe transport.

It is no secret that our infrastructure has deteriorated over time due to neglect and lack of sufficient funding for maintenance of our roads, bridges, airstrips and seaports.

In the last 10 months, the Works Department has carried out an evaluation of what needs to be done and it's a mammoth task, but not impossible.

We have secured an in-principle agreement with the EXIM Bank of China and the Government of China for a generous loan to carry out infrastructure. I will be leading a delegation to China to secure this loan from the EXIM Bank to begin the massive work in the coming days ahead.

Businesses and commuters that use the Highlands Highway daily know what I'm talking about when I say we need to act with urgency to rebuild our Highway and even seaports and airports.

04/01

Reliable and well maintained infrastructures are the drivers of the economy and we must not let these opportunities slip by. Our people deserve better than what they have now and we will focus on rebuilding the major highways and airports like the Jackson's Airport and the Nadzab Airport extension.

Major seaports like the extension of the Lae Port and the re-location of the Port Moresby wharf and the building of a major port in Kikori to join the Southern region to the rest of the country.

Again, these are projects that will take many years to complete but we will start the process and the necessary work today, not tomorrow.

Law and order continues to be a major concern for businesses and our people alike and we have done little over the years to beef up police manpower and provide adequate resources while our population has been increasing rapidly.

We have an aging Police Force whose current ratio stands at 1:1600 persons. This is way below the UN recommendation ratio of 1:400 persons. We will be correcting this by going on a recruitment drive to increase our police manpower, to bring the ratio closer to that recommended level.

We will also provide sufficient funding in the coming budgets so that Police are resourced well to maintain law and order in the country. Our Government intends to invest in a better equipped Police Force and will ensure that Police presence in our urban centers, provinces and districts has zero tolerance attitudes to all crimes.

Our nation's security is also equally important, we are committed to rebuilding the Defence Force to a lean but efficient Force. We will do this by not only increasing the Governments resources to the Defence Force but also disposing all the non-core assets where funds received will go into rebuilding the infrastructure for the Force.

The good work of the Correctional Services under very difficult circumstances have been largely ignored by many governments but again, we will focus on training,

discipline and building capacity over the next five years to improving the performance level and the immediate review of the working conditions of all the Discipline Forces will be undertaken immediately as our intention is to rebuild the barracks and we will increase training and discipline so we restore confidence and pride of our men and women in the Force, can be once again trusted and respected by their people and their country.

Mr Speaker, we will continue the free education and free basic healthcare over the next five years with direct funding coming from annual budgets. It is not a mistake to grow and secure the development of our nation's future; the human resource and the workforce with our investment in the free Primary and Secondary education for all our children with more teachers in classrooms who are well trained and equipped.

Mr Speaker, tuition free education will be extended to include Grades 11-12 in the 2013 Budget and the National Scholarship program will also be extended. We are bringing that one year forward from our commitments that we have made in the 2012 National Elections.

We are now ready to bring this forward in 2013 and we understand that as a result of free education there are substantial increase in student population causing stress on the school infrastructure and teachers and personnel.

We will over the next five years invest in construction of more classrooms and other infrastructures in schools in 2013 and we will also build teachers houses in some of the remote areas. And we will also try and provide better working conditions for our teachers with better training programs.

We will also do a comprehensive review on the curriculum that is being used by the Education Department, given that many parents are complaining about the quality of education under the Outcome Based Education.

Mr Speaker, at the Tertiary level starting with the University of PNG, we are in the process of increasing capacity including the building of student accommodation as part of the South Pacific Games which will go as far as increasing the number of student intake in the future.

In 2013, we will start the comprehensive implementation of the recommendations of the Garnal/Namaliu review so that we can bring our students to the international accepted standards while we continue to increase student population in these institutions.

Mr Speaker, it won't be easy but if we don't start addressing these issues now, it is not acceptable. From many examples around the world, an uneducated country is a poor country. Our people are our biggest renewable resource. That is why we must continue with these investments.

Mr Speaker, in terms of health, major provincial hospitals and health centers will be directly funded under the annual budgets to continue the provision of free basic healthcare services to our people and also to rebuild many of the rundown infrastructures.

Money will not be diverted directly to the line department but it will be given directly to the respective hospitals so that they can continue the work.

Mr Speaker, over time, our governments ceased the provisions of free healthcare at clean modern hospitals with more doctors and nurses with greater access to medication and modern equipment in these hospitals.

05/01

Mr Speaker, many of the health work programs have started. I have been advised by the Health Department that this work has already started as a result of the direct funding that we provided in the 2012 Budget but a more concerted effort needs to be made. Again, beginning 2013 and over the next five years, we are determined to invest in the hospital infrastructure including updating of necessary equipments, training and better working conditions for the health workers. We are now undertaking a major streamlining of pharmaceutical procurement process by setting up a central and more accountable tendering and supply system, including better distribution of drugs in a timely manner.

Mr Speaker, this measure is aimed at curbing illegal drug imports and improper procurement practices which have led to our people being denied access to medicine and drugs.

Mr Speaker, the Health and Education sectors receive the largest portion of our Budget every year. But the continued decline in health and education services must be a major concern for every leader both at the political level and at the Public Service. We must all direct our combined effort in ensuring that we give priority in providing the highest level of service to our people in the coming years.

Mr Speaker, we have also prioritised the delivery of legislative reforms. Our Government is committed in delivering that in the coming months.

Mr Speaker, after 37 years of nationhood, we must revisit some of our old and new laws and either repeal them because they are old or make amendments so they are consistent with the changing times and the changing national mood.

Mr Speaker, some of the specific legislations that we have identified to come under review, repeal, amendment and enactment among many are:

- Review of the Constitutional provisions relating to the Election of the Prime Minister and the term of Parliament;
- Review of the *Organic Law on the National and Local-level Government Elections*;
- Review of the *Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates*;
- Repeal of the *Judicial Conduct Act* and the *Supreme Court Amendment Act*;
- Repeal of the *Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act*;
- Repeal of the amendments to the *Prime Minister and NEC Act*;
- Pass a legislation for a dual *Citizenship Act*;
- Enact the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

Mr Speaker, other existing laws to come under review will be the *NCDC ACT* and establishment of Lae and Mt Hagen City Commissions, the *Public Services (Personnel) Management Act*; the *Oil and Gas Act*; the *Mining Act* and the *Police, Defence and CIS Acts*.

We will also review the education programs in the country and we will review the *Education Act*, the *Organic Law on Electoral Boundaries Commission*, the *Organic Law on Provincial and Local-level Governments*, the *Regulatory Services Authority (Appointment to Certain Officers) Act*.

Mr Speaker, I think these are very important *Acts* amongst many of the *Acts* that we will be reviewing in the coming months.

While awaiting the enactment and establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption of which the work is already underway and almost finalised, our

Government is moving decisively to take anticorruption program forward and beyond what the Task Force Sweep has done so far.

We are serious about stamping out corruption at all levels and all sectors of our community. No entity including persons involved in corrupt practices in both the public and private sectors will be spared in this anti-corruption operation.

We have revitalised, rolled out and begun implementing the Papua New Guinea Anti-Corruption Strategy 2010-2030 as directed or agreed to by our obligations in the United Nations.

Mr Speaker, 20 days ago on 15 August 2012, the Cabinet endorsed and approved the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy Task Force to oversee the cleansing and stemming the endemic culture of corruption in the country.

Mr Speaker, the Task Force membership will comprise Departments of Justice and Attorney-General, the Prime Minister and NEC, Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, Ombudsman Commission, Treasury, National Planning, Provincial and Local-level Government Affairs, Personnel Management, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Auditor-General, Public Service Commission and other members of the private sector and NGO representatives.

Mr Speaker, our Government has appropriated K500 000 for that Task Force mobilisation to take place and the implementation of this Strategy to take place immediately under the Office of the Chief Secretary to Government.

Mr Speaker, our other priorities involve Public Sector Reforms aimed at restoring efficiency in the implementation and delivery of public and development services from Waigani right down to the provinces, districts and community levels throughout our country.

Mr Speaker, the Department of Personnel Management will be abolished and the Public Service Commission will be restructured to oversee the efficient performance of our Public Service machinery.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Public Service will present full details of this policy development and other reviews of specific government agencies including those that will be affected include the National Statistical Office in the coming days.

Our Government has plans to engage with our citizens gainfully in areas of small to medium size enterprise business development by providing business management training including what we call business mentoring, and also providing more access to cheaper line of credit on more favourable terms to our people wanting to go into businesses.

Mr Speaker, small to medium size business will become the biggest employer of our people and will provide the long-term stability for our economy. Again, those responsible Ministers will provide full policy details in their respective Ministerial statements.

06/01

Mr Speaker, as I have stated earlier, our Government is committed to the Public Private Partnership concept as an important part of our national development. We will strengthen the Government's existing programmes and relationship with businesses and the investment sector, the churches, donor agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) through cooperative and mutual beneficial arrangements.

Mr Speaker, they will continue to provide more efficient Public Service where previous Governments have been unable to do so.

Mr Speaker, our existing foreign policy will be reviewed in line with the cost benefit analysis and changing global economic and geo-political developments. We embrace a foreign policy regime that opens doors of opportunity for us with friendly nations without compromising our national security and sovereignty.

Mr Speaker, we must develop new partnerships with countries with strategic trade arrangements suitable for our country. We have begun rolling out these policies, plans and agendas and we will continue to build on them and deliver them under our watch.

Mr Speaker, we have opted for a multi pronged and inclusive approach to the national development and legislative reforms. This is a deliberate move, and it is designed to maximise achievements of far reaching and positive outcomes for our country, our citizens, the business and investment communities. It is an approach that underpins our commitment to ensure and sustain our nation's economic, political and social stability.

Mr Speaker, political stability is important for our Government to achieve national development programmes. The nation's interest and development aspirations of all our people inspire our Government to do better than ever before. There is no time for divisive politics and political grandstanding for there is only time for work.

Mr Speaker, our national politics, especially our parliamentary practices and our conduct must remain focused, constructive and be driven by achievable national interest agendas and objectives.

Mr Speaker, our Government will make sure that we provide mature, responsible and constructive debates on national issues that will prevail and flourish in this Parliament. Our Government will make sure that our people's Parliament will not be reduced to the regrettable vents of the past.

Under our Government, Parliament will perform to strengthen the three arms of government so that each will perform their national service and leadership roles responsibly and maturely. That is what the nation wants and that is what the nation will get from this Government.

Mr Speaker, we hear our people's cry for change for a better life that reflects our national wealth and our Government is determined not to fail them. Why should our people continue to remain poor in a rich country? Why should our citizens remain spectators while others prosper in business and other economic opportunities that our people can own and operate? Why should our citizens be reduced to the level of street sellers of cheap imports? Why should our mothers have no opportunity but only to sell ice blocks and betel nuts on the streets to put food on the table for their families?

Mr Speaker, these are the questions that eat at the very fabric of the type of Papua New Guinea's society that we live in at present. Our Government has the will and commitment to make positive and gainful changes to the prevailing economic conditions. We must not let our people down. We will provide our people with the necessary incentives and lifelines to lift their personal living standards to greater heights and new levels of wellbeing.

Mr Speaker, our nation's past thirty-seven years was littered with missed development and wealth creating opportunities. Our national development planning and

implementation of development programmes and projects since Independence has been extremely poor.

Mr Speaker, under our Government we will embrace all those missed economic and social opportunities, take stock of them, create funding and implementation programmes so that we can deliver on them. Our government has begun putting together the building blocks for achieving that vision.

We have the opportunity to turn our nation into an educated, happy and wealthy society that complements and underpins a reliable improved infrastructure and an efficient law and order enforcement.

Mr Speaker, the policies that we are pursuing underscores the start of a new era of rebuilding and developing our institutions and our country. Importantly, we are serious in our resolve to reinforce the independence of our boundaries of the Executive Government, the Legislature and the Judiciary.

All the three arms of Government came through twelve very grueling and challenging months of trials and tribulations. It was a period that we tested the very foundations of our brand of democracy, Executive Government and the Judiciary's independence, all of which exist under our *National Constitution*.

Mr Speaker, in a way, those very turbulent months will stand out in history as a worthy and learning experience for all of us. Leaders both appointed and elected and all our citizens now must know where we are placed in the serious business of working together in taking our nation to higher levels of prosperity.

Mr Speaker, our nation is at the door of a big unprecedented economic progress and a very bright future. The onus is upon our Government to open that door to transform the wealth and opportunities into gains for our people and our nation. Our people and our nation have been working for these for many years.

07/01

Mr Speaker, that wait is now over. We are a new Government with a chance to reset the development and wealth creation direction of our country. We can make a positive change, a positive difference to do better and do more for our people and for our nation than ever before. We must build on the work of the past governments.

The formalities of electing the head of the Legislature, the head of Executive Government and putting in place an inclusive government with a full Cabinet of Ministers is now done. Other executive positions in this Parliament will be filled today and will be announced in the coming days.

It is now time to do the hard work. We have to grow the future of our nation and our people. We have planned the work programs for our Government. It is now time to work them. It is time to grow the nation's future and to deliver the required services driven by our key policies of free education and basic health services, infrastructure development and maintenance, strengthening and delivery of efficient law and order services and strengthening the Public Service machinery.

We need not stop and waste time. We must move from inaction to action, develop and implement policies that will deliver in these key areas.

Mr Speaker, delivery in the core policy streams all add up to growing a strong, educated, healthy and wealthy nation. Importantly, the core policies we have embraced complement and add value to the underlying reasons established for our nation's Sovereign Wealth Fund.

Mr Speaker, the Sovereign Wealth Fund and our key policies of free education and health services, infrastructure development and maintenance, strengthening and delivery of efficient law and order services will create a strong domestic manufacturing base and also important economic and social drivers.

They are not just politically expedient policies. These policies are directed towards cushioning our macro-economic and fiscal stability against all the external and internal pressures.

Mr Speaker, I have said many times before and I will repeat my Vision Statement again. My vision for Papua New Guinea is of a better, stronger, safer nation with free education for the young and to have a nation of educated population over time.

My vision for Papua New Guinea is of a nation with a public health and hospital system that can cater for anyone in their time of need. It will be a country where you know that when your child or your parents need medical care, they will get it.

My vision for Papua New Guinea is of a country with roads, seaports and airports infrastructure that supports both economic growth and the ability of our people to live a good life.

I cannot emphasise enough that I want this Government to be one that delivers for the people of this country competently, efficiently and inclusively.

Upon my re-election as Prime Minister on Friday August 3, I said in my Maiden Speech in Parliament that I want this Government to be measured and judged on what we deliver that can makes life better for simple Papua New Guineans.

I said then that Papua New Guineans were tired of empty words and broken promises. This time they want action, honesty and delivery. I assure Papua New Guineans that they can expect nothing less from our government.

Our citizens must rest assured that together with the development programs embraced by the Government, we will cut through political and bureaucratic bottle-necks and red-tape to deliver basic life-support services and begin the process of growing our nation's future.

Mr Speaker, as a Government, we will take decisive and assured action to bring about positive and gainful socio-economic outcomes for all our people. From here on, we leave the past where it rightly belongs, in the past and for all our people to move forward into the future with more confidence and certainty of a better and prosperous life.

Mr SAM BASIL (Deputy Opposition Leader) – I move –

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for recognising me. On behalf of my family and my people of Bulolo Electorate, I would like to congratulate you and the people of Finschhafen in your appointment to the highest office as the Speaker of the Ninth National Parliament. I also extend congratulations to the Prime Minister and Member for Ialibu-Pangia Honourable Peter O'Neill, for retaining his post as the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, I would not be here for the second term without the overwhelming votes of the people of Bulolo. For that, I extend special thanks to the people of Waria,

Upper Watut, Wau/Bulolo Urban, Mumeng and Buang who have given me absolute majority in the first preferential of 24,950 to represent them again in the Ninth Parliament. I will truly serve them without fear or favour at the national level and also do so without forgetting my responsibilities of carrying the burden of my district.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Belden Namah, the Member for Vanimo-Green and the fifteen Members who elected me enormously as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on Monday 6 August 2012.

Mr Speaker, I also want to use this occasion to suggest reforms to the following:

(1) Restore and preserve the integrity, partiality and dignity of the Office of the Speaker;

(2) To call for the earliest preparation for the 2017 National Elections to begin Immediately;

(3) I urge Prime Minister O'Neill to begin his Government's fight against corruption by clearing the air and the controversy; and

(4) To reaffirm the role of the Opposition in ensuring good governance.

I believe, Mr Speaker; the Opposition Leader will deliver his formal reply to the Prime Minister's statement tomorrow. We served together as ordinary Members in the Opposition ranks in the last Parliament and we saw many practices and rulings that were abundantly against principles of good governance that raised many key questions.

For example, how does the Chairman change impartiality and objectivity in ruling without allowing itself from being dictated by the majority of the Government Members who elected the occupant of that Chair? Should the Speaker resign from his political party once the elections are over, and I believe that must have happened?

08/01

Mr Bob Dadae – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, the Deputy Opposition Leader was supposed to respond to the Prime Minister's Speech. This is not a response to the speech.

Mr Belden Namah – Not necessarily, he should know, he is a third term.

Mr SPEAKER – Your point of order is out of order!

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker, how can and what are the grounds in which the occupants of the Speaker’s Chair can be removed?

Moves to address these concerns will greatly restore integrity, respect and dignity to the Office of the Speaker which many Members and the people of Papua New Guinea want to see happen.

Another area which your great office can address is the effectiveness or effective use of information delivered by many Members of Parliament, past, current and in the future recorded in the *Hansard*, the Official Record of the Parliament’s proceedings.

I refer to the Maiden Speeches and Grievances Debates by MPs on their district’s development and national issues which are not incorporated into government policies.

Mr Speaker, with your encouragement, the majority of the Cabinet ministers can make it their business to remain in attendance, to listen, to take note and to make it their business to use this wealth of information by mandated representatives.

If Ministers are to be absent on State matters, they should inform your office in advance. If that is practically impossible they should apologise and explain their absences on the Floor when they return.

Mr Speaker, we must prepare for the 2017 National Elections now.

While we rejoice in this honourable Parliament, we must not be deaf to the voices of up to 20 per cent of the voters and the thousands of losing candidates, many of whom will want to brand the 2012 National Elections as the worst of the eight national elections held in Papua New Guinea since 1977.

The facts are accumulating by the numbers of Election Petitions and I believe some Members of Parliament are avoiding being served these notices that have been filed.

The most revealing facts comes from a recently leaked Electoral Commission Report which states that from the 4 776 096 eligible voters enrolled for the 2012 National Elections, 3 672 251 actually cast their votes. This means that 1 103 845 eligible voters did not cast their votes.

In my electorate, there were no extra generic ballot papers used. There were informal votes due to some illiterate voters in the remote areas of my district. Many rival candidates

thrived on these and collected majority votes from their tribesmen and clansmen compared to votes I received.

Mr Speaker, while my own win is still undisputed I am very dissatisfied with the Electoral Commission. They rushed the Election despite serious concerns about the updating of the Common Rolls nationwide.

Now, reports show that 1.1 million eligible voters did not cast their votes and that they overspent their budget by K500 million.

What I do not understand is that in Bulolo up to at least 15 to 20 per cent of the voters were not on the Common Rolls. On top of this, there were claims of inflated numbers of voters which jumped incredibly by 100 to 500 per cent in many ward areas in Papua New Guinea.

In my area, frustrated voters assaulted the Assistant Returning Officers when their names could not be found in the updated Common Roll. The same problem was reported throughout the electorate with over 10 000 to 15 000 eligible voters being denied their rights to vote.

Mr Speaker, I would urge the Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O'Neill, and his 94-Member coalition government to go all out to ensure that there is no repeat of mistakes from the 2012 National Elections by updating Common Rolls and ensuring that the biometric system is well established before the 2017 National Elections is a priority.

The People's National Congress, the Prime Minister's party was given the numbers to receive the invitation from the Governor-General to form the Government. Any delays will fuel perceptions that Mr O'Neill's PNC Party does not want to fix the National Election process and integrity because their Party stands to benefit again in 2017.

The Government must also ensure that the Electoral Commission and the Judiciary are well equipped to fast track all election disputes that arise from the 2012 National Elections. Our people in the districts must not be made to suffer from the lack of delivery of basic services and effective representation because of prolonged Courts of Disputed Returns.

The Prime Minister should begin with investigations into the Budget blowout of K500 million, the Electoral Commission Report on the 2012 National Elections and go beyond that to table a report with recommendations on procurement processes, five years schedule of Common Roll updates and phased introduction of the biometric voting system and a realistic

budget over the next five years. The actions taken will help ensure that true fair, free and safe election is held within the given budget.

Mr Speaker, it is good to hear that the honourable Prime Minister declared his determination to weed out and stamp out corruption in our country with the introduction of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the ICAC.

Mr O'Neill has announced the establishment of a national Anti Corruption Strategic Task Force to be headed by the Department of Prime Minister and NEC. Coincidentally, I hear that the new Member for Henganofi in the O'Neill-Dion Government, emerging out of his cocoon opting to produce a Private Member's bill that could wipe away all the pending cases so that we can start afresh with the new anti corruption initiative of the O'Neill-Dion Government.

That to me, Mr Speaker, shows that the Government is succumbing to public demand in creating an ICAC on the one hand but at the same time, covering themselves so that their creation does not haunt them.

Mr Peter O'Neill – Point of Order! The honourable Member for Henganofi does not announce government policies. Government policies are going through Cabinet before they are announced. Private Members have every right to express their views about life in Papua New Guinea the way they see fit. So please, withdrew that it's a government policy. It is not a government policy. For your information we will be fighting corruption and the other issues upfront.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, continue.

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you Mr Speaker, my statements were in reference to that. Are we genuine in the cause? If the Government has nothing to worry about, why is it trying to manipulate to cover itself? How can you fight corruption in the future when there is no deterrence or precedence set on the past offenders?

09/01

This is the most unthinkable and unheard of approach to fight corruption. Does the Government realize that this would pave the way to entrench and institutionalize corruption?

Mr Speaker, the honourable Prime Minister's words will have a harrowing effect with this seemingly forked approach –

Mr Francis Awesa – Point Of Order! Mr Speaker, the Member for Bulolo keeps on reminding the Government on the lack of action of Electoral Commission laws and reforms but these are matters that were raised and mentioned in the Prime Ministers address if you look at page 16 and 17 it's all there. Why do you want to keep wasting our time?

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you Mr Speaker, I believe the Member for Imbonggu will have his opportunity to talk.

(Comments on NPF ordered to be struck out by the Speaker 5th September 2012)

On that note, the Prime Minister must seek to be absolved by competent authorized legal entities before he can lead these anti-corruption reforms. The same must happen with similar leaders who are associated or implicated with controversial issues.

Mr Speaker, we changed the Somare Regime more than 12 months ago and established the investigation Task Force Sweep team to investigate misdeeds under the Somare regime.

Key players in that former regime are now integrated in the O'Neil/Dion Government. The Prime Minister must inform the country that the deal he has made with the Somare regime as coalition partners in Government often not only trades for Ministries and Members on Boards but also to compromise to forgive and forget cases.

In practice, this means suppressing of law enforcement agencies efforts to pursue cases through threats or loss of jobs, outflow of funds affecting logistical support on

cases, rewarding of investigators who turn a blind eye on cases and even making important files on cases go conveniently missing.

On ICCAC, the Opposition would like to buy into something that is genuine and not a window dresser. We want something that is physical and can stand the test of political pressures.

ICCAC must be punitive to wrong doers and send signals that there is no escape for white-collar criminals posing as leaders.

We must stop issues like the daylight robbery of Members Superannuation Savings like those exposed in the NPF Inquiry, the abuse of Members funds in the then POSF purchase and land lease arrangements of the Cairns Controversy and Malangan House in Brisbane.

We must stop issues like the Julian Moti Affair where decisions from the Office of the Prime Minister resulted in breaking of multitude of laws, domestic and international, which is likely to reincarnate and devour funds which are needed to save and improve the lives of our ordinary people back home.

We must stop issues of international embarrassment like the stealing of the State Funds like the Taiwanese Government in the pretence of diplomatic recognition knowing very well that PNG was one of the first nations to recognise and maintain the One China Policy.

We must stop political engineering of clashes between the Executive, Judiciary and the Legislative arms of Government.

We must stop engineering divisions within our disciplined forces nationally or setting them up against each other. If we are honest there will be a lot of confessions in relation to these gestures.

We all know that to date, no one has been successfully prosecuted and put behind bars for many of these offenses, which are criminal in nature.

Mr Speaker, corruption and the fight against it advocated by so many of us must translate into practical action. We must rise up and fight to completely eradicate it.

Mr Speaker, as an Opposition Member under the leadership of Honourable Belden Namah, our terms of reference is clear and we will stand united to expose and oppose all traces of bad governance.

One day we will draw numbers to depose the Government. Many of us spent more than four years in the Opposition during the 8th Parliament exposing and opposing misdeeds by the then Somare led Government.

That coalition Government if I am not wrong has incarnated itself and reorganized itself under the current Prime Minister O'Neil's Government.

Correct me if I am wrong, but most of the Member's implicated or associated with controversial issues I raised and others I have not mentioned, aren't they sitting on that side?

The voters wanted change to this country that is why they removed their mandate from more than half of the previous Member's serving in the 8th Parliament.

I fail to understand why all new Member's whom many campaigned against corruption have aligned themselves with veteran Member's on the other side. What is your purpose on this Floor today?

Sir Michael Somare – Point Of Order! Mr Speaker, the honourable Member for Bulolo should be aware that they are honourable Members of Parliament and if he has any personal implications or personal imputations, he should quietly name those persons, instead of calling all the Members on that side and this side corrupt.

Can you name them please? There are Members who are legitimately elected and who came to this Parliament as honourable Members.

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you, you tried to kill me but I am still standing. I will not elaborate further because I think some of the Members sitting on that side are feeling the pinch of it.

10/01

Mr Speaker, I will just say that I leave it with all MPs on both sides of the Parliament but one thing is clear, that those controversies mentioned cannot be addressed by MPs who have strings attached to them.

They can only be addressed by many of the newly elected leaders and bold leaders who are not afraid to make decisions. We and by that, I mean former Opposition Coalition were

used as a springboard for the National Alliance and its coalition to re-organize itself and take control under the leadership of Mr O'Neill.

Mr Speaker, sitting in Parliament, we can see leaders with different characters and we can see mostly veteran MPs who are on top of the pyramid; these are mainly party leaders who lead and also hold senior portfolios after every formation of Government since the Elections.

These smart leaders somehow become millionaires after entering Parliament and have a lot of money to spend during every Election. They are after winning numbers to keep and maintain their statuesque of course, in control all the time and it has even become a trade for them to master their timing and alliances to be in Government since entering Parliament and they are very good at it.

I wonder if many young MPs realize they are just pawns used by veteran MPs to bolster their numbers so that these leaders can maintain their statuesque and privilege in Parliament.

My point is that the only time that this country can break free is when fresh MPs take the lead and I can assure PNG that many outstanding issues will be dealt with without fear and favor through strong leadership.

We believe as national leaders, anything which opposes the national interest that takes away from the preamble of the *Constitution* of Papua New Guinea and the National Goals and Directive Principles is an enemy of this country and its great people.

We must stir up a transparency mechanism with accountability measures that monitor our own decision making without manipulating them. As an Opposition Coalition we stood our grounds and refused to repeat the statuesque but we will support the Government agenda done with the purity of intentions but we will not support some window dresser mechanism to divert and diffuse public pressure.

Mr BIRE KIMISOPA (Goroka) – Thank you Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prime Minister Peter O'Neill on his successful election and also commend the party president Mr Simon Korowa for a fantastic result in the elections for recording almost 27 Members of Parliament.

And I would also like to offer the best wishes of the people of Goroka to the Speaker for your election to the Chair and I sincerely wish that you will succeed. It will be remise of

me to not forget the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Leo Dion on his election and also THE Party did extremely well and I also like to congratulate and commend three lovely ladies sitting amongst us listening to all our political rhetoric.

This afternoon, I would like to pay tribute to their wonderful husbands who have demonstrated to the whole country the humility and the sense of repose in elevating these women who are able to take their place in Parliament.

Mr Patrick Pruaitch – Point of Order! For the three women Members, can the Member withdraw the word Lovely?

Mr SPEAKER – Member for Goroka, please rephrase your statement.

Mr BIRE KIMISOPA – Ok! Can I now turn to the State of the nations address? The macro conditions look good, 9 per cent growth for 2012 and 11 per cent growth last year, these look good but they do not rationale with our people on the ground.

Ox & Palm is K10, 1Kg rice is K4, and our people are struggling with the macro economic conditions that we put together. The macro conditions are good but the micro conditions are bad. The onus is on this Parliament. As we come together, we should make the right contributions and offer the right legislative support and give our businesses the concessions they deserve which I think will see us on the right track.

There are roughly about 300,000 people who are on the payroll tax in a population of over 7 million. This is not much compared to Australia and we need to lift the game. We need to make more investments into NDB. I am happy that the Prime Minister in his address made every effort that he will do some the things.

If your Ministers do not pick up on your State of the Nation's address then we will lose track. The challenges that you have mentioned are good in terms of housekeeping. You have endeavored to repeal the Judicial Conduct Bill and I am all for it.

This is a good sign that you are bringing in the Judiciary and giving them back their confidence and that is something our people want us to do but our people want a lot more from us.

When I became Member of Parliament in 2002, unfortunately, the people of Goroka decided to give me a furlough leave in 2007 but I am here now. In 2002, the National Budget was K2 billion, this year we appropriating almost K13 billion but in the life of this Parliament or at least, the last 10 years, we have gone through a record of five Supplementary Budgets and these has never been done before.

From Independence up to this day, we may have spent K170 billion, what have we done? What have we put on the ground?

11/01

Mr Prime Minister, the Highlands Highway needs urgent repair. This is the most important corridor and it does not deserve any political rhetoric but it deserves more direct investment starting from Lae all the way to Tari in your province.

Mr Speaker, the cost of doing business in this country is very high. People in the Highlands are charged encashment bank fees to cash K10 000 cheques from coffee sales. Where else in the world do you see such fees for cashing cheques or depositing money into the bank? The banks are getting fees for nothing. These are obstacles that are hindering our progress.

Mr Speaker, I want to commend the Prime Minister on his brief statement and it is pleasing to note that he has endeavoured to do a number of things and I think it is important that this Parliament remind the Prime Minister and the Government of their commitment.

Our people are watching us very closely and they deserve a lot from all of us and I think it is important that we bring some sense of respect and understanding about the real issues that are confronting our people on the ground, especially on the micro level and I think this Parliament would be a very good Parliament if we can focus and deliver to our people.

Sir PUKA TEMU (Abau – Minister for Public Service) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also wish to associate myself with those leaders that have commended your elevation to be the Speaker of the 9th Parliament. I congratulate you, your family and your electorate.

I also congratulate Honourable Peter O'Neill on his election as the Prime Minister of this most important term.

I was sitting in the Opposition some months back and then later on this side. In the last 12 months, I was watching as we debated on preparations of the 2012 National Elections, and the fear and the apprehension was echoed on the Floor of this Parliament. Some of the political observers both domestic and international wanted Papua New Guinea to have a failed election but we didn't.

Today, I thank God and our people out there that despite the political dynamics that developed on the Floor of this Parliament and the three arms of government that were clashing, I think our people were the winners at the end of the day.

And in supporting the statement made by the Prime Minister regarding the plan for action, I say thank you to the 7 million citizens out there who stood firm, stood their grounds and allowed the political issues to be managed by their leaders. They never went onto the streets and we never saw bloodshed so I stand today as a proud Papua New Guinean, thankful to our little people out there for making us a very proud people.

I also thank my people of Abau for electing me for a third term, a political history in the district.

Mr Speaker, in the inaugural statement of the Prime Minister in supporting His Excellency's Statement, the Prime Minister for the first time in this nation and I have been on this Floor for three terms, has announced a very clear Action Plan for the next five years which I have never heard before. For the first time, the Chief Executive of the country has now pronounced a very clear pathway for action.

Mr Speaker, I was also sitting down in Alotau with many of you who watched a different political dynamism develop. Previously, we would chase candidates around with helicopters and lock them up but during that gathering, I saw a voluntary movement of leaders because they saw that the Peoples National Congress was leading in the election and the leaders recognised that Prime Minister Peter O'Neill was given the mandate to lead the country and everybody flocked into Alotau. I think that was a fantastic political development.

(Mr Sam Basil interjecting)

Sir PUKA TEMU – Well, you chose to stay there and some of us chose to move there and that is part of the democracy; that is the beautiful thing about democracy.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Sir PUKA TEMU – As leaders, we were elected on merit so don't tell me some Members were elected in a different manner. They are here because their people elected them to be their leaders and you are one of them, I am one of them and the Speaker is one of them as well as the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, I stood very proud listening to the Prime Minister on a very clear platform for action that should generate interest and excitement because our nation is now taking off. The economic indicators that the Prime Minister has announced, we have never heard them on this Floor of Parliament before. This is the best chance for us to work together, and I represent a service delivery machinery as Minister for Public Service and I want to make a statement on what I believe the Public Service should realign itself.

Mr Speaker, I have already given instructions under the Prime Minister's directive to make sure that the Public Service must work now. All the departmental heads must now work and there is no time for sitting around. All the deputy secretaries, deputy provincial administrators, district administrators right down to the local-level government, this is the time to work.

The Government has already pronounced an Action Plan and it is time for the Public Service machinery to take it on board and run with it. Many times there is a misconception. Today, 60 per cent of Members did not return to Parliament. The problem is, our people are saying that it is the fault of the Members but it is not their fault, it is the fault of the delivery arm of the government; the Public Service.

12/01

Under the Prime Minister's direction we will change the Public Service. I have already given circular instructions to departmental heads and the deputy secretaries that only they will be allocated the use of government vehicles. All government Z-plates will

not be tinted and the police have been instructed to check drivers of government vehicles if they have government driver's licenses. If they do not have government driver's licenses then the vehicle will be impounded. This will apply to everyone from Waigani right down to Abau Local Level Government right across the board.

We are going to restructure the Public Service Commission because it is just a sitting dead duck. It just focuses on reviews regarding disputes of public servants and this is a waste of time and money. We will now bring, as the Prime Minister has instructed, a Public Service similar to the working of the Ombudsman purposely for the Public Service.

Therefore, an Ombudsman for the Public Service will be established and we will have expatriates under the Ombudsman. Whether, if a mother is sick and goes to an aid post in Goilala where there is no anti malarial medication the Chairman of that Ombudsman Commission must call up the Secretary for Health to find out why there is no anti malarial medication at that aid post.

Money has been appropriated under the Budget, so why is the teacher not turning up for classes, and why is he or she roaming around in Port Moresby or Goroka looking for pay? Why is the system not working?

With all these accountability structures we also recommend that there should be a Select-Parliamentary Committee on Public Service. This Select-Parliamentary Committee on Public Service will be the top end of external accountability. The Ombudsman for Public Service will be directly accountable to the National Executive Council (NEC) and not an independent body like the Ombudsman Commission. It must be accountable because the Executive Government is driving the development agenda.

Provincial Governors, we are going to give you the authority to appoint your administrators. They will be accountable to you and when they do not perform they should be removed. The NEC will be given –

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, order in the Parliament!

Dr PUKA TEMU – Mr Speaker, we must organise ourselves now, divisional heads, deputy secretaries, branch heads, sectional heads and unit heads ,take charge of

those below you. That is the way that the Public Service is arranged. You all have been asleep and when the services are not delivered, the people complain and then do not vote the Members, and it was not their fault for it is the fault of the public servants. I was once a departmental head and I know exactly what I am talking about.

Mr Speaker, I want the governors to support me and –

(Members interjecting)

Mr SPEAKER – Order! Order!

Dr PUKA TEMU – I want to select four provinces in the country to bring in a new design for the Public Service in the provinces, so put your hands up and we will come and restructure it.

We will start with Bougainville, New Ireland, Manus, okay then, it looks like its everybody, then we will have a go at it.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Dr PUKA TEMU – This is because the Prime Minister has already provided a road map for action. All the Ministers will keep talking until the cows come home and nothing will happen if that machinery is not working.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to mention something that I have observed, in that, 60 per cent of the Members of Parliament here are all newly elected Members. Only 40 per cent are recycled like some of us –

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Dr PUKA TEMU – However, there is one thing missing, the political will to do something different. Members of Parliament are looking for project money and that is already a mistake. Ministers are then saying to Members to come and collect their

cheques and that is another mistake. The Ministers say come and bring project proposals and get your money.

Mr Speaker, we must stop that now. The Prime Minister has announced a very important legislative programme. That is why we are here on this Floor of Parliament. We must be good legislators and policy makers.

Mr Speaker, this means that all the leaders must be provided with the support of top level secretaries and advisors so that they can debate meaningfully on the Floor of this Parliament. If you resource all the Members of Parliament well then this Parliament that you prayed for will be blessed because we will be debating the best laws and policies rather than us going project managing in the districts.

We should forget about project managing, I have been a public servant for a long time and I am tired of being a project manager. I would rather sit here and debate for good laws and policies and make laws that will change this action plan that the Prime Minister has announced.

Mr Speaker, the Electoral Boundaries Commission Report must come quickly and have it reviewed quickly. With all these political infighting, the Prime Minister has made an announcement regarding how we should elect a Prime Minister. After the Elections, we went to Alotau then we came back and lobbied again and voted. Why cannot we change the law so that the Governor-General who invites the party with the majority to form the Government should also automatically appoint the party leader as the Prime Minister.

This will do away with lobbying and camping in Alotau, Hoskins, Kimbe and wherever.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Dr PUKA TEMU – We should do away with this type of politics. This must be a new era for politics as this type of politics stifles development in our young nation. The Prime Minister’s road map is very clear for the next five years.

If you go to forestry, mining, LNG, infrastructure development, law and order, health and education, it is already prescribed. All that Ministers have to do is take the

lead. This task is very easy because PNG is a small country. We do not have 20 million people or 1.2 billion like India. Our population is just only 7.1 million.

Our country is small and yet we cannot even cover the country with roads. Our country is blessed with the sun, wind and rivers and we cannot cover the entire country with power. This is what happens, we play the game right in Parliament, but when we go out there, we play it wrong.

13/01

Many times we do not play the game correctly. Instead of playing soccer we are applying netball rules on the soccer field.

Mr Speaker, it is time for action. Let us walk the talk. In my areas of public service, I am looking out for the Governors and the Open Members to take the lead, with the District Administrators. Let us restructure and move the foundations. Let us make Waigani small and make the provinces to monitor and move everybody to the districts and the LLGs.

The housing programs must come into place. The teachers and the public servants must be moved in there because 87 percent of our people live there in the districts. They deserve better Mr Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARABE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, let me firstly congratulate you on your appointment to the Office of the Speaker. I have seen your work in the last Parliament and I know you are a Member with high integrity. You will bring integrity to the Chair and in total confidence you will restore the integrity of the Parliament itself.

Having said this, I would also on behalf of my people of Tari-Pori congratulate the Prime Minister on his election as the Prime Minister. The affirmation of 3 August to your position as Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea confirms what happened on 2 August 2011. You are a Leader chosen by God to run the affairs of this country during the transition period of this country's history.

Mr Speaker, having said this, let me also congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister on his appointment. He is the most senior Member now occupying the Office of the

Deputy Prime Minister. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all Ministers for their appointment as Ministers of the State.

I wish to also congratulate all Members of Parliament for their election into office including the Opposition side and not the least to my brother, Honourable Belden Namah, who is willing to serve the Chair of the Leader of the Opposition.

Let me also congratulate Honourable Sam Basil for again working with the Opposition Leader. We look forward to your contribution to the Parliament in terms of a strong Opposition to keep the Parliament in place.

As Members of the Opposition, we urge you to stand and provide constructive criticism to the Government. We kindly ask you to deviate from running gutter politics and use of personal clashes on issues that camouflage the nature of running petty politics.

Mr Speaker, I know the caliber of Members of the Opposition. We have had able leaders who could rise up and question policy debates. But I would like an Opposition who would work along with this Government so that we can deliver key objectives laid out by the Prime Minister in his wonderful speech this afternoon.

Mr Speaker, the issues laid forth by the Prime Minister has potential for this country to progress from where we are today. The year 2012 is exactly 40 years since Self-Government took place in 1972. We had our country's juncture and I see today in Parliament, the caliber of leaders we have. As stated by the Minister for Public Service and in the formation of Government in Alotau, there was no element of chaos, rivalry and undue influence in the manner in which this Government was formed.

As a principal player in hosting that camp in Alotau, I saw Members coming in of their own accord. They came in from all over PNG to join the camp in Alotau and to walk together for this country to make that transition.

Forty years on from self-government, this country cannot afford the luxury of petty politics. The luxury of having politics camouflaged with words, which portrays best interests for our people, can derail this country from progressing.

Mr Speaker, we have seen in the last 37 years that a single factor that has remained in Parliament is the constant changes in Government.

14/01

The average life of governments since Independence up till 2002 was about 18 months. Before Sir Michael Somare in 2002, our Prime Ministers had the luxury of running governments for only 18 months.

Mr Speaker, this time onwards, we cannot afford to have governments and oppositions and Members of this Parliament run political lines for the expense of running politics and gaining office into the Office of Prime Minister.

There is only one chair as prime minister and today we have filled that vacancy. Today, the Honourable Prime Minister, Peter O'Neill, sits upon that chair. It is now incumbent upon every one of us to isolate political rhetoric from real government policy issues and development agenda.

The Prime Minister has laid forward everything. The onus is now on Ministers to grasp that speech and convert it into workable policies and ensure that we deliver what is expected of us.

The challenges are big but with big commitments, we could meet these challenges and conclude every fiscal year saying that we've done our best for the nation.

As I sit in my chair today as Finance Minister, I ask, 'what can I bring into this country that can make a difference?'

Comments have come from our good Opposition describing that we are currently in deficit, and yes, we are in deficit. But that deficit is only K500 million, in fact, K513 million to be exact.

Deficits are normal experiences of governments in the event of economic downturns, in the event of fiduciary prediction of revenue collection that is collected below what was predicted.

When you make forecasts in your Budget formulations, your forecast is based on commodity prices and future revenues that you are going to collect but when you don't collect, what do you do as a responsible Government? These I am sure our Treasurer will outline as he speaks on the fiscal and monetary policies that the Treasury Department and the Central Bank are now formulating to arrest or manage these deficiencies.

We will experience deficits as we go along and as I stand here today and look into 2013 when the global economic activities will slow down, what do we do as a nation? And I echo the statement made by Sir Puka Temu, do we come here as Members of

Parliament having millions of kina and billions of kina submissions and asking the Government if I can make this submission work. I say, yes, we can make this submission work so long as it is within the context of the Government's Development Agenda and it is within the context of the Budget that we frame.

Fiscal responsibility is incumbent upon every one of us. This year as we experience deficit, from the Finance perspective or expenditure perspective we will be asking for fiscal responsibility, living within our means, or living within the existing budget framework. That is what we will do and it is incumbent upon every one of us to respond likewise, to work the district plans, to work the department plans and to work the provincial plans in line with overall government agenda but within the context of the annual budgets that we have and the budgets that the Government puts out.

The onus, really, Mr Speaker, is on every one of us to work today and let me, before I sit down, conclude that whilst not every one of us are perfect, Mr Speaker, let me commend the Prime Minister and the coalition partners who sat in the Alotau camp where the leaders put together the *Alotau Accord*. The statement or vision that is captured by the Prime Minister in his speech today stems directly from great consultations amongst all the Coalition Party leaders in this Government today.

Whilst we may have our inadequacies as leaders, one must never question the commitment of this Government right from the start. The Prime Minister rightly puts it, 'The past rightly belongs in the past'. We can never go back and unwind past events but we can only stand here today so that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past. We must see the experiences of the past as learning experiences and take corrective actions so that we better our implementation of government programmes so that our future can be bright and good for, not only ourselves, but most importantly for our children.

So, Mr Speaker, I'd like to conclude my comments this afternoon by saying, 'please, Members of Parliament, let us not get caught in the power play of politics for who will sit in the Prime Minister's chair'.

There can be only one occupant of the chair and the prime minister's chair has been sat on already. We all have our roles to play. Let you now work your own district plans. Let you now work your own roles as Members of Parliament and tomorrow, I will be announcing the Committee Members and composition of the Committees.

Mr Speaker, let me impress on you and the Parliament that Committee members and Committee compositions is a very important part of parliamentary democracy. We will support the Committees and ensure that they have adequate resources unlike in the past. And all Committees will be equipped and Chairmen will be equipped so that you work to ensure the Committees function and work properly so that you make governments and support this Parliament and make the government respond to the call of delivering to this country the correct deliveries that we want to make to this country.

So, tomorrow, Mr Speaker, through you, I'll be announcing the Committee compositions and I will be announcing who will chair the various committees and the membership of the committee. But that is something that will come tomorrow.

But on that note, congratulations to every Member of Parliament, we look forward to working with every one of you. Congratulations, Mr Speaker and congratulations Prime Minister for laying out the directions well for us to follow.

Mrs LOUJAYA TONI (Lae – Minister for Religion and Community Development – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, to congratulate you on behalf of the people from Lae District which I am elected to represent. And I'd also like this Parliament to take note that just because I am a woman, I refuse to be an ornament, neither do I have a disability but I am an elected Member for the people of Lae District so I wish to be acknowledged as such.

15/01

Mr Speaker, whilst hearing the address to Parliament of my honourable Prime Minister, Mr O'Neill, I'd like to say that indeed it has been long overdue for us as Members of Parliament. As a first-timer coming into this Parliament I have not seen in past governments in the last 37 years a vision that all Members of Parliament has been able to work together as team players to fulfill.

Yes, we have had a vision that has brought this country this far; a vision of sorts that put our *Constitution* together and that is what held the fabric of this democracy together as such.

But we have come to a very strategic time in the development of this nation where the level of input in Government and the Opposition must be one of strategy. Whatever our vision is, which has been made clear to us not only by the Governor-General but by our Prime Minister, the onus is now upon us and on the people that we represent to translate this vision in the best possible manner to deliver a tangible, visible effort on the ground, because at the end of the day, we will be voted back into office by these very people.

Being heads of various ministerial portfolios as well as being Members of the National Government is a balancing act that needs no political power play.

We need the commitment of the Public Service and I commend the Minister for Public Service who has made it his business to be all fired up and passionate about making sure that his department is there to deliver.

I stand here, honourable Speaker, as evidence of malicious media outplay and interplay of what is going on in my department. There are road blocks within my department, visible road blocks and innuendoes of people who have aligned themselves and refused to change. They have aligned themselves with factions that no longer exist as political heads or no longer exist as prime ministers in this Government and yet, they hold onto dear life clinging to power play within the department.

And I speak not only for myself, I believe that this is all paramount in other departments as well and so while I commend the honourable Minister for Public Service, I'd like his help to ensure that all those roadblocks are cleared, because as a first time Member, I am not an ornamental flower. I am here to deliver not only for the people of Lae but for the people of Papua New Guinea.

The work of the Department of Community Development is important to every single one of you. I am sure you want to see the hand marks of the Ministry of Community in your districts, and I do want to go into your districts but there are roadblocks within the Public Service machinery.

That is why, I think that we create DSIP and other shortcuts to try and make it easy for Members to go down and withdraw funds and put it where we really want it to be put.

But if that is going to be brought into question, I want to ask the honourable Minister for Public Service to set a timeframe and inform us in Parliament and in Cabinet which deadline we are looking at.

We don't want to wait until 2014 which seems to be the magical word when the LNG Project will come on stream and all sorts of good things will start then. We want to hear that we can go into our individual ministries and do work right now.

Whoever wants to be a roadblock, we want the bulldozer of the Minister for Public Service and the Chief Secretary to go in and remove them. If the bulldozer cannot do, a front cam loader can go in and do the job because I really want to work with all of us, both Members of the Opposition and Members of the Government.

I have a lot of strategies and there are ways and means as to how we can work together to make these tangible and visible development happen under our human resources in the districts in the categories of disability and many other categories.

But all of us should stand together and remove these impediments and leave politics for the time being because we have played enough politics over the last 37 years. We want to turn our five-year term so that we can see the fruits of whatever it means to stay in the Government.

Mr LEO DION (East New Britain – Deputy Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for acknowledging this position and for allowing me to contribute to this debate. Firstly, I congratulate you on behalf of the people of East New Britain for your elevation to the position of Speaker of Parliament in this country.

I also congratulate the Deputy Speaker whom the Members of this Parliament have mandated.

The Prime Minister of this country, leaders of political parties in this country and all Members of Parliament, I congratulate you all on your elections on behalf of the people of East New Britain. But specifically, I acknowledge my incumbent who occupied this position and is now the Leader of the Opposition in the caliber of Honourable Belden Namah who is a young leader of this country and his deputy.

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Mr Speaker, from my experience as a Member of Parliament for the last 10 years and also in the provincial government for almost 15 years, my observation is that many good things that used to happen before are no longer happening now.

Before I speak on my observation in this debate, I wish to congratulate the other Members who have taken part in the debate. Their statements are true and full of wisdom and it gives encouragement to some of the young leaders in this Parliament. The road map and the vision is already in place in the O'Neill-Dion Government. This is a comprehensive status that the government has brought forward and I want to thank the Prime Minister because in the past years, I have not seen any strong consultation and dialogue take place. As we have mentioned, when the Prime Minister's party was leading the election results, other party leaders respected our *Constitution* and decided to support him after he was mandated by the Governor-General to form the next Government.

I would like to commend those leaders who contributed to formulate the policies and vision through consultation and dialogue. That is the difference that we can be proud of. It set the vision and the road map but the question is whether the system of government or the machinery of the public service can absorb it. For instance, can the Department of Provincial Affairs and other agencies accommodate these big statements we are making today.

All these years, we have come to the Floor of this Parliament and we talked about the same things over and over again but now, I am pleased with the statement made by the Prime Minister where we are now saying enough of talking. We must make some drastic decision which will push this country forward but how are we going to do that? The challenge is with the relevant Ministers, the Opposition and ordinary Members who will be Chairmen of various Parliamentary Committees. We must recognise them. The law must be there to govern these leaders and we must respect our *Constitution*, there are guidelines in the *Constitutions* and also enabling laws where provincial and local-level governments and, Joint District Budget Priority Committee must operate. The law is quite clear and it stipulates the structure of the public service and the chain of communication through the public service including our Defence Force, Police and CIS.

If we look back in the history of this country, we will not look further to put the blame on. We are passing the buck all the time by blaming the public servants and they in

turn blame the political leadership. Where do we stop? There is a fine demarcation in relation to responsibilities of leaders in this country so we should not mix them up.

If we look properly at reinforcement or the implementation of this law, the leaders will educate themselves that there is a committee which is called the Provincial Joint Planning and Budget Priority Committee. This is a committee established under the *Organic Law on Provincial and Local-level Governments*. What is their function? What are the powers of the leaders who have been mandated by the people to make decisions at this level of government?

I congratulate the Prime Minister for his statement because it is very clear. We can make statements here to encourage ourselves and through the various decision making process we can and then implement our visions. At the moment, looking in from the outside, there are many brocades and impediments within the government system. When I say government system it does not merely mean the political decision making process but the public service as well. They are fighting amongst themselves; they are not cohesive or assisting each other to make sure that the delivery of services trickle down to the districts.

Mr Speaker, I will deliver a statement tomorrow in relation to my Department. One of the biggest Departments is the Provincial Affairs who is responsible for administering certain Acts, such as the Bougainville, Gazelle and Manam Restoration Authorities, which was legislated through the Speaker.

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We have to make sure that it is implemented by the relevant Provincial Administration but that has not being gazetted in the National Gazette. The Oro Restoration Program is another, and whilst we continue to talk in this Parliament, people continue to suffer simply because of our lack of decisiveness.

The Department of Provincial Affairs is addressing those issues and we will be addressing those issues in a more practical and serious manner so this Parliament will be told of the impediments that should be removed. A statement will be forthcoming but coming back to the statement of the Prime Minister, every responsible Minister and vice Ministers and those in the Opposition can only achieve our vision through simple

understanding of where we stand. We are elected by the people and we are here to represent the people of this country in the various capacities as leaders of this country.

Mr Speaker, these are some of the contributions that I want to make today but before I take my seat, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Leader of THE Party for his humbleness and through the wisdom of the Prime Minister to have given me this very sensitive position in the country.

I thank what my counterpart has done before but I will try to make sure that this country benefits from my experience that I have gained in the provincial setting. And I only wish that we bring in more people from the provinces with experience and I am glad that some of the people are here.

And I stand also to speak on behalf of the Governors and as the Deputy Prime Minister, I will make sure that the provincial government system through the concurrence of the Prime Minister is working and that we will have to put our money where it is worth.

Honourable Members, I must remind you that you are occupying the Joint District Planning and Budget Priority Committee as Chairmen and that you are part of the provincial government so please, let us work together because the three tiers of the government must work and that we must make it work.

That is the challenge I would like to leave here today. The Prime Minister and I as the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Cabinet have the right attitude and I believe we can steer the country in the right direction.

Let us not forget that this Government is a government of reconciliation and forgiveness. Let us not forget our Christianity and as Christians, how would we look if we do not forgive others? I am talking about the principle that we do not compromise at the same time.

We must enforce good governance and make sure the laws of this country are seen to be working. We must not interfere with them and this Government stands not to interfere with these things. We must also be aware that there are people who are hellbent on making serious allegations against Members of Parliament out there without the specific evidence.

Let us move on positively and run this country to the best of our ability. Let us create a difference and a new beginning.

Motion (**by Mr Sam Basil**) agreed –

That the question be now put.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (**by Mr James Marabe**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 4:25 p.m..