

SIXTH DAY

Wednesday 31 October 2012

DRAFT HANSARD

SUBJECT:

Page No.

QUESTIONS.....	1
MOTION BY LEAVE	19
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS - REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS.....	19
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION - PAPER AND STATEMENT - MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER.....	19
ADJOURNMENT.....	41

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

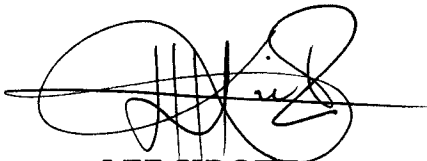
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Corrections maybe marked on a photocopy of the Daily Draft Hansard and lodged at the Office of the Principal Parliamentary Reporter, A123 (next to the Security Control Room).

Corrections should be authorised by signature and contain the name, office and telephone number of the person transmitting/making the corrections.

Amendments cannot be accepted over the phone.

Corrections should relate only to inaccuracies. New matter may not be introduced.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LEE SIROTE', written over a horizontal line.

LEE SIROTE

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SIXTH DAY

Wednesday 31 October 2012

The Speaker (**Mr Theo Zurenuoc**) took the Chair at 10.00 a.m..

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

Sitting suspended.

Mr Speaker, again took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and invited the Member for Obura-Wonenara, **Honourable Mehrra Minnie Kipefa** to say Prayers:

‘Oh God, thank you and we give you all the glory and honour. We thank you for this day for us to come together in this Parliament to deliberate what is best for the nation. Father we pray that may you be with us and guide us and give us the wisdom, knowledge and the strength to endure.

Help us to be servants and help us to lead. Father we thank you and pray for your blood over this place, we pray for the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. We also pray for the Opposition Leader and all the Members. We believe in you and that you are the God who reigns and who will always reign, and we bring this nation to you.

We pray that you forgive us our trespasses through the precious blood of Jesus. We thank you for this day. Amen.’

QUESTIONS

Mr DANIEL MONA – Mr Speaker, thank you for recognising the people of Goilala. Before I direct my questions to the Minister for Police, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the Speaker of the Ninth Parliament and as re-elected Member for Finschhafen. I also offer my congratulations to the Prime

Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Opposition Leader and the Members of the Ninth Parliament.

My series of questions are:

(1) Can the Minister confirm or deny that there is no control over law and order in Central Province and NCD?

My people of Central Province are being harassed at Gordon's Market and on every street of Port Moresby.

(2) Can the Minister confirm that a lawyer who was appointed as PPC for Central Province has brought moral down to its lowest level?

(3) Is there any way he can be replaced by a competent operational Police officer who will maintain peace and order in the province, especially in my District of Goilala?

(4) Can the Minister inform the people of Goilala why they are denied access to Police presence in their district headquarters when we have so many law and order problems both in Tapini and at the 100 per cent State-owned Tolukuma Mine area?

Mr Speaker, our village court officials and chiefs perform the duties of police personnel while policemen enjoy good pay and live in Port Moresby.

Mr Speaker, the police presence in Goilala costs K200 a day. When there is a problem and we send police personnel, it costs K10 000 to K30 000 for two or three-day operations. This is very costly and I don't have any money to continue to pay police personnel to go there when they live in Port Moresby.

(5) When can they be deployed up to Tapini?

(6) Does the Minister have any plans to train young Goilalas with grade 12 education qualifications? They can be trained as Police to be jointly funded by the Police Department and Goilala Joint District Planning and Budget Priorities Committee so that they can serve the people in the remote areas as I have seen in Bougainville and some parts of the Highlands region.

Mr Speaker, if the rest of the Papua New Guinea Police Force are not coming to Goilala, then I need people from Goilala to be trained and can assist the Police Force. Currently, if the Police cannot control Gordons Market, my policemen from Goilala can step in and assist the Police Force.

(7) The people of Central Province have been pushed around too much so my last question is, can you confirm or deny that you are going to use Police to suppress my people of Koiari from receiving their K5 million as land compensation for Jacksons Airport at 4 o'clock today?

Mr Speaker, when the landowners of Hides Gas or other gas and petroleum projects in Southern Highlands and Hela provinces close the sites, you go there with money bags but not the people of Central who are the landowners of Port Moresby city. I believe, it is long overdue and we also want to see K5 million money bag delivered to our people at Jacksons Airport or at Rouna because all of you come here and enjoy everything while the Papuans become spectators on our own land.

I want to see the K5 million money bag today too. If the police want to arrest these people, they must arrest me first.

Mr NIXON DUBAN – Thank you Mr Speaker. I want to thank the Honourable Member for Goilala for his series of questions. Let me say that with NCD and Central, the problems we have experienced are things that have gone out of control because of the indecisiveness of the past governments not giving enough resources to the Police. What you see is what we all know.

02/06

Police in NCD and Central provinces need more manpower, housing and budgetary support. Over the years successive governments have failed to provide these things and so the problems have accumulated and created this scenario in which we are losing control over the law and order situation in our city as well as Central Province.

I cannot deny the fact that law and order is a big issue, and I agree and the Member is correct. We have to be decisive in this government to try and address it. And the first thing that we can do is to increase budgetary support for the Police Force and its manpower. Housing is also another issue but there are a lot of issues surrounding the Police that have been addressed inadequately and that has given rise to the increase in law and order problems that we face.

The question regarding a lawyer as a PPC, I am not aware of that but I can assure the Member that I will find out and will reply to the Member in writing. I would also like the Member to sit down with me to see how best we can address this issue.

I am also aware that a lot of reserve policemen are going up to Goilala as expressed by previous speakers. This is an issue that is a bit too sensitive to discuss. We have to understand that the reasons behind not being there may be due to housing facilities or there is not enough commitment by the previous Police Commissioner to address the people up there. I want to assure the Member that I am happy to address that. If there is a need to help him and give him some policemen and women, I will ensure that, it is done.

The questions regarding training of policemen and women from Goilala, there are requirements that the Police Force have which people being recruited must meet. If they qualify and are recruited they can be trained as policemen and re-deployed to their province and districts. As far I see, I do not see any problems with that and I can help the Member regarding this issue.

Regarding Jackson's International Airport, I think we have an issue concerning the timing of this exercise and I think that there are other parties also involved in addressing the issues.

Mr Speaker, let me say that, the police are out there to do their duties and if there is an issue of law and order then it will require police presence. It must not be seen as repressing the rights of the local people.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Supplementary Question

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you, Mr Speaker, while I have the opportunity, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister for Police. Before I do that, I would like to congratulate the Minister for Police. Since he has been the Minister he has been working very hard to tackle this long standing issue that previous governments have been trying to fix, but to date it is still a struggle.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Papua New Guinea Royal Constabulary hierarchy for running my programmes in my District.

Mr Speaker, I have initiated some programmes in my district regarding rural policing. I have six Local-level Governments.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, is this a supplementary question?

Mr SAM BASIL – It is a supplementary question, I am giving the background information, and then I will come to the question.

We have purchased vehicles for the six LLGs including the two for towns, trained 10 reservists, with one high powered gun for each vehicle including an officer from the Papua New Guinea Royal Constabulary to oversee those 10 reservists bringing the total of law enforcement officers to 70.

When I was the Minister for National Planning we put K12 million for a rural intervention programme and this police programme is part of it.

My question to the Minister is this, because there is a lot of law and order issues being discussed, it will cost billions in terms of training and recruiting fulltime policemen from Bomana.

With this type of programme, can the Minister and the Government look at establishing 10 reservists, one police vehicle, one high powered gun and a police officer from the Papua New Guinea Royal Constabulary to oversee the operations for the 3,000 LLGs in Papua New Guinea? We must fight the law and order issues from the LLG level.

Thank you.

Mr NIXON DUBAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I thank the Deputy Leader for Opposition for his question.

I do think that it is a good concept at the community level and I understand from past allocations of DSIP there is a sector allocated under the DSIP for law and order. Therefore, I encourage all the Members to utilise that so that we can all work in coordination and synchronise the support that this government can give.

Mr Speaker, the Police Force as I understand needs a lot of money to fix the problems and if Members of Parliament are ready to assist, and with me as the Minister responsible, I am ready to assist in whatever capacity.

Supplementary Question

Mr KEN FAIRWEATHER – Thank you, Mr Speaker, my questions are:

(1) Is it true Minister, that we have the same number of police in terms of numbers as we had 37 years ago at Independence?

(2) How many of them are still in the Police Force?

Because by the look of Karkar Island it seems like all of them. That is the problem with the districts –

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member that is a completely new question and not a supplementary. You were allowed to speak regarding a supplementary question.

Mr KEN FAIRWEATHER – I am asking the Minister.

(3) Why don't you do the right thing and recruit people that are already policemen, instead of fooling around with village courts and officials?

This is because this idea will not work and you will be wasting your time. You need to get real policemen to do the job, and also, we need to send some of our policemen overseas.

All these nonsense about putting the responsibility back to the people is not how the police work. The police must be above all that.

Enough of wasting time, you must do something.

Mr SPEAKER – Thank you, Member for Sumkar, the Minister for Internal Security can answer your questions.

Mr NIXON DUBAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Sumkar for his questions.

I do agree with the Member regarding what he said. We have been thinking and that is a concept that is always expressed by Members and Ministers. I for one would like to see a shift in that area and I want to assure the Member that whatever ideas he has I will be fully supportive of it in terms of getting real people out there to do a real job. And I also understand that at the moment we have about 5,000 police personnel.

Mr Speaker, the ratio of police personnel to the population in this country is 1:1,600. The United Nations requested for every country to have a ratio of about 1:400, so there is a big gap in police duty. And a lot of police personnel are not able to perform effectively. They are not able to do their duties on time.

03/06

As a government we have to commit a lot of time and effort especially the budgetary support so that we can address most of these things. I would like to assure the Member that I am fully aware of this problem on Karkar Island. So we will work closely with him.

Mr BENJAMIN POPONAWA – Since this is my first time to speak I would like to firstly,

Mr Patrick Pruaitch – Point of Order! Under the Standing Orders you can only allow two supplementary questions.

Mr SPEAKER – Yes but this is a new question, it is not a supplementary question.

Mr BENJAMIN POPONAWA – Thank you, Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Police. Since this is my first time to speak, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my people of Tambul Nebilia for having confidence in me and for returning me back here for the second term.

I want to also put on record that, there were candidates who contested against me. But they are leaders of their own rights and they are capable of sitting in this seat. But,

they do not want to waste any time for the people of Tambul Nebilia to get services so they have not challenged my win in the court. And I want to thank them for that.

I want to also congratulate Mr Speaker, on your appointment to the Speaker's Chair. I would also like to congratulate the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition. We are all worthy of sitting on these seats. But one has to seat on those shits so, we have to congratulate you guys on that -

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, you need to address these leaders properly.

Mr BENJAMIN POPONAWA – My apologies. Yesterday I heard the Minister for Police mentioned that Policemen are not prepared to go out to the rural communities because there is no housing. I have heard that again today when you were responding to questions raised by Member for Goilala that there might not be any police housing but I have been in Tambul Nebilia and I have built houses for the policemen. I also bought vehicles but they refused to go there.

So you need to check your records and your in-house matters and see why policemen don't want to go to the rural areas. Rural areas really need the assistance of the policemen most.

Mr NIXON DUBAN - I think this is a fairly straight forward issue. Policemen should not refuse to go to any rural area and with the way we are going, we just need to ensure that they are there. I want to assure the Member that if he can write to me on that issue I will address it accordingly. There should be a number of policemen that he would request to be available for his district.

I do not see any problem Mr Speaker, with that issue. But if there are houses available there is no reason why policemen should not be deployed to those areas.

Mr LUCAS DEKENA – I direct my question to the Minister for Community Development. Before I ask her the question I would like to congratulate her on her

appointment. On the same token I would like to commend the Member for Sohe and the Governor of Eastern Highlands.

Mr Speaker, every time we come to this Parliament, we make grand plans to come up with strategies but I think we do not know what we are really talking about because we do not have the basic data on hand.

We come here and make plans based on assumptions only. We really do not know how many people we have in this country. So my question is: Do you have any plans to register all our people? We should not spend a lot of money to register our people. We just have to make use of all our existing State departments and institutions as well as the employers to register our people.

We can make use of the schools and the hospitals as well. We can make use of all these institutions and organisations to register all our people. Once that is done all our plans will work because we will be basing our plans on real figures.

So do you have any plans to register all our people so that by over five years we would have registered all our people? We will then know how many people are of the voting age, so that we will know how many ballot papers will be sent into respective voting areas.

Mrs LOUJAYA TONI - Thank you Member for your question. It is a question that is of public interest and I welcome it. As far as plans and strategies are concerned we certainly do need basic data on hand to be able to validate areas of investments and spending. And I can assure you that the National Planning Office and the various departments including my department are certainly focused and working on bio-metric system and the benefits that will come as a result of that.

04/06

You will have heard in the various ministerial statements that have been presented over the last week, especially that presented by the National Planning Minister and the Prime Minister himself alluding to the bio-metric system. And the commitment that this Government has made to ensure that before the 2017 elections we will have data of our people in this country.

But, where I am concerned as the local Member for Lae District, I have already begun establishing a focal point within the Lae District, especially where community development is concerned.

We are working as a national department and rolling out using Lae as a pilot project area, incorporating the work of the Civil Registry to ensure that all people within the 16 wards of Lae District have a Birth Certificate. That work of Civil Registry is also being rolled out quietly throughout the country, even as we speak.

Also the arrangements with fibre optic integrated government system is being rolled out quietly. But to speak again for what I am doing for Lae District gives the roll out exercise for data registration is to ensure that I have data of how many people with disabilities, how many youths, and how many women within my district.

I really need to be an example and therefore I set myself up to be able to complete the exercise with my officers and all those departments concerned. We will work together on the ground to ensure that by April next year we should be able to have the data required for 16 wards but I have included the Ahi LLG as well making it 23 wards within Lae Urban and Lae Rural. We should have the data for all these wards.

From that exercise we should be able to use it as a template throughout the country. But collectively, as a government, the departments concerned in this exercise collectively are focused. My Department has not only come up with plans and strategies but we are actually putting our money where our mouth is to make sure that we comply with the need of our people in the 20 provinces. And by 2017 we should have a completed data that can be utilized, not only by the Electoral Commission but other agencies as well.

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I have just one brief question to direct to the Minister for Public Service. It is a question that concerns the housing allowances given to public servants.

The housing allowance granted to public servants has remained unchanged for the last 37 years. More or less they are still receiving K7 a fortnight. You can't live anywhere on K7 a fortnight.

Because of this situation we are losing a lot of very productive public servants to the private sector and even abroad. Because of this problem we are facing productivity issues in the public service, public servants are not turning up on time, or are not able to attend to their duties because they are living in villages and settlements.

Many public servants who are now politicians and sit here have experienced the difficulties of having to survive on K7 a fortnight.

Can the Minister please explain or give some sort of an undertaking that this issue will be resolved. And this major problem that concerns the public servants and the public service of this country is addressed so that we can improve productivity, public servants can live with dignity and attend to their duties.

Dr PUKA TEMU – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable Governor of Oro for that issue which has been publicly pronounced by many sectors in the country.

Let me say this, the issue of K7 per fortnight housing allowance is a big issue in the provincial centres. But, as you know in the district centres, there are provisions for public servants housing through the National Housing Corporation. The provincial centres also have the National Housing Corporation providing houses and so its not to say that the government has over the years completely neglected civil servants throughout the country.

I could not agree more with the honourable Governor, Mr Speaker. It's an issue that this government needs to address but it cannot address it just as a housing allowance issue. We are undertaking a comprehensive programme. As you know, under the previous government in the last Parliament, we are continuing because the issue of public servants housing is one of the programmes of the government.

So we are working very, very hard in terms of budget support and there are provisions for it in the last budget. Unfortunately, as everyone is aware, a housing project could not be delivered. And that matter will be seriously considered by the Minister for Housing and I. We will review the matter that was not completed and we are going to bring it forward but we are waiting for an issue related to transfer or reimbursement of that particular fund.

So that is the beginning of the government's policy to address this issue holistically rather than just looking at increasing accommodation allowance but providing housing for public servants. And we hope that in the process efficiency will then be realized or expected by the government.

Mr Speaker, I want to assure the honourable Governor and also our public servants. I want to, on behalf of the O'Neil-Dion Government acknowledge enormous input by public servants for a long time.

05/06

Many times, we say bad things about them but there are many good committed servants out there who are doing a very good job.

It is a few that are spoiling the good work that they are doing. This government is serious about addressing efficiency and housing is one of them. We will not just be looking at increasing the housing allowance.

Mr ATI WOBIRO – My questions are directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Border Development. Western Province is a very important border province that shares two borders with Australia and Indonesia. For a very long time Western Province has not received proper attention.

In fact the Border Development Authority in the distribution for boats and barges to coastal provinces, Western Province missed out completely. Western Province borders are seen as exit and entry points for gun and drug trafficking. Western province does not have the capacity to monitor what is happening on the borders of the province.

A recent media report showed that Indonesians are coming at their own will and slaughtering deer and engaging in commercial fishing with no control at all. My questions are as follows;

(1) Does the Minister have any plans to set up border posts both on the Papua New Guinea/Indonesia border and PNG/Australia border?

(2) Does he have any plans to set up a naval element to provide surveillance on the waters if that is the case, is the government willing to assist with logistical support?

(3) Does he have any plans to open up a consulate office especially in Merauke so that Western Province can enter into a formal trade relationship with Merauke and that part of Indonesia?

Mr LEO DION – I thank the Governor for his questions, these are important questions which are not only for the Western Province but for this country as well. As some of the members of Parliament will recall that the establishment of the Border Development Authority was established by the former government.

And I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for coming up with that initiative because it has a vision and a mission to establish coordination and collaboration amongst the various agencies of government both in this country as well as Indonesia, Australia and other countries.

Mr Speaker, this mission and vision is generally guided by two plans the corporate plan and the border development authority plan. On the issue of the government's plan for putting up fully staffed border post in Western Province as I can understand the question is more or less addressing the lack of capacity, insufficient funding and agencies that are involved in border operations as well as the capacity of provincial governments to fully administer the activities of the province in addition to the responsibilities that are going on around the border areas.

It is not only my department that is responsible but also agencies like the Police, Defense, Foreign Affairs, NAQIA and the Provincial Governments concerned.

In this plan I am happy to announce that it is being implemented after it was introduced by the former government and then the last government and we are taking it on board to actually fast track the implementation of the border development responsibilities and activities.

06/06

Mr Speaker, I also would like to assure the Governor that the Ministry for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs to the Border Development Authority does have this plans which addresses social service infrastructure, the national service infrastructure and infrastructure and economic corridor.

It is quite a plan which is possible to implement in the years to come provided that this Parliament recognises the need to first of all fund the Border Development Authority which has vigorously proposed some plans for the national Budget that would be presented in two weeks time.

Mr Speaker, recently we launched the commencing of a major infrastructure of border development in Vanimo at Wutung, which triggers the activities that will be happening in the border areas.

I take this opportunity to thank the Asian Development Bank for assisting the Government of this country and also the Government for putting up counterpart funding in relation to recognition for this important border post.

Mr Speaker, I am fully aware of the problems and while the component that is affecting the Western Province is detailed in this plan and the corporate plan it is also my intention to ensure that the Border Development Authority and my Department fast track this plan so they can achieve those activities that have been planned for in those areas.

Mr Speaker, on the question of Naval Operation Forward Base in Daru, let me clearly state that although this is strategically an important issue I will be liaising with the Defence Ministry, Foreign Affairs Ministry in order to be advised on this specific plan. After all the Border Development Authority and the Technical aspect, the administration of the border, when it was primarily introduced was to link up all the organizations.

Mr Speaker, even though we introduced this animal into the system we accessed a very good intention and I would like to advise the Governors concerned in the six provinces to make sure that they take ownership and part-take in the decision making process of ensuring those infrastructure when we fund them are established.

Mr Speaker, having said all that doesn't mean anything at all, there are facilities that have border officers in the six provinces that are being established by the Government in Bougainville, New Ireland, Milne Bay, Manus and west Sepik and the Western Province. I agree that Western Province has a bigger land mass and the Government is making sure that after Vanimo I personally feel that for the next stage of border development activities like we have in Wiam Border, Dorme Border, Mabu Davan Border post and some of these areas that I have not been to but I am planning to go sometimes now to see for myself.

Mr Speaker, in regards to the question of opening up a Consulate Offices in Cairns and Merauke to cater for the formal trade and educational cultural exchange and so fourth, I will be consulting with the Foreign Affairs Minister and the other relevant Ministers in order that I will be properly advised and work together to achieve the objectives of the Border Development Authorities.

Mr MOGEREMA SIGO WEI – Mr Speaker, this is my first opportunity to rise in this Parliament representing my people of Karimui-Nomane so I take this opportunity to thank them for the mandate they have given me to represent them on this Floor of Parliament. I also thank the Honourable Peter Ipatas, Leader of the People’s Party my Dau village, my wife and my children for the assistance and help during the elections.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of my people we congratulate you on your election to the Chair of Speaker and the Right Honourable Peter O’Neil for his election as the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

We also congratulate all Members of Parliament for their election victories and the important roles they have taken to serve our people and our country in this 9th Parliament.

Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Works but seems he is not present in the Chamber I would like to direct it to the Minister for Finance. I would like to provide some brief before I ask my question.

Mr Speaker, my Electorate of Karimui was identified as a potential district to contribute to the national economy and employment. This contribution will have high impact both direct and indirect on the Governments Medium Term Development Strategies 2010 – 2015 and the Governments Long term Development Strategy 2010-2030 in enabling the national Government to achieve its goal of creating a healthy and smart middle-income society by 2030, for the people of Papua New Guinea.

Under the Corridor Plan, the National Government in 2010 – 2011 Budget appropriation made available a total of K20 million to the Karimui road project during the last term of Parliament.

A further K10 million was released to the Chimbu Provincial Government based on the commitment made by the Right Honourable Prime Minister Peter O'Neill for the roll-out of the Karimui road construction project.

On the 5th of December 2010 the National Government through the Central Suppliers and Tenders Board awarded construction of Karimui stage two between Waratua and Karimui Station for the contract price of K9.9 million.

The 33 kilometre from Karimui to Tua river pilot project has been constructed within two months between November and December 2010 by a deployment of 17 675 locals.

The Department of Works has paid the progressive claim of K5.2 million which incurred to K2.7 million mobilization components of plant and equipment to site on the 16 July 2011.

Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that no plant and equipment was mobilised on site for which payment for K2.6 million was paid to the contractor?

(2) How will the 33 kilometer pilot track be constructed without the earth moving equipments and plants mobilized on site for which a claim of K2.5 million was made?

(3) Is the Minister aware that additional mobilisation was made of K2.8 million was submitted on the 28 June 2012 to the Works Department and again the same claim forwarded on the 16 July 2012 to the Chimbu Provincial Government by the contractor on the K10 million now with the Chimbu Provincial Government Treasury?

The Department of Works is the implementing State agency for those claims for payment under the Central Supply Tenders Board awarded contract.

(4) Is the Minister aware that the very contractor is receiving payments outside of the contract in which a sum of K1 million was paid to the contractor from Karimu-Nomane District Treasury account against the contract?

(5) Would the Minister investigate the activities by the contractor and the involvement by the Department of Works in making payments with minimum physical work on the ground?

I would also ask that the K10 million now, with the Chimbu Provincial Treasury be transferred to Karimui-Nomane District Account so we can use this funds for building

roads to Karimui. I fear the funds maybe lost again without any tangible work being done with.

As I am told the K10 million in the Chimbu Provincial Treasury is less by K300 000. This occurred recently after my attempts both in writing and meetings with the contractor and the Chimbu Provincial Administration.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Karimui-Nomane for his important questions and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his election to represent his people on the Floor of this Parliament.

This is the first time I am responding to questions from him and they are serious in nature.

07/06

Mr Speaker, the National Government recognising the importance of unlocking a very fertile and important area in Karimui-Nomane but did appropriate money in 2010 and 2011 Development Budgets. I acknowledge that the funds have been issued for one or two projects but there are some funds still sitting there.

Mr Speaker, in relation to the issues raised by the Honourable Member, I want to assure him that I can look into the issue and I will call for an investigation to rectify whether work has been done on the projects and to see as to what has happened to the money. As a Government, we are focusing to ensure that our provinces and districts receive support. There must be compliance to contracts that are issued, and let me signal to the nation that we the *Public Finances Management Act* is responsive to ensure that punitive measures are given to contractors who abuse contracts that are issued to them.

We have no problems issuing contract to contractors but I wish to take this opportunity to raise awareness to all the contractors that the Karimui-Nomane road starts from Karimui all the way to Gumine the other side of Waghi so I am making a commitment to look into what had happened to the contract.

In relation to the K10 million that is sitting in the Chimbu Provincial Treasury, it really makes no difference whether it is in the district treasury or in the provincial treasury. The project value is about K10 million and it will require the NEC/Cabinet's

approval. If projects vary between K3 million to K10 million as the law has it now, you will need CSTB to clear them, if they are between K300 million to K3 billion, you need Provincial Supply Tenders Board (PSTB) to clear them.

Where the money is parked, project proponents will then call for a valid contract to be issued and so we might be spending time moving it from one account to another. Therefore, I recommend for contract tendering process to start and for the tender to be awarded in line with their procurement processes as laid out in the *Public Finances Management Act*.

Mr Speaker, I give guarantee to the Member that the money that is meant for that road should eventually link up your people and K20 million is a big amount of money so I will do a detailed investigation as to what has happened to it and we will inform the people of Karimui-Nomane through their Member and Parliament.

But let me confirm to Parliament and announce to the nation that we will be doing a review on the financial instructions in line with the next year's expenditure. We will also be doing review in the Public Finances Management Act, and part of the review will free up access to contract and increase ceilings at various levels of these investments but at the back end of it, we will tighten up defaulters of contracts. I am really looking at ensuring that these types of companies are punished from doing business in Papua New Guinea.

In this way, we will be serious as a Government. I don't think money is the issue, for instance, in the issue of Karimui-Nomane road, there should be by now K20 million worth of road construction already but if there is not K20 million worth of road construction, some has to pay. As far as Public Finances Management Act is concerned, we will tighten it up so that contractors who default or do not honour their side of the bargain, I am really looking at hardcore approach and banning these type of companies from doing business as far as public fund is concerned.

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 (**Mr James Marape**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent the Minister for Environment and Conservation making a ministerial statement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION – PAPER AND STATEMENT - MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER

Mr **JOHN PUNDARI** (Kompam-Ambum – Minister for Environment and Conservation) – Mr Speaker, I believe the copies of the statement will be circulated by the Attendants because it is not on the Notice Paper.

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to have been given the responsibility for this most challenging of all ministerial portfolios during this greatest development period in the country's history. The Department of Environment and Conservation is the government's agency with primary responsibility for overseeing the fourth Goal of the National *Constitution*.

08/06

Mr Speaker, the fourth goal states that, Papua New Guinea's natural resources and environment should be conserved and used for the collective benefit of all, and should be replenished for future generations.

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any other agency in government, which has such a clear and sole responsibility for protecting a key provision of the *Constitution*.

Mr Speaker, after I assumed office and following briefings on the department's functions and activities, I have identified three priority areas for action by the Department.

They are:

(1) The strengthening of the department's environment capabilities to ensure that all major resource developments are implemented in a manner which does not cause long term damage to the environment.

(2) The strengthening role of the provinces in environment protection, in particular, developing regulatory functions for developments which are not of national significance.

(3) Developing a national system of protected areas to protect Papua New Guinea's global and national significant bio-diversity.

Mr Speaker, to achieve these outcomes I have identified two further critical actions.

They are:

(1) Transforming the Department into the conservation and environment protection authority to ensure it has the funding and staff capabilities to deliver on its functions and responsibilities.

(2) The establishment of the Department of Environment and Conservation new office accommodation and staff home ownership scheme to provide good working and living conditions for all officers.

Mr Speaker, it is only three months since the formation of this Government and I am very pleased to say that the Department of Environment and Conservation has identified clear priorities to deliver in the next five years. I have endorsed those priorities and it is now my responsibility to ensure that they are delivered during the term of this

Government. Implementing these priorities will provide the solid policy foundation to move the organisation into the new era of the O'Neill-Dion Government.

Mr Speaker, let me add that these priorities are also in line with the government's Vision 2050 and the Development Strategic Plan 2030 with the aim of streaming environment sustainability into Papua New Guinea's economic development goals.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to raise a number of issues which, have concerned me for some time. There all issues which my Department will need to address often in partnership with other agencies to deliver on my priorities.

Mr Speaker, a large number of Special Agriculture and Business Leases (SABL) for agro-forestry purposes have been issued. It appears that many of these SABLs were issues without undertaking due diligence on the proponents and following proper legal processes. The previous government established a commission of enquiry into SABLs which, the O'Neill-Dion Government is committed in bringing into completion.

Mr Speaker, my Department has an important role to play in approving these agro-forestry proposals and regulating them once environment permits are issued. I have directed the Department to develop regulations and formal guidelines specifically for assessing for monitoring agro-forestry projects under the *Environment Act*. This will ensure that the project proponents will deliver on their commitments and that they are implemented in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Mr Speaker, I do not wish to see agro-forestry projects, many of which appear to be logging projects in disguise being approved by the Department.

Mr Speaker, I have also been concerned about the issue of deep sea tailing placements and its potential impact on marine environments and fisheries. I understand that it is probably the safest method of waste disposal for most mining projects in Papua New Guinea given the difficulty of land based waste management in areas of high seismic activity and complex terrain.

Mr Speaker, however, we need to be confident that the practice will not harm the environment.

Mr Speaker, I have directed the Department to work with the Department of Mineral policy and the Mineral Research Authority (MRA) to finalise new guidelines for the deep sea tailing placements. The guidelines will assist us to better understand the

impacts of these means of mining waste disposal, and to have improved monitoring systems in place to ensure that our regulatory framework is effective.

Mr Speaker, my longer term objective is to have the *Environment Act* reviewed and amended to ensure it can meet its objective of ensuring development in Papua New Guinea does not cause environmental harm. The Act has been in force for seven years and has been applied to many resource development projects.

Mr Speaker, one of my key objectives for the review is to identify areas where environment regulation activities can be devolved to provincial and lower levels of government. The *Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments* clearly provides a role for the Department in relation to projects which are of national interests.

However, many projects that the Department regulates do not meet this test and would be best assessed at provincial or local levels. For example, matters like management and litter can be devolved to the provincial and Local level governments. Similarly, the management of small scale conservation area projects can also be dealt with by provincial and Local level governments.

The Department does not have sufficient resources to manage national interest projects and cannot be fully effective whilst it also attempts to do the job that our lower level governments can do.

Mr Speaker, the object of devolving activities to lower levels of government cannot be achieved without the provinces committing significant resources to environment regulation.

Mr Speaker, I also intend to review the penalties and fines provision of the *Environment Act*. The penalties and fines are breaches of the *Environment Act* as they appear now are far too low and are not able to act as a deterrent for poor environmental management practices.

Mr Speaker, if Papua New Guinea is to ensure its critical environment and valuable bio-diversity is protected then we need to have high penalties for breaching our laws. Resource developers need to know that we are serious in our commitment in protecting the environment and bio-diversity that we have to operate and conform to the standards defined in our laws.

Mr Speaker, Papua New Guinea contains a wealth of bio-diversity. It is one of eighteen mega diverse countries which have a very high total number of species. Papua New Guinea contains more than 7 per cent of the world's bio-diversity in less than 1 per cent of the land area.

09/06

Papua New Guinea has more than 18,894 described plant species, 719 birds, 271 mammals, 227 reptiles, 266 amphibians and 341 freshwater fish species.

This bio-diversity provides the timber, food resources and medical supplies for a large proportion of the population. It is under significant threat from major resource developments and a rapidly expanding human population; it needs to be better protected.

Mr Speaker, I am committed to the development of a national system of protected areas to protect Papua New Guinea's globally and nationally significant bio-diversity. I am also keen to support the provinces and lower levels of Government to protect areas of importance to local communities. My priority as a Minister in the National Government is to identify areas which need to be protected in the national interest.

The greatest impediment to protecting bio-diversity in PNG is the lack of sustainable financing for protected areas. Landowners cannot be expected to give up rights over areas of land or water without seeing benefits in the form of service delivery or support for economic development. Protected areas need to be seen as an alternative development option to resource developments in the forestry, agro-forestry or agriculture sectors. We will then see significant support for their establishment.

Large amounts of international funding have come into PNG to establish protected areas but much of these funds have been spent on salaries and expenses for the employees of large international non-government organisations. I am sad to announce that PNG does not have one sustainable financed protected area even after tens of millions of kina have been spent over the last twenty years or more.

Mr Speaker, it is time for a change. I am proposing the establishment of a PNG bio-diversity conservation trust fund which will be used to attract funding from international donors, industry and philanthropic organisations as well as being supported through government funding.

The Endowment Trust Fund will be independent of government and will be managed by specialists in the areas of finance and law, and will over time deliver an annual income stream for each nationally significant protected areas.

I have directed the Secretary to prepare a submission for me to bring to Cabinet on the trust fund so it can be endorsed as soon as practicable. The trust fund needs to be seen as a credible entity by the international community so the Government will be inviting one of the key multi-lateral agencies to assist us in its design and establishment.

If Papua New Guinea is going to achieve the objective of establishing and sustainably financing a national system of protected areas we need to change from the current approach of ad-hoc protected area gazettals to allow generally for facilitated by non-government organisations. We need to ensure protected area establishment and management is properly coordinated by the national government through whole of government processes.

Mr Speaker, I have directed the Department to prepare national policies on protected areas and on non-government organisations. The purpose of these policies is to provide a clear direction to the international community and national stakeholder regarding the government's new direction on the creation of protected areas.

We all have a role to play but those roles need to be better defined and clear responsibilities and accountabilities established so we don't end up with large numbers of protected areas with no effective management or funding to support the local communities within them.

Mr Speaker, the final issue I wish to address is transformation of the Department into the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority. This is, in my view, the only mechanism available to ensure that the important constitutional responsibilities that the Department oversees on behalf of the government can be implemented in a sustainable manner.

Unlike other resource sector agencies the Department is a multi-sectoral regulatory agency and oversees environment regulation for mining, petroleum and gas, forestry, agro-forestry, and agriculture as well as manufacturing, infrastructure and utilities. It attempts to do this with a budget less than one third the size of the PNG Forest Authority and half the size of the mineral resources authority budget.

The Department's current budget is around K10 million. In my view, its budget should be between K40 - K50 million given its enormous responsibilities in the area of environment protection, water resource management and bio-diversity conservation.

Mr Speaker, my Department is now facing up to the enormous challenge of managing the environment approvals process for the Wafi/Golpu Mine in Morobe Province. This mine will be bigger than Ok Tedi and is within the critical and extremely sensitive Markham valley catchment and the major population centre of Lae.

Mr Speaker, Papua New Guinea cannot afford to have this proposed mine experience the enormous environmental and social problems which occurred at Ok Tedi and Panguna.

10/06

Many of these problems occurred because of failure by previous governments to properly assess the environmental and social views before allowing the mines to come into operation.

Mr Speaker, before I continue, honourable Members will realize that I am not making this statement with regard to the Solwara 1 project investment considered by Nautilus.

But, Mr Speaker, the honourable Members may be informed that there will be a briefing tomorrow at the State Function Room and of course, the Opposition Members of Parliament are invited to attend so you can make informed debates on the Floor of this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, information is very, very critical to our progress in any new investment in the country. And this is a new frontier that we are engaging ourselves with in the country. This is the reason why after your briefing tomorrow we will be conducting a public forum so that information can be disseminated and we can appreciate the information that has been made available to us. And as a result certain approvals have been made by agencies of government. So, Mr Speaker, I invite honourable Members of Parliament to attend that briefing tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, let me continue on from here. I wish to alert the Parliament on the extremely low staffing levels in the regulatory division of the Department given the

expectations that government and the community has with respect to compliance and enforcement activities.

Mr Speaker, this is something that I think the honourable Members of this Parliament will have to note very seriously the fact that the Morobe Mining Joint Venture has more environmental staff and consultants for the Hidden Valley Mine than there are in the regulatory division of my Department.

Mr Speaker, the Hidden Valley Mine is one of around 150 developmental projects that the department has given license to operate in Papua New Guinea. This illustrates how desperate the Department finds itself in. Hidden Valley is just one out of 150. So you can see how desperate our situation is.

Mr Speaker, this absurd situation has to change. The establishment of the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority and the move toward a cause-recovery model for environmental regulation is the only way forward. This will enable this service delivery and budget outcome to be achieved.

Mr Speaker, the authority will also be able to attract qualified and capable staff to add capacity to what is a serious understaffing situation.

Mr Speaker, the establishment of the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority will also significantly increase job opportunities in environment and resources development sector in Papua New Guinea.

The Authority will be setting higher standards for environmental approvals and compliance which will be reflected in a need for more young graduates to cater for this increased demand for environmental services.

Mr Speaker, the Department advertised for young graduates to join its graduate programme several years ago. It received around 400 applications for 15 graduate positions only. Many of these graduates have been unable to find work in the environment sector and were working in other sectors where their skills were not being utilized. This is not right.

I am committed to ensuring that the establishment of the authority and strengthening in the environment protection in Papua New Guinea generate job opportunities for young graduates and for new local businesses to be established in the environment services area.

Mr Speaker, the establishment of the authority is the most urgent and a critical action is needed to move forward in this short time. Without these changes I cannot see how the under funded and understaffed Department of Environment and Conservation can meet, the government's or the changing communities' expectations regarding the protection of our environment in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, I intend to take the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority proposal to Cabinet before the end of this year and hopefully to establish it in the first half of 2013 if not before that. I am asking honourable Members to consider your support for the bill when it comes before the Floor of the Parliament.

Mr Speaker, let me thank you once again for giving me this opportunity to address the National Parliament as Minister for Environment and Conservation in the O'Neill – Dion Government.

And let me thank God for the beautiful country of ours, an environment with rugged terrains, beauty of the country that we have, the geography of it, the flora, the fauna, the bio-diversity, white sandy beaches, and great oceans. A beautiful country, Mr Speaker, the God, so richly blessed us with.

And, Mr Speaker, before you and I enjoy the benefits of the mining sector, of the petroleum and gas sectors, before you can I even started commercially logging and cutting down our trees God gave us our environment. Even before that time our livelihood was with our environment.

We've got to protect that environment. We've got to ensure that we are a proud people, proud of our bio-diversity, of the fact that we belong to a great and beautiful country.

Mr Speaker, when all the mines run out, when your gas is gone, when your petroleum is gone, what do we have. We still have the richness of our environment that God so richly blessed us with and we need to protect that.

Mr Speaker, thanking God and appreciating God for giving me this –

11/06

We still have the richness of the environment that the God has blessed us with and we need to protect that. I thank God for giving me this opportunity in my life and also the Prime Minister for giving me this portfolio.

Mr SAM BASIL (Wau-Bulolo – Deputy Leader of the Opposition) – I move –

That Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Speaker, I represent an electorate that has Hidden Valley and very soon Waffi. I do not have much to say but I will briefly speak on my districts experience and I would like the Minister to take note.

I congratulate the Minister, for his new appointment as the Minister for Environment. He was also the Mining Minister in the last Parliament and he has travelled extensively throughout PNG and he is well aware of many problems that we are currently facing in our districts in regards to the mining issues.

First of all, I do agree with the Minister that during Question Time that he admitted that the Department of Environment and Conservation are not funded properly which is true. We do agree that the Government at the right time and now is the time with the Budget coming soon we all support that the Department of Environment and Conservation should be funded properly to increase their staff, because I have seen in my own district that the mining companies have more staff and the Department of Environment and Conservation has less staff.

Less officers' means that they cannot be able to attend to queries made by the people or people are not made aware of the environmental impacts. In my district we do have our problems; before Hidden Valley came into operation the Department of Environment and Conservation granted the permit which allowed for the mine to start.

The permit clearly states that there won't be any environmental impact but during the phase of stripping the land, site casting was experienced. Site casting means the sand or the top soil is being washed down and this caused a lot of problems for the Watut River.

The sand built up on the river causing the river to be dirty or dry and people had to find other means of getting water. At the same time there were some sort of chemical reactants that produced acids along the river; and there a lot of people living along the river. I am sure that the Member for Huon Gulf whose district is joined to mine will agree on that.

I am sure the Governor for Morobe will agree with too, that we have a lot of problems in the Watut River. We called on the Department of Environment and Conservation when Sir Puka Temu was the Minister and we discussed a lot of issues as we were trying to get the Government's attention to come to the aide of the village people because they were suffering because the environmental impact that was being caused by the mining company.

We tried our best but the way the DEC is structured is not good for the people and that prompted us to go on and take out a court order against the mining company and I believe the case is ongoing.

Mr Speaker, when the company realized that they had problems on their hands, they convinced DEC that they will run their own assessment and report and I salute the Minister in saying that he will not allow individual companies to run their own independent investigations and compiling reports.

When the company does its own investigation they come back and tell us that everything is alright, when in fact it isn't and the people from the river in my district are suffering. The current structure in place at the DEC is not really suited for our people.

Take for instance Ok Tedi, or the other mines they still have environmental problems that have not being solved. During Question Time it was raised and I also raised a supplementary on that same issue, during that time Sir Julius Chan stood up and said something very important.

Sir Julius said if the DEC does not have the capacity to look after the environment why does it continue to give new mining licenses? I am sure that the new Minister is aware of all these and I would like to suggest here that when you are doing your restructuring maybe you look at putting up a laboratory for the department.

We need that one because some chemical components of the water need to be processed within an hour and it takes a lot of time to have them flown out to other

countries to be processed and have the results flown back. We have to have our own independent assessment laboratory run by the department so they will do their own tests to prove that it is safe.

Mr Speaker, it is very hard but while we are happy to commence with Waffi being one of the biggest mines we have not fixed the Hidden Valley problem. We are happy and say that money is coming in and there is no problem but we are doing it at the expense of people's lives. They have no proper drinking water but here we are signing and being happy about the billions that will be made from these mines.

Mr Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister that the environment problem of Hidden Valley problem is still pending so we should look at that before we proceed to Waffi. If we do not attend to Hidden Valley the Waffi people will feel the biggest impact because we ignored the first problem and only increased the second one.

Let's teach the company to be responsible before it goes out to the Markham River because then there'll be more problems and we can't have the companies turn a blind eye to the people, we have to teach them a lesson.

Another thing is that there was a SMEC report that was released; however I am not sure whether it is being sponsored by the DEC but that report supports the claim of the Watut people and reported that there was site casting and there were defects along the Watut River. And this report is supporting our Court case and we will go in and ask the Company.

I want to also say here that sometimes when we take the matter to the department, some of the environmental officers' actions show that they are working for the mining company and not the Department of Environment and Conservation. They want to protect the companies.

12/06

This Government belongs to the little people and they are suffering because of the environmental pollution that is happening. The Government should be protecting the people of Watut, Ok Tedi, Misima and any where in this country.

Mr Minister, I urge you to stop awarding new mining licenses but concentrate on fixing our environmental problems.

Mr Speaker, I support Sir Julius Chan's statement earlier, that if we do not have the capacity to manage our environmental problems, do not give new licenses.

I believe the Minister does not have any answers to the seabed mining. He doesn't know how it will affect our Tuna stock and all the marine resources. We are just assuming that it will be good because some people wrote some reports and they pushed it down our throats and we bring it to Parliament and the National Executive Council and we approve it just to find out its consequences.

Mr Speaker, I seriously urge the Minister to take these concerns into consideration.

Mack Adams National Park is one of the main conservation parks in the Bulolo District and there are no Rangers and the park was set on fire and I think the area of parks and conservation needs more funding and we all support the Ministers call on this. I urge our people of this country to please look after our parks because we are losing most of them.

Mr TITUS PHILEMON (Milne Bay) – Mr Speaker, I rise to support Paper presented by the Minister for Environment and Conservation and I would like to congratulate him for the Paper and the initiatives he has taken, especially to establish the authority and for recognizing the Parks and gardens in one of his media statements.

Most of our parks are becoming places for criminals and this is good that he is looking into those things so that we can bring the beauty of this country.

Mr Speaker, I was a Member of Parliament, 10 years ago and getting re-elected this term, my interest is to speak for the people that I represent. I thank the Government for the initiative that it has taken.

Mr Speaker, I believe the Ninth Parliament is the right Parliament to address most of these issues.

Mr Speaker, Milne Bay Province is the biggest maritime province in the country and it is one of the most beautiful provinces because of its marine life and its islands. I would like to put on record my grievances on record and to register my concerns that I believe this country has been cheated. Now we must look forward and take stock of where we went wrong and improve.

I thank the Minister that he has realized this importance and being a Minister for Mining Department, Lands Department and now he is the Minister for Environment and Conservation this ministry might not be as important to a lot of people but I believe that this ministry is a very important ministry and it is to protect the interest and beauty of our country that diversify Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, so many people come to Papua New Guinea because of the resources we have because we are very rich with all the natural resources we have in this country but how much capacity do we have to protect our environment for the future of our country and our children. That it is why I am putting my grievance on record that we have been cheated.

Mr Speaker, I urge the Government to support the Minister in his endeavours. In the past there have been some mining operations and even in my Milne Bay province.

Mr Speaker when the Bougainville crisis was on the Misima Mine was the only mine that held the economy of this country together. What has happened to the Misima Mine? The many years of struggle by the landowners to get what was rightfully theirs has been falling on deaf ears.

The Department of Environment and Conservation was the many departments that was involved in the structure of the agreement, but when my people came to the department or even the Government nobody wanted to listen to them. I believe this is what is happening and most of the prospecting companies, logging companies or whatever companies, when we give licenses and permits to them people agree to give their land, forest and even the sea for the sake of development but when they come to see the government or even the companies for their fair shares they shut their doors on them and they start to sell their betelnuts on the street and that is how they survive.

Mr Speaker, I believe in this Government and I know we are going to improve on those areas.

The main Islands in Milne Bay province have been given licenses for prospecting, even my island of Russel, Sudes, Misima and Woodluck is going into full mining operation in the next one or two years.

Mr Speaker, the Minister is concerned about who is going to protect our people's interest and I fully support and agree with him.

I am always happy to see that our National Goals and Directive Principle No. 4 talks about national resources and environmental protection. Also in Goal No. 5, it talks about Papua New Guinea ways. These are very important information that our forefathers have enshrined in the *Constitution*.

Let us go back to Ok Tedi's experience. I have been reading one of those agreements that were signed in 1984 when the tailings dam got broken. The investors threatened to leave close the mine and leave if the government intervened because of the environmental damage. Discussions were held in this Parliament and some leaders said that lives of the people of Western Province were more important and we should close it while others said, 'let's think of the economy of this country and the investors, it is better to sacrifice for this country's economy than the environment'. They agreed to sacrifice the environment of Western Province than the economy of the country.

To date, what has happened to the people and the environment? I am trying to share this experience so that we understand the risks involved in opening new mining or oil and gas industries.

Let us take Ok Tedi, Panguna and Misima as examples. In the past when I was a little boy, my parents used to take me to the river during dry season for diving and I could stand at the bank of the river and see big barramundis. When they first start clearing the site in 1980, all the fish died. When we asked what caused the fish to die, the investors said, they just died of natural causes. Later on when the mine started operating, it was releasing 80 000 tons of wastes per day from the mill and 121 000 tons from the mine into the river system, including direct dumping of chemicals like mercury, cadmium and cyanide.

Today, people are facing disaster; there is so much genocide and mothers are giving birth to deformed babies. Two years ago, I invited a Japanese media group and they went to the affected area and found seventeen deformed children in one village alone. The elder people now have many cases of stone bladders. I have two big stone bladders. These are the effect and impact of the mine waste that is being directly dumped into the river system.

In the beginning, proper Environmental Risk Assessment was not done as well as socio-economic baseline surveys. Its ignorance also affected the tributaries of the river. I

I want the Minister to take note of the ships that pass through our waters and they throw a lot of waste into our waters destroying our marine life and a classic example is the Jomat Passage. It is frightening to see that most of these companies have more staffs than our own departments. The department that is trying to protect the interest of the people does not have the capacity in the human resources. That is why, we are being overlooked. They just sign agreements and we just follow them and we have no say on their operations. This is why I am saying that we have been cheated. Let us put a stop to this now.

13/06

This Parliament is given the mandate by the people of this country so we should not cheat our people. Let this Parliament stand to fight for the rights of the people. Therefore, I support the establishment of this Authority.

Mr BOKA KONDRA (North-Fly – Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture) – I think it is very important that I contribute to this debate. With our experience with Bougainville Copper Mine, if you are talking about environment, you are touching the nerve system of the people of Western Province.

Mr Speaker, let me first commend the Minister for Environment and Conservation. When he was the Minister for Mining in the last term of Parliament in the Somare Government, a pipe in the Ok Tedi Mine got broken and he as a Minister for Mining and Honourable Benny Allen as Minister for Environment and Conservation were the first leaders in Parliament to drive from Tabubil to Kiunga on a dusty highway to inspect the damage. I believe that you are a true Papua New Guinean.

I commend this wonderful ministerial statement. Let me ask what is environment. Environment is our livelihood; it is our supermarket, garden, World Bank, kitchen and a mother to us. When there is no environment, there is no life. Once environment is destroyed you are looking at disaster. It is just like you catching a fish from a river and roasting live on a fire. The fish has no way to go but jump up and down until it dies because its original place is in the river and not on a fire.

led a group there to investigate on indirect pollution. In 2001, they said to close down the mine and scientists were sent there and they later found out that there was negligence on the part of the developer.

14/06

We have lost all our crustaceans, all our fish, turtles and crocodiles. Therefore, when the big river is affected the other tributaries are affected as well. Thus, the fish up in the tributaries are dying because there is congestion at the main stream so the fish cannot enter. The tributaries and the main river are home to migratory fish as well as the native fish, and when the migratory fish are affected the native fish are affected as well.

The Western province is affected by the two mining activities that take place around the province's close proximity. One of these mines is Porgera Joint Venture and no government officials or environmental officials have come to talk to us about the pollution that the mine makes into the Strickland River because the people are affected by this pollution.

If the mine closes by 2013, how long will it take for the river system and the surrounding environment to recover from the damage from the pollution from the mine? The answer is 999 years for the river system and surrounding ecosystems of Western Province to return to its original state. I may only live to the age of 60 and die but there are still generations upon generations to come after me.

When I was in Sydney I heard someone say, if the pipeline were to come through the Western Province there would not be any environmental damage, and I told that person that it was a lie. This is because; whatever occurs on land always goes back to the river. You can take all the rocks and soil but suspended sediments will always travel through the water destroying all the natural habitats. Therefore, when our natural environment is gone the livelihood of our rural people is also taken away from them.

Today I just want to appeal to every Papua New Guinean to think about our natural environment and I believe this Government is a responsible government that will put proper laws in place so that we can make money for this country but with minimal effects to our natural environment. But our main concern should be the lives and welfare of our people and our natural environment.

Another issue which I would like to mention here is the environmental investigation statement. Last year, there was a meeting held in Kiunga for the Stanley Gas Project. I attended that meeting and asked what was the meeting about and I was told that they were about to get the due process done. I therefore closed the meeting that day and sent everybody home. When you talk about issues concerning the environment it is like you touching my nerve system.

Therefore, if you have any mining activities happening in your areas or mining industries, please, come to Western Province and see for yourself how my people and I are suffering. My body contains so much mercury and cyanide that after some time I will die soon.

What I am trying to say here is that, this Government is a responsible government and despite national goals and directive principles, goal No. 5 says, 'PNG ways, can we do it? Can we write something that is according to the context of PNG or Melanesian Way, so that we are protecting the lives of the people and environment?' Money is important but first things first, lives of people are important. When there are people they will make money and the country will be strong. If we have all the people affected and sick they will not contribute meaningfully to the country.

My people in the past were going to school and learning much better because we were getting things out from the natural environment. However, due to the pollution in the river system, it has affected the learning capabilities of our children. What I am telling you all here is the truth and not a lie.

I could go on and talk about this issue but this information that I put to all should make you think about making good laws that will protect our natural environment but at the same time generate revenue for the country.

With that, thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr FRANCIS POTAPE (Komo-Margarima) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I also would like to comment on the wonderful statement presented by the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

The Minister is a very experienced Member of Parliament and I believe that you he will do a good job from where he has started.

Mr Speaker, it does matter where you sit in this Parliament, whether in government or in Opposition, a Minister or a backbencher in the Opposition. The issue regarding the natural environment touches all of us.

I want to say that the Department of Environment and Conservation is the most important Department in this country. Yet, over the years governments after governments have neglected this Department. And I believe that when I was working with Honourable William Duma at that time, he was the one who that really fought for the Department of Environment and Conservation to be elevated. And now the step taken by the current Minister is in that same direction.

Mr Speaker, the time has come for us to decide whether to keep this department or abolish it. This is because we cannot be rubber stamps for big corporate giants who just want us to issue permits. We can issue these permits but when they go back to their country they laugh at us. They think like as if they are Ministers in government and they can simply make their way out.

As a country we can make a decision to abolish it and may be come up with a new way of incorporating its functions with the Department of Petroleum and Energy and some with Forestry, Mining and other relevant departments.

If we going to keep the Department, then I think the time has come for us to really fast track the establishment of the authority. We have to give teeth to that Department. I know that in my humble opinion and before I became a Member of Parliament I was a mining engineer by profession.

15/06

I was a Mining Engineer and as Engineers we worked around the clock to convince the Local level Government Counsel, Provincial Governments, Ministers and the Government of the Day on environmental law.

In Australia, New Zealand, America and else where in the world today the issue of environment is one that cause the delay in executing the projects but in Papua New Guinea they just come in and the environmental permit is given on day one. The work permits are given to the foreigners on day one.

This country has been an easy ride for many international firms. Government after government can come and go, ministers may change but yet we are not moving forward. We need to establish the authorities straight away. We really need to fund the Department properly so that the Department of Environment and Conservation should par with the Department of Treasury, Finance, and Petroleum and Energy. They Department of Environment and Conservation should not be pushed down to the policy level instead it should be pushed higher.

This is the livelihood of our people. If you attend bio-diversity conferences around the world, as a Papua New Guinean you will stand tall because you will have variety of bio-diversity. You have almost 19 thousand described plants, almost 700 plus birds, 200 mammals and so forth whereas many countries don't have it. And Papua New Guinea is envy.

The environment Officers are the policemen because they ensure that these animals and plants are protected. With these officers all that we have will be gone. Many foreigners will go back to their own countries with millions of kina that they have already made in this country. That means we have not done a good work while representing our people here in Parliament. May be we are here just to enjoy the peaks and privileges and collect our pays.

We serious need to fund this department and keep it in the authority status and protect it. Otherwise we have to abolish it to save our own faces and further refer its functions to various departments who may be able to do a better job.

Companies have more environmental officers and if you visit Australia you will find that they have a department of water, conservation, and environment. They have many departments whereas in this country we have amalgamated all of these functions into one body.

We need to support the Environment and Conservation Minister on his legislation to establish an authority. We need to also fund it and ensure that these environmental officers are present.

If you go to many of the project areas today, you find that we have issue this permit and the Minister for Petroleum has given petroleum license and the Minister for Mining has given Mining Licenses.

But if you go to my district in Pomo, we have no environmental officers living there today. Massive work is going on in the Hides area but there are no environmental officers around unlike in Australia or American you will find many environment officers around just like policemen. They ensure that their birds are protected and the water is not polluted. They also ensure that erosion is controlled.

The previous Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare made a decision for government officers including environment and Conservation, Petroleum, Lands to be placed in those project areas but we have not done that yet or may be partly because of the political impasse.

But under the leadership of Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, we still need these government officers, to really look at some of these things.

Minister you did a good and some of us in the Opposition support you. We want to see that the Department of Environment and Conservation takes its rightfully place in this country so that the future of our people are protected.

Mr JIM KAS (Madang) – Thank you Mr Speaker, I wish to commend the Minister for Environment and Conservation for his statement. I support him on his bid to establish an authority and to set up PNG bio-diversity conservation trust. I will elaborate on that later.

The Department of Environment and Conservation has been a Department that has been taken for granted most of the time. I think most of the outlook is on Treasury, Finance and Police.

You will have my support because of all the projects found in Papua New Guinea Madang has all of them. When you talk about timber, copper, fish, gold, nickel, oil and gas, agriculture, palm oil and etc Madang has it all. Out of the 850 languages that PNG has Madang has 175 of them.

16/06

As much as there is so much diversity and conservation in Papua New Guinea we have a lot more languages in Madang also that needs to be protected. And our environment also needs to be protected.

Sad to say, the people who are doing conservation in Madang are NGOs. They do their best in implementing government policy, especially with regard to minor conservation areas such as tree, forests and rivers. There are individual NGOs which extend the government policies by streamlining them to the village level. Such NGOs include World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International based in Milne Bay, Nature Conservancy and one that is in Madang which always opposes us.

I agree with the Minister in regulating the activities of NGOs in Papua New Guinea. That law has to be brought to Parliament so that we have to regulate the activities of NGOs, international as well as domestic NGOs.

I think these NGOs receive large sums of money from government outside OF PNG but when they come to PNG they are called NGOs and they attack us.

The case of Ramu Deep Sea Tailings, PMIZ and Solwara 1, I think this one particular NGO, based in Madang, receives funds from the government on the one hand and then make this money their private money and then turn around and attack us as government under our protection.

I therefore support your thoughts on bringing in regulatory measure to ensure they keep in line.

On the establishment of an authority, yes, we must do that. There are times, from experience, I have seen that the actual implementation of the policies of the authority to LLGs becomes a problem due to lack of manpower.

That is where PPP comes in, Private Public Partnership. And with your regulation of NGOs, the experienced people in the NGOs can assist in implementing government policies. One that is currently underway is the policy on climate change.

If you go to Manus, some parts of Madang, West New Britain, in the Walindi Bay area, you will notice that some of these policies are being advocated by the NGOs. In your draft bill, ensure that our relationship under the PPP arrangement is incorporated so that if the government falls short in any area, we have partners who should be funded to assist in implementing this policy.

I feel that the time is right to say that your Department must also look at the Ramu System. Between the months of June and October every year, despite very little rainfall the Ramu Valley gets flooded. My people along the Ramu River feel the effects. This

was not so in the past, it was never like that but the continuous activities upstream from the operations by Ramu Sugar, Ramu Oil Palm as well as the headwaters on Yonki has resulted in this event. The sedimentation in the river bed has caused it to rise and when a flood occurs the river system cannot take the volume of water causing it to spill its banks and cover areas of Ramu. The effect of this is felt all the way to the Ramu delta. I also appeal to you that your officers should take some time to concentrate on Madang because of the number of projects that are happening, in the sea, close to the sea and up in the mountains.

So, that is my contribution to this debate and I support the creation of the authority, the creation of the PNG Biodiversity Trust and also the bill to regulate the NGOs in this country.

Debate (on motion by **Mr James Marape**) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

Parliament adjourned at 12.30 p.m..