

SIXTH DAY

Wednesday 14 May 2014

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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Sarufa M. Haro
Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SIXTH DAY

Wednesday 14 May 2014

The Speaker (**Mr Theo Zurenuoc**) took the Chair at 10.am..

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 Abau, **Honourable Puka Temu** to say Prayers:

'God eternal, God, of love and mercy, God all knowing, God who has all authority. We submit ourselves under your authority this morning as leaders of our country and our people. We acknowledge your sovereignty and your goodness in this nation. Father, this morning as we bow before you, we want to say thank you to you for what is happening today in our country. In particular this morning, father we thank you for the first shipment of gas that will be leaving our country to oversea.

As leaders representing our people, we as a body on behalf of our people we say thank you Father. Thank you for blessing our young country with enormous natural resources. Thank you for blessing our young country with over seven million lovely people. And thank you for the goodness that you have brought to our country. We give you honour. We give you glory. We give you praise and we give you all the credit this morning on behalf of our people.

We commit all leaders, the Prime Minister and right down to our ward councilors in various wards throughout our nation. As the executive government takes leadership on structuring the way to manage these resources today and into the future, we request of your wisdom and knowledge to abound and to be great, Father.

So this morning, on what is happening on the LNG plant site, once again thank you true Papa God. Thank you, for blessing our nation and thank you for the proceeds that will come into our country.

Thank you for the systems that we will establish in order Lord so that the resources can be equitably and efficiently distributed throughout our nation. Thank Father, for this morning we submit this Parliament session unto your hands and our Speaker..

Commit ourselves Lord to the things that you want us to do and the decisions and the choices and laws that this House needs to pass this morning. Forgive us of our shortcomings. We thank you because you have provided a way for us to Christ your son our Lord who taught us to pray, Amen.'

QUESTIONS

Mr TOBIAS KULANG – I direct my question to the Minister for Planning.

This question relates to the functions and the operations of the Office of the National Statistic. The official data relating to the key statistics concerning human development indexes in terms of health, education and economy is published by this key institution dating back to 2006. These are the official data used by other relevant institutions to compare with partners like the United Nations.

02/06

Mr Speaker, this is a serious concern because sometimes I wonder what measures and statistics we use to frame annual budgets and set directives and forecast on how it should be implemented to improve and develop the communities in terms of health, education and other different sectors. To date, the Government has passed a record budget and allocated a lot of money to the rural areas. As leaders, we are also committed to serve our people in the communities.

Mr Speaker, at some point in time, we want to see what we have achieved in all our various sectors in our term in Parliament.

(1) Does the Department of Planning have plans in place to ensure that the Office of the National Statistics effectively performs its responsibilities?

(2) What is being done by the Office of the National Statistics now to ensure that the critical data and statistics of this country are updated from 2006 to current? We are still using the data from 2006.

Mr Speaker, these are not complicated questions, and I believe this nation needs some answers and we need to do this as soon as possible.

Mr CHARLES ABEL – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I also thank the Member for Kundiawa-Gembogl for his very important questions.

Mr Speaker, I did state in this Parliament on several occasions on the very important outstanding issues that statistics and monitoring from the Department of National Planning and other State agencies are unsatisfactory. I have stated many times that too many agencies of government, particularly the central agencies of government like Finance, Treasury and Planning have been preoccupied with things that they should not necessary be doing. They have been too hands-on in terms of implementation and what that means is that, the other functions that they should be performing like monitoring, evaluation and reporting back, keeping statistics up to date have been neglected. So this is an issue that is obvious and apparent and we have been working very hard on to rectify.

The relevant agency in terms of statistics, particularly macro statistics is the National Statistics Office. You will have noted that since our Government came in, we started on a very important statistic or data base for the national population census that is supposed to happen every 10 years. It was supposed to be completed by 2010 but was outstanding.

Our Government in the first instance checked that particular issue and you will have noted that after allocation even more money, which is yet another concern as to how much this particular activity costs, we have finally completed the census information after 2011. The final figure are being published and made public.

Mr Speaker, despite that, there are still some ongoing efforts to complete that. You will also notice that we have managed to complete the household income and expenditure report that was outstanding as well. This is in relation to the income and expenditure and consumption patterns of our household which is very important in terms of determining the Consumer Price Index (CPI) information. This is another important macro statistics that the Member alluded to which is completely out of date.

So upon completing that particular report and finalising the figures up to 2010, we are now able to adjust the basis of the calculation of the CPI to better reflect the current expenditure

patterns of our household, and therefore, better reflect exactly what is happening with the inflation. This is because the spending patterns have changed greatly over the years and things like flex cards have come to us and education fees are now free and so on.

Mr Speaker, so what is going to happen is that at the end of this month, I will be launching the new CPI bracket and the first quarter CPI inflation figures of 2014 will be based on that new information. So the inflation figures that National Statistics Office (NSO) produces will be brought up to date for the first time after a long time.

Mr Speaker, in relation to another important statistics from the NSO that is out of date is the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is based on an annual business survey.

03/06

It is also well and truly out dated and this has come down to a lack of funding to the NSO. That is why we are now facing this issue. There is funding provided by our Government through Treasury to conduct that survey and bring the statistics up to date.

Mr Speaker, as we speak, I am trying to get that funding given over to NSO so that they can get onto updating together along with the business survey so that we can get an accurate estimate of GDP, which is of course the basis of many of our important statistics.

Mr Speaker, Parliament will also note that there have been some structural changes at the NSO, including the replacement of the head of the NSO, we now have a new National Statistician in place, whilst the process goes through the Public Service to find a duly qualified person, to take charge of this very important office.

The Treasury Minister and I have signed a submission that will come before Cabinet in accepting assistance that is being offered by the IMF, to come in and conduct a review on the National Statistical Office and provide some funding expertise in that regard, so very importantly, we will subject that institution to some independent international analysis, to say what is required in terms of capacity and funding, to resource the NSO and get it up to date.

Mr Speaker, I will just touch on quickly on our effort in relation to the national ID program; in relation to improving statistics. We have undertaken a very ambitious task of introducing a national identification register that will be the basis for the collection of data, from

our population. Hopefully, we have a real time and live information collection system that will be integrated and sit on the back of the integrated government information system, fed into a national data base and be able to assist us with things like the election common roll and census.

Tomorrow, I should be able to table the legislation in relation to the amendment to the *Civil Registry Act*, to introduce the new program into the legal framework, otherwise continuing the very important task of rolling out that particular project. I acknowledge that these issues are not only related to NSO but the Department of National Planning and monitoring as well and we are trying very hard to bring back focus.

We will soon introduce that policy in relation to the monitoring system. As we have described before in relation to the budget and the public investment program that governs the development budget, we have been saying that we need to get back to the basic principles and respect public investment processes which very much involves political fashion, and the critical part of that is the monitoring and responding to the monitoring system.

So we are always guiding and improving our systems, particularly the NSO, civil registry, which I will explain tomorrow. The civil registry itself will be combined with NSO to create a National Bureau of Statistics, under the Department of National Planning and Monitoring, to give it that eminence and place it under a central agency.

Mr Speaker, we will get the IMF to review it, fund it and get on with producing timely census, of TPI statistics, PDP and all other related statistics that our government needs, in order to have a properly informed public investment process, development budget and all other activities of the government.

Mr Speaker, just to summarise, this is the way that we are going and without dragging it too long, I hope I've answered the questions.

Supplementary Question

Mr SAM BASIL –Thank you Mr Speaker, just to help the Minister out, I want to point out some things. When I was the Minister from 2011 – 2012, especially during the last 12 months of my time in office, we embarked on a system where we thought and still think that the

ward councillors are the best data collectors for Papua New Guinea, compared to other people that we engage.

It takes millions of kina to do one-off data collection and then wait for many years.

04/06

Mr Speaker, during that time, we arranged with the NSO office to create a ward recording book that will be lasting for 12 months. It will be retained and attached with the K500 000 LLG SIP money that is going to every LLG. If they don't fill that and don't bring that back to the NSO office, they won't be eligible for funding. We have to hold them at ransom to produce the results for us.

Mr Speaker, we have spent some money from the National Planning Department to ensure that this rollout program comes out because the record book will record the number of trade stores, coffee tress, nearest airstrip, deaths and births and the list goes on and it is good for data collection.

Can the Minister explain if that program has been shelved? If so, are there any other better ways of collecting data at the ward level?

Mr CHARLES ABLE - I thank the Member for Bulolo for that important question and for reminding us of the ward recorder. Yes, indeed, the ward recorder is the person on the ground and in the front line.

Mr Speaker, the ward recorders are very much involved in this process of reform in data collection and statistics, particularly the national ID system. He is the person we will be relying on at that level to organise all the information at that point.

Mr Speaker, that ward recorder and his functions that the Member for Bulolo started in his capacity as National Planning Minister at that time is a very good idea and I will just seek further information on its status. It will play an important part in this new review of the system.

Mr ROBERT GANIM - Mr Speaker, I direct my questions to the Minister for Correctional Services.

Mr Speaker, it was reported in the media last week that 20 prisoners escaped from Baisu. The 20 dangerous prisoners are all from Enga Province.

Mr Speaker, leaders of the Enga province along with their law enforcement agencies work very hard to find these criminals and lock them up in Baisu jail.

Mr Speaker, every time we seem to hear of prisoners escaping in this country.

My people have asked why this mass breakout occurred in Baisu Jail?

(1) Can the Minister explain how this breakout happened in Baisu Jail?

Mr Speaker, we have a jail in Enga but it has almost taken over 10 years to complete the prison facility.

(2) Does the Minister and his department have any plans to complete the unfinished jail in Enga Province?

(3) Can the Minister for Correctional Services give some kind of assurance to this country that there will be no more jail breakouts?

It seems that this is a monthly exercise and the Department of Correctional Services is keeping very quiet. They are overworking our police officers.

Mr JIM SIMATAB – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Wabag for those three important questions.

Let me inform the Parliament that on 7 May, there was a breakout at the Baisu Jail and that all those that broke out are all remandees who are awaiting Court proceedings against them.

05/06

I would like to say here that this is not a prison and that people held there are remandees. They are remandees because they are waiting for their court hearings.

Apart from that, this country only recently had been experiencing power blackouts. During one such power blackout the prison's standby generator was activated. And the noise that the standby generator makes when it is in operation is very loud. During the blackout and under the cover of the noise produced by the generator the remandees escaped. About 20 remandees escaped by cutting the prison fence wire with a hacksaw.

I would like to also remind the Parliament regarding the many issues due to jail breakouts. Especially, in the Highlands Region you will find that most of the breakouts are caused by remandees. For example, if we had 60 breakouts then 50 of them would be remandees.

The reason for these breakouts is that, some of these remandees have been in custody for too long. Our law states that remandees can be held in custody no more than 6 months before their go to Court. Nevertheless, sometimes the reason for this is that, their files may not be ready, findings from the police investigation are not ready or because judges do not visit their Court circuits. These are some of the things that contribute to remandees being remanded from 3 to 5 years. In some cases that I also know of, files pertaining to remandees have been lost. These are contributing factors that result in the large number of breakouts involving remandees.

Apart from that, remandees are not the responsibility of the Correctional Service. The Correctional Service is only responsible for the convicted that are jailed. Remandees are the responsibility of the Police. The Police themselves do not have enough space in their cells to keep remandees to wait for court decisions so they send them to the Correctional Service to cater for them until they are called to court.

Mr Charlie Benjamin – Point of Order! Can the Minister answer the question directly and state whether the remandees can be let free or not?

Mr SPEAKER – Your point of order is out of order. This is a different question altogether that you are raising. Minister, can you get straight to the point and answer the question?

Mr JIM SIMATAB – Mr Speaker, I was just trying to inform Parliament that in the past four or five breakouts the majority of those escapees were remandees. Also, our Correctional Services facilities were built during the colonial times and that we still do not have any new infrastructures put in place.

With that, I am happy to say that we are seeking approval from NEC for K2.5 million to carry out a review of all our jails and system throughout the country. Hopefully, by the end of the year we should come up with a complete 10 year plan. We are trying to work together with all

the other law enforcing agencies and the Law and Justice sector to also modernise our correctional institutions.

06/06

Yes, I have made an undertaking in relation to the question raised in Parliament last Sitting. We will have a meeting with the Governor of Enga, the provincial administrator and the Member for Wabag. It's been an ongoing issue and we do understand that there are facilities there but they do not comply with the requirements of the Correctional Service. We have to sort out a way forward to have a permanent jail built in Enga.

On the question on assurance, that there will be no more jail breakouts. I want to inform this House that we are dealing with human beings and I cannot assure this House and the nation that there will not be another break out. The inmates in the prison cells today are well educated and sophisticated than those of the past. Who knows what goes on behind those prison walls? We will never know what they are planning when they are in prison. I cannot guarantee the Government and the Member that there won't be another jail breakout.

Mr CHARLIE BENJAMIN – I would like to direct my question to the Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding Lombrum Naval Base.

Before I do so, I want to clarify the matter. If you travel to Lombrum today, you will notice that the Base is now being guarded by a security firm other than the Defence Force. There used to be only one camp in that Base but recently there has been some developments to construct probably another camp at the heart of the base.

I have also heard that another detention centre will be built in Lombrum. I noticed that all the potential land in that Base have been taken up by the Australians. When the agreement was made in Manus regarding the detention centre, Lombrum was supposed to be a temporary settlement. What is the Minister's understanding of the word temporary, when Manus has offered to provide other potential sites to build more bases? The work carried out in Lorengau is stagnant. and the PNG Defence Force officers are no longer actively participating like they used to, I see that their moral has dropped.

My questions are;

(1) Is the Government planning to transform the Lombrum Naval Base into a permanent Detention Centre?

If that is the case then I will be pleased because so far I have seen that the moral of our Defence Force Officers in Manus has really dropped.

(2) Is the Australian Government trying to set up a Navy base at the Lombrum Naval base and if that is true, can you clarify so that the people of Papua New Guinea will know?

07/06

Mr RIMBINK PATO – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Governor of Manus for this question.

Now let me make it very clear to this honourable House and to the people of Papua New Guinea that it is not the intention of the National Government to make Lombrum Naval Base as the permanent facility centre for asylum seekers.

The intention of the PNG Government which is also the intention of the Australian Government as I've explained in recent meetings when the Australian Foreign Minister and the Minister for Immigration and Border Security were here last week that there will be the building of a permanent centre on a location that the Governor of Manus is fully aware of. I think he has been briefed on the details of it by myself to some extent and the Australian High Commission to a greater extent.

The situation at Lombrum Naval Base is that it is a classified security area for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and it is not the intent of our Government to replace it as a permanent processing centre for asylum seekers.

But it has so happened, and I've asked for a full briefing on this from my department, why the officers in the PNG Defence Force agreed to some declassification of what was supposed to be a centre exclusively for the PNG Defence Force and the requirements of the Defence Force on Manus Island. So the investigation report and the briefing has not come to me in detail as yet, but when it does, I can sit down with the Governor of Manus and explain to him what the status is.

So in summary, there is no intention to make Lombrum Naval Base a permanent facility and there is no intention to set up a new Defence Force Base at Manus other than the existing facility at Lombrum Naval Base.

Mr MARK MAIPAKAI – Can the foreign Minister deny or confirm that in the event that there is no third country found for these asylum seekers, the Papua New Guinea Government has made a commitment to accept those people as citizens in this country.

In the event those asylum seekers accept citizenship, the Australian Government will fund their stay in this country. Can you deny or confirm that?

Mr RIMBINK PATO – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the Member for Kikori for these two important questions.

Firstly, under the arrangement with the Australian Government, the position is that, we will settle or resettle all of the asylum seekers if they are found to be genuine refugees. Those who are not determined as genuine refugees will be sent to their countries of origin.

In relation to those that are found to be genuine refugees but do not intend to settle in PNG then that is a matter for the Australian Government.

The agreement is that, in relation to those that do not want to settle in PNG as well as those that do settle, all of the expenses and costs associated with the resettlement in relation to accommodation, education, and employment are the responsibility of the Australian Government. So the Australian Government will pay.

08/06

Mr Speaker, the position under the agreement is that, the agreement is subject to review after every 12 months and it has been extended after the expiration of first 12 months. It is an on-going exercise and the Australian Government has approved 1.2 billion dollars for it for the Asylum Seekers on Manus Island. However, it does not stop there since there are other fundings from other areas under the AusAID, which is for the Manus Island.

Mr Mark Maipakai – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, the Australian Government has funded this project for the people who are prepared to stay in this country.

Mr RIMBINK PATO – Mr Speaker, I have clearly explained that there is funding of K1.2 billion dollars for this project for Asylum Seekers' facilities on Manus Island in relation to the on-going issues of resettlement, education, health, employment, accommodation and all works, et cetera. The deal of cost and expense of resettlement of Asylum Seekers are met once they comply with processes set by the *PNG Migration Acts* or *the United Nations Conventions* in relation to the Refuge and other Principal of International Law and the cost will be met by the Australian Government.

Mr Speaker, the issue for those types of case that arise has not come about, yet, at this point in time, we are developing the facilities, and the cost of services we are developing has been addressed so once we make those determinations, which are likely to take place in June or July this year and after the Cabinet has made the decision on the policy framework, perhaps the Member can ask that question so I can provide detail answer.

Mr JOE SUNGI – Mr Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion.

Mr Speaker, as we rise this morning, today is a very important day for Papua New Guinea because the first shipment of LNG left the shores of PNG.

We can go on and do other things but I want the Minister to inform this Parliament and the people of PNG, whether there is a program that can mobilise the Ecumenical Council of Churches to publicly acknowledge God and say thank you to God for giving a blessing of so many resources in this country, while other countries do not have the resources in abundance! We all know that they are not put in the land by mistake through our ancestors. In fact, we believe that God by his divine plan has created all the resources on our land and we have witnessed the first ever LNG shipment of Gas out of the country today.

Do you have any plans to publicly call the Ecumenical Council of Churches to say thank you to God for these resources in the country?

Mr Speaker, I believe we should thank God for such resources he has given us, so we must acknowledge him publicly so that our gas and other resources will be fruitful and we will harvest in abundance into the future. In addition, we will also set a better foundation for the future generations for the, benefits to flow. Furthermore, the good lord will guide us in the right way to share the benefits for the common good, right purpose and for all the people of this nation. With the help and guidance from God we may avoid problems and corruptions, so I the Minister to seek funding from the Cabinet to host a public thanksgiving honour to God.

Ms LOUJAYA KOUZA – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Nuku for his very important question.

09/06

Mr Speaker, the Cabinet has approved a Covenant Day, a Thanksgiving and Repentance Day and that is on the 26, August.

So if we were to organize a co-operate day of thanksgiving, my department will have to liaise with the Prime Minister's Department for such a program. It will have to come through an NEC submission. I thank you for asking that question and we will take it up with the Prime Minister's Department.

Mr RONNY KNIGHT – Mr Speaker, logging is taking place in Eniara / Lesawera areas in Manus. I believe it is operating now. Mr Speaker, the clan called the Wasu Land Group is a registered group. The Clan, incorporated and registered under the Lands Department has given no permission -

Mr SPEAKER – Who is your question directed to?

Mr RONNY KNIGHT – My questions are directed to the Minister for Forests, for the logging deposits. They own the land and the resources in that area.

Mr Speaker, it is extremely irritating that the companies of Malaysian origin who are the same operators who have logged over a third of the west coast areas without fulfilling their commitments years ago are again taking our children's inheritance.

After 25 years west coast Manus has nothing to show for logging as well as the associated deals in agreement. The operation has began without the consent of the landowners.

Mr Speaker, I have letters here from the major clans and sub-clans demanding immediate halt to the highly illegal operation, which I will hand over to the Minister.

Mr Speaker, the run-off damages have killed the coastal reef and impacted fishing in a substantial level around that area.

My questions are:

(1) Has this company lodged a complete operational plan inclusive of an environmental plan?

(2) Do they have proper permit and license for this operation, and if so, how did they bypass the local government and the two provincial MPs.

(3) Is there not a ministerial decision endorsed by NEC to ban logging and adapt downstream processing, and if so, when will it take place?

(4) Can the Minister immediately stop this illegal operation and impede the equipment and investigate immediately the allegations made by the landowners?

Mr Speaker, this issue has already caused us to lose a life and we do not want to repeat the same incident. This people are greedily raping our forests. They should not touch our virgin forest because we are just an island and do not wish to destroy our forests.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Firstly, I would like to thank the Vice Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry and Member for Manus Open for his questions.

I sympathize with the Wasu Clan and the good people of Manus province on the recent incident.

Mr Speaker, the investors coming into the country must respect our people and the laws of the land. If you are operating within the forests industry, you must also respect the laws that are governing the forests industry.

(Members applauding)

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, there is a protest that the landowners must have full control of their land. After this, it will come to the Provincial Forest Management Authority.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Minister, the Chair will only allow you to respond to the four questions. Maybe later, you can prepare your Ministerial statement and present it to Parliament.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am actually answering the questions, if I am given the opportunity.

Mr SPEAKER – You should concentrate only on the scope of the specific questions.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, let me conclude by getting to the bottom of the problem in Manus.

Mr Speaker, my ministry of Forest also has some problems of its own like any other departments. We need funding and at the moment, many of our officers like other departments do not have accommodation and some of these logging operators are accommodating them and providing them vehicles, so how do you expect them to do proper investigations if they are living under such circumstances and being compromised.

Some of these are national issues and we need to handle them diligently, and that in the future and hopefully whilst I am still the Minister, we make certain the benefits trickle down to our people.

(Members applauding)

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – I want to say that the tax revenue from the forestry to the national purse amounts to about K200 million to K250 million annually but I see that the forest industry –

Investigations are currently underway and we will be directing to put a stop work on the logging activity so that we can ascertain why this incident occurred.

Mr Speaker, there is a lot of illegal logging activities going on around the country, and I cannot deny that. These activities involve some big operators in the country.

10/06

I have been in the Gulf for six weeks, and I want to ask people of Papua New, Guinea, landowner groups and the Members of Parliament to please, be patient with me, we are getting there. Give us time.

Mr Speaker, I want to inform the Parliament that there are processes in place and if some operators breach these processes, we will re-visit their agreements. One thing that the logging industry has missed out in this country is their community obligation to the people. We will make certain that we get down to the bottom and ensure that they meet their community obligations. Our investigations will not only cover the companies in Manus Island but it will cover the entire country.

Mr Speaker, I want to further say that we will not renew any more FMA, FTA or timber permits. We will comply with the NEC direction which states that following Cabinet endorsement to the Minister for Forest in September 2009 which announced the government policy to gradually phase out round logging export and increase domestic processing. In line with this policy, new park management areas or timber concessions will be allocated to support downstream processing with no round log export entitlements. The new timber concession holder will enter into negotiation with the State to phase out round log exports and also domestic timber processing will be promoted vigorously as part of our 2010-2030 Strategic Development Plan. With this initiative, we will be promoting sustainable development in the country.

I can recall one time when the Minister for National Planning, Honourable Charles Abel invited me to attend a program in Alotau on the National Development Strategies. I did speak during this time and said that we will achieve our plans. Whilst I am given the opportunity to be the Minister for Forest, I want to inform Parliament that I will not renew any FMAs, FTAs or timber permits until negotiations are complete.

Mr Jim Kas – Point of Order! You are simply not answering the question.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, you should address your Point of Order to the Chair.

Mr Jim Kas – Mr Speaker, I directed my Point of Order to the Chair.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Minister you need o keep your answers short.

Mr Jim Kas – Mr Speaker, I apologise for not raising my Point of Order through the Chair.

11/06

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA - Member for Manus, let me make use of this minute, through the Chair, we will make certain that we investigate the situation that occurred in Manus. I will be giving a letter to the Member for Manus to be certain that we have addressed all the issues that are highlighted in his letter to me.

**DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RELIGION –
2013 ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT – PAPER AND STATEMENT-
PAPER NOTED**

Ms LOUJAYA KOUZA (Lae –Minister for Community Development and Religion)–I present the following paper pursuant to statute the 2013 Annual Management Report.

I ask leave of the Parliament to make a statement in connection with the report.

Leave granted.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to present to this Parliament the 2013 Annual Management Report for my ministry and department.

My ministry does not only look after my department for Community Development and Religion but three other important statutory authorities; include the National Youth Commission, the PNG Office of Censorship and the National Volunteer Service. It has become conspicuous, not only locally but at the global scene, that in the pursuit of achieving developmental goals, much focus has been centred on the economic aspects of development, and for years it has perpetuated until the late 1990s.

What has evidently become as a result of the trend was and is that, multifaceted social problems have compounded tripled and even quadrupled. We are then posed with the fundamental questions of what are economic problems and what social problems there are.

Further questions are then asked to draw a fine line to differentiate between economic and social developments.

Mr Speaker, this honorable House needs to be informed that there are clear cut, succinct and explicit definitions for the two terms of economic development and social development and they are both interwoven. Therefore, when we speak of one, we must always be intellectually vigilant and think of the implications and effects they have on each other. The quantifiable effects and the non-quantifiable effects they have on each other must always be accounted in our development strategies.

I had to get my introduction correct as my ministry is normally referred to as a social sector agency where we deal with contemporary problems of our marginalized groups, such as women, gender, disabled, elderly, youth, children, and the ramifications, brought to through the introduction of mass media, information technology pertaining to censorship.

To address our social problems, the pillars have to be set correctly. As for the Ministry, we have reasserted our focus correctly to have the conviction to say, we want to and endeavour to protect those who are vulnerable.

12/06

We have reasserted our focus correctly to have the conviction endeavor to protect those who are vulnerable and marginalised in our villages, provinces and more so the nation.

The foundation of the pillars I alluded to a while ago was given prominence when this current Government was formed in Alotau.\

Mr Speaker, the three priority areas for my ministry and department remain;

- (1) The National Social Protection Policy;
- (2) The National ID Card system; and
- (3) The Establishment of the Office of Religion.

On the National Social Protection Policy we have already set up several working committees comprising of people from various sectors including development partners to work on the scoping so that the boundaries and parameters of how the policy will be translated into programs are correctly defined and articulated clearly. We envisage to have the policy formulated shortly which will subsequently be endorsed by the NEC so that we can start piloting the ensuring program by the end of 2014.

Mr Speaker, the programs will be aimed at providing pensions for people with disability and the elderly people in the communities.\

Mr Speaker, with the National Identification Card System, draft policy was already endorsed by the National Executive Council last year that also included draft, revised or amended *National Civil Registry Act of 1963*. Since then, the Civil Registry Office was relocated to the National Planning and Monitoring Department, and I believe my colleague Minister, Honourable Charles Abel, Minister for National Planning and Monitoring, will be dwelling on that in his ministerial statement.

Despite the transferal of function, the administrative transfer of powers hasn't taken effect yet. It still remains in my department. Until such time that happens, my colleague Minister and I shall continue to cooperate to getting this important project to materialise eventually, as the basic outcome is about giving a sense of real identity to all our citizens of this country.

Mr Speaker, the last priority area for my ministry and the Department as per the Alotau Accord is the fostering and promotion of Religion. Churches have been very pivotal in our development crusade. The values they promote must be equally recognised. The resilient and strenuous efforts they have invested must be clearly valued and given prominence.

Mr Speaker, in order to foster a better understanding and working relationship, the end objective is to create an office to be known as the Office of Religion or Religious Affairs.

My department has already established an interim secretariat. Four regional and one national consultation were already held.

A detailed brief will be sent to the NEC shortly to include important aspects such as the organizational establishment for the Office of Religion.

Mr Speaker, from a bird's point of view, I am very pleased to report to this Parliament that my department in less than two years has contributed and implemented a total of 16 NEC decisions.

The Departments Annual Report for 2013 dwells further on these specifics. Whilst I speak, the report is now before the NEC to assess, evaluate and recommend for further necessary actions to be undertaken.

Mr Speaker, some of the notable achievements apart from the three priority areas are:

(1) On 26 September, 2013, our Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in New York.

(2) The old PNG National Disability Policy has been reviewed and an NEC submission with the revised policy is now before NEC for endorsement.

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The revised policy is now before NEC for endorsement.

(3) National Council of Women draft Bills successfully tabled in November 2013 and were passed, thanks to this honourable Parliament.

(4) And last but not the least, the ongoing dialogue and partnerships between other government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, development partners such as the Australian Government, UNICEF, UNDP and the European Union (EU) are still ongoing.

Mr Speaker, and honourable Members, I would like to state here unequivocally and in no uncertain terms that my Ministry and Department is an organically evolving government institution that maintains its core values and aspirations over the years despite its relegation as a low profile entity over the years. It was even made harder to promote the values that we stand to fight for with the lack of financial support and meager support given by consecutive governments.

Mr Speaker, since I assumed the leadership of Minister, and with a good management team headed by the acting secretary, I can now amply put on record that we have managed ourselves with a fixed budget and even produced some good returns for people in our communities throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, money is not everything. This is not to say that we have not had our share of problems. We do face many hardships because with a 30 percent cut in the Recurring Budget, for instance in 2014, the Department had to strategise its efforts in three priority projects while maintaining vital services in terms of civil registration and child welfare.

As the saying goes, 'where there is a will opportunities will arise', so, it is from this point of standing that we still persevere.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, it is within the framework of this spirit that I thank my Department's staff, while also acknowledging the mammoth contributions from our development partners and stakeholders at the national, provincial, local and community levels for journeying with us to ensure that our common and shared values shall prevail and prosper yet.

Lastly, and not the least, I thank you, Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister and all the Members of this honourable Parliament for the support that you all have given to my Ministry to be able to pass important legislations. And I hope your support will continue.

Thank you.

Mr SAM BASIL (Bulolo) – I ask leave of the Parliament to ask the Chair a few questions to clarify a few issues regarding this report.

Leave granted.

This Parliament belongs to all the Members of Parliament that were elected during the National Elections where we all represent the 111 seats today.

Mr Speaker, when Ministers provide statements of such, in reference to an Accord such as the Alotau Accord, some of us here are not privy to that Accord.

Can I ask the Minister to make the Accord available to some of us so that we can cross check and make reference to the Minister's presentation? We are not privy to that Accord and it

can affect the government policy. We as legislators and as Members of Parliament here have the right to have access to that Accord.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER – I will ask the Minister to make a specific answer to that before we get on with the debate.

Ms LOUJAYA KOUZA – This is certainly a very important consideration and one that we will bring up with the Leader of Government Business. So, that it is government business that all of us are privy to.

Thank you.

Mr PUKA TEMU (Abau- Minister for Public Service) – I move –
That Parliament take note of the Paper.

Mr Speaker, firstly, let me congratulate the honourable Loujaya Kouza, Minister for Religion, Youth and Community Development for presenting her Department's 2013 Annual Management Report.

As Minister for Public Service –

Mr Bob Dadae – Point of Order! I apologise for the interruption but for us to participate in this debate for the important report that the Minister has presented, all of us need to have access to the report.

Mr SPEAKER – I believe that the Report has been circulated.

Mr Bob Dadae – I do not have it here.

Mr SPEAKER – Okay, that will be made available to you. Minister you may continue.

Mr PUKA TEMU – as I was saying, as Minister for Public Service, I wish to congratulate the honourable Minister and her departmental head and the Acting Secretary for bringing last year's annual management report to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, on very few occasions do we hear about last year's annual management report.

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This is for 2013 and under the policy provision each department through the Minister should report to Parliament every month of the year after. Congratulations to the Minister and the hard working Acting Secretary, Ms Anna Solomon, for providing the Parliament with a very up-to-date report of the work that has been done. I wish to reiterate that the ministry that the honourable Minister Loujaya Kouza is leading is the largest ministry in this country and the work that she has to undertake is more than the Public Service Ministry. This is because her ministry covers all the communities and many laws, the youth and women and it's an enormous work. I take my hat off to the Minister for the dedication, focus and the much strategising that she has brought to this important ministry. This ministry was a lower level ministry but this has changed through the Ministers leadership.

One of the important pillars that the Minister and her department delivered is social protection which is so critical in our country.

Mr Speaker, in many of the rural villages, the face of the government is not there, it is the churches and the communities working together. It's usually the pastors and their wives providing the leadership skills in the communities and they are multi-skilled officers on the ground. When a person is sick, or there is a conflict, or a disabled family, it is the churches that go and visit them. I am happy that under the Ministers leadership, the establishment of an office for religion is being organised.

We all know that church partnership with the Government is the key and if the church had not contributed to our country, we would not be where we are today. We thank the churches for taking the task head on, especially in those areas where there is no government presence. I am happy that Government has strategically partnered with the churches to provide essential services.

There is a lot of debate, for example in this morning's Question Time, whether we should not request churches to organise a thanksgiving day for the God-blessed gas that is leaving our country today. We all will acknowledge that we have a strong focal point for our churches to interface with the Government. The State will not take over the Church. That separation must always be maintained. The State must not interfere with the churches overall activities.

After all I always say, God does not need us, we need God. God will always remain as he is, all knowing and powerful. He's agency is the church and we must work with them. The religion office is very important, and with the God-blessed economic growth of our country, I believe this office will be very critical in the direction that we will go under the Vision 2050 and other policies that the Government has introduced.

15/06

One of the pillars that the Minister's statement focused on is the social security. It is a big one. I am very happy that the Minister is also focusing on addressing this enormous issue. We look at, for example communities that are not moving into the formal economy.

Whilst the wealth is being generated at the national level how can our little people down benefit and also generate wealth themselves? With the health services expanding, how do we ensure that there are safety nets provided in both health and education? I think one of the big issues that we really have to address is the User Fee Free primary health care policy which, I am glad that the Prime Minister is providing leadership on.

But the bigger area is when the people need, for example, high cost specialist health care, should we be allowing our people to pay out of their pockets and therefore the little income that they have is being used for health cost only, or should we look at spreading a safety net so that we prevent our people from footing the bill out of their pockets and that needs to be used for other purposes as well?

To me that is a very important social welfare and social protection direction that we really need to move into. Many times we focus on the production sector like agriculture, mining, gas, forestry and our excuse is that these are social related and community related issues. We need to move away from that concept because investment in the communities; welfare,

investment are advancing our little people and supporting the youths and churches and it is, in fact, a very wise investment. This also applies to education and health as well.

In supporting the Minister, I would want us to recognize the importance of the Ministry. As an individual, last year I was fighting for when the structure for the DSIP came in, we only catered for health, education, law and order, infrastructure and economic priorities. But I was also fighting for an item called 'community development'. And I am very happy that the Minister for Planning, in the new guidelines that are coming has allowed for a specific item for community development because out in the electorate, out of the K10 million, we as open Members or Governors need to give some support to all the community development activities that we are in charge of.

And that is recognized in the Minister's Ministry as a very important ministry as we are dealing with human beings. I am very happy that the institutional structures that we are now putting up, we are able to say we have partnerships with the churches, as well. They will support the young people, they will look at the disabled, buy their wheel chairs or have literacy training programmes and even organizing young people in music, sports or all those other things.

Mr Speaker these are very important things, they are building blocks, right at the foundation of our State. When these building blocks are constructed the State will stand strong. No matter what happens at the top level, we have already built the base. And that base is what this honourable Minister is leading.

And I am very happy that she has outdone all the department and ministries in that last year's annual management report is being tabled now. Well done, honourable Minister, and congratulations to your hardworking acting secretary.

16/06

I am aware of the difficulties that the ministry and the Department went through last year including relocating the office plus internal fights between the ousted departmental head and the acting departmental head. In spite of all that, the Minister has now brought the report and I appeal to all the Ministers and departments to take the cue from the honourable Minister and inform Parliament what we are doing in our various ministries.

Mr BOB DADAE (Kabwum) – Mr Speaker, I also rise to congratulate the Minister for presenting a very good statement. Whilst the copies of the Ministerial Statement are distributed to all the Members of Parliament, may I say that this ministry is not adequately funded. It is a matter that is to be raised to the attention of the Minister for Planning and relevant line Ministers who make decisions on funding.

Mr Speaker, I support the sentiments raised by the Minister for Public Service about the importance of this particular ministry.

To gain good recognition and to enable that department to effectively participate and promote all the activities that are represented in this country, I would recommend that if the National Government, may be through the Minister herself, should add one more sector on top of the five sectors that we get funding for DSIP like infrastructure, education, health, transport and et cetera.

Mr Speaker, this important sector needs to be specifically recognised. We need to have some funding directly allocated for youth, women, churches, disabilities and the disadvantage minorities in this nation. We should add this particular sector on top of the money that we getting now for the five sectors so that, we can sufficiently fund those areas in respectively electorates.

Mr Speaker, in Kabwum District, I had set aside some money from my DISP to help the Churches, but the late Chief Ombudsmen stopped from using that money for Church's purpose because he told me that the policy does not directly support Church.

I think it is about time that the work of the Churches has been recognised and that the funding must be allocated separately aside to assist the work of the Churches in our districts. We are all related in one way or another through Churches regardless of denominations, the Churches do lot of work for this country.

Mr Speaker, the law and order issue is not a big problem because of the presence of the activities of the Churches such as the spiritual enrichment of our people. For this reason, this Government must recognise the work of the churches and under the Church-Government Partnership arrangement, we had to demonstrate in terms of allocating money directly support the work of the churches, youth, sports and women in this nation.

I want to suggest to the Minister, if possible, she can submit her submission for the Cabinet's approval so that in the 2015 Budget, there must be six sectors created for the money to be allocated directly to the sectors thus we can use the money in our electorates.

17/06

Mrs JULIE SOSO (Governor of Eastern Highlands) – I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Minister for Community Development for presenting this Report. This is a very important ministry as the ministry is directly dealing with the human resources of Papua New Guinea. About 70 per cent of our people live in the rural communities. However, this ministry does not have sufficient funds to assist the 70 per cent of our people at the community level.

Time and time again, government after government, we have not recognized the need to inject enough funds towards community development ministry.

Mr Speaker, the community development ministry is the ministry that reaches out to the people at the community level, to the community leaders, the LLGs and the ward councilors. As stipulated under the Organic Law, we must have a ward development committee.

Mr Speaker, I am currently putting aside savings to support the LLG Ward Councilors in my electorate. I believe that when the ward development committee is finally established, they will work together with our people to do mapping and prioritise the project needs of the respective communities.

These ward development committees can then reach out to the provincial governor or the Open Members to fund the priority projects in respective wards and LLGs. Only through such arrangements our people at the village levels can realize such services because our people have waited for too long to realise the government services.

On the *EM TV* news last night, some people from Morobe Province expressed their concerns about services because they have waited for too long. Mr Speaker, many of our remote areas are still awaiting to receive these most needed services which are supposed to be provided by the Government.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that the Ministry of Community Development must receive more funding. In terms of the PSIP and the DSIP, we have been allocating 10 per cent to the Economic

Sector and another 10 per cent to the Law and Order Sector, however, we should allocate another 10 per cent to a sector like the Community Development so that this sector can reach out to our wards. We should already have a ward development committee in place so that we know what type of service is most needed.

Mr Speaker, the National Council of Women has placed in a special measure. This particular Bill went through the first reading stage and the second reading stage. It did not go through the third reading stage because the Parliament went into National General Election. However, when the new government came into office, it did not push for this special measure which is the 22 seats for women in parliament to go through the third reading stage.

Mr Speaker, if this is not to be entertained, I suggest we give the women a space because if we, the current three female Members, do not make it back in the next election who will speak on our behalf?

Mr Speaker, I urge the Minister to reconsider this because politics is volatile. We cannot be given the mandate yet. What guarantee do we have that other women folks out there can enter the Parliament to represent our views? I think it is 50 per cent because you men are marrying more than one wife and do not care about a woman's wellbeing.

Women have their own issues like the health issues. Many mothers have died during child birth. Men only know how to make babies but you are not so much concerned about the wellbeing of mothers at childbirth. Because of this, Papua New Guinea's childbirth mortality rate has increased. This is why the Community Development Ministry is very important.

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And that is why Papua New Guinea's maternal mortality rate is very high. This is where Community Development, a very important department, should integrate its program with departments of Health and Education and work together with the councilors and their committees at the rural areas and train people on basic things like midwifery and village birth attendance.

If the O'Neill-Dion Government cannot entertain the Women's 22 Reserve Seats in Parliament then why not look at appointees from the four regions? Otherwise, take on board the proposition made by Sir Julius Chan, review it and allow women to also make decisions at the

provincial government level. The provincial governors can be elected but why not legislate to allow only women to contest the provincial deputy governors under the Organic Law?

These are some of my suggestions that I want to share in this debate. The Government must seriously look at the National Council of Women and fund them adequately. There are 22 National Council of Women and below them, there are 89 women council representatives in the districts and further below, we have about 6 000 ward women's council association, but they are not adequately funded. Therefore, we should look at properly funding them to look after the women in the country.

We also need to properly establish the National Youth Council so they can in turn establish the Provincial Youth Council and they look after districts and ward youths as well.

In terms of church, I am giving my tithes out of my provincial internal revenue in Eastern Highlands. I am working together with the churches and last year, I allocated K1.7 million and this year, I allocated another K2 million.

When the honourable Member for Nuku asked a question to the Minister, if he could appoint a day to celebrate the first shipment of liquefied gas from our LNG Project, I wanted to put up my hand again. Last year, I hosted the August 26 Covenant Day celebration and I invited 111 members to attend. I am prepared again to invite all the Members of Parliament to celebrate this day with the church and my people to appreciate all the abundant resources in our country.

Mr JOSEPH LELANG (Kandrian-Gloucester) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I want to join my colleagues to congratulate the Minister and her Department Secretary and the management for bringing this report to Parliament for our information.

Mr Speaker, when the honourable Minister was presenting the report, a few words came out from that report and first one is; '*what core values do we stand for?*' The second thing that I noted from the report is that her department is an evolving government institution. So these are the two key words that I would like to spend a bit of time to talk about some of the pressing issues that is facing this country.

My Speaker, the other key word that her department is also dealing with and I think similarly by other central agencies is the cross-cutting issues. The other departments are also dealing with these issues. The two things that I would like to point out is that one of the rising

contemporary issues and challenges that our people face now is the increasing number of teenage pregnancies which also leads to rising number of single young mothers.

Mr Speaker, these are serious issues that our country is now facing, and I think that her department, as an evolving institution, should look at that and try to see how they can fit in because they involve many of our youths.

19/06

Many of our youth in particular are going through that issue and it affects the very core of our values and issues that we are supposed to stand for.

One of the problems that I have seen is in the school system. We create grade 1-12 in the same school in the same perimeter. In the days when we went to school we had grade 1-10 in the same area and at that time we were innocent people. Girls and boys had separate schools or co-ed but in grade 11 and 12, you are a young adult who matures in thought and when you have this in the same school with grade 7-10 girls.

These are the kinds of problems that we will be facing. The bigger boys are preying on these young grade 7-10 girls, this is the kind of problems that we are having in this country, and I know the Minister is very capable and she can have an audience here with other colleagues and look at this as a matter of policy and urgency, so that we separate the grade 11-12 from the smaller grades and move so that we avoid issues such as teenage pregnancies and other social issues.

Young mothers are a rising concern and I am sorry for those children that are affected. I believe it is an issue that I wish to dwell on because it touches the core value that we stand for; what is the family unit? If we are not careful, this problem may become much bigger later on.

There are many other issues that deserve equal attention but I'd like to single out this two issues to talk about.

Mr JIM KAS (Madang) – I would like to commend the Minister and staff from the Department, because the work that they do is mostly not being commended, so I would like to extend my appreciation to your staff, from the security right up to the research officers that compile the report for you to present in Parliament.

I know the three things that you mentioned, firstly, your responsibilities for the youth, the censorship board, and the NVS. I just want to base my comments in those three areas.

I was really struggling to ask during Question Time. I would like to say that the word youth has been abused seriously. My question is, what is youth and at what age group do we define the term youth?

When travelling around my province, I see a lot of people referring to themselves as youth and they are old enough to be grandparents. And I think the department should specifically define the age group that we refer to as youths so that we know what we are talking about.

20/06

Can the Department of Community Development give us an exact definition of youths? Like from what age group do we start calling people youths and what age group do we qualify to be elders.

Mr Speaker, the Minister can laugh about it but I would like to call myself a youth too.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr JIM KAS – Mr Speaker, the Censorship Board seems to be ineffective because of the fact that we are allowing pornography to come into Papua New Guinea. The Board has compromised its standing and those people who are on that Board should take it from me, the Governor of Madang, that they are not doing their job.

If we call ourselves a Christian country, we should not allow pornography to come in this land like what the Member for Kandrian- Gloucester said earlier.

Mr Speaker, I stood up in this Chamber and I said that we should make it compulsory for Religious Education to be introduced into the school curriculum from Elementary to Grade 12. The same should go with the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. If we want disciplined youths in the near future, we should make it compulsory.

Mr Speaker, the National Voluntary Service has to have its functions clearly defined. It is a very good initiative to direct our youths to go that way so that they learn discipline.

Mr Speaker, most of the leaders here in the Chamber grew up in my time and we have some common sense here.

I got stoned on Easter Sunday and I was sworn at. I was trying to raise a matter here but I was laughed down or talked down in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, if we are going to have youths around the country with that kind of attitude. I am sorry, our moral standards will drop and we will get nowhere.

Mr LEO DION (East New Britain - Minister for Provincial Affairs and Inter Government Relations) – Mr Speaker, I rise to offer my contributions to the Statement by the Minister for Community Development regarding women, churches and agencies that are helping the Government bring development.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Minister for a very important report that was presented on time and it is setting a good example for all the other Ministries like mine. Of course, we have various responsibilities.

Mr Speaker, the umbrella department of this country is the Provincial Affairs, It looks after all the agencies of Government and enforces and complements their structures and acts with all the other departments including the Community Development Department.

Mr Speaker, I stand to acknowledge the previous Government and this Government in recognising the leadership of our womenfolk in this country. Regardless of the fact that there are some controversial issues, and as leaders we have our own differences, the report that has been presented today is a report by a woman leader who occupies that ministry.

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I also want to thank the Prime Minister for his wisdom in relation to acknowledging the plight of this country's women by appointing two women as Ministers of this Government. I also acknowledge the previous government under Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare also appointing a woman leader as a Minister at that time, Dame Carol Kidu.

This is a vote of confidence by this Government and by this Parliament for all the women of this country to come up to these high positions. And this is despite the many situations and problems that this Parliament faces through the media.

Nevertheless, our women leaders have managed to have this Report tabled in Parliament focusing on the way forward for this very important Department. Provincial governments, local level governments, joint district budget planning committees and all the various kinds of committees that we have come under the Department of Provincial Affairs. In fact, it is one of the biggest agencies of government. This Government will make sure all these agencies must work together to come up with policies like the one the honourable Minister presented on the Floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge the churches. I also acknowledge the community development of all our provinces throughout the country. This is regardless of the fact that they do not have the capacity for financing.

I also would like to thank the Governors, especially the Open Members for recognising these issues because I am speaking from experience. Despite the policy on how to fund it, the Act for the Council of women was not clearly specified. But I think it is stated somewhere along the line that the women must participate in the running of the local level government as well be members of the joint district planning and budget priority committee (JDP & BPC).

As a former Governor, I would like to say to Parliament that we recognise the capabilities of this country's women. I must also thank those Governors who are recognising women leaders and appointing them to various positions, especially in government as representatives of Provincial Assemblies, the JDP & BPC or the local level government assembly.

Many women have now become recognised and have become councilors. Out of the 6000 ward members of this country, quite a number of those people are women. Therefore, I do not see any reason why women in this country with support cannot become elected leaders of this country.

I also want to acknowledge the Government's allocation of funding to churches in providing services to our people. There is no discrimination with churches; the Government does not discriminate against all churches in this country. I think that we have to continue to do that. In recognition of the main line churches, the Government has already given them K25 million to carry out their work and bring services to our people.

22/06

The concern raised by the Minister in relation to the guidelines that the finance management guidelines are being given in order for all the Open Members and the Governors to provide certain percentage of funding towards the activities for community development. I think, deliberately this Government has intervened by providing K9 million for this year to implement the policies to strengthen the functions of Community Development throughout the districts. I would like to urge the Governors and Members to recognise the plea by Community Development and assist financially from their annual budgets.

Another point is in regards to the Women's Council under the provincial governments. When the Act was implemented one of the provisions should have provided for the elected women representative of each province and should automatically be also be the women representative in the provincial assembly in order to recognise the leadership of women in either the provincial assembly or the Joint District Planning and Budget Priority Committee or at the Local Level Government assembly committees.

Before I take my seat, I congratulate the Minister for a job well done. I think many of the Members thought it was only right for a female Member to be appointed to that Ministry because she would be able to fit into the shoes of the former female MP. The Minister has done very well and we want more women to follow in this footsteps. The men have been dominant all this time and I congratulate this Government for appointing two women to be ministers who have the strength and leadership which, they have displayed to prove to the country that women can do better things. I also acknowledge the Governor of Eastern Highlands Province, who has spoken with tears. Let us recognise that and assist the women.

Mr BIRE KIMISOPA (Goroka) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me join in by congratulating the Minister on the Annual Management Report by the Department of Community Development and Religion.

Mr Speaker, before I join in the debate on the report, I want to state here that this House is the national Parliament; it is not a 'haus man'. I think every women in this country has a right to contest the elections and we are quite blessed this time to have three distinguished female members of Parliament. I am confident that in 2017, if other women were to contest the Election

we will see a number of women coming into Parliament. We have come to the half mark of the O' Neill - Dion Government in terms of the calendar cycle for this Parliament. The Minister has come halfway in her ministry and she has the most prestigious role where she can see the social side of the developments put on the ground by the Government.

23/06

At this critical juncture, it is important that you bring to this Chamber the humane story, the plight of our people and tell this Parliament the issue about domestic violence issues surrounding poverty and how many of our people are living below the poverty line.

I think as a lady politician and as a distinguished member of the Cabinet, you have that privilege; you have the honour to be able to stand on this Floor and tell the story about the Papua New Guinean plight so it can resonate in this Chamber. And perhaps your colleagues, the Ministers for Treasury, National Planning, Police and Works can pick it up and articulate all the sentiments that you have expressed into their department, programs, budgets and so forth, so the humane side or humane plight of our people, the sufferings of our people which has not been expressed, in my view, strong enough, on this Floor can be heard.

Issues like child labour, for instance in PNG, you just have to go to Down Town Port Moresby and see the young boys who are performing the role of traffic officers, guiding motorists to park their car. They are soliciting money for their parents who are at the house.

There's an issue there. Now we can't brush it aside. These are the kind of stories this Parliament needs to know. Why can't we address some of these critical issues in our country?

Fine, we can have GDP growth of 21 per cent next year, what is GDP anyway? Is it going to change the lives of our people? It is just some number. In case we are so focused on that number, let's come back, come back to reality.

Mr Speaker, we need to talk about homelessness. Why are our people leaving their villages as a result of tribal fights? They come into the cities of Port Moresby, Lae, Goroka and others but if you drive around our towns and cities at night you will find them sleeping on the pavement. Some are even sleeping at Ela Beach. These is not foreigners sleeping at Ela Beach, these are Papua New Guineans. Their story needs to be told in this Parliament. What kind of programs are we articulating?

Mr Speaker, if I may do so, I'd like to congratulate the Minister in terms of the social mapping exercise she has taken on boldly in her electorate, and I would hope, for the entire country. I think this is the halfway mark.

I think this Ministry is so big, it is the biggest grey area in government. There is no start, there is no end. Where do you go in terms of this Department?

We have changing demographics in this country. The lifestyle patterns of this country has changed, people are no longer eating kaukau, sago and banana. We are creating an instant noodle generation; they want two-minute fast food. All kinds of issues are coming in.

And if this Department is able to canvass all those broad issues and articulate it quite eloquently on this Floor of Parliament, I am confident that the human plight of our people can be canvassed by mainstream government. The policy makers, especially Cabinet could be articulating all those issues.

There is no point that our good Minister has the greatest responsibility and we pay her lip-service. They are women; they know everything. Enough of this language, tell her the truth. Tell her what's going on; we need to hear all these human stories. There is no point if we patronize her and all the women in this country. They don't need to be patronized. Our women in this country are hard-working, they are working side by side with their menfolk and in fact some or most of them are succeeding in this country. In fact some of them or most of them are succeeding in this country. In this country no woman is suffering, none of them are left behind, they are doing exceptionally well. Many women in this county are doing well.

Perhaps the US\$ 64 million question is, when will there be a time when 60 per cent of this Parliament be occupied by women. Perhaps this is the way forward. We get 60 per cent of this Parliament occupied by women and we'll see whether or not this country will go forward. But while we're here, we have a lot of work to do.

I would like to congratulate the Minister and as a Member of Parliament, a colleague standing here listening to some of the presentations, especially from her, I think Minister, you have a wonderful opportunity in this country.

There is no better platform for you. This is it, you will never get another platform any where else in this country, this is it. Tell the story about our people, how they are suffering in this

country, tell the story about the plight of women and children, homeless, poverty, all of these stories need to be told.

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And there is no better person to tell it than you. You have to tell that story so that it can be captured in the Budget so that we all know that something is happening in this country. Otherwise, we will be preoccupied. I will be the last person to congratulate you on this Management Report because I want to hear and I want to see a lot more of our stories.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Parliament take note of the paper – agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Charles Abel**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.30 p.m..