

SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 15 February 2018

DRAFT HANSARD

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



LEE SIROTE

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 15 February 2018

The Deputy Speaker (**Mr Pesab Jeffrey Komal**) took the Chair at 10.02 a.m..

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

Sitting suspended

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.50 a.m., and invited the Member for Goilala, **Honourable William Samb** to say Prayers:

“Papa God while we acknowledge that this is the highest office that a citizen can hold in this country, we also acknowledge that we as individuals and as a group have sinned against you, your son and your spirit, therefore we ask this morning Papa, that you forgive us our sins and cleanse us by the blood of Jesus so that he may grant us wisdom and knowledge so that we can discuss issues affecting the Nation and while we will say our Lord’s Prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliverer us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.’

**PUNCTUALITY OF MEMBERS DURING PARLIAMENT SITTING –
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, the Chair recognises that our attendance to the meetings are very slack and we are always late so the Chair is asking the honourable Members to try to make extra effort to come early in order for Parliament to start on time.

CERTIFICATION OF ACT

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament that I have in accordance with *Section 110 of the Constitution*, certified the *Public Monies Management Regulation Act 2017* made by the National Parliament:

Public Monies (Management) (Regulation) Act 2017

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament that the following Members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group are present in the Speaker's Gallery;

- (1) Honourable Ratu' Inoke Kubuabola, MP,
Minister for Defence and National Security of Republic of Fiji,
- (2) Honourable Rick Nelson Houeipwela, MP,
Prime Minister of Solomon Islands,
Outgoing Chairman of Melanesian Spearhead Group,
- (3) Honourable Milner Tozaka, MP,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Internal Affairs of Solomon Islands,
- (4) Honourable Chartlot Salwal Tabimasmass, MP,
Prime Minister – Republic of Vanuatu,

(5) Honourable Ralph Regenvanu, MP,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Internal Corporation and External Affairs,
Republic of Vanuatu

(6) His Excellency Desra Percaya Ph.D,
Deputy Minister for Asia Pacific and African Affairs,
Head of the Delegation for Foreign Minister's Meetings
Republic of Indonesia

(7) Mr Benny Wenda,
Chairperson
Head of Delegation
United Liberation Movement for West Papua

(8) Mr Mickael Forest,
Representative of the FLMKS to the MSG.
Foreign Minister's Meeting

On behalf of Parliament, I extend to the distinguished visitors a very warm welcome to Papua New Guinea.

(Members applauding in the Chamber)

QUESTIONS

Confirm Proper Selection List - UPNG

Mr KENNEDY WENGE – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

My question is directed to the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology.

02/07

There are two sets of acceptance lists for students attending the University of PNG; one is from university the other from the Office of Higher Education.

Those students who were selected by office of Higher Education are still waiting outside for their space in the campus.

Many students from Nawae district are here and are faced with this issue. As their Member, I want to know the status of the students from my electorate regarding their selection list.

Will they be given a space at the University of PNG?

Mr PILA NININGI – Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for Nawae for his question.

Many people are confused and wanting to know the answer regarding two different selection lists, one was done manually and the other list was done electronically.

The Office of Higher Education selects the students electronically. When complaints were raised I instructed the Secretary of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology to fix this issue, which was sorted out two days ago.

The Secretary went to the University of PNG and met with the vice-chancellor and the deans to sort out the problem.

They all screened the software list and found out that the list selected by the university were eligible to attend technical colleges and not university.

And the list provided by the Office of Higher Education is the correct one and they have the students with their marks and are eligible for a space at University of PNG.

Therefore, I want to assure the Member that if one of your students have been selected by Office of Higher Education automatically has a space at UPNG and no one will deny his or her right.

We are tired of wantok-system and nepotism, this will have to be stopped. And I appeal to the parents, students and the institutions to respect the selection process. Those students who were selected electronically will automatically have a place at the University of PNG. I will make sure it is done and that has been communicated to them.

Medical Cover for Members of Parliament

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT – Mr Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Prime Minister but in his absence I re-direct it to the Deputy Prime Minister.

It relates to the entitlements of Parliamentarians.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister please advise the members and this Parliament that there is medical insurance policy covering all members of Parliament? How is it currently managed through the Parliamentary Services?

As Members of Parliament our line of duties and responsibilities are at risk and at times politics is hard.

Are we covered by the insurance policies of the National Parliamentary Services or not?

That's the concern from us all members and if we happen to be admitted at the hospital then Parliament can meet all the medical expenses because we are covered by the insurance policy.

Mr CHARLES ABEL – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Namatanai for his question, obviously Members of Parliament have a quite a stressful job when dealing with district responsibilities.

And even ministers performing functions on the Floor of Parliament and pressures from the constituent and it is a highly stressful job.

I won't decide but absolutely the condition of the Members of Parliament that they are covered in a medical sense and that policy is in place.

03/07

I know that Parliament has been going through the process of procurement in relation to that and I believe that process is complete.

But regardless of that when you do incur medical expenses it is within your condition to present those bills retrospectively to Parliament and Parliament will reimburse any of those expenses incurred.

Mr Speaker, let me also say that this Government very much wants to support the Speaker and the Parliamentary Services to provide a medical centre here in Parliament as well.

It is appropriate that we have a doctor present in the precincts, particularly during the Parliamentary Sessions if any emergencies occur or for any regular check-up you should be able to go for that service.

Ultimately, we all know that it all comes down to personal responsibility and I encourage everyone to do their best to take preventive measures to look after themselves.

In my two terms here in Parliament there is good number of Members who are more health conscience and I have witnessed Members eating healthy and less Members smoking and drinking but all in all that is a good question.

Thank you.

Funding for SME Incubation Centres

Mr GINSON SAUNU – Mr Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister for Planning and for the Minister for Commerce and Industry and the Prime Minister can take note.

Mr Speaker, firstly, let me commend this Government for recognising the SME Sector as key player in the economic growth of this country.

We all know that SME underpins the growth of any nation either developed or developing economy.

The O'Neill-Abel Government for the first time since SME corporation came into existence two years ago and the launching of the SME policy and master plan by the Prime Minister in February 2016 have now realised that for a broad and inclusive economic growth SMEs must feature strongly.

In realising that, in the 2018 Capital Investment Budget, the Government it has allocated K30 million to SME Corporation to build business incubation centres throughout Papua New Guinea.

As the Governor of Morobe, I have already moved in that direction to implement that in Morobe.

I have written to the Chairman of the SME Corporation towards the end of last year stating that we stand ready as we have identified land area and also providing some counter funding to immediately commence the business incubation centre in Lae.

Mr Speaker, the SME Corporation is the appropriate Government agency and it must get this funding to assist in implementing the Governments SME Policy and Master Plan.

My questions are as follows;

- (1) Where will this K30 million be parked?
- (2) Will it not be used in Port Moresby alone?

I have learnt through the Media about the Six Mile SME business incubation centre. This fund must not solely apply to that project alone and it must be spread across the country.

Mr RICHARD MARU – Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of Morobe for his very important questions. Let me take this opportunity to announce that we are starting a new program to build incubation centres in all the provincial capitals throughout the country.

The NCD Governor and his team have already moved and they have designed a centre in Port Moresby to start this program.

The intention is not only to have that centre only in Port Moresby but we are looking at the whole country starting with Port Moresby.

Let me assure this Parliament that the allocations in the Budget for 2018 is parked under the name of SME Corporation and it will go to the SME Corporation.

04/07

They are the rightful legislated body to take charge of this project. They will liaise with you and NCDC and the rest of the provinces to look at bringing back SME Business Incubation centres that we are planning throughout this country.

In fact, for the record we have already asked the Indian Government to come and meet with you and the Morobe Government to look at the next incubation centre which we want to build in Lae.

So, that's the record and I am hoping that between now and the next two months we are going to bring in the Indian Government to do a complete feasibility study on setting up a major SME business incubation centre in Lae.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA – My question is directed to the Minister for Lands. Minister, you are a good Minister, you are an action Minister. I am impressed with all the work you have achieved in the last term and now you have been given a new ministry, the Lands Ministry.

There are some major problems in Papua New Guinea with regard to land, you know very well.

The Prime Minister had confidence in you and appointed you, you are the right person for the job.

Mr Speaker, my questions are:

Ninety eight per cent of land in PNG belongs to landowners. So in the laws of Papua New Guinea with regard to extractive industry companies, and whoever wishes to develop the land pay rentals to the landowners. The resources found under the ground, at six feet and above belong to the land owners and those under six feet belong to the State. In your department and in each provinces, I know that out of that 97 per cent, all the administration, management or laws cater for State leases only. There is no branch or division within your department or the provinces which take care of the majority of our people.

(1)What is your plan for the next five years to resolve this?

(2) Will the Minister establish an authority to assist the majority of Papua New Guineans who are landowners?

(3) SABL is a controversial subject in the last term. The Prime Minister established a Commission of Enquiry which reported to Parliament and I am sure it was referred to your department.

(4) Do you have any internal investigation report into the SABL that was delivered to you, and what actions are you taking because the Prime Minister has unequivocally stated that all SABLs are cancelled?

(5) In my view all SABLs are not cancelled, so what are you doing about it? What is the true situation of SABLs in Papua New Guinea?

(6) What are the status of SABLs in the Gulf Province and with particular reference to Purari SABL?

Purari is 600 000 hectares which is one of the biggest SABLs. This SABL covers five or six major tribal groups within the area but this SABL is owned only by one particular group.

(7) How did the previous Minister and the department approve the allocation of this SABL to this small group which did not take into account existing State leases as well as consultations with major tribes within the area which covers an LLG of the Gulf Province, namely the Baimuru LLG?

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the Minister that there are implications because within that SABL there is Elk-Antelope or PRL 15 and the number two Papua LNG Projects that the Government intends to start

05/07

Secondly, there are 200 000 hectares of forest under the Turama extension which falls under that SABL; thirdly, there are PPL which covers discoveries at Triceratops, Bobcats, Uramu and gas fields under that SABL. And fourthly, there is coal in Depot with 200 million tonnes which is awaiting drop report so these developments are on that land under that SABL.

My question is, what action has been taken on that SABL because there are implications on that project which are of national significance in the country.

Mr JUSTIN TKATCHENKO – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Gulf Governor, Honourable Chris Haiveta, for his very important questions.

I will start with the last question. About 650 000 hectares of the Gulf province which is one-third of the province has been issued an SABL under the Purari Development Association.

In going through, the SABL Committee that was set up on an NEC decision has clearly found a total breach in all procedures issuing that SABL to Purari Development Association.

I am very happy to say, for the people of Baimuru and Gulf, that under *Section 11* and *102* of the *Lands Act* that was breached, an issue of summons under *Section 161* of the *Land Registration Act* to Purari Development Association has been given as of last week to surrender the original titles and owners copy of Portion 8 in the Gulf Province for total cancellation. That means that we will go back to the drawing board and truly identify the traditional landowners and the customary landowners of that land because there was no proper vetting or clan identification done. It was a total disgrace.

So for the people of Baimuru and for you, Governor, please advice and I will give this to you in writing so that the Registrar of Titles can issue the summons to surrender the original owner's copy of the title and from there it will be cancelled.

Honourable Governor, through the Speaker, from there we will need to all get together with the Department of Lands and the people of Baimuru under that SABL that is being cancelled and then work on a proper clan vetting exercise to identify the true landowners that can get the true benefits of the land that they traditionally live on.

Secondly, the registration of customary land is a very important issue. It is one of the major issues we are facing with our department and we have to get it right. Over many years, it has failed and the land and customary titles have been given to the wrong people and they are benefitting financially and in many other ways from land that they do not own or not entitled to. Under the *Customary Land Registration Act* and through the ILG Office of the Department of Lands, we are setting up a proper division which can assist in many different ways of truly identifying, through voluntary land registration, the true landowners.

06/07

This is not going to happen overnight. It is a very in-depth and detailed exercise. A lot of it has been done through the Minister for Petroleum and others are being identified through Petroleum areas.

We need to really get it right so that our landowners are truly identified for investments whether it is commercial, industrial or residential or whatever is put through on the traditional land, the rightful landowners must benefit because they deserve it.

Mr Speaker, that is in process. We look forward in working with all the resources owning provinces and truly identifying landowners throughout the country without fear or favour.

I made an announcement a couple of weeks ago regarding SABL. We are turning the Lands Department upside down to ensure we find all the land and title files of the SABLs that have been issued.

I am pleased to say that since making that announcement, we have found another ten SABL files in the draws, under the desk of the officers in the department. So from there appropriate action will be taken and we are still continuing the search throughout the department. It is a very tedious process. But anybody involved in hiding or concealing these very important documents will be dealt with in the department and we will not spare them at all because we have had enough. Everybody has had enough.

The Lands Department needs to be cleaned up because as you know the perception is that the Lands Department is totally corrupt and we need to change that perception as well for our people to have access to all the information they require without interference or intimidation.

Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of Gulf for his questions and I look forward in working with him and his people of Baimuru and the Gulf Province to finally get their land back to the true owners of the customary land.

Flooding Issue - Gloucester

Mr JOSEPH LELANG – Thank you Mr Speaker. I direct my questions to the Prime Minister but since he is not present, I will redirect it to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of the natural disaster that has affected my people of Gloucester Local Level Government? This is the result of the recent heavy rainfall at the north-coast of West New Britain.

According to the reports received two days ago, 14 villages are affected including the Gloucester station, high school, LLG office and 35 homes completely destroyed. The flood has also washed away the domesticated animals. The food gardens are soaking and rotting.

The community has moved to higher grounds and they are in need of fresh drinking water and shelter. We provided them with tents but that was not enough. The elderly and children also need medicine.

My questions are:

(1) Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of this disaster that has fallen on the people of Gloucester LLG, ward 6?

(2) If not, can he assure my people that the National Government will respond and send a team to investigate the calamity?

07/07

Some public servants in Gloucester station have told me that some of the rivers which were flooded have never before experienced flooding. It was not only the rivers that broke their banks during this flood, water was flowing out from creeks and other sources in the bushes as well and caught the people by surprise. And many had to run for their lives and seek shelter.

Mr Speaker, many are blaming the logging operations in the area; they are saying that the loggers have moved right next to the river banks and are not moving away from the river system according to the logging and environmental code of practice.

(3) Can the Government investigate this matter by sending a team from Port Moresby to look into these alleged claims?

Thank you.

Mr CHARLES ABEL – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Kandrian Gloucester for raising these issues on behalf of his people. We are aware that there has been extraordinary rainfall in some parts of the country lately and it is having an impact on the people in those areas. I mentioned this because the Governor of Central Province has been highlighting some of the areas within his province that are severely affected, and no doubt the rest of the country. I am not aware particularly of what is happening in Gloucester LLG but if it is as he says it is, then it is obviously a concern and we will make sure that the national disaster office looks into it immediately.

But I am also concerned of the heavy logging activities in that area and if indeed some of these disaster is related to those practices and whether those particular companies are compliant with the requirements and commitments; particularly in relation to the Environment, conservation and *Forestry Acts*. There are commitments that must be complied with. As part of the investigation process, we will make sure that happens. I think the Minister for Environment gave a very excellent statement in relation to this issue in general. He will give an opportunity today to make a further statement in relation to the Bonn Meeting 22 that was held recently. I can only reinforce what he has said. The general issue at hand is that such disaster will begin to occur in a more regular and unpredictable manner. And it is incumbent upon the Government to make better preparation. I know we have had conversations about this in Cabinet before and we are reminded by the Honourable Sir Puka Temu of the past when we had a relatively more active National Disaster Office that had a competent director.

Mr Speaker, in the first instance we have to look into the profile of this office including the competency of the people that are engaged there, particularly a very pro-active director. But even more pressing is the issue of funding that goes with that office. I think we are going to support the Minister for Environment through Cabinet to look at ways; for instance, where we introduce a levy. Even if it is associated with the Oil & Gas Industry, petrol and diesel. We need to create a trust fund, and that fund is contributed to on a regular and ongoing basis. This is so that when such matters arise, we are able to respond quickly.

This fund is able to roll-over successfully over the years and continue to build up so we have enough provisions when these things occur. The other thing that we can do is to tap into and appeal to some of the countries and agencies around the world who are realising what is happening environmentally and who realise that a country like ours is on the front line in terms of climate change and that we have some of the first climate refugees. And as such, there is a certain responsibility that the rest of the world bears, particularly industrialised countries and those of us who are suffering the effects of these changes when we have not participated necessarily in causing these impacts to happen.

Mr Speaker, there is an obligation there we feel on the rest of the world as well as an obligation on ourselves to change the way we behave in our practices so that we do not continue to contribute to the problems that is fundamentally disrupting the environment and ultimately leading to impacts on the human race which is becoming more and more frightening

08/07

In relation to Gloucester, I'll take on board those concerns and relay to the Minister for Provincial Affairs.

We are dealing with some other issues at the moment, particularly the Kadovar volcano and there is limited funding, but we will do our very best to make sure we look into the issue and the impact on the people at Gloucester.

Closure of Tolukuma Mine

Mr WILLIAM SAMB- My series of questions are directed to the Minister for Mining, but, before that, I would like to commend him for the statements made yesterday on the important changes made to the legislation for MRA.

There was an article in the *National* newspaper about Tolukuma Gold Mine going into liquidation.

Mr John Simon-Point of Order! Some of these questions from the Government MPs can be raised during the Government Caucus meetings because Question Time is very limited. The Chair must give us all the opportunity to ask questions. We have a lot of questions to raise and this is the only opportunity where Opposition Members can ask questions.

Mr SPEAKER- Honourable Member for Maprik, your point of order is out of order because all members on the Floor have the right to ask questions to Ministers for answer for the benefit of the people of Papua New Guinea.

Mr WILLIAM SAMB- It's almost three years now since the agreement was signed for the sale of the mining lease in my district.

(1) Can the Minister tell the people of Goilala and this House, why there has been no progress till today?

(2) Is it because the investor does not have any resources or funding, can the Minister explain that?

Whenever there is an issue in the district, the office of the Member is always the first port of call.

(3) Why were the districts not included in the MOUs and MOAs that were signed?

It's always the State, investor, LLG and the Provincial Government. Where do we Members stand? Many problems arising from Tolukuma, brings people rushing to my office but technically I am not supposed to attend to that because I'm not in the MOA. I only attend to social issues and political survival matters. I believe it's same with all you Members in here.

(4) What is your department doing to address this issue?

In the last term, we were able to partner with the Mine to build 35 kilometres of road from Tolukuma down to the border of Kairuku-Hiri. Now there is a tender for the Tapini turn-off to the Mine Road.

(5) What is the status of that tender process?

We would like competent contractors to do that job.

Goilala is the least developed district and we don't want paper companies to come and play around with the limited resources we have, so do not put in any paper contractor. I know how to build roads and I know who can build a better road than a paper company.

Mr JOHNSON TUKE – Thank you, for the good questions raised by the Member for Goilala. Let me inform this House and the people of Goilala and Papua New Guinea that the company apparently is in liquidation. What you have learnt from the media is the truth. As a consequence, there are a lot of related problems as far as the mining at Tolukuma is concerned.

09/07

The process down at MRA is to grant licenses for the Industry to operate and mine for gold and not sit and do nothing.

In the course of next week we will demand for Tolukuma to surrender their licenses to us so that a new company or anybody can raise an interest with us and we can partake in the Mining.

On the second question, why the districts are not included in the MOA, this House passed the Bill yesterday that gives me an authority and liberates me to make decisions so that all districts will now be actively involved in the benefit sharing of any industry. All along it's been the LLG and the province but this time the immediate recipients, the people who are affected by most of the problems surrounding the districts have to be also on the same page and that is what I am going to be doing in the next meeting of this Parliament.

(3) Seriously, I am not involved in the awarding of contract; it is a CSTB process and so to speak a company has already been awarded for the 40 kilometres national road where the mining takes place.

Apparently, the Company is on the ground taking carriage of that but if you ask me and on the behalf of the people of Goilala, I am not involved in the process of determining a contractor; it is a CSTB process. They do their vetting before awarding contracts.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTION

Motion (by **Mr Garry Juffa**) put –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Question Time this day being extended by 20 minutes.

There being no absolute majority, motion not carried.

Motion negatived.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, it is a shame that we cannot extend for 20 minutes so that we could at least ask and answer questions so that our people can hear about what we discuss here on the Floor.

Mr Speaker, please ask the Minister to stop disrupting Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER – Order! Allow the honourable Governor to ask his question.

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Please, stop disrupting Parliament because it is unbecoming of a senior minister.

Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister for Forest. The Minister has been very active and I would like to commend him for moving around and inspecting logging ponds and so forth but I would want to encourage him to take one step further by taking specific pecuniary action against certain individuals who are raping and plundering our forests at will and whim.

10/07

Mr Speaker, in Oro Province we have an area known as Utan Plantation, State land portion 136 and 137, which was unlawfully acquired.

I would like Minister for Lands and, again, I commend him for his efforts to take note under the lease of United Church business arm and the Provincial Government. The United Church and the provincial government are embarking on the process of working together to develop that portion of land.

Whilst we are in that process a Melanesian Company illegally acquired that portion of land dealing with some rogue landowners and landed heavy equipment there to log that area.

The landowners took the matter to court and successfully won and the company was removed but has since returned. And it's interesting that the person involved is also the same person involved in West New Britain, Madang and other parts of PNG as well.

This particular Malaysian-Chinese takes with him a group of people with logging equipment around PNG taking advantage of the slow process of the government's action. And before we caught up with him he logged a particular area and shipped off these logs illegally often.

I believe the Minister is aware of this person and he has raised his concern with me privately and he informed me that he was going to pay a visit to this particular location.

My questions are:

(1) Has the Minister visited this particular location and if so, what were the findings and what actions did his department take?

(2) Since we know the identity of this particular person, can he be dealt with because he is stealing our resources right under our nose and turning over a significant profit?

(3) Can the Minister also inform us if any action is going to be taken against this company and this individual and what type of actions will they take?

(4) Is the Minister aware that at this point in time a makeshift jetty has been constructed in Collingwood with significant volumes of high value hardwood timber waiting for export?

(5) To prevent this theft of resources, can the Minister work with the Provincial Government, Customs and make a report to the police because this is a criminal matter.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of Oro Province, yes, we have discussed on some contagious issues that have affected his province and I am thankful that we -

Mr Garry Juffa – Point of Order! We will have this recorded in *Hansard* so I am very careful to specifically detail here that we discussed contentious issues and not ‘contagious’ issues, that’s for clarification purposes.

(Laughter-in-the-Chamber)

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, I think I am using the right term. This issue is not only affecting Oro but whole of PNG. It’s only proper that my brother can sit down and allow me to complete my answers.

Yes, I am well aware of these issues affecting his area and Collingwood as well. I have been to Collingwood and surveyed that area and found out that there was no logging taking place there. I was aware of the equipment arriving there and when the Governor spoke to me about the issues down there. I took an immediate trip down to confirm that this particular person and his company has moved in and started constructing the log pond.

11/07

However, we have taken necessary steps and have realised that this State land, Utan Plantation, actually belongs to the United Church and they have got very good plans for the development of that area. I am aware that the Governor and the province are working very closely with the United Church.

Mr Speaker, many a times, we are quick to point a finger at the Forest Department and we forget the process that is in place. The process actually begins right in our provinces.

The Provincial Administrators or certain selected leaders within the provinces are the PSMC Chairmen's who make the decisions with the landowners.

Mr Garry Juffa – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, the Minister is correct and we are taking action against the Administrator. In fact, he is suspended at the moment regarding their role in this matter.

In regards to logging, I have photos I will email to you recently taken just last week of all the logs and activities.

Mr James Marape – What's your Point of Order?

Mr Garry Juffa – Mr Speaker, please inform Ministers to remain quiet when these important matters are discussed and to stop disturbing us, especially the Minister for Finance.

(Laughter-in-the-Chamber)

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, I thank the learned Governor. Yes, he raised that issue in the last Parliament Meeting and that was about two or three months ago and I think in that period they have done some logging which I am unaware of but I will be briefed by my ministry.

However, let us go back to the facts. These PSMC are Chaired by Provincial Administrators. The decisions are made down there. When the decisions are made it comes up to the Forest Department and the department goes through some due diligence to make certain that processes are complied with before approvals are given.

Mr Speaker, we are aware that it is State Land Portion 136 and 137 and we are aware of the plans that the United Church have. One of the examples similar in Collingwood is the area in Putput, in East New Britain, that the land belongs to the Catholic Church and they had development plans likewise.

Mr Speaker, as the Governor has raised the issue, we are dealing with the particular person and we are aware of the areas that he has done a lot of logging and one of the issues that is really concerning us is the shortcuts they take by avoiding the National Forest Board and the Forest Office. They try to go through in a different way to gain a provincial license to harvest 500 hectares a time.

That is now an issue with the Forest Office. Before the PSMC approves anything, bring it to the Forest Office.

Mr Walter Schnaubelt – Point Of Order! Mr Speaker, PSMC don't make decisions, they make recommendations. We need to clear that out for all of us to understand. Otherwise, we are misleading this Parliament by saying PSMC makes the decisions down there.

They make recommendations to the Authority who then makes the decisions.

Mr DOUGALS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, I thank the good Member for his point of Order. But I think we all must understand that there are certain delegated powers.

The National Forest Board has delegated powers down to the provincial level. Those powers authorises the provincial chairmen to make decisions under 500 hectors.

Mr Garry Juffa – Point of Order! The good Minister fails to understand and that is not totally correct. There are instances where the Provincial Forest Officer himself is by-passed and there is a direct link between his ministry and some officers on the ground who then collaborate to carry out this act of fraud.

12/07

This is a fact and we have got the evidence so that is for clarification purposes. Though the processes are there it is not often followed and key officers are bypassed. This is an act of fraud where people work together to carry out this theft and it is reality that we must understand.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Mr Speaker, through the Chair may I ask, the point of order supposed to be asked only one time, you cannot continue with points of order because you have to allow ministers to answer.

And, let me say that the good Governor has got all the right to lodge a complaint and we can act upon his complaint.

However, he has raised a question and we have dealt with the issue and I have called him and mentioned to him about it, that we are getting to the bottom of the issue but like the Minister for Lands said, they are lengthy processes that we have to go through, you have to go back to the PFMC, the PFMC have to call it's meetings to review its decision then it comes to the Board and the Board will cancel.

But, I have taken a ministerial stand on it and I have acted and dealt with it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Peter Yama – Point of Order! It has to have the signature of the Governor and that is what I do in my electorate, without my signature the PFMC cannot send it to the Forest Board.

That is what is going on in Madang and I am going through it so I just want to correct that.

In relation to TRP, 6 000 TRP hectares it has to be recommended to the PMF to the Governor and I sign off so, if I do not sign off it doesn't reach the PMFC.

So, let's get the facts right and if we have a problem with places where we have TRP and where there is timber we need to sit with the minister and we need to sort the problem with the Governors.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, your point of order is not a point of order, you are now debating.

The Chair would like to inform the House that it is not going to except any more points of order on this question and I will allow the honourable Minister to complete his answers because Question Time is over.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought that I finished but thank you for allowing me to continue.

(Laughter-in-the-Chamber)

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Honourable Governor, we have taken this issue up, the Utan Plantation. We are aware that the plantation should be under our control and we have dialogued with the United Church to see if we can get this license back from the United Church and make certain that that area is not logged out.

You have raised a very important issue here. There is already some logs there and I was down there about two or three months ago and I did not see anything but with you raising it I will make certain that I will send some of my officers down to deal with them and if there has been some operation already done it is of great concern to me and we will deal with it appropriately in the next few days.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**STATUS OF GUN RELATED ISSUES – MINISTERIAL STATEMENT –
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF THE PAPER**

MR JELTA WONG (Gazelle – Minister for Police) – Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make this important ministerial statement as Minister for Police to the National Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to focus on the status of gun related issues

Mr. Speaker, I have redistributed the gun report that was tabled on 23 August, 2000, and the reason we have redistributed is due to the fact that we have a lot of discrepancy with its findings.

Mr Speaker, this report is pushing that all guns must be banned; licensed ones as well as illegal ones. My perspective, as is the government's, is to totally eradicate illegal weapons. In order to do this we must amend our laws to be more stringent with people caught with illegal weapons.

13/07

Mr Speaker, by virtue of the powers conferred by *Section 5A (1)* of the *Firearms Act Chapter 310* and all other enabling powers bestowed under the *Constitution*, I signed the Moratorium on 04 October, 2017, banning the purchase and issuance of new gun permits to citizens across the country until further notice.

Mr. Speaker, a similar Moratorium on firearms was issued by the Government in 2000 when late Honourable Mathias Karani was then the Police Minister and Sam Inguba was Police Commissioner until it was revoked in 2005 by the then Minister for Police Honourable Bire Kimisopa.

Mr Speaker, I took this measure because of the increasing number of gun-related violence and killings reported in certain parts of the country in recent times. These include, the shooting deaths of four policemen; two in Enga at the height of the concluded 2017 National General Elections and two in Southern Highlands Province.

Mr Speaker, the country's three disciplinary forces which include the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, Police and Correctional Service are however exempted from this Moratorium.

Mr Speaker, in compliance with this Government directive, the Police Commissioner who is also the Registrar of Firearms will not approve new applications for purchase and issuance of new gun licenses.

Mr Speaker, it's only fair that we exhaust all avenues as this Government's position is to put tougher laws on illegal weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr MICHAEL NALI (Mendi-Minister for Works and Implementation) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I would also want to thank the Minister for Police for his statement relating to firearms.

Mr Speaker, I believe the report on gun related issue is being talked about in the House and the use of guns is a very bad encounter for people who have experienced being held up with firearms and some families have lost loved ones because of the improper use of firearms, it is not a good experience.

Mr Speaker, here in our country, I believe that citizens should own and continue to have the rights to a gun for self-defence.

Up in the Highlands our ancestors used to own 'supsup' and bows and arrows. So, when we had conflicts arise or there was a tribal fight they defended themselves with the bows and arrows but today, the bow and arrow is used like a toy for the children.

Today, firearms is a big problem in our country and it has become even worse when the person who possess the firearm is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Mr Speaker, I want to say that the gun is not a traditional object so I think it is best that we totally ban the use of guns in the country including the licensed ones.

14/07

We must increase penalties for those in possession of illegal guns or any firearms related crimes. We should impose life year sentences or death penalty.

If you don't want to agree on this option then allow and permit everyone to have gun licenses. However, I still will not agree on that because history has spoken and it is a major and continuous problem in the United States where everyone is allowed to own a gun, and doing so, the gun related issues have increased in other parts of the world too.

There are two reasons why anyone should obtain a gun license. Firstly, to own a gun to use for hunting purpose and secondly as a weapon for protection purposes. Approval to obtain a license is only done through the normal police approved license process.

Mr Speaker, many people are now in possession of illegal firearms which were taken out from the Defence Force and the Police Force as well as from within the borders of PNG.

In reference to the guns in the Highlands Region, I have no evidence to justify that, however, every household owns a gun. So when I am talking about buying back the guns from them, they will not sell it to you even if you have offered them more than one hundred thousand. Their gun is more important to them. If someone surrendered the gun he is lying to you because he knows that, that gun is defective. They are only deceiving you. They are not insane, they know what they are doing.

Mr Speaker, secondly, Facebook is exposing those in possession of the guns. The photos are there. We should look at this issue at a bi-partisan approach and collectively take care of it. It is a problem that we must all stand up together to overcome. We must stop this gun issue.

Mr Speaker, ZD Industry used to sell bullets. Over the last five to six years, you have to produce an empty bullet case in order to buy a new one. There was control.

But regardless of a gun, the bullets are provided by our own system, so who provides bullets for the illegal firearms? The Defence and Police Force, this is not a joke, Mr Speaker.

We can come and talk about many important things here but this gun issue is much important too. Though the word 'gun' is short and small in size, it is a very dangerous device.

15/07

Gun or is it spelt G A N in tok pisin? This is one very dangerous equipment

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I will not augment the debate on this subject as many of you have grown to hate me and even called me names on *FaceBook*. But I am not what you think of me, this is the real me standing here, so this is me.

Mr Speaker, we don't need to bring back this issues to debate and discuss in Parliament. We must now take a stand, two things, firstly to totally ban guns in the country. These firearms are possessed by spirits which causes men to take the life of a fellow human so we need to totally ban it. I am happy to surrender mine if we all agree to surrender firearms in the country.

For your information, I have a licensed firearm, I do not possess an illegal weapon. The government has given me and the government knows why I possess a firearm. I realised that there is no need to carry a licenced firearms. Why do I need to carry a firearm, what am I protecting myself from, I do not have any enemies. Also, if I happened to be annoyed by someone who is unarmed and accidently decide to use this firearm, I may injure or even kill this person. The Court won't take into account the license I have, my innocence or guilty plea will be based on the fact that I had a firearm and used it on an unarmed person, causing harm or death, that's all.

Mr Speaker, secondly, we must increase the penalty of those in possession of illegal fire arms. These are the two options that I believe are appropriate for us to do. And thank you Minister for Police for bringing this issue to light.

I want say that the gun issue is good, but in future we must also discuss the issue of drugs and homebrew. Don't ignore the fact that we have foreign drugs such as cocaine and ice in the country. While we are talking about the guns, we might as well have to go another step and discuss drugs and their uses in the country. When people want to use a gun, they will have to lose their sense first in order to use the weapon. How do they lose their sense, either they go to Laloki, get some experience and come back onto the street or take drugs to make them delusional to do such a thing.

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – I would like to say here that when we are talking about serious issues, it would be nice if we do not joke about them. I would like to commend the Minister on a very level headed and fair presentation of a government policy. I am happy because it is a very fair and balanced decision. I was one of those that was called up in my province to give our thoughts to the Ministerial Committee when it was travelling the country. One of the things that was said by an African Catholic priest who was in attendance. I think it is important that the Parliament understands it, he said, 'you can ban guns for use but he will still use a machete and do what he wants to do.'

Mr Speaker, I want to expand on that. I was the Chairman of a hospital board for four years.

16/07

In that time we dealt with a lot of injuries to individuals, 99 per cent of those where from bush knives, grass knives and very few from gun shots. Those inflicted by gun shots were from the police.

When we are debating issues like these we need to use evidence and be more circumspect. I differ with the Minister for Higher Education who says we shouldn't be very professional about it. I think we should be professional about this by using proper evidences in contributing to this debate rather than becoming emotive, beating around the bush and getting lost somewhere in the jungle and losing the point.

Mr Speaker, this is a good report because the Minister is saying that we need to take control of the illegal weapons. It would be interesting to find out how many guns were used by people during hold-ups, murder and so forth and how many of them are actually registered?

The report says that vast majority of these guns that are being utilised in committing crimes and horrendous acts against other Papua New Guineas are being done with illegal guns. In many cases, our smart educated Papua New Guineans have figured out how to make guns. They have figured out how to make ammunitions themselves.

We can pass the law here to ban guns which sounds very exciting, but the practical reality is that young Papua New Guineans are making guns. I read in the paper that the ones from Western Highlands are actually better than the Sepiks in making guns.

Mr Speaker, we are the law making body of the country and we need to do something that is practical and implementable by our agencies including police.

First of all, we need stronger policing of our border with Indonesia because a lot of the guns entering the country are coming through my province. When 120 of my policemen decided to leave their job because they were unhappy with their management and are now everywhere else, I have only one car patrolling one of the largest province at 2 am. It is very easy for the speed boat to sail in when you are buying an M16 for K500 across the border. It's very easy to lend at Pagwi at 6 am in the morning when everyone at Sepik Wara are still in bed, transport them on the canoe and sail to Malamata and the next you know it is in Kompiam Ambum. It's very easy for these guys to do that so let's be realistic.

Mr Speaker, this is a very good report from the Minister. I would like to see tougher penalties, not just for people using guns on other citizens but for someone using a bush knife on another citizen. Let's get to the root of the problem. Someone who is frustrated can use these weapons and do harm to others. It's not the gun itself that jumps up and shoots at somebody. Not everyone has access to a gun but everybody has access to a bush knife.

Mr Speaker, I banned beer bottles in East Sepik province because we were getting reports from the hospital that a large number of people that are coming in to be stitched are wounded by beer bottles thrown at them. It still does not matter if there is no gun, they will still use stones. They will find anything that is convenient to use as a weapon.

Mr Speaker, my understanding is that new licences for guns was banned some 25 years ago by this House or someone in authority did that. But that has not stopped the gun problems since then. We can declare another ban again but that will not solve the problem. So let's be practical.

I support the Minister in his suggestion and I support the Government because it's a Government provision. Let us deal with the illegal guns, let us make a concerted effort to do that. And at the same time let us look at providing meaningful opportunity for young Papua New Guineans.

17/07

Let us support efforts in agriculture to create jobs for the young men so they will work and not use their time to make guns or find other weapons to kill others. The more we deny our people economic opportunity particularly the young people then they begin to look at other things to occupy them such as making homebrew, selling marijuana and fighting.

We are avoiding the problem by trying to put a band-aid on a massive gaping wound in the soul of Papua New Guinea. Our young people do not have jobs. If Governor Parkop is here, I remember the statistics in Port Moresby that when the LLG Project was on the crime rate was reduced.

Today, if you ask the Police in Port Moresby how many cars are hijacked. I think it is around 10 to 15 a day and that is a direct correlation that there is no more work.

The other day, Mr Speaker, I stood up and talked about taking responsibility and owning the problem. We are just here blaming everything like the gun, Sir Michael Somare or Mr Patrick Pruaitch, but nobody actually stands and takes responsibility.

Many senior ministers are sitting here for the last 25 years; take responsibility and do what is needed to be done. Just stop blocking out members when they come in with their proposals to revive an agriculture project in his district to create job opportunities for the young people, you must support it. We do things here for parochial interest, like I hold a higher position and you are on the Opposition so I am not going to support you in a genuine legitimate project to give jobs to young Papua New Guineans because I am a minister and I do not like you that is what we do. We are playing marbles here, gentlemen, I ask you all to stop it because we have serious problems in Papua New Guinea and guns is just one of them.

Our young people are so pissed off legitimately and rightly so. They involve in criminal activities because they are unhappy and dissatisfied while we are here flexing our little ministerial muscle to cancel economic opportunities for our people.

So, don't come and blame it on the gun because you do not have any courage to humble yourself and do the right thing or humble yourselves and listen. When the Minister was making his statement although I am in the Opposition I still listened. This is not petty but it is what we are supposed to do. But so long as people use their little ministerial muscles and try to flex them and try to spoil each other to the detriment of the country then I will sit here and I will continue to speak for the young people who do not have opportunities.

I will continue to speak and we must do this because it is our duty and we must perform it and support the Sepiks and Western Provinces and let us shut that border. Give us professional police officers who don't get drunk and womanise but support us. This is nothing to do with Government or Opposition so support us because it is about the country. It is our young people that we must focus our efforts to enabling, empowering and pull them away from all this disruptive things they are getting themselves involved into.

With this, young minister, you outdid all of your colleagues and I salute you.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SAM BASIL (Bulolo – Minister for Communication, Information Technology and Energy) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to join the debate. We all know the Correctional Service, PNG Defence Force and the Police Department and other individuals and businesses under special cases where they are required to protect money and valuable resources are issued firearm licenses. This also includes Security Firms throughout PNG.

18/07

Mr Speaker, if we don't engage these sort of people, criminals will overpower us in any pressing situation in the country.

Before we decide on imposing a total ban on firearms we must ensure that we have police personnel stationed at every district around the country to maintain law and order.

As elected members of Parliament we are fortunate to have access to police and security services. We turn to forget when we were ordinary citizens and how vulnerable we were.

We have seen the real situation faced by our people when there is no police present to attend to issues. Therefore we leaders representing those very people have to be careful when making decisions concerning the law and order issue affecting our people.

But again, I join my colleagues to congratulate the Minister for bringing this very important issue on this Floor of Parliament to debate because our people have waited long enough.

Mr Speaker, I do not support the total banning of firearms. I have experienced the importance of firearms. Before I became Member of Parliament, I worked with some companies to provide security escorts.

For instance, I use to provide security escorts for local coffee buyers with hard cash from Lae to Menyamya to buy coffee. And also flying on one-engine planes from Wasu to Kabwum. I provide security escorts to those coffee buyers because they carry huge sums of money with them to buy coffee in those remote places because there are no banking services.

Mr Speaker, many of our people who live in remote places need firearms also for hunting and protection. Some of these places have dangerous animals such as crocodiles. Institutions who need to go into such areas for research purposes also need firearms for protections.

So we must not put total ban to firearms but debate on how we can control illegal issuing of firearms to the people.

Mr Speaker, my opinion is that when people own illegal firearms they commit crimes. If crime is committed by using illegal firearms then we should increase their prison sentence when they are found guilty. Just by owning illegal firearms they should be sentenced up to 10 to 20 years. And if they murder another person using illegal firearms then they should be given the death penalty.

There are people who have been given death penalty by the courts and waiting for their turn to be executed in Bomana, Buimo, Baisu and other jails around the country.

Therefore, we have to be serious with this issue, if we want total ban of firearms then we should be executing these prisoners now. They are still waiting to be executed and many new deaths are occurring every now and then in other places.

Who knows while we are debating on this issue there must be holdups somewhere. It is not happening only on land but out at sea as well. The criminals holdup boats and commit these crimes. I remember at one time they killed one man when he was traveling on the boat. Yet these murderers are still on death row.

The other point here is that when we want to register firearms at their registry office strict rules must be applied to individuals who own licensed firearms. Which means that, that person alone is the sole owner of the firearm and full information must be outlined on the gun; the model and serial number, the date issued and the capacity of that gun. That license must not be given to another person to use his license as carry-license.

19/07

Mr Speaker, in some places in this country there is tribal fighting and people are killed in many high crime rate areas and we need to look at those areas and not permit gun licensing in those areas. Otherwise the owners of the gun have tribesmen and they can use that license to buy ammunition and distribute amongst his tribesmen escalating lawlessness.

Like the honourable Governor of East Sepik stated, the people are getting smarter in manufacturing home-made guns.

We drove past a written-off PMV in my district and we saw that those two-inch pipes were cut off and taken and that was literally cut to make a home-made gun.

Mr Speaker, we have young Papua New Guineans who are employed in the industries where they use led machines to cut pipes and make triggers of the gun and carefully put springs and coil in them. It's no secret that everybody knows how to make a gun. Literally anybody that knows how to operate a led machine knows how to make a gun.

So there are guns being manufactured and put in the hands of our young people on the streets to commit these crimes.

Mr Speaker, we have to hold responsible the people who are manufacturing the guns. We must make an amendment so that when someone is caught manufacturing guns he needs to be given life imprisonment. Anyone manufacturing ammunition must be given 10 years or so to sound the warning out that this must not be tolerated.

Mr Speaker, also we must tighten the border areas where smuggling of guns are common. Like the Governor of East Sepik stated and I believe the Western Governor will also share the same sentiments that we do not have good border patrol on the open seas and our land borders. Any ship can embark on our shores and drop cargo and leave. This is a big issue.

Mr Speaker, if tribal fights are a norm in villages and innocent people are attacked for no reason at all then of course the innocent have the right under the sun to manufacture a gun and protect their own families.

Mr Speaker, when we are talking about the gun ban we must make sure that there is law and order and the safety of our innocent citizens in our districts and in the remote areas are protected.

In my district, the hotspots for tribal fighting is in the Warrior Valley where it borders with the Goilala District in the Central Province. People are killed and buried and when this matter is reported to the Police in Lae already the culprits are aware and they go into the mountains and bushes to take refuge. But the crime has already been committed and someone has died.

Mr Speaker, we have to take into consideration the people in the remote places who have no access to law and order.

We cannot just remove guns from our citizens until there is law and order in place.

Mr Speaker, in regards to security companies, they have guns to provide a security service and at the same time assist the Police.

If the security companies are not around, the police will have a hard time providing escorts and combatting crimes. Everyday business houses go and do their banking and before they open the safe at 8.00 am they will be lining up in front of the police stations.

When the Police Minister says not to escort private companies and private business men to buy vanilla and cocoa and so forth, the private security services are the ones we need to turn to.

The Police Force runs the country and we must not be over excited and make rational decisions in banning guns from those companies and individuals who provide protection services in this country.

Mr Speaker, let's think about it and make good decisions.

Mr KERENGA KUA (Sinasin-Yonggamugl) – Mr Speaker, the fact this continues to be an issue which is actually escalating rather than diminishing is evidence of the failure of the leadership of this Parliament over successive governments to address the issue decisively, once and for all.

20/07

The use of guns to facilitate the commission of an offence cannot be denied. It is a problem yet the way the debate is shaping up on the Floor of this Parliament is going to lead us into another state of paralysis again. It is going to lead to another five years of wasted opportunity. This is not a new debate or a new issue. It is as old as I have been in Port Moresby when I first became aware of this issue back in 1982. I was a first-year law student, when I went down to the old House of Assembly to observe the proceeding for the first time and coincidentally, Mr Speaker, the issue debated at the time was about the threats that gun holds in this county. The types of guns discussed was mere single shot, shot guns but they were debating in exactly the same format and content that we are debating today. I have listened to at least four or five speakers already and that was the very same kind of debate they had and in the end they paralysed themselves, failed to make a decisions and the issue has remained on the table without a resolution and in the interim, lives have been lost, people have been injured,

properties have been lost through injury in which guns have played a pivotal role. An otherwise timid person who does not have the conviction and the courage to commit an offence all of a sudden feels empowered when he has in his possession a gun. He is somebody else altogether and he commits the offence.

The records of the district courts throughout the country, National Court and Supreme Court is replete with evidence of offences where the gun has played a pivotal role. If we continue to debate it like this we are not going to resolve it. We are going to paralyse ourselves into inaction by listening to all these debates. At that time, they were debating shot guns, now we are debating all kinds of weapons SLRs, AK47, hand grenades, maybe machine guns somewhere. We are talking about those kinds of weapons. It is bigger. If we paralyse ourselves now with this kind of debate about the pros and cons when the evils of this thing is so obvious in front of us then the problem is going to be buried under the carpet.

In another 30 years' time, it is going to be an even bigger problem. We are going to defer the resolution of this problem to the next generation of leaders year's down the track. Our children are going to have to have to leap and try to deal with that issue. They don't deserve that, we are here now. The issue is in our hand, why we don't stand up as leaders, make tough decisions when tough decisions are needed. We stand up and make it.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Minister for Police for bringing up this issue. He is a new Minister, but I have to commend him for bringing this issue in the first 12 months of occupying his office because it is an important issue and that office needed to bring this issue up in an early point to demonstrate the importance of this issue amongst other issues we have to deal with.

But Mr Speaker, I beg to differ from the direction in which he wants to focus his attention. In his paper he states, 'my perspective as is the governments is to totally eradicate illegal weapons.' His focus is going to be on illegal weapons. Again in his conclusion in the last line he states, 'this government's position is to put together tough laws on illegal weapons.'

My contribution to the Minister is not to take a limited and narrow approach. You need to take a wider approach and also to deal with the availability of legal arms and ammunition.

21/07

He need to approach it from both fronts because what is legal today becomes illegal tomorrow. The bigger source of illegal firearms today were once legal firearms. If we just focus on the by product, we are forgetting the production machinery which will continue to produce illegal weapons. So as you try to control it, more is being introduced into the possession of

citizens of this country by the day. We need to look at it from both fronts. I would ask the Minister, while your attention is on this issue and you are keen to look at this issue and bring some resolution.

Perhaps, you should look at taking a very tough approach on the availability of legal weapons in this country and narrow it down just to the people who absolutely by necessity by virtue of their office need that weapon and can be no more than the Police, the Defence Force and the CIS. They are the only three organisations in this country whose duties necessarily require firearms. Everybody else, from the villager who needs to deal with a crocodile to a wild pig to a delinquent use, can prevail themselves for support from the police. And if the police system is inadequate in addressing their request for backup firearms to deal with those threats, well that is another issue that needs to be looked at. But you have to deal with this in a way that prevents the availability of firearms in the arms of ordinary citizens by firstly limiting fire arms to only this three organisations.

And all licencing or probating companies trading in guns and ammunition must be cancelled and banned. Nobody in this country must be licenced to supply guns or ammunition. We are cutting our own toes despite what we say. We say one thing but at the same time the facilities are there for these crimes to continue to perpetuate. In five years' time, 2022 onwards you will come here and talk about the same issue. Let us be decisive.

While I appeal to the Minister in these terms, I also want to appeal to us as leaders here. This is going to be a conscious debate. Think of yourselves as leaders, not as individuals. The country is under threat by a menace on the free availability of weapons, whether legal or illegal, and we need to deal with it decisively. Please I know you have all kinds of variations and points you want to argue, but the point is that for so long as we frustrate ourselves through debate and paralyse action and decisive approach we are not going to solve this issue and maybe our children are going to inherit this problem quite unfairly because we have failed them. Let us not fail them. Stand up as leaders, be decisive.

Let us ban all weapons and ammunition in this country in the hands of everybody except the Police, Army and CIS. Thank you.

Sir PETER IPATAS (Enga) – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the new Minister for tabling a very important issue on the Floor which has been outstanding for some time. I think as Members of this Parliament, we must also be reminded that we are here to make legislation. Our job is to pass

laws. Don't worry about the implementation. We are here to pass laws. From our own experience we see that law and order is a big problem in this country.

One of the factors contributing to the law and order issue is guns. Forget all the business interest or whatever is happening. When we are in Parliament, we have to look at the business interest of the people and the country. When we talk about police being incapacitated to work, one of the obstacles they face is that when illegal guns are already in the hands of our citizens.

22/07

When we are talking about police being incapacitated to work, one of the obstacle they also face is that you have illegal guns already in the hands of our citizens. How can you expect the Police to go and execute their duties when the guns are already in the hands of our citizens?

I come from an area that is losing properties and lives because of guns. I want to appeal to our Members to support the notion put by the Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl. Why do we need guns in this country?

Our people know how to hunt pigs and catch fish the traditional way. They still have the traditional skills and ability to survive. Guns are the biggest problem we have in this country.

So I want to support the Minister who is taking some action. However, he would recall, that in my province we had the Enga Development Forum, where we invited the Minister and the Attorney General. We were fortunate to also have General Singirok there. This was the person who headed the Guns Committee. He spoke as a military man – somebody who is trained to handle a gun pleading to our leaders to do away with guns. He literally cried and this is somebody who has been taught to handle guns.

Mr Speaker, the Minister has already informed us that he is taking certain steps to correct the Police Force. Of course the enforcement of this law is going to be difficult, but let us leave that to the Police.

Let us accord every support we can to the Police Minister and the Department to ensure that they are doing their job effectively. I have said many times that Police is a liability to this country. They are no longer assets to us as a country. We need to have corrective actions taken. And in this instance, while I have the opportunity, Mr Speaker, the Australians offered their assistance. Sometimes we have to be proud as a nation, and defend our territory.

Sometimes we have to admit that we need others to help us. In the case of law and order, we have over the years seen that we cannot manage law and order in this country.

Time and time I have been asking this on the Floor of Parliament. Why are we not taking the offer that the Australia has presented? What is so difficult about giving immunity likewise

sending troops to Vanuatu. When Sir Julius Chan was the Prime Minister back then, he sent troops to Vanuatu. At that time if we had asked for immunity, it would have been the right thing to do because we were sending our citizens to another country to protect the citizens over there.

In this case, we have a serious law and order issue and if the Australians are to come here we can give them immunity. Why not? What is the big deal?

Unless we sort the law and order issues and the gun issues, this country will never grow.

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The country will never develop as much as the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Cabinet and this Parliament want to develop this country, law and order will always be an impediment to development. If we want to address the law and order issue this is one area that we should all support to ban the use and possession of guns. The next step should be to invite the Australians to come to this country on the terms that was agreed on before and help us to improve our Police Force so we do not go down the track that we are going.

Some of us as leaders but we are not facing the day to day law and order problems on the street. There's a lot of issues that need to be attended to. It is about time we put the country first. We as Members of this Parliament should do our duties as legislators and legislate to allow the processes to implement what we legislate here.

So, leaders, I want to appeal to us. There are a lot of laws we are compromising in this country. Our systems of government is the same. We always blame the system for not working but who is too be blamed? We should be blamed. We always compromise. Sometime we over politicise things. Goodness, we must start to do the right thing for this nation.

Ban guns. It is not our traditional implement. Ban it for good and ask the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet to, in their wisdom, revisit the ECP program and allow 200 to 300 police personnel to come here and assist.

When we are struggling economically it is also good for us to allow them to come and when the rent houses, guy vehicles, do shopping and so on they bring in much needed foreign currency. So it's not only about law and order but the economy will benefit also.

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity but let me some this, sometimes we must not take the middle way all the time. The country is important. If you make it illegal, yes, I concur with the Governor of East Sepik. Yes, they are getting smart but they are manufacturing guns because we are allowing guns to be present in the country. If they make it we jail them to deter them from doing it. Our children are not stupid. They see other people

carrying guns so they also made theirs. When we outlaw it, do you think they will continue to make it, they will not.

Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA (Kiriwina-Goodenough – Minister for Forest) – Thank you Mr Speaker.

I wish to contribute to this debate also but first of all I wish to commend the Minister for Police for the presentation of this paper today.

I would also like to concur with the Member for Sinasina, Kerenga Kua that we must ban guns in Papua New Guinea.

We know the issue. We cannot side step the issue nor can we deviate from the issue. We know the problems guns are causing in our country.

I totally agree with the Governor of Enga who mentioned the issues in the highlands provinces but having said that, we have the same issues at our doorstep in Milne Bay Province. It's a big, big issue and the country has heard stories about the holdups in Alotau Town. Once a very peaceful province is now experiencing the same issues that are widespread throughout the country.

The piracy issues. At one stage, I could just get on a boat and just travel down to the Trobrian Islands, the Islands of Love, but I cannot do that now. I would have to go and ask for police to protect me before I can go to the islands. It has become an issue that needs to be dealt with.

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I totally agree with other speakers that we need to ban guns completely in this country. We know the issues, why are we continuing to dwell on known issues? If we know the issues, deal with it and get rid of it.

Mr Speaker, I drove home last night around 9 o'clock and upon arrival I was told that my neighbours were held up where three guns were involved for reasons I don't know but it has become a daily issue in our capital city and our country that we need to deal with.

Mr Speaker, one of the issue we need to deal with is the criteria in issuing of licences. Somebody can go to the police station, apply for a licence and easily get it. Where is the training? People need to be trained to handle guns. People need to go through certain processes to be educated enough on the usage of guns. Today people apply for a gun licence just like a

driver's licence where you apply for a licence and there you are given a P-Plate and already driving.

It is a destructive weapon. When you hold a gun, are you trained enough to hold on to that weapon? If you are not trained, don't touch it. You cannot just say, here kid, get the grass knife and go cut grasses, no. You have to train them to use the bush knife or grass knife because that knife will turn around and kill him one day. Likewise with guns.

Mr Speaker, going back to the issue of handling of guns, so many times we blame the about people holding on to the guns or the person handling the guns but we don't check out the where the illegal weapons came from causing destructions to properties and human lives. We deal with the person handling the weapons but we don't check who actually supply that weapon.

The penalty must also apply to the people who supply the guns and not only the ones handling the guns. Most often, the owner or the supplier of that gun escape from being dealt with by the law. The penalty the offender gets must also apply to the supplier of the gun also.

The other thing is the supply of cartridges or bullets. We are just worried about the person handling the gun with the bullets but not the person who also supplies the bullets. We must deal with these people.

I know other Members want to talk so looking at the industry I'm heading at the Forest, many people in the forest industry wants to obtain guns to protect their lives. But when these guns end up in the wrong hands and causing deaths, companies are not dealt with. We must deal with them as well.

Many illegal weapons are roaming around. If we are to conduct our due diligence and check the background of those weapons, they've come from companies and corporate companies and ended up in the hands of the individuals so we have to deal with these people.

Mr Speaker, a point also is that we as leaders must lead by examples. We go out to tell people to surrender their weapons but we leaders are still holding on to our arms and running around. The Minister for Finance just said he surrendered his already that is leading by example so we leaders must also surrender ours if we want our people to surrender their guns. I personally don't have a weapon.

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As for me I am not holding onto a weapon and I do not need a weapon to protect me as I firmly believe the Lord will always protect me.

Let's look at America, a few months ago a young man took a gun to school and gunned everyone down. If we are not careful with the laws that are governing this issue that we are dealing with, what is happening out there will happen in our country.

That is why I will agree with the Member of Sinasina-Yonggamugl, Honourable Kerenga Kua, we must ban guns today. It is about time that we put our feet down and deal with the issue once and for all, otherwise if we don't we will be discussing tomorrow while people continue to die, properties are destroyed and investors will find it difficult to invest in this country so we need to deal with it, set it aside and ban guns to allow Papua New Guinea to progress peacefully.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT (Namatanai) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand here to say thank you to the Minister for Police and also commend him for his report. As we have all heard, this issue is very serious.

I just want to add a little more on to what the other Members have said, I will not take too much time. Many Members have made suggestions on the way forward but I didn't hear anyone talk about the roots of the problem and not in this specific issue that I am going to talk about.

The Police Department is not resourced properly and we are not serious about funding them adequately to cater for these problems. We do not allocate money to them and we are complaining on the other side. I have not heard any member raise this point. Are we going to be serious about curbing this law and order problem or are we going to seriously fund the Department that is going to monitor, regulate and control this area.

Now, we see that the Police Departments budget is being cut down and we do not know if they are going to be receiving their funding this year or not.

So, we need to start somewhere in order for us to tackle some of the issues we have discussed because there are going to be processes and stages that we are going to go through to make this happen. Many of the problems happening here like the rascal activities and armed hold-ups that are happening, as mentioned by the Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl and I agree but if we leave to the Police, CIS and the Defence to handle, some of the activities that are happening in the towns are created by these very people who have access to weapons. The Police are doing it and the Defence are doing it, so if we restrict the community for holding onto one do you think it will resolve the problem?

We need to be realistic about how we approach this and, Police Minister, I am ready to lobby and support you to make it happen. I think what we need to do, as a remedial suggestions to you, is to resource your department well and come up with a strategic action plan of how to cater for it. The licensing process for weapons too is an issue on its own. We have heard the Forest Minister and others member talk about it so it is a contentious issue.

We do not have an adequate system in place to screen who we can issue licenses to and who does not qualify. When transferring licenses from one ownership to another, we don't scan through if the new owner is fit to have it

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We don't know the background status of this particular person who is going to purchase these firearms.

We must not just talking about newly registered weapon or allowing them to register new ones, no, the transferred ones as well.

These are the core issues that the Police Department has to accommodate first and foremost before we debate on other ways to address this issue. So if we are going to be serious in addressing the issue than let's stop discussing it and address it right now. Fund the Police Department adequately so that an action plan is put in place by the minister on how to start on curbing this problem into future.

In addition to that, let's look at the other sectors that are contributing to this law and order issue. Our people are not having money in their pockets and when that happens they resort to other means to survive. When you feel hungry than you got to feed yourself, there is no other way.

So here we are subjecting them by pushing them into the corner so that they can fend for themselves, and here we complain about why that happened. What right have we got to complain when we push them to the corner.

Let's be serious about supporting ideas that put money back into their pockets. So we come back to the issue of employment and agriculture. If we cannot give them employment in big contracts, industries and some sort of commercial business then forget it. Let's go back to our land and support them because 90 per cent of our land is out there. Yet we are not supporting our people to stay on their land. That is why, they are finding means and ways to survive and so they are coming to the city.

And here we are pointing fingers at each other. We, New Irelanders normally say if you point one finger at someone the other three fingers are pointing back to you.

We have heard it and so we need to take ownership of this issue. I think first and foremost, let's fund the department adequately to implement those plans to curb this problem and so we all must support it.

Minister for Police, I stand here today to give whatever support from this side of Parliament, and you have heard what some of our Governors have said.

The gun is not the problem but the person using the gun is the problem. The gun is like a car on the road and the driver who is in control must ensure not to hit a pedestrian.

And so let's look at it on a holistic approach by how we are going to curb it by getting to the root of it first. The root of the problem is we are not seriously funding the Police Department to curb this issue by coming up with an action plan.

In addition to that, all the borders of this country need funding as well. If we don't adequately fund the borders then how are we going to protect all our borders? We are just allowing smugglers to smuggle illegal weapons into the country through the borders for reasons only known to them. But we are not controlling and monitoring it and even we know nothing about it.

And that's a police issue and we need to fund Police Department adequately before we debate on other good ideas on how we curb it.

That's my little contribution as member representing the people of Namatanai, thank you.

Mr PETER YAMA (Madang) – Mr Speaker, many good debates have been raised on this Floor of Parliament by my colleagues.

Before I commence, firstly, I want to repent from some of my sins of owning guns. But I owned these guns legally for 30 years and I don't have any bad records of abusing it. I have to be honest with what I do with my gun.

We don't want to be seen as liars here pretending to say all the good deeds of ourselves. And blaming our people by saying that they are doing this and that with the weapons. Some of us Members don't have license to guns that we own so we have to admit the truth.

In saying that I fully support what the Member for Namatanai has mentioned in his last point on adequately funding the Police Department to curb the issue of gun.

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Firstly, let me commend the Minister for presenting this statement to Parliament regarding matters relating to guns.

As the Governor of East Sepik stated, we don't have proper figures and statistics to actually know how many guns are being carried about by our young people and how many deaths relating to gun abuse in criminal activities. There are no figures on how many licensed guns private security firms own. There is no report on how many home-made or factory made guns used in tribal fights killing people.

There is also no proper report on guns used by police and how they have used those guns in scenes where it has resulted in loss of lives. I believe many people have died at the hands of criminals but also many have died at the hands of police personnel.

The biggest problem in this country have all been highlighted by the Member for Namatanai and Governor of East Sepik and I believe that the sentiments they have shared have a lot of meaning to all the issues we have now in this country.

Mr Speaker, when I was a young man and my father was a police officer in Enga he had only one gun. He never used a high powered gun to control a crowd of over a thousand people. That was in Kompiam and then onto Laigam, Porgera, Kandep and he commanded such authority with the late Jim Taylor. One riffle only and he controlled law and order in those places.

Mr Speaker, we also lived in Pangia in the time of the current Prime Minister's father. My father served his father in those days and it was again only one gun. I never saw them use these sophisticated guns like SLR, MK and AK47 and so on. With one single rifle there was no problem.

Mr Speaker, that system and that respect still hinges in the remote areas of Papua New Guinea and there is no problem with that.

Our problem we have in this country after independence is that the young boys and girls have been rejected by the education system and they don't have formal education. There are a lot of drop-outs and they are the ones who do not know how to survive in life.

We have given hope to 98 per cent of our children and have given them the opportunity to go to good schools but what about the drop-outs who do not have hope and are completely rejected like myself.

I may be one out of a million but I survived. I have never been to formal education because I was a drop-out. But thank God I am in the Parliament.

I survived and became somebody from a police man to a businessman and to a politician. And I thank God for all the wealth and the name that he has bestowed me over the years.

Mr Speaker, I must stand up and speak for what I believe is right. We have not given our people hope in life and we have completely rejected them. It is sad because the young ones out

there do not know where to start their lives and where to finish. These are the ones who have nothing to live for and are causing problems in this country.

The Government is in talks with the Australian Police and we are always talking about allocating more money to police and provide all sorts of ideas but the fact of the matter remains that these are our children, our citizens and as Members of Parliament we are supposed to serve them. They are our citizens.

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We are supposed to serve them, they are our citizens. Without them there is no country, no Parliament. They are our children. We must deal with them with love, not with guns and not with more money to law enforcement agencies. We should be dealing with them with love and care.

How do we deal with our own children in this country? Of course, they may not be our children because we have all the money and everything we put our children to the best schools, we educate them and they are somebody. But, what about the ones who are underprivileged and have no hope?

We need to address them properly. If we can address the root of the problem in this country such as giving them some formal education and give them the right things to do in life and get the Word of God to shape them and transform them, to make them become a better man and they can be rehabilitated by the Word of God.

And then impart the knowledge that they need in life to become a better person in our communities and our lives then they won't give us any more troubles. If you are prepared to give more money to police to go and shoot our people. If we get them arrested and charged, they'll go to jail and come back to do the same things again.

It's in the blood, survival of the fittest, how you survive does not matter, when they have a common interest to survive these young people, peer groups get together and say we don't care what happens to us, we have to survive, do it. That's what they are doing.

Mr Speaker, the government must put more money into the law and order problem and one way to do it is to get all these young men, how many thousands of them and give them an education. Put them into a school somewhere in Menyamya or Kaintiba or even get them on to an island such as Manus or Bagbag Island. I am prepared to put 10 000 young man and women onto Bagbag Island, build a big school there and equip them with knowledge and training. Bring in teachers from Singapore, Malaysia, Burma or Philippines to train them in carpentry,

plumbing and other menial skills to enable them to get jobs. And make them become somebody in this country, give them some skills so that at least they know where to start.

We cannot continue to let them out on the streets of this country and put more money to police and other law enforcement agencies, no. That is not the way to solve this problem. This problem will never, ever be solved as long as these peer groups are still in the streets of Papua New Guinea.

They have multiplied from 1975 up until today. Since after Independence all the drop outs have been sent to a pool. It is like water being poured into a bucket a cup at a time, eventually it will overflow. That's what's happening here, overflow of Papua New Guinea, do you think you will solve this problem. You cannot solve this problem here.

Survival of the fittest. They will survive, they don't care how they live or die. You said that different places are peaceful, as they say, we in Milne Bay are peace loving people. We are good people, we have no trouble and we hardly have any hijacking or sea pirates. Yes you are telling the truth.

We in Madang also have the same notion in the past. People from Bagbag will come and say we are good people, we love one another but now where is this love for one another?

In Milne Bay it is the same. Sea pirates shooting people everywhere, if they miss they may come and shoot you too, Deputy Prime Minister. They are coming after you. Anywhere any time they will get you before they get anybody else. They are on the run.

What we need to do is like what I am doing in Madang. I identified them and organised their training. I've got my one hundred boys in Madang and I will send the first trip to the Philippines. I will give those skills and knowledge. I have budgeted for it and put money there to get them to train the peer groups from the streets of Madang.

I have picked them from all the districts in Madang and get them out of Madang so I can bring back Beautiful Madang. That's what I am doing now. I am not selecting them from grades 10, 11 and 12, my selection criteria has dropped to grade six, not grade seven.

I am picking them one by one. I am cleaning Madang Town. I will start somewhere. I will pile them with love and peace by understanding their problems and not with guns and giving more money to police and law enforcement agencies to kill my sons and daughters. They are my citizens.

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I love them, the ones that are rejected. That is why Christ came to die for them, I will stand by them because the Government after Government have failed them. We must give them

hope. They are just like you and I. We can't blame this Government. All the past governments have failed. But we must start somewhere. Educate those young ones and that is what I am doing. And if we can do it all through the other provinces, I tell you, we will reduce the crime. We try somewhere. I don't care whether I don't succeed but at least I tried. At the end of the day, Papua New Guinea or Madang will have less problems one day. Four years down the line, you will be surprised that Madang has less problems. Madang will become beautiful again, a place where people respect each other.

Mr Speaker, I don't believe in putting money into the Police Force to kill our citizens because the Police also shoot many of our youths. If you compare the statics or proper data, it's likely that the Police have killed more people compared to criminals. I believe that if the Government is serious in sorting out this problem, we need to evaluate ourselves and disarm ourselves from the guns. I have about eight guns in my possession which I will hand over tomorrow. For thirty years I had guns in my possession and I have not used them but that was because I had a security firm and I kept it safely not like the bogus security firms popping up everywhere.

There are many security companies here. So far there has been no deaths related to the use of fire arms in my security firm. There are leaders in Parliament who also have security firms who are doing a great job in supporting the police in this country. Let us not pass the buck around in Parliament and try to ban the use and ownership of guns. The issue here is there are youths out there who are disowned, traumatized and uncared for that are causing all these trouble. As a government we must address them and give them work and care for them, fulfil their needs in terms of education. I think they will be a better citizen in this country.

Mr Speaker, that is my opinion and that is if we help our youths in the country we will not be face too many troubles. However, if you want to see them dead and continue funding money into the Police Force then it's up to you but one day you will die and go to Heaven and before the throne of God and you will be answerable for it. You Parliamentarians who made the legislations on firearms have also failed to take care of your own people by providing the opportunity for them to become better people. That is what is missing in life and we must give that to the people. The young men and women of this country deserve our attention now. Please let us put some budget in big proposition and let's try to solve these problems throughout the country. We can start small but we will get there if we start somewhere. Thank, you Mr Speaker.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA (Gulf) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I won't take long. I want to confine my comments to the ministry and to the subject at hand. The Minister is asking to put tougher laws on illegal weapons. This means that he has to bring the legislation back here.

It does not cost money, it will only cost our time and our intellect to debate those laws that he is bringing back. So I urge the Minister to bring it back to Parliament. We have to impose tougher laws on illegal weapons and on licensing and on those suppliers of guns. We need to impose tougher laws on the process of issuance and reporting of stolen and missing guns from the armoury in the three arms of our law and order agencies; the Police, Defence and CS including those security companies in possession of guns legally.

As stated by the honourable Member for Namatanai, transfer of ownership and the process of checking people with good character and must be carried out too.

On the issue raised by the Minister for Communication and Energy, looking after the people in the places like Gulf, West Sepik, East Sepik, and Western where there are crocodiles, we need guns. We need guns for hunting purposes especially in our bushes where there is a lot of wild pigs, birds and et cetera.

Mr Speaker, I just want to restrict my comments to the subject at hand. If we deal with this things step by step, we will come closer to solving the problem especially the wider problems that we are talking about in terms of law and order.

Let us do the things that are practical. Let us do the things that we can resolve without too much emphasis on spending more money. All that the Minister is asking for is that, as legislators when we bring the laws we exercise our responsibility to our people properly. I think that is all he is asking for. It is not much but I think a lot can be achieved if we start of that way.

The other issues on piracy and on law and order, I think we can leave that to another day. So let us just restrict our discussion on guns and assist the Minister to bring in the reforms that he wants under his mandate to make sure that he brings the right laws to make the changes necessary for gun control and ban in this country.

Mr RICHARD MARU (Yangoru-Saussia – Minister for National Planning & Monitoring) - Thank you, Mr Speaker. I, too, would like to contribute to this very important discussion.

I have experience in taking the mobile squad at the great cost to my district and flew them over. I realised that, even though I took them over to run the operation, families will never

disclose to you who is in possession of the illegal guns because of our culture and wantok system. That is a reality.

When there is an issue, the village or community leaders are always talking about compensation as a way to resolve issues at the village or community level. So we are not allowing the rule of law to proceed.

For instance, when you go to Singapore, the laws are clear there. Anyone found convicted of being in possession of drugs, the penalty is death. What the Court needs to do is just find out whether or not you are the one bringing in the drugs. Does the evidence say so?

But in our country, there is no respect for the rule of law. Regardless of how many laws we bring in, the system is not working. So, I want to now thank the Minister for bringing forward this Report.

I would like to ask, why the rule of law is not effective in our country, unlike in other countries, the people fear the law.

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They know the end result of breaching the law. But in PNG, we are embedded in our customs, and we solve our issues through compensation with families through wantok system and that is the way we have always carried on.

So, my challenges to the Minister and the legal team that is drafting this new law is, we must not allow the discretion on some of the serious crimes committed in this nation. The Courts must not have the discretion. I want to emphasise this point today. When the penalty for carrying around an illegal fire arm is 30 years of jail sentence, that should be the final decision with no discretion and every one must be made aware of the penalty of being in possession of an illegal firearm. The same must be for other crimes. We are giving too much discretion. The countries who successfully maintained law and order are those that don't have discretion but have strict rule of law and there is respect among all citizens.

The time has come for us to accept reality and accept our failures of our past and draft laws and legislation that does not allow for discretion. Every citizen must know that if you are in possession of an illegal firearm or if you are caught supplying ammunition that such will be the penalty. This is something that we have failed to achieve in all honesty over the last 43 years. We can sit and talk. We cannot solve unemployment issues overnight and that is the truth, 75 per cent of our students are going back to their villages with diminished hopes for a better future. No government, can be blamed for that as it is not something that we can solve overnight but I think that the time has come for us to relook the laws and the penalties and how

we take away discretion and everyone must know the consequences of committing a certain crime. We have even passed death penalty but we are struggling to implement it. What is wrong with us? We don't seem to have the guts to do the right thing that our people have voted us here to do! It's a disease, we talk but we don't make it happen. From all that I have listened to, Mr Minister, you should be encouraged today. All of us want to pass the tough laws, we want to remove discretion and we want to make it happen now! We have been talking for 43 years so, Minister, we are going to support you but look at the drafting of legislation and we must take a bi-partisan approach.

I also agree with the East Sepik Governor, we must ensure there's severe penalties for those harming others using knives. I am fed up with this lawlessness in my electorate. Do away with discretion, implement severe penalties and everyone must know. No, custom, no compensation, no nothing! You will go to jail and stay away. It is time we step up and make the hard decisions and transform the country. Otherwise, we will be here sitting and just talking. We have the privilege. Let's make it happen. I want to assure the Minister that I will be one of the first Member of Parliament in supporting you to enact this legislation and please make sure there is no discretion and all citizens must be made aware of the minimum penalty of being in possession of a firearm, weapon or ammunition.

Mr Speaker, enough of having no respect to the rule of law, we must make tough decisions and stand by the decisions and repeal discretions and let us make it happen to change the law and order situation in the country. It is very hard to bring investors here. Many people fear to come here because of the law and order situation. Let us be honest with ourselves and let's respect the rule of law making tough laws with no discretions and make sure people get the penalty. There should be no compromise on this. Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr CHARLES ABEL (Alotau – Minister for Treasury) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise also to contribute to this debate and I, too, want to congratulate the Police Minister for reactivating the issue around the gun report. I must say it is just a reflection of this Government's acknowledgement of this very serious issue. I want to thank all the Members of Parliament that contributed to the debate today. It was an excellent debate and we can certainly do more of this kind of open input into this sort of issues.

Mr Speaker, the point I want to emphasise and our government is trying to emphasise is that we are taking this matter very seriously. Those of us who are here today, must understand the finality that when someone is holding a weapon the person on the other side is a young

disillusioned Papua New Guinean that may be under the influence of drug or alcohol. The solution that person is holding in his hand is final.

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Pressing of the trigger can end your life in that instant and I have faced hold-ups three times under the barrel of the gun with our young boys before I came into Parliament. That is one issue about guns, the finality of the solutions.

Look at America today, a developed country. Our issue today at the end of the day is the development issue. United States is a developed country with the most liberal gun laws in the world and also has the highest death rate from guns in the world. So it's not a simple issue, but when it comes to development, every one of us try to address development issues in our electorates. It is what we debate every day, it is the crux of our budgetary issues.

The ultimate aim is to provide opportunity for our young people, that's our aim, that's the challenge that we dedicate our lives to on the Floor of Parliament for our electorate and that is ultimately the solution.

Mr Speaker, the gun issue is something that is proven also here today. Now, we have been through a process which has been concluded. Parliament sanctioned the gun committee, Parliament sanctioned a comprehensive and an exhaustive exercise to go ahead and seek the opinion of the public and the input from us the leaders which concludes the processes and the gun report. The gun report has been tabled with the recommendation clearly out there. As a Government and the Parliament, do we need to go back and revisit it again? Do we take the risk of debating it for the next ten years?

Mr Speaker, I want to come to the other point that very importantly, we can bring in all the possible measures including, strengthening the laws. I want to remind the members of Parliament that Cabinet has endorsed a series of recommendations to amend the Criminal Code in relation to violent crimes, particularly crimes involving guns. And our Police Minister has come in relatively clear to bring that to the Floor of Parliament with a range of measures that need to be undertaken.

But I think from the series of measures apart from the overall development question is addressing the prevalence of guns today in the society. If those people that held up BSP in Alotau came in with bush knives that would have been a different story. But when they went in with automatic weapons, what are we supposed to do, even what are the police supposed to do? Comparing guns and bush knives is a completely different thing. Example of a child

walking into the classroom and killing 20 – 30 people with an automatic weapon is the kind of consequences with the modern weapon that we have today.

Mr Speaker, the signal we are trying to send from the Government is that this is a serious issue. We need to reactivate the issue itself, we have to reconsider the recommendations of the gun report and the bottom line, as leaders, we have to make some decisions because at the moment in many of our villages it is the rule of the gun. It's not the rule of the gunman, it's the rule of the gun in the village. It's who holds the most powerful gun in the village. That's the person that makes the rule. You can be the Deputy Prime Minister or anybody but when you go down there, the people will respect and protect the person who holds such weapons. That's the issue today down at the village level.

In the last five years through our Police Modernisation Program, this Government has put K270 million into the police force. We are trying to invest into all these issues but when you have the prevalence of guns it's very difficult to handle this issue in a simplistic manner. But one way I think we can deal with is to remove the presence of the guns at the first place. That is what the gun report is telling us, so we all must take this very seriously.

I think through our Minister and the Cabinet, though we all had our input but it's not a simple argument. But I think it's time for decision making, stronger laws and seriously consider the recommendations of the gun report to remove guns from this country, except ones in the hands of the disciplinary forces.

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

That the question be now put.

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

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**CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY – ANNUAL REPORT, 2014 –
PAPER AND STATEMENT – MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

Mr JOHN PUNDARI (Kompiam-Ambum – Minister for Environment and Conservation) – Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank the Government for allowing me to deliver this statement to Parliament. I also wish to acknowledge the Prime Minister, Hon Peter O'Neill and the National Government who have been very supportive in providing the

necessary political will to address the existential threat of climate change through a whole of government approach.

Mr Speaker, allow me to give you the brief history of what we as a country have so far responded to address the effects of climate change. The historic Paris Climate Change Agreement was ratified by Parliament in 2016 and the instrument of ratification was deposited in New York by the Minister for Foreign Affairs & Immigration Hon Rimbink Pato, during a special side event organized by the former Secretary General to the UN, H.E Ban Ki Moon on the 21st September 2016.

I am pleased to inform this Honorable House that on the 4th November, 2016, the Paris Climate Change Agreement entered into Force after more than 55 countries accounting for more than 55% of total greenhouse gas emissions globally deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with the Depository which is the Office of the UN Secretary General. Now the number of countries who have ratified the Paris Agreement is 174.

Mr Speaker, if I may briefly inform the House on three unique characteristics of the Paris Agreement; first it is a flexible agreement, and does not bind contributions to reduce emissions like the Kyoto Protocol. Second, it is sensitive to economic growth and development, and allows countries to choose which sector they wish to reduce more emissions in. By doing so, a country will record it's commitment in an official document called the National Determined Contributions or known by many as the NDCs. Finally, developing countries, are encouraged to reduce their emissions if they are supported by developed countries. If developed countries fail to meet their financial obligations, developing countries must not restrict their growth and development, through aggressive means to reduce emissions

Mr Speaker, the elements contained in the Paris Agreement are being implemented through the National Climate Compatible Development Management Policy 2014,

Climate Change (Management) Act 2015 and UN Paris Agreement (Implementation) Act 2016. Therefore, according to international law and practice Papua New Guinea can be deemed to have accepted the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement by state practice.

On 06 October 2017, I launched the Papua New Guinea National REDD+ Strategy 2017-2027. This Strategy provides the strategies to capitalize our vast virgin forests. Following the approval of the Strategy by the National Executive Council (NEC) in May 2017, the Climate Change & Development Authority (CCDA) and other government agencies and our key donor partners are developing the REDD+ investment Plan to be submitted to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to access climate finance.

The REDD+ Investment Plan is set to be finalized this year. This will also coincide with the finalization of the National Forest Monitoring System, Forest Reference Emission Level and Safeguards Information System.

Start REDD+ implementation will commence soon after these activities are completed. Initially, the REDD+ pilot projects will be implemented in the four regions.

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On this note, I am honored to inform you and also this Honorable House that GCF Board in its meeting in November 2017, had approved our proposal for readiness finance in the sum of US\$677, 427.00. (approx. K2m). The readiness finance is a GCF funding window earmarked for developing countries such as ours, to have access to it for the purposes of strengthening the institutional capacity of their national designated authorities (NDA), in our case, is CCDA. I am advised that the readiness phase will commence this year with the assistance of our delivery partner, Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI).

Mr. Speaker, for Papua New Guinea, with APEC on our door steps this year in 2018, this will be an opportunity to showcase to the global community that despite being a climate vulnerable country, we are doing everything we can to adapt and mitigate to the effects of climate change as a responsible global citizen.

Mr. Speaker, when this government was about to be formed soon after the 2012 and 2017 General Elections, we made bold statements and framed a blue print of action plans for the new Government to align itself and work towards them. The statements and action plans are contained in *Alotau Accord I and II*. Under the *Alotau Accord*, I as the Minister for Environment & Conservation & Climate Change was directed to "Restructure the Department of Environment & Conservation with an emphasis on improving the capacity of the Office of Climate Change".

In this regard, I am pleased to say that the Office of Climate Change is now a fully-fledged Authority with an established policy and legal framework and is implementing PNG's obligations under the Paris Agreement noting our unique circumstances as a developing country. The brief successes I outlined just a while ago reflect my Ministry's seriousness in addressing the effects of climate change and implementing one of this government's priority.

Mr Speaker, the same can be done for Conservation, Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) which is also under my Ministry and I am also pleased to

announce that we will be tabling a Protected Areas Bill in this Parliament in the coming months after the necessary vetting processes are completed.

Mr. Speaker, Climate Change is a cross cutting issue and at present, PNG through the Climate Change & Development Authority does not have sufficient financial resources to effectively implement all the priorities under the climate accord. At this juncture, I implore that a close partnership must be forged with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) amongst other funding sources to enable much needed financial resources to catalyze renewable energy projects and low carbon initiatives throughout the country.

To this end, negotiations within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is underway on the possible hosting of a GCF Board meeting in PNG in either 2019 or 2020 depending on the decision of the GCF Board.

This hosting, will present a unique opportunity to showcase the vulnerability of our communities and in turn will enable key climate change projects to be presented to the GCF Board for subsequent approval.

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I am looking forward to a Green Climate Fund board meeting in Papua New Guinea if ever it is made possible by the Green Climate Fund executives and board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the hosting will present a unique opportunity to showcase the vulnerability of our communities and in turn will enable key climate change projects to be presented to the Green Climate Fund board for subsequent approval.

Mr Deputy Speaker, reducing our emissions should be a secondary consideration unless it is supported by international financing initiatives such as the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation initiatives or REDD Plus which aims to provide funding to landowners to manage the forest in a way which assist with the long term storage of carbon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are fortunate to live in a time when the global community recognises the importance of protecting the global biodiversity and dealing with climate change issues by establishing financing mechanisms such as the Global Environment Fund Facility and the Green Climate Fund.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I alluded to yesterday in the debate on the statement brought to Parliament by the Minister for Provincial Affairs, Papua New Guinea is a very unique country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we host, in a small land space of about one per cent only of the global land mass a seven to eight per cent of the global biodiversity. Some of which are endemic

and unique to Papua New Guinea alone like the Birdwing Butterfly found in the Managalas Plateau and others. Of the 10 tree kangaroos found in the world about seven or eight of them are only found in Papua New Guinea and one or two of them are endangered species.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are a great and unique country that is making significant inroads and contributions to the global community's effort in the protection of our global biodiversity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Papua New Guinea needs to strategically position itself to identify the most feasible market in order to benefit directly from climate change and renewable energy activities and low carbon initiatives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, from the time I became the Minister for Environment, Conservation and Climate Change I have made it my priority to begin the process of streamlining Papua New Guinea's international legal obligations with the domestic policy and legal framework.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with the establishment of a home grown climate change policy and legal framework, I envisage further consultation and amendments may be done to reflect the National Climate Compatible Development Management Policy in harmony with other related legislation since it will dictate our country managing domestic and international climate change issues for the benefit of our people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, for example, to kick start this process, I have given directions for REDD Plus to be incorporated in the proposed Protected Area Bill that I alluded to, to avoid overlaps between both my agencies, CEPA and CCDA and in turn will ensure consistency in both the respective enabling legislations. I am hopeful, Mr Deputy Speaker, that this process will be replicated by other State entities to ensure that we address the effects of climate change collectively and holistically.

Mr Deputy Speaker, for instance the development of food security policies by the Department of Agriculture is required and I know that they are making progress over there. Also, for example, the development of climate resilient infrastructure policy. If the Minister for Works, is listening, through you Mr Deputy Speaker, floods and climate related issues have washed away our bridges and our roads. We need a climate resilient policy on the sort of infrastructure we build going in to the future, because as I said earlier, it is not going to be any easier going forward.

To conclude Mr Deputy Speaker, let me reiterate that climate change is regarded as a key environment and development for the 21st Century affecting every continent and country. For Papua New Guinea, climate change will present challenges and opportunities. However, to tap into these opportunities the necessary institutional structures that are internationally acceptable

are needed to be put in place to access and channel international funds for climate financing to support priority adaptation and mitigation projects and programs.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, we have laid a strong foundation that will allow the country to transition into a low carbon pathway.

For PNG whose development is constrained by the rugged terrains, lack of infrastructure and an ever growing population, we are now running into major energy security issue. We cannot deny our plight, to serve our citizens, grow our economy and sustain it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we need to look forward to a future where we realistically consider blending of different energy sources in particular Renewable Energy to address the consumer demand for electricity generation. Even Coal as a potential energy source is being considered and we need to have a discussion and debate on this before moving forward.

Of course PNG's high environmental standards will need to be met and operation of such power plant should it be given the go ahead that will have to be conditional upon the project proponent's ability to efficiently manage the emissions of Green House gases.

These standards are mandatory across the world and in PNG there must not be any exception. We cannot sacrifice our development aspirations by totally rejecting one form of energy source for the other. However, we must strike a balance to see how best PNG can meaningfully take advantage of the opportunities presented and at the same time commit to our climate change mitigation targets. For instance, how can we produce energy from coal to assist us attain our national objectives of development and at the same time mitigate greenhouse gases and other hazardous gases which may potentially cause serious public health issue?

At this stage, we need to know the details of the type of technology to be used to reduce their carbon emissions from coal production.

To this end, I am proud to say that I have a vibrant technical team who made a submission to the UNFCCC on the development of a rule under the *Paris Agreement* that recognizes "Economic Diversification" which includes energy mixes, because the *Paris Agreement*, actually allows us to do that. This is reflected in the COP 21 accompanying decision paragraph 36, which allows a country to choose between which sector they can commit and which one they cannot.

It is not the intention of the *Paris Agreement* to sabotage economic and social development, rather allow countries to themselves decide what is best for them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Government is fully committed to ensuring that we manage this transformation carefully and effectively to ensure that it delivers the maximum economic benefit to all our citizen whilst protecting our natural resources for our future generations. Those are the same sentiments that I emphasised on when delivering the National Statement during the COP 23 closing plenary in Bonn, Germany; Mr Deputy Speaker, "it was stated in no uncertain terms that Developed Countries must not be pretenders and must come in good faith to help developing countries with the necessary support to implement the Paris Agreement."

I also want to inform Parliament that before we go out there and absorb what these critics tell us about what is right and what is not right about how we balance our social and economic growth priorities, with our environmental commitments, let us take time to educate ourselves about these international requirements. Most of these people who go to the media, and say what they say about us, fail to talk to us, fail to visit us, and fail to humble themselves and learn from our own domestic experts.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, as your Minister responsible for Climate changes, I will forever be grateful for the achievement and progress made so far.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it has been a team effort, line agencies, and technocrats of all the agencies including my agency, I will be forever grateful, even NGOs for that matter. The challenge now is to balance the economy growth with the sustainable development, and I have the faith and I have the trust that with the help of the good Lord, so much will be done in the years to come, based on the foundation and partnership that we have had thus far

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me thank you for your patience, I know that a lot of members would like to have some lunch now, and I thank you, for your patience as well.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – (Kiriwina-Goodenough – Minister for Forest) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I move that Parliament take note of the paper, and I wish to debate on it.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. First of all let me take the opportunity to congratulate the Minister who continues to perform in the Office of the Climate changes which is something new to this country, but he continues to perform very well in it.

I also would like to this opportunity to thank him that he allows his officers to work closely with my office, and personally, I would also like to thank him, in several of his trips

overseas, for allowing me to join him to participant in the very important issue of the climate changes in the world.

Climates change is here to stay, and it is something that we cannot deny.

Mr Deputy Speaker, climate change issues in our country are very clear. When you travel to my electorate, you are supposed to travel through more than 20 islands, before you get to Trobriand Island. However, the moment you leave Esa'ala, you find out that more than half of the islands have disappeared. Islands that we rest before traveling to the next island, we don't see anymore.

My late father was a teacher and we travel from island to island, because the old man teaches around there, and some of the islands that we visited do not exist anymore.

So climate change issues are here to stay and it is our responsibility as a Government to make sure we take charge of the issues of climate changes in our country.

Having said, on the REDD issues, while I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister, I also would like to pass on behalf of my ministry our sincere condolence to the former Director of the Office of OCCD, Mr Joe Pokana, who I hear, has passed on last week,.

Having said that, the climate changes are real, the REDD programmes that the Minister is driving is one that we would like to support. We know that most of the REDD issues are forest related. As you know, REDD + means reduced emissions in forest deforestation and degradation. And these issues now we speak about are very sensitive issues.

For us in Forestry, we believe and we have worked very closely with the Minister and his office to make certain that some of the areas that they have asked us to conserve, we have done so.

Although we know that these are issues that we need to deal with it, but we know that will continue to support the minister and his drive to make certain that its office meets his goals and aspirations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we also take note of the major funding from this office, the Green Climate Fund that is seated somewhere in American or Norway. We know that there is about 11 billion US dollars out there.

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However, to access these funds is so cumbersome that in order to apply for this funds you will have to through stringent process.

In order for us to access these funds, we need to set these steps and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister that he has done that in the last three to four years to

make certain that we get to that stage where Papua New Guinea can apply for these funds and be successful.

Having said this, we also have forest and we are looking at alternatives to control our forests. A lot of people are saying that Papua New Guinea owns the third-largest forest in the world. It is true that we own the third-largest rain forest in the world with 7 to 8 per cent of the world's flora and fauna is found here in the country and yet we say 7 to 8 percent but it could be more than that.

Mr Speaker, under the program that the forest is now currently undertaking, we have come to find out that there are certain species of wildlife that has never being found in the past are now being found.

Talk about tree species, when you go to Forest Office at the back of my office, you will see that they have placed canvas and on the canvas there are a lot of leaves spread right through. If you ask, they will tell you that these are new trees that have been discovered in Papua New Guinea. Trees that were never named in the past birds that were never named in the past and frogs that were never found in the past.

This shows that we have more than 7 to 8 per cent of the world's bio-diversity in this country, the flora and fauna, but it could be more than that. An example will be the fresh river shark found in the Gulf Province. A three-metre shark never found in the past is found here in PNG. So PNG is a country that is yet to be fully explored.

We, at the Forests Department believe that if the world is serious about conserving the forests in Papua New Guinea, they must find an alternate for us.

You cannot come to us and say, conserve your forests when you cannot give us the alternate. US\$11 billion plus is sitting out there under the Green Climate Funds, why can't you take it out and give it to us. Only a part of it. We are asking for what is rightfully ours.

Mr Speaker, secondly, we have to take charge of the carbon emission in our country. Industries like the LNG; the gas and oil projects are booming in PNG but are we charging them for the emission that they are producing in this country?

I congratulate the Minister because you have the laws in place now for us to make certain that those who emit so much carbon in this country must be held responsible.

The world that is emitting so much must be also responsible for the damage that they bring into our waters, and into the air that we breathe because our forest protects the lungs of human beings. Therefore, we support the Bills and Reports that are being presented.

I am here to congratulate the Minister and I look forward for the continuous working relationship with your office. We plead our support with you and I am very grateful that we are

working very closely with you to achieve some of the goals and measures that you have put in place.

Finally, PNG is a beautiful country and you will never find another country like Papua New Guinea. It is our responsibility to ensure that we protect PNG.

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As you are flying through Singapore you see non-stop fire burning unlike in PNG We have vast pit forest starting from West Sepik all the way to Milne Bay and to Western Province. We have rich pit soils and we must protect those pit soils. Pit soils are land just above the mangrove area, and they reach a depth of four to six metres and when you start a fire on this soil it cannot be extinguished unless you dig it up and bury it. In Indonesia currently, there are fires burning on their pit soil continuously. We need to protect the pit soils that we have in this country.

The other area that needs protection is the blue water ocean. One of the fastest moving current in the world is found here in PNG in the waters of Milne Bay These blue ocean carry a lot of carbon through that flow right through the Jomad passage and into the waters of Australia. The National Research Institute has taken that on board to study and they are also working with Forests to make certain that those blue water concept that is running in our ocean that carries a lot of emission must be protected. The ship that run through our waters must pay their dues for the pollution that they bring to our waters through the fuel they pump or spill and the rubbish and plastic they dispose. They must pay for that.

Mr Speaker, once again, I want to congratulate the Minister for a job well done and you have the support my ministry, thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I want to firstly apologise to Members of Parliament. We have been here for some time, but we represent our people and we say what needs to be said and make important decisions on behalf of our country.

I want to say a few words in support of the Minister for Climate Change and what his efforts have been so far.

Firstly, on behalf of the people of Oro, I would like to thank the Minister and the Government for recognising the Managalas Plateau, an area of more than 300 000 hectares now conserved and putting Papua New Guinea on the world map so to speak.

My comments in addition to the statement made by the Minister for Forest, I am very happy to see that he is very concerned about the environment. I would like to see more effort

from his ministry in getting out there and demonstrating his concern. For instance, taking on board the very entities that are destroying this nation that we are talking about here. We talk about protecting and constantly remind ourselves about how great it is in this country that we call home, Papua New Guinea. However, there is much work to be done and capacity is needed. We cannot wait for the world to come and tell us especially the developed nations because they have their own specific interest. Do they really care about us and our tomorrow as much as they care about themselves and their profit margins for instance? They have arrangements where they would put funds aside but then it would be kept at such a distance that countries like ours would find it almost impossible to access. We must not rely on those funds. We ourselves must find solutions for this problem. This is our home, if we are going to live in it then we must do all we can to protect it. Our people out there, 85 per cent of whom live in the rural areas and a significant population or demography who rely on us are illiterate, they rely on us who have been elected here to make key decisions to protect and promote our nation's current and future interest.

Now we have always being a caring considerate people that is why we are often exploited because many who come in here recognise and take advantage of it thus exploit our people and our Melanesian way. When it comes to protecting and promoting this nation, we would take off that Melanesian hat and be very assertive especially when it comes to the environment. It is this environment that has brought us here.

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They did not have to go to university. They were not scientists by western description, but they knew very well the importance of the environment, the forest, the valleys, the mountains and the oceans. And they had in place their own unique laws and policies to protect their homes.

We have now adopted western laws, policies and strategies but perhaps they were not designed for us, they were designed for western interest, that's what we have to ask ourselves.

Gentlemen, you are in Government, it's important that you communicate, it's important you tell yourself how great this nation is and say, what can we do when we are in the driver's seat with the resources at hand? How can we empower the office of the Environment and Conservation so that it can get out there and conduct its inspections? How can the Forest office move from just being a facilitator of logging and the destruction on our forest to reforestation and finding other alternatives in finding income for our people rather than just cutting all these trees down often to our own detriment?

The climate change issues, we will be the victims. Not those nations that are proposing grandiose and complex academic platforms that seemed to be like cargo cult funds that never arrive. Let's us find the solutions with our own experts and intelligence from our own home-grown experts, they can tell you. Sit down and listen to them and they can help design your policies. They can review our policies that are outdated and created for colonial purposes to allow access to our resources.

It is important and I believe National Government partner with Provincial Governments to transfer some of these powers back to us. We can conduct the inspections and collect the fines and revenues and identify the perpetrators that are there and remove them.

Mr Speaker, business investors that come into this country come to do business so it is up to us to design the parameters that they can operate, what they can and cannot do which we often fail in this regard. Earlier during the day the Governor of Enga said we are here to legislate but we should not be too concerned about the implementation. I disagree because we should be worried about the implementation. This is the problem area, not the creation of laws. We have created so many laws but the implementation part is not happening where it should be effectively enough.

Going back to the logging industry, let me tell you, gentlemen, this is a very destructive and poorly policed industry. We keep hearing stories about our landowners that are being abused and this week we heard about landowners and how they should sort themselves out. But listen, we have a duty to our landowners to protect those who might become victims of one or two who become aggressive or who have the funds or the means and connections to deprive them off their land and their resources. We have to do that, we can't just say sort it out and step away, no.

My concluding remarks are that the problems we highlight and we faced, the solutions are right here. We are the solutions, we have to step up. Earlier I heard the Minister for Planning talk about doing what needs to be done and stepping up and having the guts to do it. Well, let's do that rather than postponing and allowing the leaders of the future to do it. Where we may not have forest, we may not have a country left if we go at this rate. It's all very well to attend meetings whether in the country, international or regional, but let's get out there and protect our country assertively and in a jealous manner. If we really love this country and believe that it is the best country in the world and so forth, then let's act like it. Let's commit resources, put partnerships together, put aside differences, and identify those who are threats to this nation and its interest and deal with them effectively.

Finally, in the logging industry, the Minister for Forest and the Minister for Environment, there are a number of perpetrators here. These are persons of interest who operate in such a manner that they are a national security threat, threat to our environment and a threat to our revenue sources.

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We must identify these persons, blacklist them and remove them from this country because they are causing a lot of damage to our people and our nation.

Why are we so frightened by these people that we cannot bang on their doors and force them to pay their taxes that are due to this country. Some of these very powerful entities have not paid taxes for almost 20 years. What are we afraid of?

We cannot call ourselves leaders if we are afraid to attend to these type of business in a decisive manner. When it comes to protecting Papua New Guinea we should not be Melanesians, we should be patriotic, defenders of this soil and be willing to die for this country and anybody that threatens this country should be treated with utter contempt.

If you do not want to do it then give me the resources and you watch me do it for you by taking videos, photos and show you and invite to join me next time.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Motion – That Parliament take note of the statement and debates be made order of the day for further subsequent sittings – agreed to.

MOTION BY LEAVE

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

Leave granted.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr JAMES MARAPE – I move –

That a leave of absence be granted to Mr Benny Allan, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, who is attending to his wife's medical examinations and illness at the moment.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That Parliament do now adjourn

The Parliament adjourned at 1p.m..