

FIRST DAY

Tuesday 27 March 2018

DRAFT HANSARD

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FIRST DAY

Tuesday 27 March 2018

The Parliament met at 2p.m., according to *Section 124 of the Constitution and Section 2 (1) (a) (iii) of the Organic Law* on the calling of Meetings of Parliament.

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 2.40 p.m., and invited the Member for Pomio and Minister for Public Service, **Honourable Elias Kapavore**, to say Prayers:

‘Mi tok tenkyu tude long dispela apinun. Yu bugimi mipela gen olsem wanpela Nation. As lidas mipela kam tugeta long toktok na discussim dispela Restoration Authority Bill long dispela apinun taim. Papa God mipela prea na komitim mipela olgeta kam long han bilong yu, pipel bilong dispela nation na Papua New Guinea igo long han bilong yu, Lord. Mipela prea na komitim tu ol pipel we ol i affect long dispela disaster igo bek long han bilong yu.

Lord, yu save long olegat samting kamap na nogat wanpela samting save kamap nating without yu save mekim long en. So tude Lord, givim mipela understanding, wisdom long Prime Minister bilong yumi na ol lidas bilong yumi long NEC, Provincial lida na olgeta lida bilong Parliament. As mipela discas tude long givim gutpela tingting o direction as mipela i lukluk o discuss tude long givim mipela gutpela tingting o direction as mipela i lukluk long dispela Bill tude bai mipela i passim. Mipela prea long wisdom bilong yu na understanding bilong yu i ken go pas long yumi long mekim so olsem dispela Bill yumi mekim long en for the best interest of the people who are affected at this particular time.

Tude tu, Lord mipela prea na tingim tu olgeta lain bilong yumi ol i affected long dispela taim bilong disaster. Mipela prea olsem yu ken continue long provide long ol na mi tok tenkyu long ol lain we sapotim ol na ol lain partners we givim sapot i kam na olgeta lain manmeri long dispela nation Papua New Guinea bilong sapot bilong ol tu.

Mi prea tu, Lord, we stand together as one people, one nation in this time of disaster Lord, and as under one God we will continue to uphold this together. This is our prayer today, Amen.’

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

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament that the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings has met today and resolved that:

(a) The *National Broadcasting Corporation* (NBC) radio and television will be allowed to telecast and broadcast live the statement made by the Prime Minister on the status of State of Emergency;

(b) *EMTV* to televise live the statement made by the Prime Minister on the status of the State of Emergency; and

(c) *TVWAN* to broadcast statement made by the Prime Minister on the status of the State of Emergency for the duration of this Meeting for news purposes only.

**URGENT CALLING OF MEETING OF PARLIAMENT –
NATIONAL EMERGENCY – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament that the urgent calling of meeting of Parliament has been called by His Excellency, the Governor-General by virtue of the powers conveyed by *Section 124 of the Constitution* and *Section 2 (1) (a) (iii) of the Organic Law* on the Calling of Meetings of Parliament, and all other powers enabling him acting with and in accordance with the advice of the National Executive Council being of the opinion that certain circumstances justified the urgent recalling of Parliament to sit on 27 March 2018, commencing at 2 p.m. to consider the emergency laws in relation to the existence of the National Emergency in the Southern Highlands, Hela, Gulf, Western and other provinces due to the 7.5 magnitude earthquake disaster.

In accordance with the requirements of *Section 243 of the Constitution*, all matters relating to the National Emergency will have precedence this day.

02/01

MOTION BY LEAVE

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

Leave granted

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

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

That so much of the Standing orders be suspended as would prevent

(a) Prime Minister presenting a statement on the state of emergency on the Southern Highlands, Hela, Gulf, Western Province as well as Telefomin District in West Sepik Province,

(b) the Prime Minister presenting the State of Emergency Bills 2018, Emergency (General Powers) Bills 2018, and Western, Enga, Southern Highlands and Hela Province Restoration Authority Bill 2018.

SITUATION REPORT ON HIGHLANDS EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY RESPONSE – STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr PETER O'NEILL (Ialibu-Pangia - Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, our nation has been hit by one of the worst earthquakes on record in the Highlands provinces in the past few weeks.

On the morning of February 26, 2018, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck in the Highlands, shaking the earth beneath the feet of our people in the Southern Highlands, Hela, Western Province, Enga Province, parts of Gulf and parts of Teleformin. In the coming days after shocks continued causing more damage and terrifying out people.

Mr Speaker, this is the first earthquake of this magnitude in the Highlands for almost 100 years. There is no living memory of the last earthquake that took place in 1921. When this earthquake hit our people, they were shocked, mountains collapsed, villages buried, our rivers were blocked with debris.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first earthquake and it will not be the last. Our country is built on what is called the Ring of Fire. A ring of underground activity that stretches from Chilli in South America to North America through Asia, but mostly through Japan and through Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

Mr Speaker, the ring of fire is the underground tectonic plates which collide and move against each other causing shift in the earth's surface and unleashing earthquakes and volcanic activity. This is not the first time we have felt the nature's fury in the Ring of Fire. The Rabaul volcanic eruptions and the Aitape Tsunami disasters were also result of this underground activity.

Mr Speaker, after the first earthquake struck the response from the country swung into action. Both the military and police, our NGOs and private sector partners all continued to try and have an immediate survey of the disaster area.

Mr Speaker, the devastation was heart breaking, the mountains that stood for millions of years have fallen into valleys below, houses had been crushed and buried and lives have been lost. The grief in our people is very clear, many of them have lost family members.

Mr Speaker, this will stay in our memories for the rest of our lives. The cries of our people are loud and clear, our people are in pain and they want two things, immediate relief and also to understand what has happened. These people for their entire lives and generations have never felt the earth move under their feet. Some of them are blaming them for the activities that are within those areas, but reports show, in 1922 the Highlands was hit with serious earthquake that was underpinned by undersea earthquakes in the Bismarck sea that same year. We have heard 8.12 magnitude earthquake of Kokopo 47 years ago, 8.0 magnitude of earthquake in Panguna 47 years ago, and 8.0 magnitude of earthquake in Lae 112 years ago. These are natural occurrences which we have no control over, but we can only prepare for the worst.

03/01

Even last night there was a 6.6 magnitude earthquake 180km west of Rabaul, at a depth of 40km.

Earthquakes are a fact of life in the Ring of Fire, and the responsibility of our Government is to do our best to minimise damage and help communities to return to reality, in the course of their normal lives.

In our response, Mr Speaker, there were things that could have been done better, and this is the case with any disaster response in any part of the world. But that is the nature of disasters,

whether they occur in Japan, Chile, and New Zealand or in our own country Papua New Guinea. We can respond as best we can with the interests of saving lives and off course providing relieve efforts.

Mr Speaker, in the aftermath of what has happened, we have seen a rapid response from all sectors; from our Government, the private sector and NGOs, particularly our church groups. Our private sector partners especially let me mention a few of them in particular, Oil Search in particular was outstanding in the way Peter Botten and his team mobilised to deliver relief and saved lives.

ExxonMobil and many other companies mobilised their resources to help local communities. Ok Tedi and Porgera Joint Venture again donated much of the relief funds and our own Kumul Petroleum responded in a very positive way.

It is important that this funds must reach the people directly so that they benefit the most out of this relief efforts that are being carried out today.

All of the relief efforts are being managed by the National Emergency Controller, Dr. William Hamblin, and his team. His team has established a good supply chain and has a good logistic hub to deliver support where it is needed. I would now like to thank them for their efforts.

Mr Speaker, the exact number of fatalities from the recent earthquake may never be known because of the remoteness of many villages and communities in those provinces.

This is compounded by the fact that many bodies will not be recovered from under landslips because they are under landslips. The number of fatalities is estimated at over 160 either dead or missing but presumed dead. There have been thousands of injuries and some are more serious than others.

People with more serious injuries have been medevacked to the Oil Search centre in Moro and to our own hospitals in Tari and Mendi hospitals.

In Hela and Southern Highlands particularly there has been significant destruction of health infrastructure. In Hela 22 per cent of health facilities, and about 47per cent of health housing have been completely destroyed.

In Southern Highlands some damage have occurred to health facilities. Of the 46 health centres, 19 are open and 12 are partially open. There are 13 facilities for which the National Department of Health has not received a response.

Mr Speaker, the Public Health Authorities in Hela and Southern Highlands have been asked to provide lists of required medical equipment, including drugs and dressings which they

continue to require. So far 12 tons of aid post kits, comprising 640 boxes, are being delivered to Southern Highlands and a further 660 boxes delivered to the Hela Province.

Mr Speaker, in the other provinces substantial damages has occurred and we are providing medical supplies, food supplies, water and shelters to those communities as well.

Mr Speaker, we have Cholera kits sent from the World Health Organisation. The first 100 arrive on Friday, and another 400 have been requested. We are now making preparations for this to be transported to the health centres in those affected areas.

Mr Speaker, we are making contingency preparations so that we can be prepared for the outbreak of diseases particularly waterborne diseases as a result of dirty water in many of those communities.

The Emergency Controller has used his powers to facilitate release of cold-chain equipment held up in Customs so that it can be delivered to both Mendi and Tari hospitals so that vaccines may be safely administered.

04/01

Mr Speaker, on roads and bridges, significant progress has been made on roads and bridges especially along the Highlands Highway, the road from Mt Hagen to Tari is now open. The blockages have been cleared by the Department of Works and the PNG Defence Force. A convoy of 12 trucks have reached Tari with the much needed food and water and these has been followed by a further six trucks on the 13th of March 2018.

Containers of food and water are also reaching Mendi as there have been over 60 landslips cleared from those affected provinces. Most of the clearances have been done more than once, because of further slips caused by the aftershocks. The services of existing contractors along the highway has been used to clear the road and making sure that the major roads are open. Also the Works Department has mobilised the road equipment from Lae up to the affected highlands provinces for further support and road clearance activities. The Department of Works and ExxonMobil have worked tirelessly in restoring many of these interim road accesses particularly from Mt Hagen to Mendi, Mendi to Magarima, Magarima to Tari, Tari to Komo, Komo to Koroba Kopiago, Mendi to Kandep, and; Kandep to Laiagam. The Mendi town roads that were destroyed are now being rebuilt, making sure that there is access from Poroma to Moro and some of the access roads in Southern highlands and Hela provinces. These roads have been cleared and the traffic is moving safely.

Mr Speaker, the roads between Tari and Komo are yet to be opened due to them being badly damaged and security issues along those roads. We expect these roads to be opened by

the end of the week as restoration work continues, with security personnel sent to specific locations to secure the opening of those roads. The road access between Poroma and Moro is being cleared as we speak. And this has been closed because of more than 10 different landslips occurring with very heavy stones that have collapsed onto the road and we had to bring in more equipment to clear those heavy rocks. And now we expect the road to be available for heavy traffic within two days.

These road clearances have improved the transportation of goods from Mt Hagen and Lae to Moro, which was previously restricted to air travel only. The Department of Works engaged its own equipment and the contractors along the access roads to clear them. The expenditure committed for this effort stands at K42 million. And all the claims from various contractors are being vetted and we expect some reductions in the costs after vetting.

Electricity restoration work in Southern Highlands and Hela provinces have commenced and electricity has been restored in the townships of Mendi and Tari. And there are some emergency work by PNG Power in those provinces which is expected to cost us just under K3 million. There is also concern about compensation claims requested but we are very strong on this and we will not tolerate people requesting compensation when our people are in need. I also want to say there has been substantial damage to the bridges, some foundations have been dislodged by the earthquake and others have been affected by flooding and debris. They are now being assessed by a specialised team that has flown in from Australia to ensure that we have a complete report of the bridge infrastructure so that the structural integrity of those bridges are checked properly in order for repairs to be done quickly.

05/01

Again with the other relief efforts, water has been a big problem in those areas. Many of the rivers are polluted by debris and are not safe to drink so the initial response is that we will supply bottled water to all the affected villages.

Mr Speaker, we know that in the long term this will not be sustainable. It will be far too expensive and the plastic bottles will also pose an environmental risk so we need a much better solution. Our team is now organising supplies of water purification tablets to purify the water but it will do little to remove the sediments in the water. They have purchased three mobile water purifiers that will be mounted on the 4-wheel-drive vehicles and can be operated by car batteries or diesel. Another three water purifiers are being sourced from Manus which were

formerly used by JICA in some projects but are not currently in use so we are moving them to the affected areas.

Mr Speaker, we are also waiting for tests that are being conducted by Mr Renvenden Owen a UN specialist to ensure that the purification of water has correct filters installed so that our people are not drinking contaminated water.

Mr Speaker, in the interim, the provincial administrators and boards in Southern Highlands and Hela proposed to make sure that we place the equipment at the site that is easily accessible and that purified water can serve a large population.

Mr Speaker, in terms of food supply there is continuing amount of effort in providing substantial amount of food to communities. Our Government has got established stores in Mt Hagen and Port Moresby that are handling all the donations and supplies that we are buying. Some of these have been air freighted to Moro and to Tari by road from Mendi. Eighteen containers of food have gone to Tari by road and another 19 are in the processes of being delivered. A barge has been sent to Kikori with food and water. Another K60 thousand worth of food has been approved by local provincial authorities for distribution.

Mr Speaker, food and supplies were also air lifted to Telefomin and Nomad. We have commenced purchasing food from local suppliers both in Mt Hagen and Lae which will be transported via the Highlands Highway and from Port Moresby to be transported by road to the affected areas in Kikori.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Australian Government for providing us the C130 aircraft and the four Chinook Helicopters that were very much in demand to transport the relief supplies when the roads were not open which has certainly saved many lives. The Australian and New Zealand Governments are both trying to have them returned but we are in discussions to see if they can at least stay for another month.

Mr Speaker, discussions are also now held with United Nations World Food Program and they have been asked to supply some nutrition biscuits that can feed up to 38 000 people and almost two months' supply of rice that can feed about another 38 000 people. In the lower impact areas, we are asking for two months of supply for rice. This will boost the restoration team's supplies. The controller is asking for more supplies especially from international donors. Many of you would know that the France Government has sent their navy boat from Philippines to Port Moresby with food supplies.

Yesterday, they delivered ten tonnes of supply which has been unloaded and now dispatched to the affected areas.

06/01

Mr Speaker, it is imperative that we continue to supply basic necessities to the most affected communities to maintain social stability and to avoid social outbreaks of diseases in those areas.

Mr Speaker, for less affected areas it is now time to encourage people to move back to their villages if their villages are still there or we provide them with starter kits to assist them so that they can build their houses and also do their gardening so that they can sustain themselves.

Mr Speaker, we have now moved two tons of seed potatoes into Enga, Tari and Mendi and there is also further suggestion of moving carrot, pumpkin, corn and cabbage seeds so that our people can now continue to grow them and feed themselves.

Mr Speaker, because of the high number of water logged areas, mosquitoes is a problem so we have now taken a supply of 4 000 large mosquito nets, tarps, hygiene kits, food, clothes, kitchen utensils, jerry cans, and water purifiers from donors.

And we are now working closely with organisations such as Rotary Against Malaria, World Vision, Red Cross Society, Care International and JICA in making sure that we deliver them to communities that need them the most.

Mr Speaker, logistics are a massive challenge. Initially there was limited interaction among government departments, Oil Search, donors, NGOs and provincial governments, and affected communities.

Resource mobilisation was in some ways in a piecemeal situation but given the magnitude of the disaster and the problems faced by the National Disaster Centre this was understandable.

This was a situation that was regrettable and one that needs attention and a longer-term solution to establishing a properly funded disaster preparedness program. Our government is closely working with the Queensland Government in reviewing and setting up an organisation called State Emergency Services that will undertake or manage all our emergency services including fire and ambulance so that we can respond to our people in a timely manner

Mr Speaker, although we had co-ordination problems, with the Australian Defence Force, and of course, our own lack of capacity and the priorities that have been given to support us in our time of need the using of Australian assets has been a welcomed support.

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank the Australian Government, the people of Australia, especially Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, and the Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, for their effort.

Mr Speaker, I should also mention that we have enlisted the support of the United Nations and they have brought in experience in managing relief efforts such as these, particularly in receiving support, delivering, distributing and maintaining relief services.

Mr Speaker, there is an insufficient number of helicopters in the country, many of which have long term contracts with the private sector but what is available including our own Defence Force we are now able to continue to supply goods and relief supply to the remotest communities where there is no access by road as we speak today.

Mr Speaker, a total of around 120 tons of support has been distributed to over 70 villages and these does not include the relief supplies that have been supplied by the NGO's and development partners directly to those villages and now, what is required is that we continue to have that support at least for another three months while our people find their feet.

Mr Speaker, in terms of the Emergency Restoration Trust Account that was opened with the initial support of our own Ok Tedi Mining Limited and thank you to the management, staff and the people of Western Province for that kind support, we are working closely with them to manage all the relief effort in some of the affected communities in Western Province with Ok Tedi. Again, Kumul Petroleum Holdings has committed K50 million and they have adhesively transferred K10 million and K40 million will come over the course of the next three months so that we have consistency in funding in that account.

07/01

Mr Speaker, we have bought immediate emergency supplies out of Mt Hagen and all the suppliers in Mt Hagen have contributed to that at about K4 million. As I've said earlier, road clearance is about K45 million, that's the emergency cost and off course PNG Power almost K3 million. We have paid almost K1.3 million for both Defence and our own helicopters to keep on supplying remote villages with supplies. As I've said, it's a costly exercise but there's no other choice in that.

Mr Speaker, we are also thankful for the support we are getting from Porgera Joint Venture with almost K6 million. Our own companies within the business community have contributed quite a substantial amount of money as well. We are also seeking the release of US\$3 million from ADB as grant assistance that should be available in the next three days.

Today as we speak, there's about more than K59 million in the account. The committed funds from ADB, Japan and Kumul Petroleum Holdings and others are yet to come. So we have got sufficient amount of money to keep going for the next three months. But public are also continuing to contribute to that account and we are thankful for their support in this time of need.

Mr Speaker, those are the commitments that we have made and I think in terms of delivery, we are doing quite well. We expect that the long term infrastructure restoration will take some time. We are proposing to introduce this bill in Parliament which will be for a period of four years after which the particular authority will cease to operate because the authority covers many provinces unlike the Gazelle Restoration Authority. But it is modelled around the Gazelle experience and I think it will certainly serve our people well.

Mr Speaker, in concluding, despite our challenges, financial situation in managing this relief efforts remain manageable. There's been many progresses made and we are making continuous headway in our relief effort, particularly to the targeted villages that have been affected the most.

Logistic is still a challenge with the withdrawal of Australia and New Zealand air assets but we are still communicating with them to continue assisting us. Oil Search commitment will continue, government funds the supplies and they help us distribute to the villages in the communities.

Mr Speaker, all our invoices that are been paid are being scrutinized well. They are subject to rigorous checking.

Mr Speaker, the disaster in our country is unprecedented, loss of lives is unprecedented and certainly will take many years for us to recover from this.

Again, let me thank everybody, all Papua New Guineans, all donors, all development partners who has contributed enormously in trying to restore the normalcy to lives in those affected communities. For those, we are indebted to you, thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr PESAB KOMAL (Nipa-Kutubu Open) – I move –

I move that the Parliament take note of the paper.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the honourable Members and this House of the devastation of the 7.5 magnitude earthquake in my electorate.

Nipa-Kutubu is the most affected district in the recent 7.5 magnitude earthquake and has devastated homes, properties, all government institutions, infrastructure, land and has taken many lives.

Mr Speaker, before I give a status report of the district, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to countries, development partners and organisations that have played a significant role in serving the affected people as part of the humanitarian support.

08/01

Thank you honourable Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and your government and the Disaster and Emergency Response Unit, the Australian Government and their High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea and the Australian Defence Force, New Zealand Government and their High Commissioner to PNG, American Humanitarian Aid and American Embassy in Port Moresby, UNDP and UNICEF, Chinese Embassy and the Israeli Government.

Mr Speaker, I will now give a status report on my electorate. We have 23 deaths, we have 23 care centres and out of the health sector we have 43 buildings which includes community aid posts, sub-health centres and also included the newly built district hospital.

In the education sector we have 129 school buildings, and it's a tragedy, on the road infrastructure side, more than 10 feeder roads and bridges.

Mr Speaker, the affected people are still traumatised and the fear is still a nightmare, even as I speak today.

The cost us millions of kina. My district disaster team has produced a comprehensive disaster report already but we will be working with the restoration team to establish the actual costing of the reconstruction.

Mr Speaker, to conclude, I would like to make an appeal to the restoration authority to ensure that all funds allocated for the restoration and reconstruction of the disaster should be managed transparently, fairly and accountably.

Mr WILLIAM POWI (Southern Highlands) – Thanks you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

I thank the Prime Minister for the statement encompassing the devastation of the earthquake covering the five or six provinces and I also take note of the statement by the honourable Member for Nipa-Kutubu.

I think it is proper and fitting that as the Governor of one of the provinces affected it is fitting that I give a provincial perspective in this regard. But before I do that I want to thank the honourable Members of Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea for the support, assistance and the prayers in one of the most difficult times that our people have gone through.

On that note, Mr Speaker, on behalf of the people of Southern Highlands I rise to give my sincere thank you and appreciation to a number of people and organisations from both within and outside the country who have contributed in many ways to help my people suffering from the 7.5 magnitude earthquake that struck Southern Highlands, Western, Enga and Gulf provinces in the early hours of the morning of Monday 26 February, 2018.

By way of background, Mr Speaker, let me first brief this honourable House and our listeners, the people of Papua New Guinea and international friends who have come to assist us on;

- (1) the earthquake that shocked our way of life,
- (2) the people of Southern Highlands who have been affected,
- (3) our institutions and infrastructure that have been affected; and
- (4) the likely costs in restoration and rehabilitation.

09/01

Mr Speaker, according to Geoscience Australia the 26 February 2018 earthquake was the largest in the New Guinea Highlands since 1900.

Its occurrence is consistent with known seismic characteristics of the region — on the Papuan Fault Belt - between the rigid Australian Plate and the New Guinea Highlands Block.

The earthquake started at a depth of 17 km in the earth. This is not consistent with earthquakes triggered by drilling activities, which generally occurs at depths of less than 5 km.

The epicentre of the earthquake was somewhere between Kutubu, Mount Bosavi and Hides. In 1954, a large 6.8 magnitude earthquake occurred near the location of the 26 February 2018 earthquake.

However, the 26 February 2018 earthquake was the largest beyond living memory — even beyond intergenerational memory of our people. That explains why our people have been traumatised, and they are living in fear right now.

Mr Speaker, aftershocks have continued for a month now. A large aftershock on Friday 23 March 2018, for example, caused the iron bridge to Baguale Primary School and Village near Lake Kutubu that was earlier damaged, to collapse, and turn the Mubi River into a rotten human flesh-like odour.

This is to say, Mr Speaker that aftershocks have prevented our people from going back to their normal pre-earthquake way of life in those worse affected areas. It is also allowing their trauma and fear to persist.

Mr Speaker, of the 5 provinces affected, Southern Highlands is the biggest province with 5 districts, 20 LLGs, and 474 Wards, 2 357 hamlets, 100 575 households, and a population of 534,907 people.

Nipa-Kutubu with 171 420 people scattered among 109 Wards in 5 LLGs is the largest and worst affected area.

Mendi-Munhiu with a population of 144 629, spread across 4 LLGs and 120 Wards is the second largest and next worst affected.

Imbonggu has 80 994 people living in 62 Wards and 3 LLGs,

lalibu-Pangia has 63 725 people, spread across 4 LLGs and 88 Wards, and

Kagua-Erave has 74 139 people, scattered among 4 LLGs and 95 Wards. All have been affected but sporadically.

Mr Speaker, in the worst affected districts (Nipa-Kutubu & Mendi-Munhiu) some people have died, some have suffered injuries and many are in care centres.

A total of 48 people from Mendi, Nipa and Kutubu are confirmed dead.

About 1 500 people have been injured, and treated, and about 12 000 people have been displaced in Nipa, Kutubu and Mount Bosavi. They are in care centres. There are 5 care centres in Kutubu 6 in Mount Bosavi, 1 in Poroma; and 2 in Nembi Plateau (Nipa).

Mr Speaker, it is my government's desire to relocate our people back in their villages as soon as possible and have these care centres closed. For Bagua le and Yalenda Villages in Kutubu, their villages have been completely destroyed so a new location has to be acquired for resettlement.

10/01

Mr Speaker, in terms of education, we have about 100 000 students throughout the province enrolled in 383 elementary schools, 184 primary schools, 15 high schools, 9 secondary schools, 3 technical colleges, 5 vocational schools and the Mendi School of Nursing.

Mr Speaker, as you have read in the newspapers recently, the School of Nursing in Mendi is partly damaged and is near closed. We need to have it reopened soon. The Southern Highlands Technical College at Nipa is also badly damaged as the Deputy Speaker's statement has alluded to. All schools in Kutubu and Bosavi areas are closed including Kutubu Secondary school. Immediate work is required to have them opened and I thank the Minister for Education

who has been in consultation with me to deal with education in Southern Highlands since the disaster. All schools in Nipa, Nembi Plateau and Poroma LLG's were closed for three weeks.

They have resumed classes, but because of the daily aftershocks it has been on and off and open for half day. Schools in other districts are operating and back to normal.

Mr Speaker, health facilities in the Southern Highlands Province comprise of the following: 177 aid posts, 46 health centres, 4 Hospitals in Mendi, Nipa, Yalibu and Kagua. The Provincial Health Authority in Mendi had done a thorough investigation and compiled a detailed report on the damages caused to health facilities in the entire province.

Mr Speaker, Mendi General Hospital's critical medical equipment worth almost K700 000 has been damaged .Office buildings, staff houses and water tanks have been damaged.

Yaria in the Imbogngu district had its staff houses and health facilities destroyed. In Nipa Kutubu, surprisingly, there was no identifiable damage to the recently built Nipa Hospital facilities except the collapse of stone wall. Many aid posts in Kutubu and Mt Bosavi have also been damaged.

Mr Speaker, in terms of Government administrative facilities, Southern Highlands Provincial administration and the Southern Highland Provincial Government occupied two buildings, the seven-storey building called the Agiru Centre and another three-storey building. Both buildings have been structurally damaged and currently declared unfit for use.

Consequently, my government and the public servants at the Provincial Head Office in Mendi have been operating from their own homes and a few rented places. There is an immediate need, Mr Speaker. We urgently need rehabilitation and restoration of the Government Administrative buildings.

Mr. Speaker, for infrastructure, the Highlands Highway is the life-line for the Southern Highlands Province. While some parts of the Highlands Highway closed by landslips have been cleared, structural cracks and damages to its core foundation in several places remain to be thoroughly inspected and the entire length of the highway firmly rehabilitated and sealed.

Many feeder roads have been closed throughout the province. Some have been cleared, but others remained to be opened.

Lae remains the only seaport entry to the Southern Highlands. The earthquake has woken us up to the need for an alternative seaport at Kikori. This will need to be considered as urgent and a priority project during the rehabilitation and restoration exercise.

Mr Speaker, my government is undertaking a thorough investigation Ward by Ward inspecting each of the 474 Wards in the entire province to determine the scope of damages to residential houses; institutional houses; destroyed food gardens and sources of drinking water

by landslips; damage to economic activities; and displaced people and the need for relocation and rehabilitation.

11/01

Our Ward by Ward assessments in Nipa-Basin LLG, Nembi Plateau LLG and Poroma LLG have been completed. These results are very telling.

Mr Speaker, for Nipa Basin LLG as stated by the Deputy Speaker, 30 136 people have been affected by this earthquake one death from Pulim Ward 1 109 sustained injuries, 602 land slips are recorded, 116 permanent houses have been damaged, 404 semi-permanent houses have been damaged, 12 612 food gardens have been destroyed, 48 livestock have been killed, 15 911 traditional kunai houses have been destroyed, 28 trade stores have been damaged, 148 water sources have been destroyed, 162 cemeteries have been damaged.

Mr Speaker, for Poroma LLG: 2 766 people affected, 3 deaths, all from Towairo 1, 30 injuries, 402 landslips, 135 permanent houses damaged, 208 semi-permanent houses damaged, 1 169 food gardens destroyed, 18 livestock killed, 71 church buildings damaged, 121 trade stores damaged, 97 water sources destroyed. One care centre is established at Poroma Station as I speak.

Mr Speaker, Nembi Plateau LLG: 7 721 people affected, 13 injuries, no death, no landslips, 74 permanent houses damaged, 394 semi-permanent houses damaged, 61 water sources destroyed and 1 care centre established at Semin Ward 2.

Once our team working on the other LLGs is completed, we will then have a complete picture of the extent of damages, and decide how and where to direct relief and rehabilitate and restore them. This is a huge task. It will cost a lot of money. Every help is welcomed and will be appreciated.

Mr Speaker, the immediate relief efforts have been concentrated in providing medical assistance, food, water and shelter. Of the 544 000 people affected, according to the National Disaster Centre in Port Moresby, 34 100 have been displaced, and 143 000 are in need of food assistance.

Mr Speaker, we have detailed records of relief assistance in terms of food, water, temporary shelter and medical relief that have been provided to date in the Southern Highlands. Some containers of food items are still sitting in Mendi waiting to be distributed as I speak. Many people have helped, and many are still helping.

Mr Speaker, the National Disaster Centre reports that 1300 households have received emergency shelter, and 56 000 people reached with food. I have flown to the affected areas in my province, especially in Kutubu, and Mount Bosavi, and Homa Paua areas where over 1 500 people are living in care centres. I have seen the temporary shelters. Our ultimate aim is to encourage them to return to normal life as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of my people, I want to sincerely thank the Prime Minister and his government for the swift decision to set aside K450 million to provide relief and restore the infrastructure destroyed by the earthquake in the five provinces. I know the extent of damage may cost more money than this, but for now at least we have this amount to start with.

I also sincerely thank the support of the Members of this House, standing solidly with our people in their time of need and grief.

Mr Speaker, I acknowledge and wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to organisations, companies and individuals who have contributed and provided relief assistance in one form or another. I want to thank the Australian Government, the New Zealand Government, the French Government, the Government of Japan, the Chinese Government, the United Nations, Oil Search and ExxonMobil, Petroleum Resources Kutubu, Kumul Petroleum Holdings Limited, Mineral Resources Development Company, other companies in the country, Churches and NGOs, the 23 provinces and the people of Papua New Guinea, PNG Power, PNG Defence Force, PNG Police Force, business houses in the country, international partners who have pledged to contribute, individuals, and all those that have helped but I have not named here.

12/01

I also want to thank the people of Papua New Guinea who have contributed in their own ways to help us. Thank you for being with us, for all your support, your prayers and thank you so much for making us feel and know that we are one country, one people.

Dr KOBBY BOMOREO (Tewai-Siassi) –Thank you Mr Speaker, I rise to make a statement in my capacity as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Emergency and giving specific reference to the recent earthquake disaster that has affected the lives of our people in Southern Highlands and nearby provinces on 26th February 2018, that severely devastated parts of the Southern Highlands, Hela and neighbouring provinces. With continuous rainfall and flooding that we are currently witnessing in other parts of the country; that is causing damage to food gardens and houses.

Mr Speaker, as we all know more than 125 lives have been lost and the daily livelihood of our people in those areas have been severely affected. They have been so badly hit by this disaster and are currently living in makeshift homes further in land from the Kikori River. The nation also experienced the worst earthquake and for the people in the highlands it has been the largest earthquake since 1900 and our people have been traumatised and are suffering. These people need immediate medical assistance, food water and other basic supplies to start recovering from this ordeal.

Thank you to all our close neighbours and the people of this country for coming together to assist our disaster our people. To all those who assisted in relief efforts, and many who volunteered to make sure these people were attended to, we cannot thank you enough. At this juncture, let me on behalf of my committee take this opportunity to sincerely thank them and also send a heartfelt appreciation to all the hardworking men and women who are and have been on the ground since day one of the disaster. These are the people who have been involved in the rescue and relief efforts. I also want to thank the Prime Minister for the orderly efforts that have been initiated so far.

Some doubts have been cleared on the cause of the earthquake when the Australian Agency Geo-Science Australia has cleared mining and hydro carbons operating the country of any wrong doing over the 7.5 magnitude earthquake.

However, my committee is of the view that there has to be several investigations yet to be conducted to find the underlying factors that caused such a huge magnitude earthquake and those reports will be tabled on the Floor, advising this Parliament for the possible extension of the emergency as per the Governor General's gazetted notice on the 19 of March 2018. The committees report and findings will further guide the Government for future actions to be taken in line with the natural disasters. And with the current experience and the consequent declaration of the emergency. The committee by virtue of powers conferred to it under the *Emergency Committees Act 1979, Section 240 & 242*, I put to this Parliament that the Emergency Committee will carry out its task forthwith.

Mr Speaker, it will be a mammoth task undertaken by the committee to conduct public inquiries into the affected areas and assess carefully the situation on the ground before the aftermath of this earthquake and flooding in provinces mentioned earlier.

13/01

Finally and to conclude, Mr Speaker, the Committee will present to this Parliament its full findings for parliamentary adaptation of the report and further action to be undertaken along the framework of the newly introduced Restoration Authority Bill.

The Parliament will then act on those findings and report of the Committee thereafter. May the good Lord guide us and comfort us throughout this time of rescue, relief and recovery period. Thank you.

Mr JAMES DONALD (North-Fly) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to make my important statement about the pride of the people of Western Province. Since the recent 7.5 magnitude of earthquake of Monday 26 February at 3.44 am, I would like to express my heartfelt sorrow for the 130 plus people as reported by the United Nations who have lost their lives as a result of this earthquake.

The many aftershocks that followed and other recent quakes, I know many of the 544 thousand affected people that survived would be still in need of clean water, food, shelter, and medicine but importantly, counselling for the traumatised. Entire landscapes have changed, rivers have been blocked, and gardens have been swallowed up by the earth along with houses. Not to mention wild and domestic animals that have been affected. Villages are looking for answers as to what has happened and we as leaders have not been able to provide any answers to date.

Mr Speaker, last week the Governor of Western, Honourable Toboi Yoto and I had a media conference about our situation in the province and our disaster relief plans. However, according to my understanding only one media organisation reported on our pleas to the National Government to consider the 26 thousand people displaced in the province.

Mr Speaker, it saddens me that Ok Tedi Mining based in Western Province gave its distribution of K50 million directly to the National Government but nothing to the provincial disaster and emergency service in the province.

Mr Speaker, I would like to inform this Parliament that on behalf of the Governor, the Member for South Fly, the Member for Middle Fly, who is in government, and as the Member for North Fly, we are not going to sit around and tolerate the indifference of this current Government to the cries of the people of Western Province.

Mr Speaker, as elected representatives of the people of Western Province, we are going to do something about what we consider to be induced earthquakes that have significantly

changed the lives and livelihood of our people. Our early searches into the course of this disaster shows that between 7 and 14 March 2018, 10 earthquakes occurred. A total of 114 earthquakes have happened in the 365 days prior to 14 March. About 111 of them occurred in the last 30 days and this is phenomenal.

While it is true that PNG as a whole is prone to earthquakes, we have found out that according to observed earthquake data since 1964, the exceptions are the southern part of Papua, Papuan Peninsula and Western province.

14/01

These have been identified as part of the Stable Australian Croton and this is extracted from “Earthquake Hazards in Papua New Guinea, Problems and Way by Lawrence, Anton and Garry Gibson.”

It saddens me that before we identify the source of the recent quake we already have *Post-Courier* reporting on the Hela Governor saying that he is looking at an investigation to clear ExxonMobil. We need to be sensitive to how we frame our statements when many lives have been lost and we need an independent investigation before we can decide on a way forward.

Mr Speaker, in our search for answers we have found some case studies on induced seismicity. These investigations link to source extraction and earthquake. Some of these information came from “The United States Geological Surveys” formerly, simply “Geological Survey.” It is a scientific agency of the United States Government. According to the USGS only one to two per cent of the earthquakes in the US are linked to the hydraulic fracturing while the remaining earthquakes are induced by the waste water disposal into extraction

The second case study we looked at was the experience of the Dutch Shell Company and an ExxonMobil joint venture in Netherlands. The joint venture in the province of Groningen goes by the name of NAM. In 2015 the Dutch Court ruled that the Royal Dutch Shell and ExxonMobil must compensate the home owners and the drop in house prices caused by earthquake linked to the production of Groningen Gas Fields. It is important to note here that there were no lives lost in Netherlands but here we have lost thousands of lives but they still compensated for them. As a consequence NAM accepted civil responsibility for the damage caused by the quake and has already paid over half a billion euros.

Back home we have PNG LNG Plant which accounts for about three per cent of the global production, lies roughly six hundred kilometres from the epi centre of the earthquake and

exported about 7.8 million tons of fuel last year to buyers in Japan, China and Taiwan according to data combined by Rombe.

Mr Speaker, as leaders we need to ask these difficult questions like;

(1) Were oil and gas extraction activities in Moro and Hides responsible for the recent seismic movement in the area?

(2) Did the operator know of the potential risk to the community? We want a way forward for our people and for Papua New Guinea as a whole.

(3) We want an independent investigation.

(4) We want regulations and a regulatory authority for the oil and gas sector to also monitor the rate of extraction. There could be a cost.

(3) We want registration for tracks to be in place on the industry.

(4) We want amendments to our Environmental Act. This is something that is really serious.

Mr Speaker, had there been development levies and royalty payments, provincial governments, LLG's and resource owners will be in a better position to deal with this epic proportion disaster ourselves, those who are involved up in the impacted provinces and districts.

Mr Speaker, to conclude the people of Western Province have seriously suffered from environmental damages from extractive industries for many years and like we did with Ok Tedi we would take this matter further in the name of our people and we will seek legal recourse.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

15/01

Mr PHILIP UNDIALU (Hela) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity as I will be short and brief. I've got a preliminary report but if I had to read, we will stay here until day break because my province is the epic centre and of course Southern Highlands.

Let me firstly take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister and our Government, the National Executive Council for immediately responding to the disaster, the 7.5 magnitude earthquake that struck our people in the early morning of 26 February 2018 while we were fast asleep, around 3.44 am.

Because of the magnitude of the disaster that spreads right across five provinces, the amount of efforts and the resources needed to attend to the disaster areas is such a massive exercise and as a province, on behalf of the people of Hela, I would like to thank the Government for taking immediate step and for the Prime Minister to establish an Emergency

Controller, allocating sufficient funds, giving delegated responsibilities to responsible SOEs, coordinating with foreign governments, international communities, our development partners and the friends across Papua New Guinea. It was a mammoth task and let's give credit to the Prime Minister for taking the lead in this aspect.

Although there may be some overlaps, I don't expect a perfect operation due to the mammoth responsibilities and tasks but, Prime Minister, you did well and on behalf of my people and my three colleague members of Parliament here, Member for Koroba Lake Kopyago, Komo-Magarima and Tari-Pori and our people back home, we are so thankful for that.

I also take the opportunity to thank all the Honourable Members who are seated here, Opposition leader and your team. I think because of the disaster, the people of Papua New Guinea have brought us here in this one spirit and unity despite our differences in policies and personalities. But this is the time Papua New Guinea has come together to legislate an important restoration authority that will restore the lives of my people and the other five provinces including the infrastructures that were devastated because of the disaster. I commend all of us here and those who have contributed in cash or kind.

Let me make a specific reference or mention to friends who have come on time. Firstly, our development partners, ExxonMobil and Oil Search, PJV, OK Tedi, our own MRDC and subsidiary companies, PJV, National Petroleum Company, PNG Power and the list goes on. That also includes the Australian Government, New Zealand Government, Chinese Government, Japanese Government, Philippines Government and citizens, France, Israeli Government, US and the list goes on who have come on board to help us in this time of disaster.

Back in the province, we are completely out of reach from rest of the world and rest of the provinces because our only means of contact is through communication facilities and Tari airport to Port Moresby and by road.

16/01

Whilst these essential services were cut, we were out of reach for almost 10-11 days but with the help of individuals and corporations that I've just mentioned, we were able to restore services, especially the main Highlands Highway from Tari to Mendi, back to Koroba and partly back to Komo. The airport was re-opened, thanks to the Civil Aviation Authority and Curtain Brothers.

The communication network with Digicel has been restored while medevac was organised and spearheaded by Oil Search and Tari Hospital CEO.

We have reported and certified about 81 deaths in Hela, thousands being injured and almost 150 000 have been displaced, made homeless and we are expecting to relocate them in new locations or establish between 25-30 care-centres within the province.

As we speak, a hundred per cent of the education sector is shut down, all elementary, higher secondary schools are not operating today because the infrastructure has been destroyed. These are infrastructure that we have inherited from Southern Highlands as well as those from the colonial days. They have all been demolished.

The report that I have here has been done by the Department of Works' Building Section. Their structural division has made an assessment and it is likely to cost almost K200 million to rebuild the education sector alone.

Mr Speaker, I will not dwell much on the cost of the earthquake but let me correct the sentiment echoed by the Member for North-Fly that my statement calling for an independent enquiry was not to clear the company but it is only fitting that an assessment and a thorough report must be done to establish whether the earthquake was induced or whether it was of a natural cause.

And my position remains the same that despite the scientifically proven evidence from satellite images and interpretation from geologists which have proven that it was because of tectonic plate movements within the fault line but the people of Hela will still insist that a thorough investigation must be done to ensure that the cause of the disaster is indeed natural and not induced.

Let me state clearly here that it is not an anti-project movement but this is to put to rest the widespread misinformation and speculation on social media and many other information coming out from various sources.

So, for the long term security and cooperation between the communities and the developers I think we have to stand beside the call that the people are making to have the company cleared of these allegations.

With the restoration authority bill in place, let me make only two recommendations. Because it will look after about five provinces the operational centre for each of the provinces must be centred within the respective provinces must be standard so that we can work closely with the Government and authorities on the ground so that we do not overlap and duplicate functions.

17/01

The assessment report and restoration plans that we have put together on the ground will be utilised for the restoration exercise and reconstruction efforts.

Mr Speaker, in four years' time, the capacity that we are building and the effort that we are putting in will be handed over to my province.

My province is a new province and lacks a lot of capacity and we will migrate and manage for long term sustainability of the restoration exercise. In due course, we will put up a very comprehensive report to assist the National Government and the Restoration Authority to ensure that the damages that has been done is properly costed and delivered.

Mr Speaker, let me emphasis that although there are different interpretations to the cause of the earthquake, we believe in our Hela prophesy. We still believe that Gigira Laitepo was not found through seismic activity or through drilling operations.

Our forefathers predicted that there is fire beneath Mt Gigira and that one day it will be utilised. Firstly, to kill a pig, in the Opena territory in the Enga Province because it has been fulfilled that we have used the Gigira Laitepo to fire up Mt Porgera, the gold mine.

Secondly, it was told hundreds of years ago that there will be a white ship and a white haired human being will come and ask for fire. If you give the trunk of the fire something terrible will happen in your life. And I believe that we have taken the people's resources according to prophesy of the Gigira Laitepo against the will of my people.

A lot of concessions have been given, and commitments have been made. A lot of things have not being honoured over the last seven years after the sale of gas took place and 110 shipments have been made.

Mr Speaker, we heard from the various presenters at the Petroleum Summit last week, that the industry has already recouped the money spent. Where in this world, within four years of operation can you recoup US\$819 billion? It only happens here in Papua New Guinea.

Finally, I call on the Government to give what is due to my people. Today, over the last couple of years, my province was left out in the cold crying for its share. A number of changes to the Gas Agreement and to the UBS Agreement was proposed by the government. So much immunity has been given, including the royalties and the equity which is still parked in the various trust accounts, for which I do not blame the National Government because my landowners are also responsible.

Mr Speaker, the court was cleared last week Friday and we are moving forward. Hela Province does not want to beg for donations. But we are just asking for what my people are entitled to and it must be given to them. I will give my report through the Restoration Authority

through and through the National Government and the various authorities and together we will build the province and together we will help our people.

If my final call is taken for granted again, the worst is yet to come and believe me, because many people never believe in the spirit of gas but today they will believe because it has targeted Porgera, Hides, Ok Tedi, Kutubu, Moro and all the facilities.

I believe that today this is the first effect of the earthquake we have experienced because the cries of my people is yet to be heard.

18/01

Finally I call upon the people of Hela, the disaster caused to my people has been taken stock of and we have killed more people through tribal fights than the earthquake has killed and I will go back home. Our leaders are together, we have 200 public servants working without pay and through this relief exercise we want to build our province. And let me commend all the friends, foreign governments, state-owned enterprises, all the leaders and people of Papua New Guinea for staying with us and contributing in cash and kind and in prayers, and let me commend the Prime Minister for taking this approach. Thank you all honourable Members and thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr PATRICK PRUAITCH (Aitape-Lumi) – Thank you Mr Speaker. I rise to also pass on our condolences to the families of the ones lost during this disaster. It is an unfortunate situation for the country at this time. Let me make an appeal again to everyone in this country to support those people who have been affected by this calamity.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to take this opportunity to thank our development partners, particularly the foreign governments, the local NGOs and the business houses who stepped up and were on the ground when the disaster happened in those provinces, particularly OK Tedi, Oil Search, and ExxonMobil. They have done a tremendous job in ensuring that normalcy is restored to our people. While I do commend them, I am somewhat dismayed at the response by our national government. Somewhat dismayed. While I do commend the Prime Minister for personally being on the ground, I think the national government has shied away at its core responsibility. Why do we have to allow other people to come and put in money just before us?

Mr Speaker, the immediate thing for the Government to do was to release the money that is already within our budget. We have this DSIP and PSIP, rightly budgeted for people of Hela Province, Southern Highlands, Gulf, Western Province and for Telefomin in West Sepik. Why

can't the national government immediately release that money to provincial governments on the ground? The provincial governments know the local community it governs. It is fair for the national government to talk about accountability and transparency. Too much talk about money. Our people need restoration, they need food, water, and their provincial government and local government is on the ground. If the Prime Minister and the Treasurer provided that funding, I am sure Governor of Hela, Governor of Southern Highlands, Governor of Gulf and Governor of Western Province will take the call and ensure that normalcy is restored very quickly. We have appointed a new emergency controller overlooking the job of National Disaster Office. When we talk about this Bill, the provincial governments must be involved. If they are not involved, it is going to be another extravagant expenditure by national government. Provincial governments must be involved, local leaders must be involved if the national government is serious in addressing this problem.

My call to the Prime Minister is to release the money that is budgeted for. Why are the funds not released? Is the economy bad? Then be transparent and tell the truth.

19/01

Have you receipted those provinces? It is very disappointing for the National Government to rely on private sector. But yes, they will come in because they are corporate entities. But the National Government must come in first.

The Prime Minister should say Hela and the Southern Highlands provinces funding is available. The National Government must take the bold step to ensure that upfront funding is available. We must not confuse ourselves here.

As a government, we must decide for ourselves that this is our contribution and the rest of you can come and make your contribution.

If the Government is not releasing the money then we must ask why the national government is not making the first call. Unless the economy is in good phase, I know the government can do it. But why are we not feeling the pinch of it.

It is important for us as the national government to take the leadership upfront. Our presence there is not to sympathise with the people but to be there to put down the funds to assist our people. Let us do it. We cannot be establishing an authority without funding because you cannot restore services without money.

The money is in the 2018 National Budget so we need the national government to front-load because we know the disaster has affected five provinces, so let us allow those five provinces to receive their allocations, the rest of us can wait.

Mr Speaker, it is important that the national government must be serious and therefore. I appeal to the Prime Minister to make that funding available to this authority before we can talk about accountability.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA (Gulf) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I also rise to make my contribution to the five disaster-affected provinces.

Mr Speaker, my province was affected too, especially the West Kikori and the East Kikori LLGs.

The river system in these two LLGs were polluted as a result of the earthquake. After the earthquake effects, the rivers will continue to carry the clogged up pollution and probably over the next six months.

Mr Speaker, in my province, we had five deaths and about 27 houses destroyed but that is nothing compared to what has happened in the Highlands Region.

So before we speculate about the effects of the earthquake and what the causes are, I think we should really confine our discussions to the statement that the Prime Minister has made.

The *Standing Orders* are clear, Mr Speaker, that these Bills are coming up and when they come up we can debate them so I want to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister and his government. They have been proactive. The NEC has met, made the decision and have allocated the funds.

From the Gulf Province's point of view, what we received is sufficient to assist us to help those two LLGs to try and bring normalcy to our lives. The communities affected along the Kikori River host both the pipeline for oil and the pipeline for gas.

20/01

The river systems are clogged up endangering the animal species that have dwelt in the rivers such as crocodiles, eels, prawns and turtles. If you live along the river system you will know that when it floods all other fish die except for these four, they always survive. In this particular case everything including these four have been wiped out in the Kikori River. This river is akin to environmental pollution. When you go and stand at Ningerum, from Ok Tedi or Tabubil and look down to Bige, you can see that the river is practically dead and it will take many years for that river to come back to life when everything is cleared.

I am requesting that we get the Fisheries Department to have a look and restock it, with fish and other species that once called this river home. The effect of the earthquake has contaminated the water and affected sago, the staple diet along the Kikori River.

Yesterday, Minister Soroi and I flew there for the first time. Since we have put money in for the Kikori Airport, it is only right that we fly on the first flight into Kikori.

Mr Speaker, I join my other fellow Governors in thanking the government for moving forward. We are facing hard times but they have made the money available for us to move as fast as we can. In Gulf Province, we are also doing what we can and that includes making allocations in the provincial budget of K3 million to be added to what the national government has given because part of our province has been affected. Our funds have been used to procure food and other stuff to help the people of Kikori. What we need is water containers and water purification tablets for use until when WHO gives us a report by today or tomorrow that the water is safe for our people to drink.

Our efforts must continue to focus on the devastated areas of Hela and Southern Highlands provinces. There are a couple of lessons we must take from this disaster; firstly, there has to be an alternative route to the highlands from Lae. The road to Kikori and the Port of Kikori must be given the same priority as the road from the highlands down into Madang so that if disasters such as this strike in the future our people have alternative routes in which we can open up supply lines because they will always be there.

Secondly, since my province joins Hela, Southern Highlands, Jiwaka, Western Highlands, Morobe, Chimbu and Eastern Highlands provinces I am asking the National Government to, with the help of the authority that they are setting up, to manage disasters in this country to have a flood mitigation plan for all the major river systems in my province.

21/01

This is because every year the same thing happens over and over again. We have to use this opportunity to gather resources to have major flood mitigation plans for rivers in my province as well as the Fly River, the Sepik River and other rivers in the country.

I commend the Prime Minister for looking at the model from Queensland because I believe that it is the appropriate model where it involves all agencies of government whether it is at the state level or the federal level similar to the provincial or the local level governments.

Mr Prime Minister, you must undertake this review quickly and set up a structure so that we can respond much better than we have been doing since independence. Our structures, our processes and the people we have there need to be overhauled.

Mr Speaker, in closing, I join my colleagues in thanking all who have helped and I pay my condolences to the families who lost their loved ones and their provinces. Thank you.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I move for Parliament to incorporate the Prime Minister’s statement on notice for debate later, it will be not good to not make a statement especially in light of the fact that my district is one of the affected areas.

On behalf of my people, I think it is only fair that I pass our appreciation to many Papua New Guineans who have responded to the call and have reached out to help fellow countrymen who are in need. None can be more exemplary than all Members of Parliament for making yourselves available today. The Parliament is supposed to meet next week Tuesday but I thank you all for turning up today. You showed commitment and concern to come for this re-call of Parliament to ensure that we give support to our Government’s plan in setting up a proper structure to deal with this disaster.

It was an earthquake that none of us foresaw although looking retrospectively back in data, not only the Highlands but our country is sitting in a place where earthquakes have been happening for a very long time. In our history the Highlands region has never experienced an earthquake of that magnitude especially where it has destroyed much and claimed lives.

Let me say thank you to everyone and whilst the corporate citizens and many responses have been acknowledged, I am moved by many ordinary Papua New Guineans, you see mothers and children coming with bags of clothes and food to donate to the affected areas and that goes to show the intrinsic Melanesian value of sharing and caring for each other as times are hard our fellow citizens are there.

22/01

Having said this, let me place on record our Government’s intervention.

Today, the proposed Bill before us is a culmination of an effort that was led right from the front by the Prime Minister. He has been taking pictures and the pictures are from a leader who has been to the frontline of where the victims are, and where people are emotionally affected and in destitute, experiencing low moments of life.

The Prime Minister has stepped out of the comfort of his office, stepped out from the protocols and visited the disaster affected areas, and only after he has brought answers to them through the rally of support that was sought from the agencies of the State.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to mention on record that the agencies of State responded immediately and that is something that must be seen as we propose to go into the future. So the biggest contributors so far in this disaster are the agencies of the State, the State-owned companies. They responded in great amounts and came forward to us.

Mr Speaker, before the Prime Minister stepped into the disaster areas, he instructed those of us at the Finance, Treasury and Planning to ensure that what is allowed for in the budget are made available and as I speak today, K1 million each was allocated to the districts helping centre and K2 million each went to the five severely affected districts including my district. The money was put into their account two weeks ago, however, because of technicalities, for example in my district, the entire district treasury office is not functional because the earthquake has ripped it apart.

Mr Speaker, I know the Opposition Leader means very well. The amount of sympathy he has for our people has been expressed in the volume of his speech today. But he should have consulted us first.

Mr Speaker, the Member for Wabag can confirm that K1 million was transferred into the Wabag District Treasury Account, likewise the Member for North Fly can also confirm that K1 million was transferred into his District Treasury Account. Those are the instructions that we passed, however, if it has not been transferred yet then the districts concerned can see me.

All the districts in Southern Highlands and Hela province, Kikori and Kandep districts have been listed for support and we have funds transferred to them. I think, K20 million was made available for them to respond immediately to the people who are affected.

Mr Speaker, having said that, the next business of this recall is for us to go into the proposed Emergency and the Restoration Bill which we have in place.

Mr Speaker, this relief effort will see us transit from the current immediate relief assistance to the next. In my humble view this is the most important thing. I think it is about time, our country should be sensitive to the fact that we must build infrastructure to withstand the forces of nature and the forces of disaster.

Mr Speaker, I urge the provincial governments to take note, I think the building board is not complying with the building standards for a start and secondly, they are not building to withstand earthquake specifications.

23/01

I recall when they were designing to withstand about nine as far as the earthquake is concern I told them that I don't have money to give to build that extra but the advice to me was, what is K1 million or K2 million compared to possible damage and in their passing remarks said that your geological structure is very young. Those discussions took place two years before the earthquake. So that building is the only building that stood firm despite the earthquake and the number of aftershock. So it's about time we take those as lessons in learning.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first disaster, neither will this be the last, in fact, the Bible is correct leading on into the future.

Mr Speaker, my Bible is correct, and going into the future, we expect a lot of natural disaster occurrence. It's part of life now. Japan lived with earthquakes and their design in the infrastructure and public infrastructures are designed to withstand earthquakes, hailstorms, thunderstorms and whatever it is.

Our economy is not yet big to move big time but it does not stop us from planning ahead in getting simple programs tuned to withstand disasters. As we speak, it is shaking in the New Guinea Island as it shook last night and before that. You know you got earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunami. When I visited one of the villages in the fringes of Western Province, Southern Highlands and Hela, an area called Uiya, seven villages were completely buried and the people are living in makeshifts houses. They told me something that will still stand with me for the rest of my life.

Mr Speaker, they told Governor Undialu, Minister Petrus Thomas and the representative of Minister Alfred Manase, basically that, if the earthquake did not strike, we would not know when we will see government officials, let alone leaders or company agencies. They have never seen in their life time for the last 40 years since independence an elected leader or government officials.

I think the natural disasters and the earthquake have amplified the need for us to be proactive, planning in anticipation of disasters going forward. There needs to be a bi-partism approach among us on both sides of the House so far as planning for natural disasters are concerned.

We budgeted in this year's Budget some money for disasters. This morning during the Government caucus meeting, couple of other districts expressed concern that extra ordinary floods, earthquakes and other disasters are causing need for interventions. I'm bringing home a point that we need to be cognitive to the fact that we live in a time where disaster will continue

to grow so we need to have systems of government prepared to be on call as soon as a disaster hits.

Today we are fortunate that the Prime Minister is proactive and has responded well utilising his own network as well as our government systems. We responded and we are able to arrest what could have easily have blowout of proportion as far as the aftermath effect such as social effect, law and order effect and everything else that is associated with the society that is now surprised with the earthquake that is happening.

Mr Speaker, going into the future, I propose a bi-partisan approach. I propose to this House a specific quarantine fund that can be established towards and in line with the endowment fund principle and we can charge that to the way we collect our GST or others and not to be touched by any Government except when disaster triggers. We have a specific fund set aside that continues to grow and when the disaster hit right across our country, there's a quick respond time we can access to ensure that we meet those disasters because the disaster bill in the Southern Highlands alone runs into and even go past the billion kina mark easily.

24/01

The cap of K450 million which we have put is not a one-off payment for this year, it is a programmed allocation. It will run for three or four years consistent with the life of the authority that we are setting up and in that, Mr Speaker, some of the major projects, in light of the restoration effort will be concluded very soon.

I would like to appeal, especially to the little Papua New Guineans who are still giving out there, that your heart and the motives of your heart is noted by Hela and those who are affected.

I also appeal to the rest of the Papua New Guineans who are still giving, please, you heart is valued and your motives are valued. You can cease giving. For my people in Tari, we don't need the food anymore, we can pick up and go. We just need to move to the next phase to rebuild the building, rebuild the infrastructure and move on.

That is the phase that I think the authority here will be responsible for, the big infrastructure drive of all these five or six provinces, picked upon and run through without circumventing the process of government because it is a disaster area but we just procure to the best of our ability, run those big programmes through, get the major infrastructure, especially roads, schools that have collapsed, hospitals that need rebuilding and run the major programmes so that we can give life back to our people up there. The proposed authority that is on foot before us will have to fulfil those in terms of government services.

So, in conclusion, Mr Speaker, let me say thank you again to every one of you who have stood with us. Your help and your kindness is certainly noted. And, as I said earlier, for the small Papua New Guineans who are giving out there, please, I don't intend to direct what you do, but we don't intend to beg you for a long time. We are now moving into infrastructure effort. We will be ceasing collection of food very shortly and concentrate on medicine and rehabilitation as we move into the proper restoration phase.

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

EMERGENCY (GENERAL POWERS) BILL 2018

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Peter O'Neill** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr PETER O'NEILL (Ialibu-Pangia – Prime Minister) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, just a short statement. Again, our country is facing one of the most devastating earthquakes of 7.5 magnitude that affected almost six provinces, namely, Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga, Western Province, Gulf Province and West Sepik.

25/01

The earthquake has caused many loss of lives and many homes, gardens were destroyed, many families and our people being displaced and many key social and economic infrastructures destroyed.

Mr Speaker, our government has acted swiftly to declare a state of emergency and established a relief supply coordination's to assist in coordination of relief supplies to the affected areas in the six provinces.

Mr Speaker this relief operations is continuing with the support of private sectors, development partners, our bilateral partners including Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, United State, Israel and many others.

Mr Speaker, given the massive operations that includes relief supplies and restoration of social and economic infrastructures, the government through NEC has recommended for the declaration of the State of Emergency. This is simply because Parliament is the only authority that declares the State of Emergency.

Mr Speaker, I now please to submit to Parliament for its enactment Bill for Emergency General Powers Bills 2018, which just sets out the appointment and powers and duties of the controller and other powers that he needs to ensure that this Restoration Authority functions.

Mr Speaker, after the enactment of the bill, the government through NEC will appoint a controller who will then take charge of the entire operations including coordination, monitoring and movement of people in and out of the declared and affected areas within the six provinces, thankyou Mr Speaker.

Motion (by **Mr Patrick Pruaitch**) agreed to –

That the question be now put.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill by leave, read a third time.

WESTERN, ENGA, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AND HELA RESTORATION AUTHORITY BILL 2018

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Peter O'Neill** and read a first time.

26/01

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr PETER O'NEILL (Ialibu-Pangia – Prime Minister) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, again, as I said, this earthquake in our country on 22nd February, 2018, devastated many communities, lives and destroyed many social and economic infrastructures in the six provinces. It is likely that the cost of restoration be into the billions of kina but it is essential that we establish this Authority so that we can restore the roads, bridges, schools and many health facilities that were destroyed. The NEC approved K450 million for the restoration programs over next few years, and currently the Government coordination team is working closely with the our development and of course bilateral partners who are providing financial and technical assistance for the design and funding of the infrastructure that is needed.

Mr Speaker, given that this is a massive restoration requirement, a dedicated authority similar to the Gazelle Restoration Authority is needed to coordinate this work program. The Bill to establish the 2018 Restoration Authority has been approved by NEC which I am pleased to present to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform Parliament that this Authority will be in place for four years only and thereafter, it will cease to exist. This is to ensure that the Authority performs its principle tasks within the legal time frame and I have already deliberated on the ways to protect the existence of such authority into the future.

So Mr Speaker, this Authority has time limitation and I commend this Bill to Parliament.

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

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General

A message from His Excellency, the Governor-General dated 27 March 2018 was announced recommending the expenditure of public monies in accordance with *Section 210* of the *Constitution* insofar as the Bill relates to and provides for such expenditure.

Third Reading

Leave granted to move the Third Reading forthwith.

Motion (by **Mr James Marape**) proposed –

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Motion (by **Mr Patrick Pruaitch**) agreed to –

That the question be now put.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a third time – agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

MOTION BY LEAVE

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

Leave granted.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS –
ALTERATION OF DAY AND HOUR OF NEXT MEETING.**

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Parliament at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 3 April 2018 at 2 p.m..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – Mr Speaker, before I move a motion for adjournment, let me thank every Member of Parliament for coming out from your busy schedule to support the Government on this afternoon’s program in respect to the disaster.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 4.50 p.m..