

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 29 May 2018

FINAL HANSARD

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FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 29 May 2018

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10 a.m..

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

Sitting suspended.

Mr Speaker again took the Chair at 10.35 a.m., and invited the Member for Kandrian-Gloucestre, **Honourable Joseph Lelang**, to say Prayers:

‘Our Heavenly Father, whose voices we heard in the wind and whose breath gives us life to the world, heard us. We are gather here, before your Holy presence here today in the Leaders of your people in these Nations, Papua New Guinea with humbleness and humility, we come to as many children’s, we are small and weak, we need your strangled and wisdom, Our Heavenly Father make our eyes purple sunset, listen to the wind, birds, and mauvers at your entire creations, make our hands respect you have made our ears have been suffer to heard your voice, O Lord bless us and your people who are gather here today, bless our Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, the Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament, O Lord make us wise, so that we may know the things that you taught us, the children.to ;lead the people in just faith way and making decisions and guide us deliberations today O lord and in the rest of the days ahead. And make us strong so that we may not be superior to other people but as humble servants ready and willing to serve our people and that we be ready to fight Satan and all of his errors. Make us ever ready to come to you with straight eyes so that when our work is done and life fade from us, our spirits can come to your without shame. We commit this prayer to Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and every. Amen’

QUESTIONS

Table Audit Reports - KPH

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY – Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer and relate to the transparency of information on Kumul Petroleum Holdings (KPH) and the implications this has on his promises in the so-called 100 Days Plan and budget. This information is also vital for understanding the extent of any financial benefits to the people of PNG from the PNG LNG Project.

Mr Speaker, there has been repeated calls for transparency about the flow of finances from the PNG LNG Project.

The Minister for Petroleum, last week on 16 May, called for Oil Search to disclose where K14 billion in benefits has gone to. He said himself that he is only aware of K4 billion but the governors of Gulf and Hela also queried the payments and distribution of royalties and other benefits the week before last.

You have called for transparency yourself through your support for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and we are quite happy with your work in this area. We in the Opposition have made similar calls and strongly support greater transparency. We seem to be in agreement that there needs to be more transparency.

However, there remains considerable uncertainties about PNG LNG revenues and payments including through Kumul Petroleum Holdings.

In the 2015 EITI Report, in table 33, there is a confusing statement that IRC said they had received K73.8 million from Kumul Petroleum in company tax but Kumul Petroleum did not report any company tax payments to the EITI.

In the 2016 EITI Report, table 32 indicates K15.2 million was received by IRC but Kumul Petroleum had said that they had paid no company tax. That is very confusing.

It is more confusing on claimed dividend payments where in the 2015 EITI Report, footnote B to table 34 says that Treasury has confirmed that there was no distinction between dividends and temporary advances.

So in 2015, there appears to be reported payments of K286 million but Treasury only actually received K86.4 million

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member for Kavieng, let me interrupt you. There are far too many complaints from Members of Parliament that they don’t get the chance to ask their questions within the limited question time. If you are trying to make a report there is a time for it.

Honourable Member, make your questions brief and highlight the real issue of your question because there are Members waiting to ask their questions.

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY – Mr Speaker, I certainly will but I just want to stress the points because these are issues of national importance. They need detailed explanation so that Members of Parliament can understand.

Mr Speaker, my questions are as follows;

(1) Can the Minister confirm whether he has seen any copies of Kumul Petroleum Accounts or Audited Reports for the years 2014, 2015, 2016 and or 2017?

(2) If the Government is committed to transparency then why have these financial reports not being properly published or promptly tabled on the Floor of Parliament?

(3) Is it because there is something to hide such as losses from the UBS Oil Search Deal, missing millions of LNG income or a weak balance sheet that will make it hard to enhance future projects?

(4) If there is nothing to hide then why are the Members of this Parliament and the people of PNG being kept in the dark?

(5) Can the Treasurer commit to table these reports in Parliament during this current Meeting?

Mr CHARLES ABEL – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Kavieng for these series of important questions relating to the proceeds and benefits from the mining and gas projects in particular the LNG project.

He is quite correct when he explains about the EITI process and reports and I am proud of the fact that our Government has subscribed to this initiative and we are keeping up to date with our reports in that regard.

Sometimes of course, the process is not perfect in terms of data collection and the production in a timely manner and the EITI Office within Treasury continues to work hard to make sure that it avails itself of that information. Through the EITI the purpose is to make sure that we collect and marry the information from both sides for the benefit of the public and not only the Government so that the public can see that what is reported by the operating entity and what is being reported by Government matches up.

A lot of what the Member is saying relates to some discrepancies in the reporting. There can be several reasons for that in particular on how tax is treated in an accounting sense and tax payments are made in a cash sense. There can be differences in relation to what you return, in annual returns in terms of what you owe in tax and then how that then translates into actual cash that is paid to IRC and subsequently reported.

In relation to what has been raised by the Leader of the Opposition regarding those discrepancies that the KPH is reporting and what is in the EIT Reports, I have referred that matter to the IRC to look into that, and I have also asked KPH to liaise with the IRC and to explain why the discrepancy is there.

Mr Speaker, in relation to the accounts, KPH is obliged to produce financial reports through the relevant Minister and tabled in Cabinet, subject to all the processes being completed. And one of the very important aspects of that is that these accounts are fully and properly audited, either by the Auditor General or through an allocated or engaged auditor and that completes the process. And those reports are brought to Cabinet and tabled in Parliament. I believe that process is being adhered to and I have no reason to suspect there is any issue or foul play or deliberate delay in that process. We will find exactly where that is in terms of what years have been finalised and are ready to bring to Parliament.

I can assure the people of Papua New Guinea that there is certainly nothing to hide and as you know, this Government is making every effort to collect every toea of revenue that is due to the Government.

On the LNG Project in particular, we are making sure that KPH is receiving those dividends fully and passing it on to the Government. And through the IRC we are also making every effort to ensure to collect any tax obligations that are due, not only from the PNG LNG project alone but from all mineral petroleum projects and all companies and operators in the country. And the Government is putting in the effort to make sure that everybody is captured in the tax net and everybody pays what they are obliged to pay to the Government and the people of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, in responding to these questions there is nothing to hide because the process is there. We will be tabling it through the Minister, the Prime Minister or the Minister for State Enterprises will bring them to Cabinet and we will be tabling them in Parliament in due course.

Teleco Merger

Dr ALLAN MARAT – Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister for State Enterprises. The National Executive Council has decided to merge Telikom PNG with Bmobile and DataCo. There are many issues with the merger that is going on at the moment at an unusual speed because normally mergers take a long time to finalise because of the detailed issues that need to be properly settled before beginning the process of merging.

Mr Speaker, outsiders can trick and find their way into Papua New Guinea, dig up the gold, extract the oil and gas and through their rather initial greed and selfishness take away massive benefits and leave us bitter. Our National Leadership, through the ongoing merger, is allowing outsiders to take away our national security in the telecommunications industry, leaving everything our constitutional forefathers sought to protect and secure always, exposed to terrorists and other foreign elements.

And for the sake of the citizens and listeners outside, my questions are;

- (1) Who are the shareholders of DataCo and its subsidiary DataCo Pacific and the percentages of their ownership?
- (2) Who are the shareholders of Bmobile-Vodafone and the percentages of their shareholding?
- (3) Are there any business connections that any member of the National Leadership has with DataCo and its subsidiary DataCo Pacific and with Bmobile-Vodafone?
- (4) Who are the directors of DataCo and its subsidiary DataCo Pacific and of Bmobile-Vodafone?
- (5) Who are the CEOs of Telikom, DataCo and its subsidiary DataCo Pacific and of Bmobile-Vodafone?

Telikom claimed it was owed a substantial amount of money allegedly by Bmobile and Telikom was ordered to write-off those debts. Telikom was alleged to have owed a substantial amount of money to a commercial bank which that particular commercial bank had vehemently denied. It is claimed that at the moment Telikom generates about K3 million per month whereas the other two are alleged to be insolvent.

(6) Mr Minister, through the Chair, could you explain to the citizens of PNG the truthfulness of these claims which seemingly justify the merger?

(7) Which of Telikom, Bmobile and DataCo has been the most profitable?

If Telikom is the most profitable, why is it that in the ongoing merger, Mr Minister, you are not bringing Bmobile and DataCo under Telikom but forcing Telikom and its citizen employees to come under Bmobile (which was allegedly run down by the same person who is now heading Telikom) and under DataCo? Which telco is merging into which telco? And what is the rationale for such a direction, Mr Minister?

Some citizen employees of Telikom have served in Telikom for many years and disapproved of the merger because Telikom has the ability to sustain and build up profitability in Telikom. And these citizen employees have been forced allegedly by the Government to sign some papers which will see them terminated.

(8) Mr Minister, could you confirm this to the affected citizen employees and their families throughout PNG and tell them what will happen to their legitimate entitlement for the many years of service with Telikom?

(9) Mr Minister, why have you not seen fit to meet with the PNG Communications Workers Union in spite of the fact that on numerous occasions they made appointment to meet and talk to you before the merger started?

Mr WILLIAM DUMA – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Rabaul for asking these very important questions.

Mr Speaker, normally, I would try my best to answer all these questions in the Chamber but because of the sensitivity and the importance of these questions, I would like to ask the Member for Rabaul to put those questions in writing and I will later on during the course of the Meeting answer those questions in full.

But to answer some of the questions, if I may, Mr Speaker, DataCo is 100 per cent owned by Kumul Telikom Holdings now and Kumul Telikom Holdings itself is owned by Kumul Consolidated Holdings Limited

I am not aware of the existence of the company called DataCo Pacific Limited and who owns that company but and I will in due course seek to provide the answers to the Member.

In relation to the CEOs of the three companies, their names are well known to the public and one of them is a foreigner and the other two are citizens. I am sure the good Member is aware of these CEOs.

In regards to the relationship between Telikom, DataCo and Bmobile, most of us will recall at one stage Bmobile was owned by two shareholders and the majority shareholding at that time was owned by the State, whereas the balance of 20 per cent was owned by a company called Capital Way Limited, which is based in Hong Kong. And at that time the shareholders of Bmobile practically the government and Capital Way Limited entered into a shareholding arrangement where all the major investment decisions to rehabilitate and improve the infrastructure of the mobile business and any decisions to be made by the shareholders to rehabilitate the restructure was subject to a veto power that was given to a minority shareholder

This was something done before the O'Neill Government took office in 2011. It was an arrangement that was already in existence.

When this Government, led by Prime Minister O'Neill, came into office, we realised that the Government's efforts to rehabilitate and put into infrastructure that will enable Bmobile to be able to compete with Digicel were hampered because of the veto powers that were enjoyed by this minority shareholder. Every time the board wanted to make an investment decision to put in the money, this minority shareholder had the veto powers so we were handicapped and hamstrung by that power that was enjoyed by that minority shareholder.

Mr Speaker, under the directions and leadership of our Prime Minister, a decision was made by Cabinet to payout this minority shareholder so we then would enjoy 100 per cent of that Bmobile company that would then be able to put in the money and to compete and regain the market share that we lost to Digicel.

Mr Speaker, the Government of this country through Kumul Consolidated Holdings Limited now owns 100 per cent of Bmobile and as part of the restructure the plan is when we are able to pay off the moneys that those companies owe to the bankers, we would be able to put in the money so that the infrastructure is rehabilitated

and more communication towers are built. We will then be able to compete with Digicel and regain the market share. This is one of the reasons why this Government has decided to restructure our teleco companies as such that they all come under one new holding company namely, Kumul Telikom Holdings Limited.

Mr Speaker, as of today, Telikom PNG Holdings Limited owes a substantial amount of money to its bankers. Technically speaking, we do not own that company because it is owned by the bankers, therefore, as a responsible Government, a decision was made to restructure such that we would then pull all the good assets of those companies together and retrain and re-deploy our employees. We would then be able to help that company trade out of its difficulties and pay its bank loans.

Mr Speaker, as a responsible Government we cannot allow this situation to continue. The Government has made a decision to restructure to be able to make those companies leaner and more profitable.

In terms of the welfare of our employees, when the merger finally takes place, you will realise that those three companies will need to more employees. Unfortunately, more than seven years ago, Telikom PNG Limited started what was known as a spill and fill exercise that involved the forced retrenchment of many of our qualified and competent national employees. We are now trying to restructure in such a way that all those good employees return to work for our three Telco companies.

Mr Speaker, we do not have any plans to retrench any of our good employees. In fact it is the other way around. Once the merged entity commences operations we will need qualified and competent and more national employees. I can assure our people particularly the employees who may be listening that there is no room for retrenchment particularly when the economy is down.

We, as a responsible Government, do not wish to see any of our own national people being forced to go out on the streets; that is not part of the agenda. The idea is to restructure and make those companies competitive on the national market so that in the process of trying to make money we still retain our good employees.

Mr Speaker, another decision that was made more than six years ago was the establishment of a company called Telikom Mobile. Again that company was competing with Bmobile. Where in the world do you have two mobile companies owned by one shareholder? This is another reason why we are restructuring such that when the two mobile companies merge, we retain the good assets and we look at dealing with infrastructure that is out of date.

As we all know, telecommunication industry is an industry that changes every year and you will eventually find that most of the models are outdated so that is the reason why as part of the restructure exercise those infrastructure that are outdated will then be made redundant and we keep the best infrastructure assets. The new company or the reorganised company Bmobile will use those good infrastructure utilising the new staff that will be recruited and the other staff that will be re-deployed and be able to compete with Digicel.

Mr Speaker, in relation to the business model that we have come with. We feel that once the three telecommunication companies are merged under one company, they will be able to better compete with all the other competition in other industries.

In terms of alleged business interests which may be held by leaders, I can assure this Parliament that all those companies are 100 per cent owned by Kumul Telikom Holdings, ultimately Kumul Consolidated Holdings and then ultimately by the people through the State. The directors of Kumul Telikom Holdings Limited are also directors of the three companies. There are no separate board of directors for the three companies. There is only one board which has the power to appoint a CEO to run those three telecommunication companies.

Mr Speaker, once the Member provides those questions in writing, I will again answer him in writing. I feel that this is an important issue and we must make sure that we deliver the information properly and correctly so that our people know the current status of those companies because ultimately all of us are answerable to our people and those companies are ultimately owned by our people.

Supplementary Question Telikom Debts and Rates

Mr GARRY JUFFA – I wish to thank the Minister for his elaboration and explanation. My questions are brief and they are in relation to the amount of money Telikom owes the banks.

- (1) Can the Minister explain exactly how much Telikom owes?
- (2) How did Telikom, which is basically a money printing machine, come to owe so much to the banks?
- (3) Will the rates be affected?

Papua New Guineans are enjoying very reasonable rates under Telikom. Will these rates remain as they are or will they be hiked causing inconvenience to us that we may abandon Telkom?

Thank you very much.

Mr WILLIAM DUMA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Governor of Northern Province for his important question.

I would like to point out to our leader that the current sorry state of affairs of all our State-owned companies and more particularly Telikom did not happen overnight. It took more than six years or even ten years for these companies to be so run down that in some cases they have become a laughing stock.

Mr Speaker, in the case of Telikom, it started from Post and Telecom Corporation and then eventually there were series of changes that happened. Subsequent governments fiddled around with the management of those companies so in most cases we as leaders have a lot to answer for the sorry state of the affairs of these companies.

However, what this Government has done is to restart and put them on the right track to be profitability.

In the case of the rates that are being enjoyed by our consumers, as we all know, Mr Speaker, ICCC has the power to set tariffs and rates. All companies that operate in this country including all our State-owned entities also come within that so any price hike or price adjustment is all subject to the approval of ICCC so at this stage there are no plans to increase the prices for our consumers.

Elementary Teachers' Payroll Woes

Mr JOE SUNGI – Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Education Minister. This is in regard to the issue of elementary school teachers.

Mr Speaker, in my district, I have 164 elementary school teachers. From that 164, only four are on the payroll while 160 are still without pay since 2014.

I don't know about other districts or electorates in this country but this is a very serious issue for the early learning of the foundation of our children starting from elementary level

Mr Speaker, if we are not going to address the issues of the teachers of elementary schools in this country, then one would wonder what the future holds in terms of education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

(1) Can the Minister inform Parliament, the people of this country and most importantly, the teachers, if his department has plans in place to address the issue of elementary school teachers, especially those in my district who are not on the payroll?

Mr Speaker, the other issue is on training. Teachers are now undergoing training on an adhoc basis with their own funding.

(2) Can the Minister elaborate more on the future of elementary education in this country, in terms of teachers training and salaries?

Mr NICK KUMAN- Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Nuku for his questions. Firstly, all elementary school teachers throughout the country are on the payroll. If there is any specific issue on any particular teacher or particular school in your case, Nuku district, I would suggest that you refer them to me in writing so that I can provide you a good response so that you know exactly what the situation is.

The decision on elementary education right throughout the country was made two years ago in the last Parliament. I am sure this is your second term and you are fully aware of the restructuring of the elementary school system in the country. This is to correct the mistake made by the Government that introduced the elementary school system in the country.

Delivering good quality education to children at a very early is important because at the prime age of 5, 6 and 7, they are learn new things quickly in school or at home. We made mistakes in the past by introducing elementary schools, taking the young kids away from the primary school system in the country. We then introduced what they called, vernacular tokples and tokpisin (pidgin) as a form of instruction to our young kids. They were learning local dialect and tokpisin at school.

The students who progressed to grade 3 had serious problems. These kids were not able to read and write, not able to count and recognise colours, shapes, alphabetical letters and the numbers. It was very difficult.

This Government recently made a decision to restructure our school system in the country. We introduced 1-6-6 to take the elementary school system away from the village level, the ward level and bring them back to the primary so that we can get grade 1, 2, 3 all the way to grade 6 at the primary level and push 7, 8, 9 and 10 into high schools.

And that's the new structure that is now running for two years in a row now. We are pushing elementary out altogether.

It is this Government that made a deliberate decision last year to ensure that basic government services are at the ward level, including basic health services, the village courts and early childhood education, including prep to be established in our ward systems throughout the country.

This year we had funding of about K62 million approved and it is up to the Department of National Planning to ensure that this money is rolled out now. This is where you will see that the elementary schools will, over time, be moved back to the primary system.

So these are the problems that were created by whichever government that introduced elementary schools into our education system because the elementary system was never a part of the education system that was brought in back in the 60s or 70s.

I am pretty sure that the system that you and I went through started from prep and went up all the way to Grade 12.

We are going to go back to that basic education system in the country including doing away with what is called the Outcome Based Education which was borrowed from the Australian Government system by the previous government.

This is the system that didn't work and so we are reintroducing the Third Based Education so that it can work in this country. While we enjoyed the TFF policy it brings in a lot more enrolments into our school system. You see the growth of our young girls in this country. This government is now concentrating on delivering quality education.

Mr Speaker, I am basically trying to answer the question by saying that, yes, all elementary school teachers in the country are on the payroll until such time it is phased out and fully implemented by 2021, they should be on the payroll as we speak today.

Thank you.

End Sports Politics

Mr POWES PARKOP – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you for giving me the chance to ask a question. I have a question for the Prime Minister in his capacity as the Minister for Sport.

Mr Speaker, you are a football fan and so as many of us who are fond of football such as rugby and others.

Let me give a little background. Last weekend the UFI Football Championship happened in Europe where Liverpool FC played Real Madrid and we all know the outcome. Real Madrid won because the star player of Liverpool, Mohammed Fallah got knocked out.

Now, Mr Speaker, Mohammed Fallah is from Egypt. And another star player of Liverpool FC is Sadya Mane who is from Senegal.

Mr Speaker, if you look around Europe you will see that many young Africans of the age ranges of 18, 19, and 20 years old are playing in the European Cup.

In PNG we can make it too. I believe we can produce a Mohammed Fallah or such players. These two players will lead Senegal and Egypt to the World Cup in Russia next month.

But politics is killing sports. If you look at Rugby Union now, Fiji does not win the 15s but they do win the 7s and the 9s and are now the world champions.

How can Papua New Guinea not win the world championship? We have the athleticism. Just look at our young people running everywhere, swimming up and down and climbing mountains. Some are throwing stones here and there. They are natural athletes but we can't make it like Fiji.

You look at Rugby League, Fiji is a late comer but they are dominating the National Rugby League down in Australia.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, what is your question?

Mr POWES PARKOP – My question is that politics is killing the potential of this pathway for young people in Papua New Guinea. I thought politics only transpires in here but it has gone on to kill sports. Look at football, it has been there for the last 15 years or even before I came to Parliament and it seems that it will beat my time in Parliament also.

Mr Speaker this is a problem we have in sports administration. Sports politics is killing the potential for young people in our country.

Mr Speaker, here in the nation's capital we cannot venture into fisheries or logging or mining. We looking for sports talent in our young people.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, ask your question.

Mr POWES PARKOP – Mr Speaker, when the Government intervened in Rugby League we now have Justin Olam playing in the Melbourne Storms.

Can the Government intervene in sports administrations and get them out of sports politics? Look at some models like in New Zealand, there is a sports tribunal and in Swaziland they have court of arbitration for sports where they can intervene and the tribunal makes the decision and that tribunal recognises which association or body that is properly elected and legitimate.

Is there some way the Government can stop this sporting politics?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of National Capital District for his question regarding administration of sports in the country.

Mr Speaker, I know that there are two sporting codes struggling at the moment with some issues. That is soccer and rugby union where the officials who are managing those codes are at war against each other on positions in those associations. And it has resulted in those association breaking away and forming new associations in those sporting codes. This is bringing too much confusion for our sporting fraternity in the country.

Mr Speaker, if they really cared about the sport they would put down their differences aside and put the interest of the sports men and women ahead of themselves. They should be working together to making sure on building on the many successes we have had so far.

Mr Speaker, not so long ago we hosted the Pacific Games and it was a very resounding success, and recently the Commonwealth Games just concluded. Our sporting men and women with limited support are excelling beyond expectations. We also had a very huge success in hosting the Rugby League World Cup which mobilised and brought about patriotism in our citizens and we were all fully supportive of the success that our boys had in rugby league. Our women went to Fiji for Rugby Union and of course beat Fiji as well in the sevens.

Mr Speaker, these are good success stories of this country and many sports men and women are putting their efforts in a lot and that is why the administrators need to get their act together.

The last thing we want to do is legislate sports in the country by bringing legislative reforms where we will have to dictate to the administration of sports in the country. We want to make sure that it is voluntary and it is one that is building community spirit rather than the Government enforcing its will onto sporting bodies right across the country.

Mr Speaker, I have had a few meetings with the Rugby Union people trying to mediate their differences so that they can work together but it seems forgiveness is really absent in some of these issues. Some are entrenched differences that have taken place and I want to assure the Governor that we will continue to maintain dialogue between both parties.

I hope this kind of issue been brought forward to public will bring some common sense thinking in some of this administrators so that they can work on their differences so that it is resolved amicably.

Mr Speaker, in terms of soccer you look at some of the success stories of people like John Kapi Nato and Hekari Football Club. With a very solid management, they have made huge sacrifices for the good of that sport in both financial and personal sacrifices. These are the sort of people we need to run this kind of organisation in the country.

We have too many people who want to make a name for themselves. We need to support people who are passionate about the sport. And I think these are the people that we need to support and we need to continue working with them, particularly in soccer and rugby union.

Upgrade Level of Schools

Mr KONI IGUAN –My question is directed to the Minister for Education, and this is in relation to the response that he made to the question raised by the Member for Nuku.

Before I ask my question, I want to stress here that every time there is a new Secretary, it is accompanied by new changes, and in the process; it is confusing our children.

My question is on upgrading the level of our schools. I am aware that individual districts have just one high school in our electorates.

What plans do you have in place to upgrade these high schools to cater for grade 9 through to grade 10?

This is because we only have one high school to accommodate for several primary schools that we have in the district.

For example, Omili Primary School in Lae has eight classes of grade 8 and if other schools also have five to seven classes of grade 8; how are we going to accommodate all of these students into one high school in the district?

That is why I want to know whether we are going to allow all primary schools to cater for grades 9 and 10 or move them to the one high school in that district, which is going to pose more problems?

Mr NICK KUMAN – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for his question. The reform to the Education system began five years ago because the curriculum and the school structures were seen to be old fashioned and also we had a population growth and needed these reform to place us to be on par with the growth of the country.

For those reasons, you will also see that this is evident in our national development plans to cater for such things. These have been adequately addressed during the last term of Parliament. And the Treasurer, during his time as the Minister for Planning, addressed some of those issues.

Mr Speaker, I want to make it clear on the Floor that the restructuring of the education system in the country allowed for one elementary school per ward, one primary school to cater for three wards and one high school per LLG. We also allowed for one secondary school per district and a vocational school in every LLG. These were all undertaken during the last term of Parliament.

If you are concerned about your own electorate, I am sure the former leaders of Markham would have undertaken some of these reforms that we want and by the time we reach the Medium Term Development Strategy Plan for this country by year 2030, these reforms would be completed. This is why the Government put 20 per cent of the DSIP and PSIP into the policy of the government when we started in 2012. These funds should go straight to education and not for them to buy school consumables such as biros, text books and so forth. No, you have to use these funds to develop the capacity of every level of school systems that you have in your district and the province. The very reason why funds are allocated is so that you can build classrooms and teacher's houses and it's not the responsibility of the National Government.

A total of K2 million, which is 20 per cent, is parked in the education sector every year. And after five years you would have used up K10 million for education sector alone. As for our provincial governors, they receive K5 million for PSIP and that's a lot of money for almost three years starting from 2012 to 2014.

If you had used this money properly you would have built these capacity and they should have expanded by now to create space for the increasing number of new intakes every year.

We have allowed accessibility by making sure that our kids are at school and now it's the time to make sure that we concentrate on delivering quality education. All we need is partnership from the districts and provinces so that we can all work together to address these issues of building capacity at the primary and secondary levels.

Honourable Member for Markham, you would at least have a high school in every LLG that you have. But if don't have it then come and we discuss and I will guide you through so that you secure approval from the provincial level to the national level so that we must establish to cater for the growing number of students that we have in the country.

Academic Christian Schools

Mr POGIA GHATE – Mr Speaker, I wish to direct my questions to the Minister for Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology, in relation to AC Schools.

Mr Speaker, we all may have a fair idea that the quality of knowledge and education gained by those very graduates who pass out of these institutions are not up to world standard.

This is obvious in the standard of English spoken and written by some of these graduates. In line with that, they also seem to have lost good Christian principles and values in our society.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Motion (by **Mr Pogio Ghate**) agreed to –

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

Mr POGIO GHATE – (1) Can the Government establish a system where higher educational institution can be operated like a business where competition can be established to produce the best students and future leaders of this country.

(1) Can the Government also give recognition to AC schools who have so far produced some best students with good Christian values and let them compete with other institutions in the country?

Mr PILA NINIGI – I thank the Member for Daulo for his important questions.

I cannot sit back and claim that the university is running smoothly and there are a lot of things that we need to do to improve the university. We are doing something about it but we need to do more to improve the quality of education there.

With regard to the question about AC schools, I know that most of you are sending your children to AC schools to do primary studies until they are eligible to continue elsewhere. We have now developed a strategy or plan for AC schools to teach grade 1 up to grade 12. We are giving students there the opportunity to apply directly like any other established schools or universities that we have in the country.

We are doing this because we have realised that the quality of education has dropped in our country. We must run our schools like a business and, therefore, compete for the best results. If the AC schools are like other institutions that educate our children then they must compete like all other schools to have places in our higher institutions. We must give equal opportunities for all our children.

The Constitution also provides for those students rights to attend our universities and we have denied them that right for too long. It is about time we address this issue and accommodate for it. At the same time I have been doing trials to see if those students from those schools can perform and the report that I am getting is that they are doing well. Therefore, AC schools are schools that we are encouraging. This also goes to our international schools in the country. Our children from those international schools also have as much right like any other kid to attend any higher institution in the country.

Rid Political Influence over SOEs

Mr KERENGA KUA – I direct my questions to the Minister for State Enterprise.

This morning in answering another question, he alluded to an important issue on the question of why State-owned enterprises have never consistently performed when compared to other companies in the private sector.

One of the main reasons why that is so is because politicians especially at the ministerial level are directly involved in the management of those companies. This has always created a platform of instability, nepotism and all other things that have a direct impact on the performance of those companies over many years.

The State is in business and it will be in business for a long time. We have to be serious about this enterprise.

(1) Can we look at cutting out the involvement of politicians, especially in the appointment of boards and chief executive officers and the approval of budgetary processes and all these things so that these State-owned enterprises are given a lot of autonomy to operate on their own and only report to the State as a shareholder only once a year as ordinary companies are required to do to their shareholder?

The appointment of board is done independently through an independent process and every other thing including the appointment of the CEO. They are appointed through a very independent process. Only then can you introduce stability and that will lead to performance by these companies.

(2) If the Minister for State-owned Enterprises is serious about turning these companies around, can he start the process now?

We have example of models to follow already out there. These examples are in the superannuation industry. In the year 2000, the government led by Sir Mekere reformed the laws and very importantly they cut out the involvement of politicians, ministers and the government in the appointment of the board and the CEO and the approval of the budgets and finances and all these things. It was completely independent and no wonder *NasFund* and *Nambawan Supa* are examples of extraordinary successes well beyond our expectations and our dreams. Those are examples there. When you cut the politicians out the companies perform.

I know the Minister is serious about making a profit, declaring a dividend to come back into consolidated revenue.

(3) Can the Minister now make an undertaking to this Parliament to initiate a study and process leading to the removal of politicians, including himself, in the management of these companies if these reforms are carried through successfully?

Mr WILLIAM DUMA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl for his important questions.

I agree with the Member; that is the way to go eventually.

Over the years our governments have actually realised that there had to be changes and it was started by the Member for Moresby North-West and former Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta, followed by the Grand Chief and of course by the current Government.

Mr Speaker, all those prime ministers and governments realised that if we want to turn those companies around there needs to be less intervention and influence from the political masters of the day.

We have looked at models that are being practised in other countries starting with Singapore where all the State-owned companies that are operating in Singapore have done very well. That is the model that can be looked at later on. But, if you go to the existing legislation, Mr Speaker, there is less room for political intervention.

Most of the candidates who are considered for appointment to the boards must meet certain requirements. They must not for instance have contested in the previous elections, they must not be office bearers of political parties. They must be older than 22 years, they must have tertiary qualifications and they must also have experience and qualifications that are relevant to the industry in which the State-owned company is operating in. There are stringent procedures in there so the Cabinet is only a rubber stamp where ultimately after the process has been completed most of those who go through that process are appointed.

The only State-owned company that currently provides for directors to be appointed by various institutions is the National Development Bank where a proposed nominee must belong to an institution to be nominated. We heard that this system is applied to the other SOEs but when the Minister was appointed that was changed. There were reasons for that.

We must not forget that these companies are owned by our people and the government of the day is ultimately responsible. The risk already remains that if we were to go and run those companies without any checks and balances, the risk from our experience is that some of these companies operate as if they do not report to anyone. As you all know, we all report to someone. We really report to our people so ultimately the Government is answerable.

Mr Speaker, I agree with what the good Minister is saying but what we need to do now is, all of us have to work and help me actually turn those companies around. And once those companies turn around, we can go into the proposed Public Private Partnership where we can invite investors to come in and take up equity.

Australia has done it very well where it has Qantas. The government has maintained the golden share and it allowed the private equity investors to buy into Qantas and it is a success story. We would like to go down that path but first we must fix those companies.

Mr Speaker, we wouldn't want to be in a position where all those companies are not performing very well and then we sell them at under value prices, low-down prices. We must fix them and once they are making a bit of money, we've got added value then we can be able to look the part of inviting the private equity investors to take up shares. And then eventually those investors will be able to control the destiny of those companies and the Government can then take the back-step. But the timing is such that we just need to put in the money and rehabilitate all those SOEs and then eventually when they are able to make money and there is added value, Mr Speaker, we can then invite the private equity investors to take up shares and the Government can play a reduced role.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Provincial Government Involvement in Extractive Industries

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA- Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Prime Minister, and the Ministers for Fisheries, Forestry, Petroleum, Mining and the Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government to take note.

My question relates to provincial government involvement and representation in these extractive industries and the level of consultation and the degree and the time at which these consultations are allowed for by the Provincial Governments and the resource owners.

Mr Speaker, we are enriched by the Bougainville experience in bringing about the provincial governments, and now we have another level of autonomy that is now being looked at or being practised in Bougainville. And with respect to the extractive industries, Bougainville has also given us those development forums that now takes place in mining and petroleum projects.

In the last sitting of Parliament, we had a shouting match between the Governor of Oro and the Minister for Forest because of lack of perceived consultation in the forestry sector. Many Governors have these kind of experiences in those sectors.

Mr Prime Minister, what is the level and the degree to which your Government is thinking in terms of Forestry, Fisheries, Mining and Petroleum?

I want to thank you for involving me as a member of the Ministerial Gas Committee, but this is an executive decision.

When will you have a policy that will come in play where provinces are properly consulted right at the beginning of new projects rather than at the tail-end with the landowners?

Mr PETER O'NIELL – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Governor of Gulf for his questions. Mr Speaker, I am aware that industries such as fisheries and forestry, there is an extensive consultations between the provinces and the national department or the authority.

Unfortunately, sometimes those who have been tasked to ensure that these consultations take place are probably lacking in communicating between themselves or sometimes politics takes the better of it and so communication and consultation doesn't take place.

Mr Speaker, it may be necessary that we may need to review the legislation so that we can make it compulsory and also place time limitations because in some instances consultations can take forever when for resource owners and for national interest we would like to develop that project in a timely manner.

Mr Speaker, we may have to review the legislation around the consultation process but in terms of mining, petroleum and gas industries, I think there is quite a good consultation taking place, especially between the landowners and provincial governments.

For the second LNG Project for Elk-Antelope, I want to inform Parliament that we've also included the Governor of Gulf in the State negotiation team so he is co-opted to the ministerial committee which is just following the precedent set by the Somare Government where the various governors of Southern Highlands were included in the negotiation team so that they were fully engaged in every stage of the negotiations.

So, Mr Speaker, those kinds of accommodation is taking place at all levels of government. And it is very important that we have a very open dialogue between the different levels of government and different stakeholders so that there is meaningful participation.

I certainly do not want to make the mistakes of the first LNG where the landowners were not properly identified and we are now having difficulties in the processes of clan vetting and others. Now we have all sorts of clans popping up and it can be a cumbersome and difficult exercise. That's what we want to avoid and we want to make sure that developers take on the responsibility as stipulated in the *Oil and Gas Act* and the *Mining Act* to

identify and do the social mapping properly so that the right benefits are going to the rightful landowners and stakeholders in all the projects that are being developed in the country.

So, Mr Speaker, I want to assure the Gulf Governor that we will do everything possible so that our people participate meaningfully in the developments of resources right throughout each of these sectors.

Review Koiari Landowners Benefit Arrangement

Mr PETER ISOAIMO – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for State Enterprises.

As we all understand, water is a resource that comes from my district and province. In the light of the merger of Water PNG and Eda Ranu

(1) With the phasing out or lapsing of the Malaysian B.O.T. arrangement, what steps is your ministry taking to renegotiate a new package that should and must include the landowners from Koiari as well as the Central Provincial Government in order to have an agreement that is of mutual benefit to everyone and that we don't see a continuation of ministerial committees ruthlessly taking away benefits or moneys belonging to my people of Koiari.

I know that the Prime Minister assured me a committee on the K8.9 million controversial issue but let's look forward now to doing things properly. I know by legislation the DDAs are only mere vehicles to drive development. But I have a very good understanding with my governor and the provincial government in the last term and now where my district benefits from levy and IDD funds that we use to seal up some of the roads in my electorate. And we expect similar benefits to come to our provincial government where our districts can also benefit.

(2) Can the Minister assure the people of Kairuku-Hiri especially the people of Koiari that the new package will include a good arrangement for them to benefit them?

The current arrangement has flaws. Moneys are parked under the ministerial committee and the Chairman or people responsible ruthlessly use their own companies to channel money through.

I urge the Minister to include the people of Koiari and include good benefits for them. These corrupt practices must stop. What is entitled to our people must go straight to the people.

Mr WILLAIM DUMA – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Kairuku-Hiri for his very important questions.

Mr Speaker, personally, if I had it my way, I would make sure our good people of Central Province particularly the people of Koiari receive some benefits.

Let me assure the Member that I will start the process that will eventually go to Cabinet in terms of allowing our people in this province to enjoy some form of benefits.

Mr Speaker, I am not familiar with the current arrangement as I am not the Minister responsible for that committee but if there is an existing relationship between Eda Ranu and the people of Kairuku - Hiri then that relationship can be reviewed and we can look into giving better benefits to our people.

Mr Speaker, with the case of Edevu and Naoro-Brown Hydro Power projects under my ministry, let me say that we have already started the process of ensuring that our landowners from those two project areas get direct equity in those projects. This has never been done before on our power projects and we are starting with those two projects together with the project up in Ramu and Yonki.

I can assure the Member that this Government will make sure that the people will participate and benefit sharing in those big resource projects.

Mr Speaker, moving back to benefits that can be received by our people under the Eda Ranu scheme, Cabinet has already made the decision that Concession that has been enjoyed by our Malaysian partners comes up for renewal, it will not be renewed so we have made that decision led by our good Prime Minister.

Eventually when the merger process has been completed by our two State-owned companies Water PNG and Eda Ranu we will look at the possibility of extending some form of benefit to our people. As to how much and what percentage is a matter that will be eventually determined by Cabinet but in principle I assure the Member that this Government will ensure that our good people along those impact areas will enjoy some form of benefits.

Begin Clan Vetting Exercise

Mr TOBOI YOTO – Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to ask my question to the Minister for Petroleum.

My question is in relation to clan vetting.

Mr Speaker, my people of Juha are waiting for the clan vetting exercise to take place to identify the real landowners so that they can benefit from the royalties and other benefits enjoyed by other parties of the LNG Project.

Mr Speaker, I am aware that there was a budget allocated last year and I believe clan vetting for the other LNG landowners where the pipeline runs through may have been completed but my people in Juha are still waiting.

Mr FABIAN POK - Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of Western Province for his question relating to clan vetting. I want to make it clear here that the Government allocated K3 million towards the clan vetting program. And I sought NEC approval and moved this money to Kumul Petroleum Holdings to pay up allowances. This was because in previous years a lot of money was budgeted for clan vetting but it never served its purpose.

I wish to inform Parliament that of the K3 Million, we have used K1.2 million. After discussions with ExxonMobil, they have provided all the logistical support while we are paying allowances, and K1 million has been given towards the completion of Angore. And K1.2 million has been used to complete all the ground work with all pipelines already laid. We only have four areas yet to be completed and they are Juha, Angore, PDL1 and PDL 7. We could not complete these four due to the earthquake.

I will meet with all officers tonight and tomorrow a determination of all pipelines and groundworks will be sent. For Juha there is about 90 per cent of pipeline and ground work along Western Province and the remaining 10 per cent on the Hela side. We have agreed to meet tonight and that by next week the work on Juha should be completed. Once Juha is complete, we only have PDL1 and PDL7. As for Angore it is in the hands of ADR, they've said to have completed 80 per cent of the work, so most of our work should be completed soon.

ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

Mr CHARLES ABEL (Alotau - Minister for Treasury) –I seek leave of the Parliament to provide answers to previous questions.

Leave granted.

Mr CHARLES ABEL –Mr Speaker, last week the Member for Namatanai raised a question in relation to the specifics around our loan repayment on a monthly basis and I undertook the task to get some of that information. And I will respond to him on this Floor and also provide that information in writing as well.

Today I bring some of that information relating to the months of January, February, March and April. At this time we have a series of payments that happened on a monthly basis, it is not a matter of having one general figure for each month. It varies depending on the obligations of the loan scheduling and it relates to the different types of financing that we have. And obviously we have some external debts and domestic debts. We have borrowings that are related offshore and onshore. So with the understanding of the Parliament, I will just read some of these figures to provide those specifics. For example, in relation to external debts, the loan repayment we made in the month of January this year was K36 623 244.50.

In the month of February, we paid K60 640 595. In the month of March, external loan repayment was K60 389 213.70. A total of K157 653 053.20 was paid in relation to external debts. For those repayments of course we also drew down financing that came into the country but those are the specifics on the repayment. And coming to domestic debts we had some repayments that we made to BSP, which is government obligation in relation to our BSP guarantee loans. In January, it was K5 572 373.70 and in February, it was K40 716 306.90 and in March it was zero. So to BSP, we paid a total of K46.3 million.

Mr Speaker, in relation to treasury bills, we made repayments on treasury bills, and of course we go and issue treasury bills to raise money and then we make payments against treasury bills on a month by month basis. There are different profiles on treasury bills, some are six monthly or 12 monthly, primarily.

Mr Speaker, in January, we retired K723 100 000 worth of treasury bills. In February, we paid K1 000 069 640 on treasury bills. In the month of March, K1 437 070 000 was repaid in treasury bills. Equivocally on the other side, a lot of these debts were rolled over when it came to treasury bills. For instance, in January, I mentioned that we repaid K723 million, we issued K712 million worth of treasury bills. In February, we raised K1 billion worth of treasury bills and of course we repaid K1.069 billion and in March, we raised K1.262 billion and we repaid K1.437 billion in treasury bills. So, Mr Speaker, on a month by month basis you got various streams of repayments happening and ultimately in terms of our international debts as explained in the final budget outcome report the international debts is sitting at about K7.5 billion, domestic debt is about K16.8 billion, bringing the total debts both domestic and international at K24 356 425 751.80. Based on GDP figure of about K84 billion, it is about 28 per cent at this particular point in time. So as I explained we are sticking to those fiscal parameters for our *Fiscal Responsibility Act*.

I will furnish this detail to the Member and I will also provide the April information. We are of course progressing to our fiscal deficit position as budgeted so there will be a net borrowing that comes out of this procedure but on a month by month basis we making those repayments by fulfilling our obligations on both domestic and international and we have no intention on defaulting on any of our debts repayment.

I will provide this information to Member for Namatanai and I hope this answers his questions, thank you.

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL –
LAW REFORM AND SORCERY NATIONAL ACT PLAN –
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED**

Mr STEVEN DAVIS (Esa'ala – Minister for Justice and Attorney General) - Mr Speaker, thank you and I thank the Parliament for the opportunity to draw our attention to one of the more prevalent social issues affecting our people. I present a statement of the issue of Sorcery Accusation and Witchcraft Related Violence (SARV) in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, the aim of this statement is to inform leaders of the work of successive governments and the challenge this Government faces in this challenge as coordinated through the Department of Justice & Attorney General.

Mr Speaker, as we recall in 2013, there was widespread publicity given to the increasing number of deaths of women accused of practising sorcery and witchcraft, especially the case concerning the cruel deaths of two women who were burnt to death. These women were accused of witchcraft in Papua New Guinea, and this story drew international and national attention to the problem of sorcery and witchcraft accusation related violence in our society.

In the face of mounting pressure to take action, including what was known as "National Haus Krai Protest" calling for an end to violence against women, the Government responded by repealing the *Sorcery Act 1971* and inserted a new provision into the *Criminal Code Act 1974, Chapter 262*, which made wilful murder on account of a sorcery or witchcraft accusation, a capital offence, meaning the death sentence was made to be applicable in circumstances involving wilful murder in witchcraft or sorcery accusation.

Mr Speaker, the national conversations began about the place such beliefs had in the national physique of PNG which is our fundamentals like our morals, beliefs and values. A general consensus reached that the aim of the Government is not to stop the belief in sorcery and witchcraft, but rather to break the link between the belief in sorcery and witchcraft and the violence that results from the sorcery and witchcraft belief accusations.

By way of background, the initial work on preventing sorcery accusation and witchcraft related violence started in 2009, during the tenure of the former Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Honourable Member for Rabaul, Dr Allan Marat, who issued reference No. 7 of 2019 to review the legislation with the view to imposing higher penalties for persons that commit acts of violence against others on account of an accusation against a victim for practicing sorcery or witchcraft.

Mr Speaker, I place on record our appreciation for the leadership of the Honourable Member for Rabaul, Dr Allan Marat, for the proactive steps taken in addressing in the Parliaments reaction in preventing sorcery accusation and witchcraft related violence.

From this Reference, the work in preventing sorcery accusation and witchcraft related violence commenced.

I also would like to acknowledge the actions taken by the then Minister for Justice, Honourable Kerenga Kua, Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl, for the introduction of changes to the PNG Criminal Code through the *Criminal Code (Amendment) Act No. 06 of 2013*, which created the offence of Section 299A of the Criminal Code, now described as Wilful Murder on Account of Accusation of Sorcery."

Mr Speaker, there is a growing recognition that the problem of sorcery and witchcraft accusation and related violence cannot be solved solely at a legislative level, but must involve a more holistic approach. This recognition, has led the national conversations hosted by the Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG), together with the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC).

In 2015, this work culminated in the formulation of a comprehensive National Action Plan that was developed to address this particular evil.

Mr Speaker, through NEC decision No. 202 of 2015, the National Executive Council endorsed the 'National Action Plan against Sorcery and Witchcraft Related Violence' and more importantly that NEC decision established the National Core Committee that is responsible for the implementation of the National Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, the Department of Justice & Attorney General is the lead Agency in the monitoring, coordination and implementation of the National Action Plan against sorcery and witchcraft related violence, it is also the Chair of the National Core Committee

Mr Speaker, the National Action Plan has five (5) strategic areas that I will cover briefly for the benefit of the honourable House and our people.

Firstly, it focuses on the Psycho-Social Services with the objective to support the development of training in counselling programs for a range of service providers. It seeks to improve repatriation and support services for survivors, particularly taking into account people with special needs such as the elderly and disabled who are marginalised and often targeted. Under this, the effort is to develop, review, utilise and enforce legislation and

other support structures in cases where children are involved. These are children who are relatives of the victims and survivors.

The second strategic focus is advocacy and communications which is aimed at developing advocacy and awareness materials and messages to counter sorcery accusation related violence and developing a network of organisations and individuals to provide mutual support and assistance.

The third focus under the heading 'legal and protection' is aimed at reviewing the laws and legislative framework. The *Sorcery Act 1971* was intended to be repealed and that was done. Related to that, legislations such as the *Summary Offences Act 1977*, *Village Courts Act-1989*, *Evidence Act 1975*, *Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2002*, *Family Protection Act 2013*, are aimed to ensure that cases involving sorcery and witchcraft accusation -related violence are dealt with through the criminal justice system and in a structured manner.

The fourth focus is for the health sector, through an improved system, to provide explanations about the disease process to patients and their families, and may I add our society at large to prevent the misconception that every death in our community is a result from sorcery or witchcraft. Related to this is the health service to be ready where medical checks on diseases is required in bringing up prompt post-mortem processes and a death certificate being issued.

The fifth area is aimed at developing evidence-based research framework, data base, and baseline studies to address sorcery accusation related violence and ensure that data is readily available on sorcery and witchcraft related violence for purposes of planning and monitoring.

Mr Speaker, the National Action Plan against sorcery and witchcraft related violence, along with a proposed coordinating mechanism for preventing violence was sent to the National Executive Council (NEC). In addition to endorsing the National Action Plan against sorcery and witchcraft related violence in 2015, Cabinet committed K3 million to implement the National Action Plan.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to announce today that under the leadership of our Prime Minister the funding that was committed by Cabinet was made available in this year's Budget. The availability of funding ensures that the Department of Justice & Attorney General can commence the co-ordination and implementation of the National Action Plan against sorcery and witchcraft related violence can also be downloaded from the Department of Justice & Attorney General website.

Mr Speaker, needless to say, sorcery and witchcraft accusation related violence is causing great fear and tribulation amongst our people mainly among women, older people and other vulnerable people in the society, as these groups of people tend to be targets of accusations.

Mr Speaker, it is not a safe society if after every death, the next question is to wonder who is to die as a result from the belief of witchcraft and sorcery.

A review of newspaper articles and case law by the SARV Research Team from the National Research Institute and the Australian National University revealed that there were 452 discrete incidents of sorcery and witchcraft accusation related violence reported in the last 20 years since 1998 to 2018. These documented reports involved 1 443 Victims. These figures are staggering, and this equates to an average of 72 victims per year, and an average of more than 30 deaths per year. This is a summary of reported incidents only. The point is, Mr Speaker, the figures could be more and innocent citizens are dying as a result of accusations of sorcery and witchcraft.

Mr Speaker, in terms of the way forward, we need to think about how we are supporting churches and non-government organisations and those providing temporary shelter to victims and survivors who are in need of a safe place to stay.

Initiatives like safe houses for victims are important and need support not only from the National Government, but also from provincial governments and leaders. To care for the immediate needs of victims and survivors, we need to work with police and Courts to provide resources for them to effectively carry out their respective functions.

This is also the avenue to also ensure that perpetrators of this ill are brought to justice.

The Government acknowledges the work of our partners; human rights defenders, churches, non-government organisations, those who are working on rapid response mechanisms, those who are involved in advocacy and awareness, also the dedicated police men and women and the medical team throughout our country who go over and above their line of duties to protect lives of victims.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of this short statement is to bring to light the issue and the role that my department, in partnership with the members of the National Core Committee, is playing to prevent and to prosecute incidences of violence stemming from accusations of witchcraft and sorcery.

Mr Speaker, the Department of Justice and Attorney General has housed the secretariat of the National Core Committee to implement the National Action Plan against sorcery and witchcraft related violence since 2012.

We continue to host quarterly meetings with the Core Committee members and often with provincial representatives of provinces we describe as 'hotspot provinces' to continue to better coordinate our efforts to better address this issue. And also to make the work of partners and partner agencies visible at the national level.

I take the opportunity to thank the O'Neill-Abel Government for continuing to give prominence to this issue and assure you that with the funding provided we will continue to provide resources to the frontline agencies such as police in hotspot provinces to prevent incidences of violence and to try to prosecute offenders.

Mr Speaker, there is still much work that needs to be done to protect our communities from sorcery and witchcraft related violence. I urge all elected representatives and leaders to speak out against this evil in our own electorates and to take steps to report cases to the police and to do what we can.

Mr Speaker, may I end by saying that the only way to rid one's belief is to replace it with another, of a higher value system. That every person has a right to life, has a right to be free from inhuman treatment under the full protection of the law and the ability and the right to live in a safe and peaceful and just society. That must be the belief coupled with our Christian values.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SAM BASIL (Bulolo – Minister for Communications and Information and Technology) – I move –
That the Parliament take note of the statement.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I say thank you to the Minister for delivering his ministerial statement in regard to law reform and especially sorcery related matters.

Mr Speaker, this issue, I believe, is nationwide. If any member sitting here does not have this issue in his electorate then it must be a very peaceful electorate in Papua New Guinea, but I have my share of this problem in my district. It has happened in my village, my district and Morobe Province some time ago and it does exist.

Mr Speaker, this issue of sorcery killing has been an ongoing issue. Since I entered Parliament in the Eighth Parliament the issue was debated and was raised in the media as well as through questions on the Floor of Parliament. This continued over into the Ninth Parliament and I believe that this issue is still here with us in the Tenth Parliament.

I commend the Minister for highlighting a few things that we think can reduce the burdens on those innocent people suffering.

We heard about a little girl in Kandep that was burnt alive and in a few areas around Papua New Guinea, innocent lives of elderly men, women and children have been taken and others have lost their houses.

Mr Speaker, we know that in the rural areas it is very hard to determine the cause of death and when somebody dies out there we do not have proper facilities in the rural areas to determine how and why a person died. In doing so, people start pointing fingers and start concluding that somebody else is responsible for their death. Sometimes people take advantage of this situation and aim at people they don't like and innocent people suffer.

Mr Speaker, I do not believe in sorcery and I don't believe it works. I do walk into villages where people say they practise sorcery and I sit down and eat and sleep with them and I wake up the next day and go. I really don't believe in sorcery.

I commend the Minister for outlining that there has to be a post-mortem or cause of death certificate issued by health workers. This should prevent people from blaming others for sorcery because when they do not know the cause of death they believe it is sorcery,

We do know that there are also prevalent diseases existing in the country like HIV/ AIDS, TB, cancer and so on. But we should allow for our system to make sure that we know the cause of death.

Mr Speaker, counselling services is very important like the Minister has highlighted.

The people in my district use the main morgue facilities in Angau Hospital, and one time I was there and there was a body which was loaded on the car and people in the car started talking about the cause of death and they concluded that it was sorcery. When they go and bury the body they start taking action against those that are accused.

Counselling comes with the report. If a medical condition is the cause of the death then it makes it easier on the part of counselling to let the people know that death is not caused by sorcery but because of some illness.

Mr Speaker, I want to talk about wilful murder in PNG. Sorcery related deaths in PNG contributes to murder statistics. Murders here come from tribal fights, armed hold-ups planned murder and, et cetera. Sorcery is one of them.

Since 2015, PNG has a record of 13 prisoners on death row. Since then I believe the numbers have increased and anybody that wants to commit murder in PNG does so because they know that they won't be punished by death or capital punishment.

This Parliament has enacted laws to enable death penalty or capital punishment. If we cannot implement that then I ask that we should remove it.

We have to take heed of these laws and make our citizens understand that you can't go around and just chop people up. If we experience it firsthand and see a loved one been gruesomely chopped up, we will all come to this Parliament and shout and vote for death penalty and no less.

As I said, there are 13 prisoners on death row but it may have increased. Some of these prisoners committed crimes relating to sorcery incidents so they are on death row. We have to ask ourselves whether to use this law or have it removed. A lot of people say that we have to wait for the lethal injection or the import of an electric chair. However, we have a simple method that can be done by the military squad. We have rifles and ammunition from the Military and places that can be used for capital punishment.

If we want to use capital punishment then let us use it. If we are scared then let us remove it. Don't just leave it there and let us come into Parliament and talk about it every time there is a tribal fight in Enga and a lot of people are killed, or when an innocent child and mother are killed, what are we going to do about it?

Let us not be scared about using the death penalty. It is already there and we must support the Ministers responsible and come up with ways that we can accommodate capital punishment. As for me I am tired because while we are finding ways to mitigate this, there is still killings going on and a lot of innocent lives are being lost. We continue to boast about PNG being a Christian country, yet we continue to kill each other. So this is the challenge I want to put forward regarding the death penalty, if we do not need it then let us remove it.

Mr PETER IPATAS (Enga) - Mr Speaker, the issue on sorcery is a big issue in the country. Some areas in our country where we never experience sorcery are now also experiencing it. For example, in my province we never experienced sorcery but now we do and it has become a serious issue in the villages. From my observation, killing through sorcery is an act of murder as well as causing grievous bodily harm and these acts are against the laws of this country. And I agree with the statements made by the Minister.

Generally in our society, especially in today's generation, there are attitude problems and the people's mindset has changed, in that, there is an absence or lack of respect for the law and authority. If we do not manage little things like sorcery then we will just let the problem escalate because many things are co-related. We have seen and know for a fact that sorcery exists. We see and hear about it in our communities and on social media but what are we doing about it? There is no investigation done to prosecute those responsible, and they will continue committing these crimes because they believe they can get away with it.

So we have to look into this issue and address it because there is a general lack of respect for the law, the authorities and people in our communities. There are many aspects to law and order problems, and sorcery is one of them.

The mindset and attitude of our young people on the streets between the ages of 18 and 28 is quite different. The Attorney General's presentation on the issue of sorcery related violence has allowed us to see the law and order perspective in totality

The suggestion brought about by the Minister for Communications and Information Technology has mentioned is a good idea as well. Somehow we have to deter people and show our people that there are laws to protect and discipline every individual. For instance, if you kill someone then you have to face the full force of the law. It is common sense.

We are so much influenced by Western ideology, for instance human rights law. We don't have to adopt every concept from Western cultures. These are developed nations and their society is more advanced. They have come a long way through years of making tough decisions. And when we want to make some tough decisions they come in and try to manipulate us by saying we are in breach of human rights law and so forth.

In the 1960s there was a big tribal fight in Enga Province, and during those days we were ruled by a colony. The kiaps then brought to justice the person who killed another, and they did that by hanging him from a tree. Once the people witnessed this, it was like magic, there were no more tribal fights because they knew the consequences. So that taught them a lesson and they never had tribal fights for a long time.

But lately, about ten years ago, an Australian Judge was sent to Enga. He presided over most of the cases and dispensed some of these cases quickly. And knowing Engans, they don't fear death but get afraid of going to jail, so after nine months, we realised that law and order problems had declined. So nowadays people's mindset is very different.

Sorcery was never practised by Engans so it is something new and its spreading rapidly. If we don't do anything about it they will continue to practise this evil thing.

Sorcery issue is now spreading at an alarming rate because of inter-marriages and easy access through many services such as road, transport and so forth and people move around very easily and get themselves involved in this evil activity

In Enga alone there are so many reported cases, but no investigation was carried out to prosecute those involved. This issue is very serious and I will stress my point.

The main problem now is who is really going to go down to the root of the problem to solve this problem. There are people assigned and designed to carry out this work. I don't blame our police personnel and demoralise them but we lack capacity building. This pressing issue concerns the welfare and interest of our nation. We can't allow people to commit murder and escape prosecution and live a normal life. The right authority is the police and they are the ones in power to bring these people to justice and penalise them severely.

If we don't do anything to improve the capacity of the Police Force, our people will continue to commit such crimes. Generally, our people are law abiding, it is the minority that are taking advantage and doing whatever they want to do.

I thank the Minister for bringing this issue forward. The death penalty exists for those who wilfully take the lives of others, but why are we not implementing this law?

Why are we not serious about it? Is it because of the Western influence? We must address this issue seriously as I said earlier on.

Mr Assistant Speaker, our law and order issue in this country is mounting and sorcery is no exception. It must not be isolated because it's one of the contributing factor.

Yes, there are tribal fights occurring in my province, but don't forget the news of usage of high powered guns happening all around the country. We can't point fingers at one particular province only.

Many law and order problems are happening in Milne Bay Province. We know it as the most peaceful province but now we talk about law and order issues there.

I want to tell the Parliament that we should swallow our pride and allow the interventions from overseas. Where there is an issue for public interest, we must make a decision. If you want to grow the economy then you have to have law and order. You have to have people who respect authority. If we are not doing it then who is going to come and do it for us. This Parliament must take ownership and do something about it.

I am embarrassed as the Governor of Enga who keeps talking about law and order as if Enga is worse off than other provinces. Under my leadership, I have a system that is managing law and order to a manageable level but I can see that the attitude of our young citizens has changed drastically for the worse, therefore, if we do not manage it now, we are going to face bigger problems in the future.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I want to make this contribution for the future generations of this country. This issue is going to grow to a level that we are going to have a mammoth task of managing it. I want the Parliament and our Government with the leadership of our Prime Minister to address the issue of law and order. If we do not have the money to manage law and order then there is always the option of involving the Australians.

I am not an Australian citizen or a mix Australian man but a full blooded Papua New Guinean but if we have to bring them in to intervene to save our country then we must do so. If that is the case then let us do it for our country and our people and for the future of Papua New Guinea. All the billion kinas worth of infrastructure that we are building are going to be lost just like that if we do not address law and order. It takes time to build it but we will lose it in no time.

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – I also would like to contribute to the ministerial statement by the Minister for Justice and Attorney General.

I think that it is important that Parliament makes a strong pronouncement that sorcery is not true. We have to make that statement here. Why did I say this?

Mr Assistant Speaker, when I was a child growing up in my village, elders told us to be careful with our dirty clothes, betel nuts, and rubbish in general in fear of sorcery. However, if you fast forward it to today, people are disposing of their rubbish anyway because there is no fear of sorcery. I am surprised to hear that in parts of the country where there was never any practice of sorcery, they are now practicing it, and parts where it existed don't practise it anymore.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I have never once saw a sorcerer actually achieving his objectives if there is such a thing. Sorcery is an excuse used by uneducated people to instil fear in others but educated ones also tap into it. I was surprised when the former Speaker in the previous Parliament decided to remove cultural artefacts from this Parliament Building in support of ideas like sorcery.

In this very Parliament, we supported the notion that sorcery is true and that it exists so when we removed all the carvings here our people believed that it is true that we were removing some kind of sorcery artefacts. We were only supporting their beliefs in sorcery when in actual fact we are only blaming sorcery for our failures as human beings.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I want to support the Governor of Enga. In Sepik today, people are getting killed not because of sorcery but over drunken brawls or land disputes or something else.

Many of these offenders are inclined to killing, they just used a nice cover called sorcery to destroy the life of an innocent girl or an elderly woman. So we need to recognise those committing these killings as doing nothing more than murder. And the full force of the law needs to be brought down on them, regardless of whether the excuse of sorcery was used or not. It is very important that in this House, we must not perpetuate the belief of sorcery. We must recognise the illegal taking of a life as a criminal act regardless of what the justification might be. The State must use its power rather than covering up the issue.

As the good Governor of Enga suggests, if we have issues within our law enforcement agencies and we need to beef that up with support from outside, then why not?

Mr Speaker, some 20 years ago when Australia was having problems with its Police Force, they removed all their senior policemen and they hired policemen from Britain to fill up all those positions which restored their

Police Force and today it is vibrant. The Australians made a harsh decision. Why can't we do the same as the Governor suggests? What are we afraid of? I'm very pleased that the Governor made this point that when someone commits a crime and it takes five years to solve the case. Within these five to ten years, the perpetrator evades meeting the full force of the law. The society then loses confidence in the justice system. When they do, that is when they take the law into their own hands. When the law enforcers are active, when Parliament is active and all of the institutions of State are active in doing their job, the people will fear and respect the law.

Mr Acting Speaker, we cannot deny that we have a weak State because a lot of mechanisms of state are not functioning effectively. You can look around you, from land grabbing, to people frustrating court processes to policemen asking for fuel money to make arrests. Somebody can be arrested by a police officer and yet another police officer frees this perpetrator when bribed. There has to be consistency in how we are doing these things. We have to uphold high standards of governance not because we are trying to destroy each other as leaders, but to set a standard for our society. They need that high standards. It is up to us in this House as honourable Members to uphold and to celebrate such high standards.

Secondly, on performance. When our people seek medical treatment at the Hospitals but are turned away by the medical officers without proper explanations, given that they are less educated, they try to reason out the cause of the illness and this reinforces the ideas and beliefs about sorcery.

Mr Speaker, in the interim, while we are struggling to educate our people, provide jobs and improve infrastructure and all the struggles that we discuss here, the stop-get measure is the Police Force. When everything else fails, the Police needs to get in there and intervene and at least maintain decent level of law and order. Fair law and order. A law and order that is not paid for with fuel money or 'wantok' system, but something that treats everyone fairly and equally.

At the end of the day, we need to rebuild the confidence of our people within our justice system, political system and all other state institutions.

Mr Assistant Speaker, these issues are growing as state by the Governor of Enga, I see that also in my province. Young men are now losing hope and are brewing home-brew (steam) and getting intoxicated and carrying bush knives and grass knives with them every weekend.

I was very happy that we passed the amendment to the *Summary Offence Act* in the last Meeting and I'm really looking forward to us implementing that where those who inflict wounds on others with a bush knife, they will be charged K4 000 court fine. Now I'm worried about the next stage which is the implementation.

If we begin to implement and enforce the laws that we already have, dealing with summary offences to more serious crimes such as taking the life of an innocent human being and we do that consistently over time, then our people will start to have respect for our institutions and the Parliament as well. That is where we will see some changes in our society. Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA (Kiriwina - Goodenough) - Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Some of us can say we do not believe in witchcraft and sorcery but it is one of the oldest art that has grown root over thousands of years. Someone can ask me for evidence or proof, I'm from Samarai and we live and grow with those things, they exist.

We can say no to it, but I think we should go back and look at the Bible itself. The Bible tells us very clearly including some other books about life in Egypt, 2000 years ago. Those people also believed in witchcraft and sorcery. The Pharaohs usually called out for their witches and sorcerers to lead them. So it's not something that has just grown overnight. It has entrenched itself in societies for thousands and thousands of years. So when we deal with the witchcraft and sorcery issue it is not an issue that just happened overnight, it is an issue that goes back a long way.

It is also a very secretive issue in some societies such as the society I come from. It is also very complex to understand. Some of us here have not lived in witchcraft society to understand it that is why it is a very complex issue to deal with.

The behaviours of the witches and sorcerers are also complex to understand. Some of them will come and sit with you, dine with you and in the next moment, their behaviours and characters changes.

It is an issue that did not just pop up and someone just picked up a bush knife and murder another person. Witchcraft and sorcery is part of a generation of families in a society who practise that and pass it on down their family line from generation to generation.

If your father is a sorcerer, he will pass this sorcery to you and you will then pass it down to your children. So it is not something where people just sit down and get introduced to sorcery and they practise it, no.

It is very, very important that when we debate this Bill we must understand the behaviour of those people. We must understand how they think.

I realise through our discussions that the police don't fully understand the situation in regards to sorcery. When a complainant goes and says that somebody is trying to kill him through sorcery, the policeman will just go and arrest the suspect and lock him or her away without even knowing why he is arresting that person. He does not know the deep roots of witchcraft and sorcery.

And our officers in the Police Force need to be trained to the extent where they will understand the behaviour of these people. When you are going to arrest him you must know what kind of person he is.

Let me put this to this House, Mr Assistant Speaker. Many people are now practising witchcraft and sorcery and we are thinking that all of them are witches and sorcerers but some of them are just plain conmen they do it for the gain of money. They come and tell you that you are sick because that person has cast a spell on you by putting things in you. In actual fact, he does not know anything. He comes over and pretends to cast spells and uses his drugs on you and in a little while you will be removing your wallet to put K500 on the table. After getting the money he will walk away and mutter under his breath, it is your problem, you have contracted malaria but I have lied to you and now I am going.

We must understand this complex issue of witchcraft and sorcery. It is very, very complex. That is why many times a sorcerer will go to your grandfather and tell him, you have this disease because that guy has cast a spell of you. When you have given the money to him, he uses it and then your grandfather dies. What do you do? You go and kill that sorcerer. You get a machete and you kill him. The blame goes to him because he pretended to be a sorcerer or a witch and you have paid him money. And there are a lot of killings today in the art of witchcraft and sorcery because people are not satisfied with the performance of the practitioner.

Mr Speaker, I stand to speak on this issue but the million dollar question is, how do we involve the churches to deal with this issue? How do we involve the churches to deal with the witchcraft and sorcery issue when the Bible has clearly states how? We don't have to go far to look for answers. The answers are already with us in the Bible. We need to read it to understand it. The Bible has identified the weaknesses that we as human have in terms of dealing with witchcraft and sorcery issues.

The Government has spent a lot of money to deal with this issue but we must study the Bible which has clearly indicated how to deal with this issue.

I will stop in a little while but how do we protect this minority group from being killed? The police has to be strong. The law has to be strong. When we have enough control measures in place, I believe the paper that we are now debating will be fruitful.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA (Gulf) – Mr Assistant Speaker, thank you. Sorcery and witchcraft related violence is the theme that the Government is trying to address through the Attorney General's paper today.

Mr Assistant Speaker, sorcery is problematic in the sense that in our societies in the past it was used as part of social control of our own societies.

Now the practices vary from culture to culture and as Papua New Guinea goes into a unified nation we see, as the Governor of Enga has rightfully stated, many of these carried over, either through inter-marriages or through the commercialisation of certain practices whether it's to do with killings or whether it's to do with other forms of accusations on killings over into other societies.

So, when you enter into urban Papua New Guinea you have many of these instances coming up, and it relates mostly to fear and to the belief systems of one where you really don't know whether the sorcery of Sepiks are much more powerful than Milne Bay for that matter.

So we have instances where medicine fails to cure or where our relatives don't get better quickly, we then resort to this kind of practice. Let's be honest and realistic about it.

The Attorney General's paper only talks about the violence, which is the end result but let's try and look at what the root causes are and whether it has to do with the society of Papua New Guineans. How do we address these?

It's a really fundamental issue that begs the question of whether we are really Christian or are we human beings that are Christians or are we human beings that are enlightened and we believe in medicine and science. And for science, God, sorcery and witchcraft - where do they meet?

Mr Assistant Speaker, I think in this instance we need and we ought to be doing a lot more in the belief systems that we impart in the school system, especially at the lower levels to say that sorcery really is something that doesn't exist, if the Government has a policy to say that.

We, therefore, need to explain to the lower levels in primary schools and in high schools because we all know, there are instances where our teens, when they are in high schools, they've even gone into devil worship and practices. All these things are linked up to the confusion that our teens face when they are going into an environment where hormones are at play and also belief systems are clashing.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, I believe we really need to look at this much more seriously than just taking it at the tail end and trying to address the curative part of it which is dealing with the violence at the end. We need to look a little bit more beyond and bring in a syllabus or subject that deals with this.

What is sorcery? What is religion? What are the belief systems that we have? These can get people to really understand and educate our people so that as they grow up they are much more tolerant of the beliefs of other Papua New Guineans and societies that make up this country.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, the little bit I want to say is, we ought to take this seriously and just look at this from the syllabus that we put in at the lower levels of our education system up to secondary level.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

Dr LINO TOM (Wabag) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I wish to add on to the good statement that the Minister for Justice has made.

As the Gulf Governor stated, there are now more incidents of sorcery related violence.

Coming from a background where I have treated a lot of sorcery related victims, I realised that most of these victims are those that are marginalised in the communities that they live in. Many are widowed or barren women.

So from observation, sorcery targets the weak ones in our societies. You will see that if a well to do person with high status in the community is accused of practicing sorcery, it will be very hard for people to victimise them. So one of the biggest underlying cause is the socio-economic status of people in societies. And many of those victims are accused by persons close to them.

Only a proper deterrent system in place will see a decrease in violence in relation to sorcery. The police do not follow up on such cases. As a government if we are interested in curbing sorcery related violence or law and order, we have to look at the causes and one of those is empowering people in our communities. The marginalised ones are strongly victimised and accused of sorcery. When we empower people we remove the tag and make them acceptable. Accusations build up slowly and the more marginalised they are the deeper they sink into the whole of being accused of sorcery.

Our problem is we wait until we have a victim before we take action to protect. We have to create a proper deterrent system, while the police are doing a good job. I believe the United Nations has a ratio of police personnel per person or persons. The ratio is very low for this country. While my good Governor has already made some good points on these. So if we are interested in helping our country, we have to do something. Law and order is one of the greatest impediments of progress.

If we can have financial aid to assist us financially why don't we ask for police personnel to come in and help us? If we have to call the AFP to assist, why not? For example, the recent tribal fight in Wabag; had the police intervened early, the fight would not have escalated. But we choose to wait for funding to bring in the police. For first-time Members we do not have the funds to cater for police, however, we do it because we want to curb law and order.

Mr Speaker, we have to have proactive administration in the Force to make sure police presence is there regardless of the magnitude of the violence, then we will not have to spend millions in rehabilitation, compensation, et cetera.

There were so many calls made by the Member. I believe he is one of the senior member of this Parliament and we must listen to his call. Law and order is becoming a problem in this country. If we have not realised it, law and order has escalated and it's become a major problem which is affecting this country very much.

When we are trying to bring development into certain places there are people on guard with axes, guns, bows and arrows and et cetera. If the Government has major plans and visions for this country in terms of development then we seriously need to address this law and order problem in a holistic way.

The main reason why I am stressing on these issues is that we can't expect police to do more than what they are able to do. The ratio of police to the population is one of the lowest in the world. They cannot be everywhere at once unlike God who is omnipresent. They are human beings and will be present at one place in one point in time.

So we need to bring in extra manpower and if Australian Government is willing to give us that power and help then why can't we just accept it just like we accept the donor funds that they give in other infrastructures that we need.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity and I for one think that this call must be taken seriously and must not be watered down. This call of reintroducing the ACP Program will assist us very much. The Government needs to consider it seriously because command and control within our disciplinary forces is actually on the decline.

Just recently some of the Defence Force soldiers bashed up a young doctor. People don't understand the kind of sacrifice doctors make to save and serve the sick in hospitals around the country. They do a lot of work but they are not the Creator and can only do so much. If prognosis is not good and doctors say that medicines won't help then they can't do much and they will stop there.

But if we see that there is no discipline and respect within our disciplinary forces then these sort of behaviour is bound to happen.

Now that we are going to host the APEC meeting, I don't want us to make ourselves popular for the wrong reasons. We have to host the APEC meeting in an environment which is seen to be peaceful and if we need help then get help but we have to be honest with ourselves and not pretend to be something we are not. Law and order problems exist are exist in Lae, Port Moresby, Wewak and Rabaul.

But one major hiccup is capacity issue and if we don't have the capacity then we must seek help from outside for capacity.

With that I think the call to bring in the ACP is very genuine and we must consider it seriously as a government, thank you.

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just want to add a few comments to the statements made by my colleagues.

Some very sound positive comments and I would like to commend the Minister for Justice and Attorney General for his efforts here. I would like to basically say that I think we are in a great position to bring about the changes that we need to address this issue.

I support the call from the Governor of Enga, Governor of East Sepik and the Member for Wabag.

Let's look at law enforcement capacity and for your information the ratio of policemen to citizens as recommended by the United Nations is 1:400. But in PNG its 1:1200 and in some provinces such as mine is 1:2100. It is well below what is recommended and then another issue is the type of training that is undertaken at our police college. They don't get near enough training to handle the vast variety of crime that are being committed and the issues that they are going to be confronted with when they go out there as policemen.

Then you look at the fact there is very little police presence in many parts of our country and many stations are now closed down, therefore, law and order issues everywhere. If you turn up at a police station you will be told that there is a car but no fuel, if there is a car at all. They don't even have stationeries to write with in many instances.

These sorcery related killings point to a larger problem that we are facing and that is law enforcement and it's a huge cost to society, business, investment and opportunities and this is something we must address.

Many of us have experienced the bitterness of having reported some sort of a serious crime where there is evidence but nothing is done about it.

There are no investigations and even if there are investigations, it is not done properly, therefore, the prosecution is very poor and unsuccessful hence, criminals walk free. This sends a signal that people can commit this type of crimes and get away with it. Two things happen, criminals are encouraged and secondly, those who feel that there is no justice will take it upon themselves to seek justice. How do we address these things?

Mr Assistant Speaker, I would like to commend the Government for its efforts to try and increase police numbers. That is good but let us also look at capacity, command and control. I believe the Engan Governor is on the right track here. Let us look at what the Australians did as mentioned to by the Governor of East Sepik. If we need outside help to come in and restructure the top management, establish discipline again so that policemen and women look like policemen and women and behaviour like one. They are not feared but embraced by society.

Mr Assistant Speaker, there used to be a time when one policeman would run one district and he was respected and feared. But now there are armies of them driving around in vehicles to apprehend betel nut sellers and what not. I remember as a young men growing up in the Highlands we used to have such people as Ben Okoro.

When Ben Okoro was driving down the Highlands Highway nobody put up road blocks. There were no tribal fights. The late Barkley Yarume was another feared person. We only had these persons because they were well trained, they had capacity and they had command and control in place. But today, within the Police Force there are several factions. Most of them are fighting amongst themselves and attending to something else other than their core responsibilities. The few good policeman that are there are inundated with work and they don't have the capacity.

For instance, let us look at Boroko CID. This is one of the busiest police stations in the country, if not the busiest. They have about six police units which with 10 police investigators to one unit. They have one vehicle amongst them with one computer that is barely working. How are they going to attend to crimes? Each of them have about 30 cases that they have to attend to. This is very difficult for our police investigators. On top of that, take a look at their welfare, especially the houses they live in or the salaries that they are paid. These are issues that we need to address. As Sir Puka Temu said, we should take a holistic approach to all these issues. In this instance he is right and these issues need to be addressed.

The other issue is education. As the Governor of Gulf pointed out, we need to start educating our people both the children and the adults. The illiteracy population in this country is very high. A significant population of our people remain illiterate. Our churches are struggling, how we can connect with them so that they can get out there and help educate our people.

I think it is time we seriously look at bringing in outside help but at the same time we look at issues as a Parliament to take measures to rectify the situation. The international media love reporting these things. You can do all the great things in this country and they will never report about it but suddenly there is a killing in a remote part of Papua New Guinea related to sorcery and its splashed all over the newspapers and other media avenues around the world.

We have to do our bit to show that we are taking notice of this problem that we are confronted with and how to address it. We look at the law and order situation and the efforts to educate our people and how we can create more opportunities which is the long term effort that must be undertaken.

There is also a breakdown of values in our society which we need to study.

In the past our elderly people and widows were taken care of and there was no such thing as orphans because society moved and adjusted itself to take care of these people. Today they are isolated. There a lot of elderly people that are dying in rural areas from malnutrition, from loneliness and from lack of proper care. Society is now moving towards a direction which is driven primarily by profits and greed. Our culture of sharing and caring for one another is being replaced by profit and greed, by materialism. What can we do about this situation? The people in the rural areas, 85 per cent of them are merely following what we do. They see us as the educated lot so they follow us. They look up to us. How do we address that? Is there something that the Ministry of Community Development can do about this situation? Do we need to put in place mechanisms to take care of our elderly, our widow and orphans? If that is where we are heading? Then we must do that. If necessary, we need to pass laws. We already have laws as the Minister for Communications and Energy mentioned here. If we are not going to enforce those laws then let us do away with them. If we are serious about it then let's enforce them. But how is that going to be enforced? I am curious to know who is going to take the first step in saying, I am going to take a light.

In my province, we have put in a specific Police Unit to address the issue of violence against women. It is a small unit but we are trying our best to develop its capacity. We sent a police woman to Cairns for further training. We are trying to give them the resources they need because I feel that our most vulnerable people need special attention. These types of crimes that are committed against them should be given special attention until such time when we develop our law enforcement capacity to the point where we have the adequate resources and the policeman to citizen ratio is reasonable, they have the capacity with command, control and discipline in place.

Thank you very much.

Mr PILA NINIGI (Imbonggu) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I would also like to contribute to the debates on this Ministerial paper. I think it is a major issue. In the Highlands region, we hardly faced this evil practice but due to inter-marriages and such practices were brought in and now it's widespread.

I believe it is crucial that after someone dies, a post mortem must be conducted to confirm the cause of death. The Police must take the post mortem results to the mourning area and inform them about the cause of death. Most deaths are caused by the type of food we eat. We eat recklessly, that is the cause of it. But in most cases, when we find out the cause of death, we don't disclose it and instead we start questioning how a person of such stature died and blame it on sorcery or black magic. We must establish a Police Unit that can inform the relatives of the person who died on the cause of death after a post mortem. If we fail to do this, we will continue facing problems. So I think this is one way of dismissing beliefs in sorcery practices.

Secondly, we fail to inform others about the cause of death. When someone dies after contracting HIV/AIDs or heart attack, you must state the cause of death as it is. Even the church leaders fail to disclose the cause of death and this allows others to think otherwise and then a fight breaks out and the problem worsens.

We must find out the cause of death and the police can go out and explain the causes and the reasons. Half of the problems will be gone. But I think we have never tried to find out information such as allowing doctors to go in and carry out post mortems immediately.

Sometimes doctors don't want to go in but we must pass legislations to enable people to take the body over to the doctors to conduct post mortems. It's one of the things we have never done so the problem is increasing.

The police are there to help but they are not always available or don't take prompt action. We are paying salaries and buying vehicles for them to use. We are beginning to wonder whether they are getting paid. We are talking about bringing in the police from Australia, but can our police do their job?

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

Mr TIMOTHY MASIU (South Bougainville) - Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for Justice and Attorney General for his presentation.

We all know that sorcery and witchcraft are part of our history in our country. If we try to find the source it is like a needle in a haystack so it will be hard for us to discover.

But I am happy about this document which tries to draw our attention to the sorcery related violence in the country, and how the Government intends to address the issue.

I want to say that the issue on sorcery and witchcraft are quite big that is affecting our country and will be difficult for us to eradicate, let's be honest about it. But the issue here is to find some ways to stop the violence that emanates out of this issue because of the accusations by the victims or the relatives of the victims.

Many of you leaders have given many good answers but while listening, I recall some time ago in my electorate, I made a comment to my staff. Out of nowhere, I said to them that I would hold a conference for the sorcerers. I wanted to sponsor a conference for them. I just said that spontaneously and they laughed at me. I said

those are skilled people, it's their art. Maybe we can talk to them and change them. We can't fight against them, they are powerful people. They fly, they walk, they swim and they do all sorts of things which you and I cannot. But we have to try and break into their domain and find out.

As an elected leader, these are my voters but it's their job and art to practise and perform so maybe we go to them and talk to them.

Mr Minister, I am happy with your paper but I have realised something. In the past, sorcerers were old people and everyone in the villages knew who they were. They would not go to their houses and would stay some hundreds of metres away, and other customs were followed out of fear and respect for the sorcerer.

Today this trend has changed. Younger man and woman are becoming sorcerers. He or she has the powers and they are moving around with it. Most of them are educated people. They have gone to schools and some of them are working in government departments and the private sector. Some are even employed by the churches and yet they are practising this.

I think if we take a step back and properly study how they move in this practice. I am sure we will be able to discover their weak links and then we can capitalise on that and try to change their thought process.

Now the violence happens only on suspicion. Many a time people suspect that this is the guy because traditionally maybe he comes from a family that practises sorcery and they have been casting spells on people for generations.

So, when we study these people we will see that. I am happy that the Government is taking charge of this, we must try to cut it off now. If the trend continues to the younger generation of today for them to possess these spells and go around casting them on people, we can educate them because these are educated people. In the past, it was the elderly who were doing such thing and had all kinds of materials in their houses to carry out their deeds.

Having said that, there are also good sorcerers, apart from the evil ones. There are some who cast good spells to heal you when you are ill.

When an evil sorcerer has cast a bad spell on you, the good sorcerer's job is to come and spin off chants to cure you. We must support the good ones.

Mr Assistant Speaker, this is my little contribution to this debate and I wish to express my gratitude to the Minister. Mr Minister, I do not fear the black magic spinner because I do not believe in black magic, if you have a committee that you wish to put people in, appoint me to head it. We will go and talk to them. They are people after all. Some of you have used them to win you election. You have used them so you know who they are so let us go and talk to them. Let's be holistic, this is the holistic approach that you are preaching about.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I will conclude here.

Mr THOMAS PELIKA (Menyamya) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Firstly, let me thank the Minister for bringing in this paper.

When I was a policeman sorcery was not that rife. Now we can see that it is now dominant. We need to ask ourselves why we have allowed this to happen. I believe we should go back to the Bible. The Minister has made reference to go going back to the Bible

When there was a revolution in Heaven God cast out some people with their followers down to earth. That is a fact and you all know it. They are followers of the darkness, they roam around in the night taking innocent lives. That is already stated in the Bible.

Our system in the country is built on that. Even we leaders are not perfect. I am not a perfect person, I have made some mistakes in life. But if we make some decisions in Parliament that are beneficial to the ordinary men and women in the villages, then these type of things will not happen.

We are employing our relatives in the system whether in high places or low places, so only the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. And those who don't have it, they won't have it.

So, these are some of the points I wish to raise and yet you blame the police personnel. Police personnel are only human beings. I disagree with some of the policies you are putting into this structure. The reason for my leaving was because of this stupid idea of keeping a policeman in the same place for over five years. If he is posted there for over five years he will start to build a house, make gardens, plant trees and do all the other things that normal villagers do.

If we are serious, the Police Force needs are big overhaul starting from the top hierarchy down to the bottom. For example, why are you recruiting people in the city? You recruit people in the city who are corrupt. They have already seen blue movies and received all sorts of bribes. So, if you wish to recruit, recruit from backward places like Telefomin, my electorate, Misima and other far flung areas in the remote parts of PNG so when they come here they can do some things correctly.

Then fix the middle management in the Police Force so that they are tasked to make sure that specific tasks are carried out. The policemen are just joyriding around in police vehicles. When I was a policeman I told them not to move around in vehicles and use the resources well. Some of them these police officers are overweight.

Bringing policemen in from outside will not help us. They have their own interest to protect. As a country we must protect our own interest. We have brought in too many different people who have given us all sorts of ideas and we are led to believe that our system is not right. Our system is here to stay. We must believe that some of our customs must be retained. We have been bringing in foreign ideas and extolling their virtues. What happened to our system? It has ruined us.

If we need police assistance from overseas then let us bring them. I concur with the statement from the Governor of Enga that we must do this only for specific tasks. If they are here to deal with corruption then they must deal with that subject only. If they are here to deal with the issue of witchcraft, yes, bring them in if we are afraid to deal with it ourselves.

As my leader has stated, if we are scared of carrying out executions then recruit people to come and shoot them down. Recruit them as mercenaries and deploy them to Buimo or Bomana and line up the criminal and tell them if you indulge in trouble, this is what's going to happen to you.

But we really don't need to bring in other people. If other people come, how much would we pay them? All sorts of people have come already. We are now asking for people of all trades and if we have brought them in what happens to us? There will be no employment for us. We are producing many school leavers but what is happening. We are paying a lot of school fees and but how will they be employed?

We are not creating employment opportunities for our young people so what are they going to do? They will turn to sorcery. So we should not bring them in. We do not have apprenticeship schools nowadays. So, we are now seeing some of the brothers of those people we have brought in becoming electricians, supermarket cashiers, drivers and we are not complaining. The department of labour is not going down and checking those people out. They are turning a blind eye.

Anyway I am going beyond my subject, but sorcery matters, it exists without the knowledge of many people. If we have a good police force and if they work together we know who is there who practice that can be rounded up and dealt with.

So, this is my contribution to this debate.

Mr RICHARD MASERE (Ijivitari) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I also want to join my other colleagues in commending the Minister for Justice and Attorney General for his statement.

I also want to contribute few remarks which will assist and add value towards our path to stop sorcery related deaths occurring in PNG.

Let me ask a question and then answer it with couple of experiences. Is sorcery for real or is it just a magic trick performed by human beings?

Let me share two experiences I had as a young man and as an adult. One time I went to my mother's village and felt sick and my uncles wanted to introduce me to a witchcraft doctor to come and perform his magic on me. They told me that this witchcraft doctor is a strong man and he will cure any sickness. So they brought this evil man to the house and he started to massage my stomach with all sorts of leaves as I watched very careful what. After massaging me with these leaves he took these leaves outside and coughed. And I don't know what he was coughing out and after few minutes he came back inside and showed me this bone and said that he took this bone out from your tummy. He said, fortunately, we removed this bone but if we had not done that then you would have died. So is sorcery real?

About four years ago, a young man died in my village and I happen to attend this *hauskrai*. They brought the coffin and laid it in front of us all and they invited the magicians to come and put a bamboo on top of the casket of this young boy.

As I watched, the bamboo started to lift up and was floating in the air right above the casket. Not long after, the bamboo began to move towards a certain direction. We all ran after this bamboo to see where it was going. The mourners were saying that the spirit of the boy is walking ahead and the bamboo is following his footsteps in the night. The bamboo went into a small hut and out again. Nobody was controlling this bamboo, it was moving on its own. Then it went into the kitchen and came out and went to another man's house and was knocking at the door of his house.

I was watching it very carefully and at the same time questioning myself. Was this real or not? Sorcery was something that was practised during the medieval days. During those days the people were living in poverty and resorted to any kind of belief so when a woman was suspected of being a witch they would burn her at the stakes. What we are witnessing now is something that existed many years ago.

So as leaders how do we address this issue? We can only do it by answering this question – Is sorcery real?

If someone is killed through sorcery, you cannot see how it is done, but if a man physically kills another, it's a crime and we call it murder. And this is the issue that needs to be addressed.

Is sorcery related killings a matter for this Parliament to be dealt with? Of course, we need to deal with it because we cannot allow anyone the freedom to kill.

Back at the village nowadays people find ways to protect themselves. In the past, when one person committed murder, it was easy to identify him and lock him up.

But the current practise is that people gather in huge groups or even whole villages go and commit atrocities or murder.

The whole village goes and inflicts violence upon the person or persons accused of sorcery. They mutilate the person, burn them or do inhumane harm to them in a group so it becomes very difficult to send a large group to prison.

They are looking for ways to make it difficult for justice to take place. Because how can you send the whole village to prison? Why are sorcery related deaths happening in the villages. It is because sorcery puts fear in the community. When someone makes you sick, that person is regarded as the most powerful man in the community. If you do something against him, he will take your life. The only way to stop him or her is to give them money. So it is becoming a money-making industry for some of these so-called sorcerers. Fear also plays a part in encouraging people to stop this sorcery. They fear that if they do not do something about it, they may be the next victim. So they marginalise people and accuse those such as widows and barren women.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I have heard these many times on the social scene especially through sports, for example; Rabaul Gurias have won because they use witchcraft or magic. And some of us sitting here have been accused of winning our elections through witchcraft. The thoughts in people creates fear and that sorcery is real. But the question really is, is it real or not?

When we address that mindset then we can change our society. In our society it is all about behaviour and attitude. It is the way we think about something. When we see a bird flying around at odd hours and it looks suspicious we are left to think, who sent this bird and why. I am telling myself not to believe this, because if I do, I build that thought that it is witchcraft so I have to be careful or if I have a death in the family it must be through sorcery so we have to go find the person responsible and teach him a lesson or even kill him.

This is all about our mindset, our attitude and our behaviour. The way we see it is the way we form our society. There are issues even in the Police Force. For example in Oro the Commander is sick and has a problem in his legs that is affecting his mobility. It is believed that two people were responsible for making him sick. So he sends his officers to investigate and what happens? One of the accused has been killed. How can the law enforcers help us when they too have the same mindset, attitude and behaviour and sorcery or witchcraft affects them too?

I thank you, Mr Minister, and congratulate you for your effort to try and bring these reforms into Parliament so that we can put in stronger laws. But I also believe we need to find solutions other than only address this issue through the law and justice sector. Eighty-five per cent of our community is rural based and 85 per cent of our problems are also in our rural areas. Eighty-five per cent of our poverty is in the rural areas and 85 per cent of any change to this nation is resting on our rural population.

I would like to commend the Minister for Planning who took a team on a fact-finding trip to India to find out how Papua New Guinea can connect diplomatically and economically with India. He came back and went for the same kind of trip to New Zealand. Our Prime Minister went to the Philippines on a similar trip to find some ways of addressing our economic issues but the important thing is they are talking about the most important necessity that will change the behaviour of our rural communities. It starts when you push the economy back to the rural communities and get our people busy then they will forget witchcraft.

They will forget about lazing around and looking for reasons to cause trouble. Eighty-five per cent of our rural communities are dependent on agriculture. When you touch that area, you will change the economic dynamics of this country. This is where the problem is with sorcery. It is with our rural communities and not the urban ones.

When we address the areas that matter by engaging our people in economic based participation, we will simply address some of these issues which we are talking about in Parliament.

I want to commend our leaders for going across to our neighbours. Let us look at China, it has a population of about 1.3 billion people. India has about another 1.3 billion plus people. The Philippines has about 300 million plus people. Our nearest neighbour Indonesia has about 231 million plus people.

Imagine if we were to feed the population of those four countries; we would be exporting millions of kina worth food out of Papua New Guinea. That means money going back to our rural communities and when our people have money in their pockets, they will have no reason to make money from witchcraft and crime.

If we address our rural communities, I guarantee we will address most of the issues that we are talking about on the Floor of Parliament. These are some areas in the term of this Parliament, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O'Neill, who is taking the lead to address them. Let us work together to grow our agriculture industry.

Our Lands Minister knows that he has got land just outside his door. When you walk out you find a perfect land to plant a sweet potato. I did some rough calculations based on this four nations.

If we were to send one product; for example, one bag of English potatoes to feed 10 per cent of that four nations, we can estimate to make close to K1.878 billion that we can bring back to our rural communities. If we

target one per cent then we can estimate to make K187 million that can come back to our rural communities. This are all according to just one crop but imagine if we were to include taro, cassava, banana and others. When we bring all those money back to our country, our rural communities will forget about witchcraft and sorcery related issues.

When we talk about law and order, this is one simple way of addressing it in our country. When people have money in their pocket, they will have no reason to commit crime.

Mr Minister, you are on the right track and I believe that the fact that we are trying to address this issue with constructive debates, I can see that we are heading in the right direction. I would like to commend you for your leadership in this ministry and I hope that what I am sharing here can be taken on board because these are some of the things that can seriously help our nation not only economically grow but I can see that we can address a lot of our law and order issues which also includes sorcery related deaths.

Let me also say this, sorcery related deaths are purely based out of fear. I conclude by quoting a particular statement. It says here, 'The only way to get rid of one belief is to replace it with another one'. So Minister, for me personally, I think agriculture is the only way we can change this country by putting more money back into the rural community where we can suppress a lot of the law and order issues in the rural communities which generally will help this country.

Mr LEKWA GURE (Rigo) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this debate. I thank you for recognising Rigo as well because in the past the very mention of the name Rigo would put the fear of God in my people because of our sorcery and witchcraft. But anyways, that is not the case today.

Without downplaying the importance and the seriousness of the issue, in this 21st Century in this House of Parliament, we are talking about sorcery and witchcraft while the rest of the world has gone ahead in leaps and bounds talking about high finance, quantum theory, rocket science, information technology and so on. We are getting left behind. We are way behind the 'eighth ball'. If we are going to use our energy and time talking about something that has been in our society for generations and generations. The fact that it has been part of our DNA and our culture and tradition doesn't make it right or relevant for a modern PNG society today. Is it right for us to be paying attention to it? I want to repeat that statement that the Member for Ijivitari made, because I also took note of that as well. The only way to rid one belief is to replace it with another one. I just hope that the belief that we will replace the sorcery and witchcraft one is a higher one and perhaps this is where the church can come in. The church has been in Papua New Guinea for more than a hundred years.

First of all, at the expense of repeating what has been said by some of the Members, I want to repeat what the Governor of East Sepik said, let us show some leadership. Let this House of Parliament renounce sorcery and witchcraft. Let's say, it's no longer applicable in Papua New Guinea even if we need to legislate and outlaw sorcery and witchcraft in Papua New Guinea. As part of our leadership is to empower our community and traditional leaders so that they can practise the leadership at the communities like in the past and then the churches as well. Empower the communities like in the past. Empower the churches to play a very important role in the changing of the mindset of our people.

I am just going to come back to the churches. During United Church 50th Golden Jubilee the Moderator of the United Church, Right Reverend Bernard Siai, said a lot of things and also set a challenge to the pastors and Ministers of the word of God. He said, some of you on a Sunday go out and preach the word of God but the minute you fall sick, you go running around for a *puripuri man* (sorcerer) to heal you. So if you are one of those pastors or ministers doing this then I challenge you to give up being a minister of God. Just give it up and just revert to your beliefs because you are not doing any good to the word of God and you are not doing any good to anybody else by believing two powers. You either believe in the power of God or you believe in black magic.

The Moderator is from Milne Bay and he issued this challenge. He stated that sorcery and witchcraft related killings are widely reported in the media, especially in the Highlands, so if you think that is *puripuri* (sorcery), come to Misima and you will really see witchcraft and sorcery. And if you see witchcraft and *puripuri* in my part of the world, you will wish you hadn't been born. He also stated, I come from where the sun rises and that's where the most powerful witchcraft is.

If we are going to replace one belief with another one, witchcraft and sorcery is born out of fear and ignorance so if we are going to replace that fear and ignorance, the only we can do that is through education. Education is the way. Earlier today, a lot of the questions were directed towards the Minister for Education quality education. What are the factors that constitute quality education? First of all, let's have good teachers and then right number of classrooms. Get the teacher students ratio down to effective teaching and learning. Like, 24 to 30 students per teacher.

When you educate a person, you open up his mind to a lot more possibilities. Education is the only way we are going to change this witchcraft and sorcery beliefs. Let's educate our people into the modern way of living. Sure enough, some speakers have asked, what makes us think the modern way of living is not the best way? It might not be the right way, but is witchcraft the right way? It is not. So let us replace one belief system with one

that is working for the modern world. One that is talking about information technology, rocket scientist, quantum theory or the principles of flights and those sort of things instead of witchcraft.

If we educate our people in the various facets of modern living and then our people are gainfully employed in the inclusive economy that we are talking about now and we grow the economy, then people will have things to do. Because witchcraft is promoted and promulgated by people who have nothing better to do or say and get involved in those sort of things. As important as it is, rule of law is one of the mitigating ways. But we should deal with the core issues of this belief first and then we bring in law and order to deal with those who are not conforming to the expectations of the society

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

Mr PETER O'NEILL (Prime Minister - Ialibu-Pangia) - Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I commend the Minister for Justice and Attorney General for his statement on sorcery and related issues and how his department and ministry are putting in an action plan that will guide us through mitigating some of these challenges that we had in this area.

Mr Assistant Speaker, much has been said already so I won't repeat those very thoughtful and eloquent statements made by many of the Members of Parliament. Sorcery certainly creates a lot of issues for community's right throughout the country. And in many cases, it leads to the victimisation of the most vulnerable and weak in our society, especially women and children and of course our elderly people.

I turn to see that some of our communities use this as an excuse so that they can pass the blame on to the vulnerable citizens of this country. In many cases, it leads to death of many of our young men, children and women in our communities.

As a society we need to change our mindsets. Many of the leaders have spoken about that and those changes can come about by a very hard line approach to law enforcement in the country This is not impossible to do and we can take that approach whilst at the same time maintain rule of law in the country. Or we can change it through the mindsets of our people by giving them better education and making sure that they can see that there is a global community out there that has got more opportunities for them than the one that we continue to try and practise in our community's right throughout the country.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, when you look at the Police Force, and I agree it is not only the Police Force but teachers and doctors and right across all these social sectors in our county there is a huge shortage of professional people and people who are going to take up the role of educating our people, providing better health care to our people and maintaining law and order.

Mr Assistant Speaker, we have neglected training for many, many years, just taking it for granted that things will fix itself. Well I can guarantee you that it will not fix itself. We have to work towards making sure that we solve the problems that we have in our society.

Mr Assistant Speaker, when we took over the government the Bomana Police College was shut for 10 years. No country can afford that. We reopened the Police College and in one budget year we allocated K250 million to upgrade and modernise our police force.

Mr Assistant Speaker, it was not because we are not paying attention. Also included in that package is that we had huge pay rises for policemen and women across the country but still the challenges remain. The performance is not meeting the investment that the Government continues to make in this sector. They are not building capacity and the training programmes are highly compromised.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I was very interested with the statement made by the Governor of Oro who mentioned a few old policemen that we all know like Ben Okoro and Giossi Labi and off course, Gari Baki. They were very highly disciplined, very committed to their work and when they stood their ground that was the rule of law, no compromise whatsoever.

But today when you look at the recruitment process or even our colleges, I don't know about you but I get reports from some of my young people who apply to become policemen that they need money to go and pay someone to get inside. You have in fact started from the worst possible position already in trying to be a law enforcement officer. You are getting out there trying to buy your way into the training college.

This should not be the case. It should be on merit, qualifications, education standards and the minimum standards that we set for our young people to get into the police force.

Mr Assistant Speaker, when you compare the size of people like Ben Okoro, he is a giant of a man but now when you see a young fellow who is almost as tall as I am trying to enforce the rule of law, nobody will listen to you. You try to give instructions they will push you aside. So, we used to have height limits and physical appearances of candidate but we have thrown those right out the door. So we are compromising ourselves so that we can look after our *wantoks*, policemen's children and other relatives. That should not be the case.

Mr Assistant Speaker, training is very important. That's why I want to inform this honourable House that, I know that the Governor of Enga has the right intentions to bring in support from our development partners, especially Australia to build capacity in our Police Force. We need those interventions but at some stage we need

to do it on our own. We can't keep on going out after 43 years of Independence for others to come and fix our problems. We have to say we can do it and it begins with us.

And of course we can't continue to compromise our *Constitution* in achieving that, where we give one group of policemen immunity and we expose our own policemen to any charges that they commit in the discharge of their duties if they commit an offence.

In some nations in the Caribbean they host festivals of black magic and festivals of death where a lot of tourists flock in to watch. They are earning an income out of these practises that they are doing. It is not necessarily bad but they are exposing it to earn an income. If we have people who are believing in these sort of things, there are ways to earn a living out of it. Tourists can come and watch it and if they know that it is peaceful they will be there and participate in some of the elaborate festivals and costumes that are part of it.

But most of all, what we need in the country is population control. We cannot simply have children and think that somebody else will look after these children for you. As a father or a mother or a custodian of that child it is your responsibility. Having less children means that you are giving quality time, attention, food and other basic necessities to your child or children. It should not be about how many members there are in a tribe or family that will make you more powerful. It is about giving quality to that child.

We have a huge population explosion in the country. As a result, government services cannot keep up with the population demand. There is a high number of students in the classrooms. That is because we have over 7 million people today. On average everyone here has about 4-5 children. That is a huge population increase when you look at a country of our size with an economy still developing. We cannot maintain the level of services. We cannot have 28 000 police personnel on the streets tomorrow and even if we do, we have to pay for their services. We have to grow the economy in order to make enough money so that you can pay for it. Let us work together and make sure we work with churches and our community leaders.

I do not know about other districts but in my district, I find that anybody can now run for the councillor's post. We used to have a history of councillors in our wards for 30-40 years, we had consistency and stability. They did not have to be elected, they were automatically appointed as genuine traditional leaders of those communities. Now a grade ten leader, if he is not happy with his uncle being the councillor, he will put up his hand to contest for the post. What respect will he get from the community? Nothing - he won't maintain the order that is required there. Therefore, we need to go back to some of our traditional ways which held our communities together, and ensured that there was rule of law and stability in those communities.

So let us support the Minister and the Attorney General for the good work that he is doing. This is an issue that the country needs to address. And one of the other areas where we can also immediately help resolve some of these issues is that; every death in the country should have a medical certificate and a post-mortem done. A lot of deaths are caused by sicknesses yet we continue to blame sorcery so this is one way we can be so sure. We cannot just put the blame on someone without solid evidence. We must work with our health staff and make sure we clear the causes of death before we point blame on sorcery and other people. Maybe it is time to go back and legislate that every death in the country must have a post mortem done so that there is no suspicions of sorcery and innocent people are victimised

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Westly Nukundj**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 4:20 p.m.