

SECOND DAY

Wednesday 28 August 2019

DRAFT HANSARD

Subject:	Page No.:
QUESTIONS.....	1
Morobe- Investigate Deaths at Sarawaget Range.....	1
Ramu Nickel Mine Spillage at Basamuk Bay.....	3
Bougainville Referendum Update	4
Status of Ramu Hydro Project	6
Legislative Program for Parliament.....	6
Funding for Enga Provincial Hospital.....	9
Vacancy in Bougainville's Police Top Post.....	10
Assist Bougainville Police in Referendum	10
Outstanding Allowance's for Village Court Officials.....	12
Create Policy for Equitable Financial Disbursement	13
Manus – Investigate Death of Ten Chinese Men	16
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF STUDENTS FROM MALOLO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, PACIFIC ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY.....	18
OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA - STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER.....	18
MOTION BY LEAVE.....	18
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – APPROVAL FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF BOUGAINVILLE GOVERNMENT,	18
GRAND CHIEF DR. JOHN MOMIS TO ADDRESS THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2019	18
PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUTONOMOUS BOUGAINVILLE GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE PARLIAMENT.....	19
MOTION BY LEAVE.....	19
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS.....	19

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON LIVES LOST IN MOROBE PROVINCE – CONDOLOLENCE MESSAGE	19
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT- POLICY FOR INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – WOKBUNG WANTAIM/ GAUKARA HEBOU, 2019-2028 – PAPER AND STATEMENT - MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER.	21
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HIV/AIDS – HEALTH STATUS AND PRIORITIES – MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED	25
ADJOURNMENT	48

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

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Corrections maybe marked on a photocopy of the Daily Draft Hansard and lodged at the Office of the Principal Parliamentary Reporter, A1 - 23 (next to the Security Control Room).

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

Amendments cannot be accepted over the phone.

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



HARRY MOMOS

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SECOND DAY

Wednesday 28 August 2019

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.00 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and invited the Member for Jimi and Minister for Religion, **Honourable Wake Goi**, to say Prayers:

Holy Father, we leaders of this country come before you this morning. We truly and humbly sit at the foot of your cross and ask for your forgiveness for the sins and for other related areas that are unacceptable to you. We ask for your forgiveness. Lord help us. Give us the wisdom that we need each day as leaders to talk and to interact with our people and our departments and our staff and so forth.

Lord, you are the same God in our good times and in our bad times. At some point you carry us, other times you let us walk but overall you know us. Guide us and go before us and behind us and continue to help us. Thank you. And be with our people that at least they will know what is right and what is wrong and they will help us to lead better to glorify your name. We pray that the day dedicated to really come before you is 26 August – our Repentance Day. Lord this day must not be forgotten but help us each day to really repent each day as time goes. We pray that you will continue to bless the church and to bless the government and to bless this country so that we can work together to glorify you and for the betterment of this country and to achieve the aims or objectives to make PNG a rich black nation.

Thank you, bless us this morning as we deliberate on issues of national importance.

QUESTIONS

Morobe- Investigate Deaths at Sarawaget Range

Mr KENNEDY WENGE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Defence. Can the Minister for Environment and Climate Change take note?

My question is based on media reports in the previous weeks about the disaster that befell the Morobe Province impacting two electorates. My electorate of Nawae and Kabwum.

There was a huge change in the landscape of the biggest range, the Sarawaget Ranges experienced ice falls which killed 12 people whose remains are already at the Angau Memorial Hospital while searches are being conducted for some more.

The Lae Disaster Office has sent a brief to the Minister in charge of disasters.

(1) Did the Minister receive that brief?

I also wish to inform you that there is a State of Emergency in those two electorates as a result of climate change on our country. One of the signs is snow falling which has killed those people.

(2) Can autopsies be conducted immediately to find out the cause of death of those people so as to confirm if they really died of frostbite?

02/02

Therefore, I would like investigations to be carried out to establish whether the victims were killed by the ice or, if the deaths are related to some effects of climate change taking place in our country so that we can be aware.

Thank you.

Mr SAKI SOLOMA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Member for Nawae for asking very good questions.

Before I answer his question, on behalf me people of Okapa, I would like to thank the Marape-Steven Government for appointing me as Defense Minister. It has been 15 years or so since the people of Okapa have taken up a portfolio, therefore I would like to say thank you.

Firstly, I would like to share my heartfelt sympathies with the Member for Nawae, but I have not received any report from the National Disaster Office in Lae.

As we all know, our country, Papua New Guinea has been experiencing various natural disasters like volcanic eruptions, earthquake and now the ice dropping.

For now, I will take up this matter with me to the National Disasters Office to furnish a report so that we can probably send a team this week to Kabwum and Nawae to assess the situation to investigate and to identify the best approach to rectify the situation. But my

heartfelt condolences goes to the people of Nawae and Kabwum, and we will do our very best in our capacity to assist our people.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Ramu Nickel Mine Spillage at Basamuk Bay

Mr PETER SAPIA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Environment & Conservation, and the Mining Minister to take note.

The Ramu Nickel Mine operation at the Basamuk Bay is now on the spotlight for environmental disaster. The features of the sea are now turning red, brown and orange which have gone viral on the social media

Mr Speaker, according to the Ramu Nickel environment plan, the tailings waste will be processed properly before been discharged into the sea and that there will be a zero leakage of spillage. I have already engaged an independent mining expert to be on sight to investigate, which I will present here on the floor next week.

Mr Speaker, environmental plans are presented to CEPA before any environmental permit is granted to any mine to operate. Ramu Nickel has now breached the environmental permit and therefore cannot operate anymore.

Mr Speaker, as the Member for Rai-Coast, I demand, immediate closure of the Mine. We must now go back to the table and negotiate the future of the Ramu Nickel Mine. Profit must not be prioritized at the expense of the environment.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr GEOFFREY KAMA – First of all I would like to thank the Member for Rai-Coast for raising a very important question.

This issue has now been made known to all Papua New Guineans. I have seen it too and I did not hesitate to respond. I have engaged specialists from the Mining Department who have investigated the incident. The spilling occurred on Saturday, the 24th. The spillage has mixed with the soil and sea. There are officers working on it and will furnish me a report.

03/02

I am scheduled to go there next Monday. If we see that the situation deteriorates then we will surely close the mine. But for now, we will wait on the report before we say or do anything.

I am pleased that the Chief Mining Inspector together with my staff are currently on the ground assessing the situation. Once they brief me on the situation, then I shall inform you accordingly.

Bougainville Referendum Update

Mr KOBBY BOMOREO – My question without is directed to the Prime Minister and I would like the Minister for Bougainville Affairs to take note. The question is straight forward and it is in light of the upcoming Bougainville Referendum.

What is the Government doing about it now and how well is the Government prepared to take it on board?

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the Member for Tewai-Siassi for his very brief yet important question.

Our nation stands at a juncture in our life with the Bougainville issue facing us. We have no choice but to confront this issue head on. Our Bougainville friends and relatives who are also citizens of this country have come through along a long road since our country securing peace under the 2001 Peace Agreement. It is clearly prescribed that we have to go down the path of referendum.

We have given our best endeavor to support the referendum thus far. I speak on behalf our present Minister for Bougainville Affairs, Sir Puka Temu, who is doing an excellent job so far in spite of the limitations of resources that this office has.

He has spent more time on the island and in the region than any previous Ministers responsible for Bougainville. Without removing credit from the former Minister, the Honourable William Samb, who did spend a fair amount of time and set a good pace as far as interacting with our citizens from Bougainville.

Sir Puka Temu has taken on his own initiative to interface better and he has been going back and forth to the island regularly. In the second week of September, our Government is going to meet up with Bougainville leaders in Buka. We will also be travelling down to Buin for our Joint Supervisory Board Meeting. That is part of our effort to ensure that we are prepared and they are prepared as well for the referendum that will take place later this year.

They have requested for an extension of six weeks to ensure that a total update of the Common Roll takes place to register those are residing in the region as well as those outside of the region including PNG and abroad. So we have given them that flexibility to allow for

that extension. All preparation work is on schedule, as far as preparations leading up to the referendum is concerned. As part of the preparation, a motion will be put before Parliament today to allow for President Momis to address our Parliament and speak to the nation also.

I ask the Members of Parliament to give him the respect and allow him to address us. I will reciprocate in an address to the Bougainville Assembly and strive for their regional leader as well as the national leader to set the pace on where we would like to take the country and the region towards referendum and the life after referendum.

Our people on the island are also geared towards supporting the referendum. There has been increase evidence of our friends in Bougainville responding. They have now mobilized and are continually disposing firearms. They have taken it on board themselves.

04/02

There is a growing excitement for the Referendum. As you know we are sticking to the text and sticking to the spirit of the 2001 Peace Agreement.

On record our National Government in the past and our National Government today will not deviate from these. We are on target to conclude to the text and spirit of the 2001 Peace Agreement. After the Referendum is conducted, as Melanesian leaders we will be in discussions with them to identify what is the best outcome.

There are two questions put to them; the issue of Independence as well as issue of greater Autonomy. When our team of National Leaders go to the island, we will speak to them about our views. This morning in our Government Caucus, I addressed the issue of the greater benefit of having a combined balance sheet as a nation instead of a regional balance sheet or regional economy.

I spoke at a great length about all of us harnessing the wealth of a nation together but in a shared arrangement in a greater autonomy arrangement. So, those issues will be put to them but I can't pre-empt the outcome of Referendum. It is a sensitive moment for our country but, we are giving our best endeavors to ensure that we are referendum-ready come late September, October, and November period. And we are also ready for post-referendum and are prepared for life as a country into the 2020.

So, to answer the question, Mr Speaker, may I assure: the Member for Tewai-Siassi, this Parliament and the country that the National Government and this National Parliament is cognition and very much aware of issues on the ground in Bougainville.

We are very sensitive and sympathize with them. The pain and the loss they bear cannot be adequately compensated. No amount of kindness we bestow will adequately fill in that void but we will do our best endeavors to bridge the hurt and divide on both sides of the islands. And we will ensure to find an amicable workable solution that can cure that dark spot in our nation's history both in Bougainville and PNG and find a way for each and every one of us going forward into the future. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Status of Ramu Hydro Project

Mr. MEHARRA MINNE KIPEFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for State Enterprise and the Prime Minister can take note.

My question is in relation to the US\$2 billion Ramu Hydro project. It has been a long time coming since 2015.

Now that this Government has taken over, what is the future prospect in this mega project for this country?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr. SASINDRAN MUTHUVEL – Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Member for Obura-Wonerara for his valid question.

Mr Speaker, this US\$2 billion mega Ramu Hydro project has been in the pipeline for the last four years and in fact KCH have spent over K40 million just to complete the entire feasibility studies on this Ramu Hydro project which is meant for 100 per cent private investment.

Mr Speaker, I will give a detail report on this mega project upon completion of feasibility studies. But, it is certainly a matter of importance for the State as we have already invested over K40 million. I will soon produce a report on this Ramu Hydro project.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Legislative Program for Parliament

Mr ALLAN BIRD – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question goes to the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and if I may preface the question by thanking the US Government for and her people for sponsoring a trip for a group of Parliamentarians which I was fortunate to be a part of.

During our visit, Mr Speaker, we were fortunate to visit the State of New Hampshire and I discovered that, in their legislature, which is a State's legislature, they pass approximately 300 laws every year.

Mr. Speaker, I've been in this House for two years and my concern is that we have passed and amended perhaps 20 laws in the last two years. Whilst we are concerned with the developmental issues and everything else that is affecting our country, I am worried that we are neglecting our law-making duties.

So, I want to direct this question to the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister who is also the Attorney-General.

05/02

(1) Do we have a law-making program for the Members of Parliament over the course of the remaining months and going into the New Year?

(2) If so, can the Deputy Prime Minister quantify how many such laws are under review all across the spectrum of our laws, and how many does he anticipate to bring to Parliament so that Parliament can fulfil its mandated duty?

Mr DAVIS STEVEN – I thank the Governor of East Sepik for his question.

It is a question that reminds us as legislators of our primary duty in passing laws in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I also take this opportunity to express gratitude to you for your leadership since assuming office in directing attention towards making sure that we pass laws and encourage our departments and our ministers to take lead in this area.

The current Government has been divided into two main sectors where we have the economic sector and the social sector. There is a clear direction that there will be better oversight on how we are doing our work as ministers.

One of the areas which we are now focused on is to ensure that ministers and their respective departments provide to us their priority areas. One priority is the legislations that they are managing.

Under the Prime Ministers delegation, ministers have been assigned the task of overseeing and ensuring that the legislations that have been assigned to them are being implemented. This is a matter which the Prime Minister has emphasised on— a matter which is going to go down as an important KPI for our ministers. The respective ministers are to

ensure the legislations are managed and attended to and the audit is done through a proper and intelligent way in terms of approaching the need for amendments.

The Honourable Governor has asked for details which I do not have readily available in terms of what legislations currently are under review.

However, let me assure the Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea that the approach that we want to take now is sector-based legislations. For instance, we have now highlighted in the social sector that the next bunch of legislations or regime that we want to look at is related to our labour laws. The reason we have taken that decision is because the department has already done certain work in terms of engaging consultants and the workshopping that is required for the purpose of reviewing the laws that govern our labour space.

The intention going forward is that the ministers who are responsible for these legislations or these regimes bring their legislations to NEC where the approval is given and then the necessary processes are observed. This is so that when we come next time, our leaders are well-informed about what we are going to be debating on whether it may be in the labour space or any other relevant area.

But, yes, we are taking control of that situation now and I also happy to inform Parliament that since assuming office, we have called a workshop that has brought together all the agencies of government that are involved in the process of legislation.

We have invited the Clerk of Parliament and the First Legislative Draftsman Office, the State Solicitors Office, and others. The idea now is to see where the road blocks are and begin to deal with them. Ultimately this is an important concern and important point that the Honourable Leader has raised.

I want to take the opportunity to encourage every one of us and most importantly our ministers.

06/02

Let us not forget that there's room within our processes for Private Members Bills. We are here to pass laws and we are here to introduce laws that are relevant to the needs and aspirations of our people.

I thank the Honorable Leader and Mr Speaker for the opportunity to make this point, thank you

Funding for Enga Provincial Hospital

Sir PETER IPATAS – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Treasurer – class of 1997, so I welcome him with a question.

Mr Speaker, the much publicized Enga Provincial Hospital project was initiated in 2017 and apparently the National Government has not been able to meet our 15 per cent counterpart funding. Just yesterday, the contractor has written to the Department of Works to cease working.

Can the Treasurer ensure that the funding for Enga Provincial Hospital Project is made available this year in the Budget so that work can continue?

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr IAN LING - STUCKEY – Thank you, Mr Speaker, well I have to say, it's good to be able to answer some questions for a change.

Mr Speaker, before I answer the question, , may I firstly on behalf of people of Kavieng District, thank the Prime Minister and the Members of the ruling coalition Government for their confidence and for their commissioning of myself as the 14th Treasurer of Papua New Guinea.

Before I answer the question and prior to providing a detailed statement on the economy which we all waiting for, may I assure Members of this House and the people of Papua New Guinea that in the past two years whilst I was sitting there with my good friends, whilst there may have been political differences and even at times political conflict, those colleagues sitting to my left and right the Minister for National Planning and Minister for Finance and my predecessors are mature enough and have decided to put aside some of those conflicts we have all been subjected to in this House. We are going to put people of our country and our colleagues in this House first and were willing to work together to take on and address some of the very serious economic issues that we face.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I just wanted to assure Members of this House and we have the full support of the Prime Minister and am just so assured with that.

So thank you, let me now answer the question from my Governor for Enga Province from the class of 1997, might I say here that not too many of us are left here.

In relation to his question with counterpart funding, Mr Speaker, I understand that is already included in this year's Budget. Like many other projects that my colleagues on this

side of the House and the other side will be asking the government to fund, I guess in this point in time, give me a chance to settle down and see where I can find some funding.

As we all know, it's a word I hate to use, but we are facing some cash flow problems but be assured my Governor, it's my second day in the office. I went to sleep last night at 2a.m., as soon as I get my head around where the funds are, I'll try to address those projects in priority but of course in close consultation with the Members of the Cabinet and my two colleagues; the Minister for Finance and National Planning and of course, the Prime Minister. Thank you for your question.

07/02

Vacancy in Bougainville's Police Top Post

Mr TIMOTHY MASIU – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Police. It is a straight and simple question and therefore I expect an answer.

The Minister recently removed the Head of Police in Bougainville and placed him as the Acting Commissioner of Police.

The region of Bougainville is in a very intense Referendum-mode right now, as we have heard from the Prime Minister. So when you removed the man in-charge of law and order in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, that decision has created a big vacuum in the administration of Law and Justice Sector on the island. We do not have a head of Police in the Bougainville Police Service as I speak.

My questions are:

(1) What arrangements does the Minister have in place to fill the important vacancy he created?

(2) How soon is the Minister going to appoint a new person for that vacancy?

Assist Bougainville Police in Referendum

(3) Does the Minister have an overall policing plan to assist Police in Bougainville as the countdown nears the Referendum day?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr BRYAN KRAMER – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to acknowledge the good questions raised by the Member for South Bougainville.

Yes, a decision was made following the retirement of the former Acting Commissioner, Mr Gary Baki to make an acting appointment while we consider substantive positions for the Commissioner of Police given its important role.

After reviewing a number of candidates within the ranks and file of the Police Force, the Deputy Commissioner for Bougainville, Mr Tokura was considered the more suitable candidate given the urgency of replacement.

Initially when I approached him regarding that position, I did not know him personally but after considering advice and consultation with members of the ranks and files they saw him as the most neutral candidate for the position.

He did raise concerns about leaving his position on the island in regard to the Referendum and I responded that as the Commissioner, he can ensure that Bougainville gets the attention that it deserves during the Referendum period.

He is the second Bougainvillean to be a Police Commissioner in Papua New Guinea's History. The first was in the year of Independence since then there has not been another Bougainvillean Acting Commissioner.

I had some discussion with him on whether he wanted to spend some or more of his time in Bougainville to ensure that the Referendum is conducted properly without incident. So, we have already had some discussion and now that you have raised this issue of the vacancy, there is an acting appointment that Mr Tokura has made for that position.

But again, Mr Tokura, arguably could be the best person placed for that position.

So, next week, we will have further discussions on this issue now that you have also raised it in terms of the Referendum. Given the responsibility that he has inherited with RPNGC which is significant, it is not fair to put him in a position where we have a Police Force that is essentially broken, which we are trying to rebuild.

To answer your question, there is an acting appointment made and if Mr Tokura or I feel that it is not sufficient then we will have to discuss whether Mr Tokura should return back to that position in Bougainville during the Referendum Period.

In relation to the Police Force or the Ministry has in relation to future policing, I understand that the New Zealand Government is currently running a program in policing.

But, as I said yesterday, the entire Constabulary itself is facing significant structural, logistical, financial and discipline issues. So, once we have sorted out commands and structure at the top than we will start to see immediate changes within the ranks and files on the ground.

In relation to Bougainville, we expect a clear pathway to this partnership with Australian Federal Police by next year, once the true cost of policing comes out then we can establish what are the requirements needed for Bougainville.

I personally do not think there will be any significant issue in Bougainville, this is not a National Election where the entire country is going to vote. Bougainvilleans are peace-loving people and they are voting on a decision not against themselves nor are they competing against any election and a candidate. They are making a decision on their status of referendum offered to them under our *Constitution*.

08/02

The Operations are underway and the funding requests have been by Mr Tokura and I believe Cabinet will be considering this under the Committee with the Minister for Bougainville Affairs and I am told that it has been approved already.

Outstanding Allowance's for Village Court Officials

Mr ROBERT NAGURI – Mr Speaker, I direct my questions to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

My questions are in regards to the outstanding allowances for village court officials comprising of Magistrates, Peace Officers, and Village Court Clerks.

Mr Speaker, in my District I have about 18 village Courts comprising 198 village Court officials. A total of 108 officials have been receiving their allowances but 90 of the dedicated men and women have never been paid for almost seven years.

They are now requesting if the Member or the District Office can allocate some funds from the DSIP to cater for their salaries. Obviously, the answer is no because I don't have the DSIP Funding.

Can the Minister please give them some assurance that they will be paid and when will they can receive payments for their outstanding allowances?

Mr DAVIS STEVEN – Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for Bogia for this important question which relates to our village court officials and I might add our land mediation officials as well.

Mr Speaker, in response to the Members question, I request that he write to me in detail regarding the 90 officials that are not on the payroll so that we can make a determined effort to make sure that these officials are included in the payments for next year.

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to inform this Parliament that on an annual Budget, the Government spends K50 million to pay for 18 000 officials in the village court secretariat.

In recent audits undertaken, we have found that of the 18000 officials, 11 000 officials are on the payroll and 7 000 are not, for peculiar reasons, each case has not been paid.

Mr Speaker, I am delighted to inform this Parliament and our people, especially the village court officials and land mediators that in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, we are now making sure that the in the 2020 Budget, we will be able to accommodate the deficit which is an additional K30 million which will cover all those that have been missing out.

Create Policy for Equitable Financial Disbursement

TOMAIT KAPILI -- Mr Speaker, I direct my question to the Honourable Prime Minister. Before I do so, I take this opportunity on behalf of the people of Laigaip-Porgera and my family to congratulate the Prime Minister on his election and elevation to the highest office.

On the same token, let me also commend the former Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O'Neill in terms of the delivery of service in infrastructure health and education in this country.

Mr Speaker my questions are as follows;

(1) Do we have a program in place in terms of resource allocation by the Government?

09/02

There are resource-producing provinces and electorates. Some electorates and provinces are big in terms of land area or in terms of population. Therefore, does the government have any policy decisions in place that will take into consideration how we spread the resources that we have in this country in terms of budgetary allocations, DSIP and PSIP allocations.

What measures are all these allocations based on? Are they just based on ad hoc basis?

If we don't have a policy frame work in the government for financial resource allocations in this country, can we have one in place so that the Departments of Treasury, Finance and Planning can base their budgetary appropriations on?

They can based those on any decisions we have in terms of financial resource allocations. If we do not have one, can we have a policy decision in place as to how we allocate the limited financial resources we have?

Thank you.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me thank the good Member for Lagaip-Porgera for asking some very important and pertinent questions.

I also note him conveying his congratulations on behalf of his people.

The people of Lagaip-Porgera, Kandep, Enga and Hela people share common ancestral heritage so I note with warmness his kind gesture in conveying congratulations on behalf of his people.

He also represents a very huge electorate and that's why he is entitled to ask this question in as far as equitable distribution of resources is concerned. His electorate also hosts the Porgera Mine.

The Porgera Mine contributes substantially to our economy for the last 30 or so years and for the benefit of the country, we are in the process of negotiating and concluding on a better outcome for the country, the landowners and for the provincial government. And so those will also be taken into consideration in due course.

Mr Speaker, the question comes from the perspective where at the moment there is a perceived view that our formula of distribution of resources to our provinces and districts is quite mismatched, for want of a better word, simply on the basis that everyone across this country, regardless of where you come from, is entitled to goods and services and improved living standards and better services.

And him, coming from an electorate that has got well over 160 000 people all in one electorate, he is of the view that K10 million per se distributed equally across every district does not have that equal weight in proportion to both land mass and population size.

Before 16 September this year, Mr Speaker, our government will announce certain policies on how we intend to take this country going forward. We've taken the last 90 days or so to take stock of where we are and where we've come from. Yesterday, saw a change in an

important ministry in which the Honourable Ian Ling-Stuckey has now been put into Treasury.

As part of that process, in the next one or two weeks he will be ascertaining exactly the numbers that we present in as far as where our economy sits. And taking stock of these in totality will give us a picture as to how we should go forward, concluding 2019 and moving on into 2020 and beyond.

I am indicating a high possibility of a supplementary budget coming on in the next one or two weeks to ensure that we tidy our books in 2019 and set the pace for us going into 2020 and beyond.

Last week Thursday, I visited and had a combined audience with the National Economic and Fiscal Commission as well as the National Research Institute staff and workers there and part of my conversation was for them to engage in dialogue with us. This was one of the issues that was clearly discussed.

How do we share resources, and limited resources as it is today in the fairest, most equitable and equal manner right across the country instead of just lumping it up in one or two areas while other parts of our country are being starved?

10/02

The NEFC has been working on what we call the Equalization Policy. We will embrace this one. It will take into consideration the population and land size as a matrix.

As you know, K10 million allocated to every district was a Government policy thrown in to ensure that we have some money going straight to the districts and provinces per say. We need to find the balance. Some districts, the cost of service delivery is very high, so the value of K10 million distributed is diluted in that context. Some districts have high population so the K10 million does get diluted in that context. .

We have to find a right Equalization Policy for the benefit of every citizen of this country having an equity in the furthest possible way as far as resource distribution is concern is something that we will be announcing shortly. It will include population counts and the size of electorates.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission are into these processes, working in consultation with Constitutional Review Commission. They are looking into key policy indicators like the size of electorates, the number of electorates we need to have and this will also assist in

bringing to us a formula that will enable us to have the fairest, equitable and equal way of distributing whatever funds we have for our citizens.

Mr Speaker, to answer the good Member's question, we appreciate him asking from the Lagai-Porgeras perspective which is a very big electorate. We are looking into a formula that will ensure, that every citizen of this country have equal right to the money that is collected as revenue for the dispensation of goods and services for our country.

Those pronouncements will be made very soon and I think it is incumbent upon us to ensure that there is a fair distribution of wealth right across the country. If we do not find that right policy, we will to continue have issues in the country.

Whether it be issues like what we had in Bougainville where people cried that money was coming out of Bougainville and minimal amount given back to their own Province.

Those conversations will be discussed in totality to ensure that whatever money we generate from all parts of this country, it will be distributed back in the fairest most equitable manner and everyone is progressing in the same level, instead of one or two areas progressing.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Manus – Investigate Death of Ten Chinese Men

Mr CHARLIE BENJAMIN – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Police.

It has been two years since one of our biggest shop in Manus was ravaged by fire resulting in the loss of 10 lives who were of Chinese origin.

Mr Speaker, up until now, no arrests have been made. Most of the evidence available at that time are either lost or destroyed yet the people of Manus are fully aware that the 10 Asians were murdered and the store was set ablaze to conceal the crime committed.

I have raised this issue with the Police Commissioner when he visited Manus but to date nothing has been done.

The Chinese are one of the biggest trading partners here in Papua New Guinea. It remains suspicious how 10 people can die in one particular accident or a fire for that matter

I ask the Minister for Police to direct those the officers within his department to urgently look into this and investigate the matter. Justice must be served.

I think there is a sinister motive behind this so please investigate this matter quickly so that the investors can feel safe and operate freely in Manus and also to show that we have a vibrant Police Force who are committed maintaining law and order.

Thank you.

Mr BRYAN KRAMER – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I acknowledge the question by the Governor of Manus.

The questions you raised are outstanding issues so the best way to do that is for me to answer later. I will alert the Acting Commissioner and DCP for us to meet for a brief this afternoon regarding the status of the case and will get back to you on the situation you raised. Within 48 hours, then we can find out who is handling the case and the status of the evidence. We have to look for evidence in order for the police to take action.

As you stated earlier that the people of Manus are well aware of who has been involved in that matter. I would need assistance from your office and the witnesses to cooperate with the Police. If I have to send an independent CID Officer, then I will, in order to complete the file. It is a similar case like the Alotau incident, where an old lady was kept in the morgue for months, we had to send ACP Southern Zone to conduct investigations.

11/02

They started the investigations and conducted the post-mortem where they extracted a bullet and have already released the body back to the family.

There are a lot of outstanding cases including the University shootings. I want to make it clear here that we have not forgotten these cases. And that we will deal with them from now until December. Many of these cases are prolonged because the witnesses and the police are not co-operating.

Cases involving crime can be dealt with but if the witnesses are not willing to co-operate, then, it will be hard to proceed without testimonies from these witnesses.

In relation to the current case, I will make a response this afternoon and within 48 hours, I will clarify what operations will be carried out and within the next seven days, you are sure to see some action in Manus.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF STUDENTS FROM MALOLO INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL, PACIFIC ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY
OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA - STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament that students from Malolo International School, Pacific Adventist University and the University of Papua New Guinea are present in the Public Gallery this morning.

On behalf of the Parliament, I extend to them a very warm welcome to the National Parliament.

MOTION BY LEAVE.

Mr RENBO PAITA (Finschaffen – Minister for Communication and Energy) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – APPROVAL FOR THE PRESIDENT OF
THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF BOUGAINVILLE GOVERNMENT,
GRAND CHIEF DR. JOHN MOMIS TO ADDRESS THE NATIONAL
PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2019**

Motion (by **Mr Renbo Paita**) agreed to

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent me from moving a motion for Parliament's approval for the President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville Government Grand Chief, Dr John Momis to address the National Parliament on Thursday 29 August 2019.

**PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUTONOMOUS
BOUGAINVILLE GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE PARLIAMENT**

Motion (by **Mr Renbo Paita**) agreed to –

That this Parliament approves for the President of the Autonomous Bougainville Government Grand Chief Dr. John Momis, to address the National Parliament on Thursday 29 August 2019, on the paramount importance of the referendum and update on the work carried out so far.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr RENBO PAITA (Finschafften – Minister for Communication and Energy) –

I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS –
REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

Motion (by **Mr Renbo Paita**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent the Prime Minister, from presenting a statement forthwith.

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON LIVES LOST IN
MOROBE PROVINCE – CONDOLOLENCE MESSAGE**

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari –Pori Prime Minister) – Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the privilege to make a short statement. This statement is in relation to lives that were lost at the Sarawaget mountains between Kabwum; Finchhaffen and Nawae.

I had the saddest privilege of flying over those mountain ranges to witness the occasion of 100 years of Lutheran Missionary work in that part of the country. It is close to Lae but it is so remote. We fly in and out but there are people continually walking in the hinterlands of our nation. Those 13 lives that were lost, I take this time to convey on behalf of the

Parliament and the country, our deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of those that were lost. One of them was a mother hugging her child.

They left Lae, Nawae or Pindiu and were walking on their way into the Kabwum valley to celebrate 100 years of Lutheran Missionary work. In the Sarawage Ranges, which is home to the third highest Mountain in the country. It is very cold up there, so as they came from the lowlands and were climbing up. It's a couple of days walk across and as they were ascending the chills of the high altitude was too much and maybe they were not well-prepared for the walk. And combined with hunger and cold, they died in that area.

We pay our condolences and there were some good Samaritans who were there; especially, *Manalos Aviation*. Out of their kindness, they received a distress call and stepped in and picked up those bodies and taking the others to safety without even asking or thinking of profit for themselves.

On behalf of everyone we place our appreciation to those good Samaritans for helping and to all those districts who rallied support behind them to assist in the cause. On behalf of the Parliament and the people of this nation, we share sympathy to those families who lost lives and would also like to commend all those helping hands, including *Manalos Aviation*, who were engaged in the rescue exercise.

The Defense Minister has spoken and we as part of this Government's restructure have transferred for long term our military personnel to be engaged in disaster relief efforts. And they have been told to assist in the cause.

Our defense aircrafts are quite old and run-down and in the long term we need to fix our defense aircrafts to a standard in which they could participate in civil activities, especially in disaster and rescue missions as part of the rapid response.

Defense Force will be discharged into this area but let me also take the occasion on the disaster to say that 'these citizens who were walking into an area that had no road, and it is part of our commitment to look into this. Especially for the agriculture sector and populations in the mountains to come out, just like many of our remote areas like Karamui, Bundi Goilala and Teleformin.

There are people who are still walking or in the outer islands were there are people who are sailing by dinghies and canoes for hours and days to get to the nearest town.

It is incumbent on us to discuss on how we can bring services to them and take this incident on the loss of lives.

While there, I made a commitment for our Defense Force Engineering Battalion to start building a road linking Kabwum, to Finchhaffen, and coming back to Nawae and then onto Lae. We need to unlock this area and I have committed our nation on behalf of everyone in the instance of lives lost.

12/02

Mr Speaker, I just thought I would make this statement to the House to convey our sympathies to those innocent children and mothers who walked those many days and they lost their lives in those mountains. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Motion (by **Mr Davis Steven**) agreed to –

That question be now put.

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT-
POLICY FOR INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – WOKBUNG
WANTAIM/ GAUKARA HEBOU, 2019-2028 – PAPER AND STATEMENT -
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER.**

Mr WAKE GOI (Jimi – Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion)
– I seek leave of Parliament to make a statement in connection with the paper.

Leave granted.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the Marape-Davis Government, the Ministers of the Cabinet and the Members of Parliament. I feel honored to present my first report to Parliament. There will be about 20 more to come before NEC and Parliament and I will need your support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the honor to address this honorable House regarding the intent of the Policy on Integrated Community Development Policy.

From the outset Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the leadership of my predecessor, former Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion, Honorable Soroi Eoe.

It was under his tenure as Minister when the former Integrated Community Development Policy was reviewed and rebranded to Policy on Integrated Community Development.

Mr. Speaker, the Department for Community Development Youth and Religion addresses socio-economic needs for the marginalized People in our country.

These marginalized people include the people living with disabilities, elderly population, people who are actively engaged in informal economy, the illiterate people and youths who need life skill trainings. It also includes women, youth and children who are subject of all forms of abuses and violence.

Mr Speaker, in partnership with churches, civil society organizations and relevant development partners, the Department has attempted to reach out and provide protection and empowerment services to these marginalized people. However, greater need remains for the Department to reach out to those people effectively and efficiently.

Mr Speaker, I was reliably advised that in his maiden speech whilst taking over as the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion, Honorable Soroi Eoe emphatically pointed out the reality about Government Services not reaching out to the remotest parts on of country.

It was rightfully noted that many of the vital policies and legislation in the Department like National Disability Policy, National Gender Based Violence Strategy, Integrated Community Development Policy, National Informal Economy Policy, *Lukautim Pikinni Act* are not equitably and tangibly translated into the rural communities.

Mr Speaker, I come from one of the remotest districts in the country in Jimi Electorate in Jiwaka Province. The frank observation by my predecessor is no less indisputable. The People in the remote districts like Jimmy in the hinterlands, Kikori on the Coast line and beautiful atolls in the Nuigini Irelands need to feel the presence and existence of the Government through the policies and program interventions by Department for Community Development and Religion.

13/02

On this note, Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister, Honourable James Marape for entrusting the people of remote Jimi with the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Religion and the seven other agencies attached to this Ministry.

When their paper comes through you will then know what role the agencies play. I give the Honourable Parliament the assurance that I will carry on from my predecessor.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, one of my first roles will be to launch the policy on Integrated Community Development. This Policy was formulated under the leadership of former minister who is now the Foreign Affairs Minister.

Mr Speaker, the Policy was endorsed on 16 May, 2019 during the special NEC meeting No. 09/2019 under the decision No. 115/2019. The Policy for Integrated Community Development, 2019-2028 is the Government's plan to protect families and empower communities as the platform for national growth.

In line with the noble vision of the Prime Minister to 'Make PNG the Richest Black Christian Nation', the vision of the Policy is to build safe, capable and productive communities.

Mr Speaker, imbedded in this vision statement, the objectives of this policy is to bring tangible services and programs to the district level; fostering inclusive partnerships; and improved institutional frameworks.

Mr Speaker, the policy objectives will be delivered through the District Community Development Centre that the Department is undertaking as a project. The Project is being piloted at Bialla District in West New Britain, Pangia and Imbongu in SHP, Gazelle in East New Britain, Maprik in East Sepik Province and Kikori in Gulf Province. Others not on the list are Wabag, Kerowagi, Finchhafen, Esa'ala and some more.

The District Community Development Centres will be the accessible facilities for protection and empowerment services. These centres allow facilitation of all Department's programs in districts. Specifically, legal and social protection services will be provided for the marginalized people right in the rural district. The centre will also be the source of economic empowerment for people in informal economy and SME sectors. It will also serve as information hub for the rural entrepreneurs. Through this facility, all the information about the government services and functions can be sourced.

Mr Speaker, essentially, District Community Development Centre as the business process of the Policy on Integrated Community Development is promoting the whole of

Government approach in dealing with issues affecting the marginalized people in the districts and ward councils of our country.

Mr Speaker, through the business process of the policy, the mandate of the Department to promote the rights and protection of children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities; strengthen and empower communities for informal economic development and community learning; and building service delivery partnerships between State and Churches will be readily made available in the districts.

Mr Speaker, the Policy is now set for launching. General invitation will be given to all the Members of Parliament when the date and venue of the launching is confirmed. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I invite all the Members of the Parliament to partner with the Department of Community Development and Religion in implementing the intent of the Policy on Integrated Community Development. The launching is expected to be next week Wednesday or Thursday. Once finalised we will let you know.

If you need more information, the Ministry will connect you to the Executive Management team of the Department.

Mr. Speaker, in respect to the Honourable Prime Minister's message for service deliveries down to the districts, this policy is designed for service delivery down to the district and community levels.

It is on the back of this policy that the marginalized people in the districts will be given economic independence. Consequently, as intended by our Prime Minister, right around the corners of our country, we will truly become 'Rich Black Christian Country on Earth'.

May I also take this time mention here that the component that the local MP will contribute is K500 000 and the Governor's component is K500 000.

14/02

The Department will find K2 million to make it to K3 million we built a multi-purpose complex building that will serve your people in the remote area better.

Thank you very much and God bless you all.

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

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HIV/AIDS –
HEALTH STATUS AND PRIORITIES –
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED**

Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE – Mr Speaker, I take this time to make a Parliamentary statement on the Health status report, thankyou.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to be given this esteemed opportunity to present to Parliament my first Ministerial Statement as Minister for Health & HIV/AIDS under the current Government.

May I take this special opportunity on behalf of my people to congratulate the Prime Minister Honourable James Marape on his election as the Prime Minister of our Nation.

I pay special tribute to the former Prime Minister and Member for Ialibu-Pangia for his trust in appointing me as Minister for Public Services and Minister for Health prior to the formation of the current government.

Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister's profound statement in 'Taking back PNG and making it the 'Richest Black Christian Nation' can be attained through a vibrant and effective state social institutions.

This is a similar sentiment echoed from the National Constitution for Integral Human Development that calls for the improvement in the levels of nutrition and standard of public health to enable our people to attain self-fulfilment.

The National Department of Health is committed and plays an important complementary and critical role in this journey to taking back Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health develop strategic policies, legislation, setting of health standards, and monitoring the health system, including the procurement of medical supplies and training of human resources.

Our priorities in 2019 include; Free Primary Health Care and Subsidised Specialist Services, Health Workforce Planning; Provincial Health Authorities; Improved Health System and Governance; Medical Supplies Procurement and Distribution, and the Health Infrastructure, the development of the new National Health Plan, establishment of cancer services at Port Moresby General Hospital and Angau hospitals, Universal Health Coverage, and Public Health Programs. I will highlight some updates on these priorities.

Mr. Speaker, the Free Primary Health Care and Subsidized Specialist Services policy was introduced in 2013 to remove financial barriers to access to the health services and

improve health equity. In place of the user fees, the Government appropriates a K20 million funding annually, which is distributed to all health facilities throughout the country.

Evidence is showing, Mr. Speaker, that a large share of rural health facilities continues to charge user fees. This can be partly explained by the inadequate execution of the fund and major bottlenecks in cash flows that affect funding to reach frontline service providers.

To revitalize this important policy, a revised budget was calculated, as requested by Treasury and through the Department of National Fiscal Commission, it has been identified that to sustain free health care, an annual budget of nearly K30 million is required if we want our people to access basic primary health care and specialist care services in public hospitals.

I have directed my department with the support of our development partners to review this arrangement and provide to the government recommendations for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to work force, our workforce continues to remain a challenge. This is from the number of health professionals we are graduating, the number of training institutions, and the number of aging workforce to the number of vacant positions, we have throughout the country.

The national health workforce for Government run health facilities consists of 17,878 positions, of which only 9,985 or 56 per cent are occupied. These statistics indicate that we still need to train and recruit more health workers.

Mr Speaker, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, is the only accredited medical school in PNG and it graduated an estimate of 316 doctors between 2010 and 2016. Divine Word University has established a second medical school in PNG, which will provide a welcome increase in medical graduates in the next couple of years.

I have directed my department to fast track the accreditations for DWU Medical School. I will liaise with DHERST to progress the NEC decisions on stand-alone university for health which our negotiation has already started.

Mr Speaker, I have directed the Health Department Secretary to make sure that specialist medical officers, who are currently attached with the National Department, are released with positions to Provincial Hospitals.

In addition, the clinical chief's arrangement with the Department is being reviewed to get Specialist Medical Officers attached to the Health Department released to PHAs.

15/02

While many provinces and districts are in dire need for medical officers, I am

informed that we have up to 20-30 per cent unemployed medical officers. We will establish a medical officers' central deployment centre at the National Department of Health to expedite their engagement. This includes the reviews of the current medical board's registration processes. We will support the human resources training for all health cadres and facilitation of the rural specialist doctors training to ensure all our districts must have fulltime engagement of medical officers.

Mr Speaker, we will ensure that the National Department of Health undertakes its core responsibilities and functions. Any activities that are service delivery in nature will be offloaded to Provincial Health Authorities and Public Hospitals. The Department of Health Headquarters will be reduced in size so we can beef up Provincial Health Authorities to deliver health services to our people. This is consistent with the announcement by the Prime Minister during his maiden speech, to reduce public service structures in Waigani.

Mr Speaker, while we demand more from our health workers, we are also concerned of their wellbeing as individuals. We will liaise with the Ministries of Lands and Housing to develop a health housing scheme for the workers. We will encourage health workers to enrol with the public health insurance program.

Mr Speaker, our commitment to the government's reform agenda on reforming health systems, especially at the provincial level, is showing good progress. The amalgamated "Single Health System" promises good governance, management and effective health service delivery arrangements.

Since the passage of the *Provincial Health Authorities Act* of 2007, 15 provinces have achieved Provincial Health Authorities status and the remainder will be declared in month of July 2019. I, therefore, encourage the governors of Madang, Western, Central, and National Capital District Commission to speed up the processes. The Gulf PHA is set for declaration this Friday, 5th July 2019. Western Provincial Health Authority declaration is set for July 22, 2019, following the signing of Partnership Agreement yesterday by Western Governor and myself.

Mr Speaker, Provincial Health Authorities specific regulations for contract officers and CEOs appointments have been developed by the Department of Health and the Department of the Prime Minister and is awaiting finalisation by the First Legislative Counsel Regulations and will provide details on the recruitment, suspension and termination of the Chief Executive Officers and Provincial Health Authorities staff and tools to measure the boards' performances. Asian Development Bank funded a recent workshop on good governance

attended by Provincial Health Authorities, Chief Executive Officers and their respective Chairmen held this year from 24-25 June that addressed these issues.

Mr Speaker, this is something that we are addressing and while we are implementing Provincial Health Authorities we are developing the regulation to also to measure the performance of the respective management teams as well

Mr Speaker, I urge all Members of Parliament to use your Provincial Health Service Plans when identifying projects in your districts and provinces. So far, we have thirteen (13) provinces that have service plans in place including Autonomous Region of Bougainville, East Sepik, Eastern Highlands, Enga, Manus, Milne Bay, Morobe, New Ireland, Southern Highlands, West New Britain, Hela and Western Province.

Mr Speaker, in order to ensure robust and consistency across provinces, I have directed that the National Department of Health publish annual comparative performance of Provincial Health Authorities on key health indicators and improvements. This will help us to target further areas of support and highlight which provinces are achieving results. We will continue to identify areas where we can incentivise exceptional performances.

Mr Speaker, my ministry is currently undertaking a health governance review with the specific aim to developing a Health Governance Administration Act by late 2020. This is coupled with other pieces of legislation under development including the Specialist Public Hospitals and Health Practitioners Bills.

Mr Speaker, medical supplies, procurement and distribution have been one of the government's biggest challenges.

In 2019, medical supplies received a total funding of K250 million. With these funds medicine tenders and orders have been processed and distributed to health facilities nationwide.

Mr Speaker, a number of initiatives have been implemented to strengthen medical supplies procurement, distribution and management. This includes; the establishment of a pull-system (this is where the medical supplies are supplied through a system where it depends on the orders from the health facilities); upgrading of four Regional Area Medical Stores and the establishment of 15 Transit Medical Stores in our country, and the establishment of the drug testing facility at Gordons, supported by World Health Organisation and United States of America, Centre for Disease Control.

I assure the Honourable House that all drugs supplied through the medical stores have gained certification by World Health Organisation.

Mr Speaker, the department is undertaking major medical supplies reform, supported by the Asian Development Bank to ensure efficient, affordable and sustainable levels of medical supplies are readily available in all health facilities.

16/02

These reforms include implementation of medical supplies, a logistics management software, better data quantification, theft management, and developing a medical supply procurement plan.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a thorough quantification of medical drugs and consumables will be undertaken to establish the cost for sustainable supply. As a government, we must know how much in monetary terms is required to adequately stock all levels of the health care systems. I have directed the Health Department that there won't be any more emergency medical supplies orders. Instead, we will ensure annual medical supplies tenders are utilised.

I am seeking the views and assessment of our development partners on the medical supplies issues with their recommendations. The option of outsourcing and international bidding can be considered as a way forward. We must plan to have a pharmaceutical manufacturing company in the country in the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, improved health infrastructures add values to health outcomes. The Health Sector has benefited from the Infrastructure Development Program over the last seven (7) years and saw many health facilities being built and renovated that were left unattended over the years.

Thus, I acknowledge the previous O'Neill-Abel government where new hospital theatres were built and operating in Popondetta, Modilon and Kavieng Hospitals, a PHA building with ICU/Intermediate services at Vanimo Hospital, a new state-of-the-art Diagnostic Centre was built in Goroka Hospital, while a new hospital is currently being built in Wabag for the people of Enga.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are re-developments progressing in Angau and Boram hospitals. On behalf of the Government, I thank the Australian Government for supporting these hospitals. Kupiano District Hospital is being redeveloped in partnership with Oil Search, while Bulolo District Hospital is being redeveloped with the support of Bulolo Forest Products and DFAT/Australia. Many health centres and aid posts are renovated or built throughout the country using PSIPs and DSIPs that Members of Parliament have built and fully understand in your districts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in 2018, K50 million was appropriated for hospital rehabilitation and another K100 million in 2019 for District Hospital Development totalling K150 million. We know that we can't built a district hospital with K5 million. To achieve value for money and as our way forward, I will recommend that these funds become a counterpart funding to development partners support. I have directed the Ministry to document a National Health Infrastructures Plan (summary of all PHA HSDP) comprising the needs for all provinces from L1-L7. All sources of funding will be coordinated and managed to meet the national health infrastructure plans.

In the next 10 years, we must have fully functioning district hospitals for all districts, provincial and regional referral and our super specialist hospital at PMGH with clear referral pathways, ensuring equitable, accessible, affordable and quality health care to our people compatible to the private health facilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Government released K48 million for Cancer Services in 2018. The Radiation Safety Law was passed in Parliament in 2018 and the Regulations are currently being developed. These will be considered by NEC no later than September this year.

My ministry is also working closely with NISIT and will provide the support necessary to ensure the International Atomic Energy Agency required regulatory guidance material is developed. Once the IAEA confirms the regulatory framework is in place, Angau General Hospital can procure the required cobalt to perform radiotherapy services.

I have given directive for Angau cancer facilities to be in operation by end of October 2019. Currently cancer patients are being treated with chemotherapy (drugs) and surgical operations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, IAEA is sponsoring two of our local doctors, who are studying Cancer related fields in Zambia. They also assisted training of our Physicists and Radiation Technologists. Due to the need to comply with IAEA regulations, Mr Speaker, we have been delayed in meeting some legal requirements. However, we are on target to ensure that the new cancer facility will be operational at Port Moresby General Hospital also before the end of the year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the new state-of-the-art Catheterization Laboratory (Cat Lab) fully funded by our Government will be commissioned at PMGH. Our doctors will be able to diagnose and treat heart conditions

using catheters instead of surgeries. PMGH will also provide kidney dialysis services before the end of this year.

17/02

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister has requested that we achieve universal health coverage by 2024. My ministry has commenced development of key activities in consultation with the Universal Health Care roadmap. A whole of government approach is required to provide access to affordable and safe health services. This means improved accessibility through our road networks and jetties; increased communication and electricity; building more community water supplies; improved law and order; promoting more health-friendly communities, schools and villages; encouraging handwashing; promoting good housing; and increasing family economic status. This will ensure the health and well-being of our people are improved in our communities, especially with the rural majority and urban disadvantaged.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have set health standards established for adequate staffing; infrastructure/facilities designs; medical equipment and medical supplies requirements will improve and well-coordinated patients' referral pathways with improved communication. When these standards are implemented it puts less strain on the higher level health facilities which can then concentrate on providing specialist and tertiary care services. These are requirements under the National Health Services Standards that have not been fully implemented to date. Medical Officers can only be recruited at the Level 4 or at the District Hospitals level that are fully compliant to health standards.

Mr Deputy Speaker, our TB incidences are one of the 10 highest globally and are amongst the highest in the Western Pacific region, estimated at 432 per 100,000 populations. This means every year 35 000 new cases of TB are reported. There are about 1 200 Multi Drug Resistant TB cases per year. The hotspot-provinces are Western, Gulf and NCD. At PMGH according to reports, one in four admissions are TB patients thus making it the leading cause of death in PNG as well.

With the assistance of DFAT/Australia and many NGOs and other partners increasing efforts are geared to health promotion, early screening, diagnosis and treatment. We have seen improvement from 40 per cent drop from treatment to less than 15 per cent in 18 months.

Mr Deputy Speaker, for malaria; PNG's strong progress was made between 2009 and 2014. Incidences of malaria reduced by 60 per cent due to universal coverage of bed nets and introduction of rapid diagnostic tests and combination therapy. Incidences rate went down from 320 to 75 per 1000 population. However, in 2015 with declining funding and health systems challenges there has been resurgence in some parts of the country where incidence has again increased to 250 per 1000 population. Many partners from the Global Fund and DFAT have been our strong partners. I would also like to acknowledge the support from Rotary Against Malaria who has supplied and continue to supply treated mosquito nets throughout our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is estimated over 48 000 people are living with HIV in PNG, of which just over 29 000 PLWHIV are currently taking (Anti-Retroviral Therapy) ART. Over 2 000 new infections were reported in 2018. The ART coverage has significantly improved over the past eight years from 25 per cent in 2010 to 62 per cent in 2018. This has resulted in the decline of AIDS related cases from 753 to 454 for the same period. There are over 600 HIV testing facilities and 140 ART facilities throughout the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I must report to Parliament and our people that we have achieved over 90 per cent immunisation coverage for Polio, but we as elected leaders must make it our business and responsibility to ensure routine immunisation coverage must reach at least 80 per cent to stop future outbreaks.

My department together with Australia and New Zealand governments and GAVI, the vaccine alliance is rolling out a routine immunisation programme in 2019, the year which is also declared as the 'year of immunisation'. We must protect our children through immunisation. It is estimated that less than 50 per cent from estimated 50 000 babies born yearly are immunised against preventable diseases. I believe we can improve this. We have many partners who are supporting us and in the next couple of years we can see improvements to these statistics.

Mr Speaker, we will focus on preventative care and strengthen our primary health systems. All our rural health facilities will have cold chain systems with sustainable electricity source to ensure vaccines are readily available. Support will come from both New Zealand, Australia and GAVI to do this. At this juncture, I acknowledge on behalf of our government the support by the WHO, UNICEF and DFAT in the successful immunisation campaign to contain the recent polio outbreak. I have directed my department to review the *Public Health Act 1973* and to give reemphasis on implementation of *Food*

Sanitation Regulation Act 2007. We must build the capacities of food inspectors and food analysts. It is noted that penalties of up to K50 000 or imprisonment or both can be applied to those found guilty.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform Parliament that the NDoH on behalf of our Government has signed a partnership agreement with the St John's Ambulance on June 29, 2019. This will see an integrated ambulance services in the country managed by St John's Ambulance. I urge the provinces to be part of this new initiative.

18/02

The Government has committed K10 million in this year's Budget to support this program.

I also thank the former Minister for Health who ensured that this particular arrangement was in place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, PNG as a United Nations Member State in 2015 signed SDG 3 to meet Sustainable Development Goals 2030, to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages to leave no one behind. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being as per WHO constitution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as we review the 6th NHP, we will take stock on where our health systems have failed. Our goal heading to the future is to make sure everyone has health coverage and access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines. This will be dependent on having a vibrant health system especially at the primary (L 1 to Level 4) and to some degree at the secondary (L 5) and tertiary (L6 & L7).

Mr Deputy Speaker, the national health priorities as determined by the Prime Minister were discussed during a workshop attended by the Chairs and CEOs of PHA recently in Port Moresby. These includes achieving universal health coverage by 2024, implementation of 100 per cent free primary health care by 2020, investment in new health infrastructure, support UPNG health and medical science in training new medical professionals, address shortages of health workers, support PHA, modernised medical supply management strategies and systems governance, health governance reforms, and establish cancer services at Angau and PMGH. During the workshop the additional priorities were added; review of National Health Plan, strengthen public health programs, ensuring effective regulatory mechanisms. Identified strategies were developed to ensure priorities will be effectively

addressed. I have mentioned our interventions on the some of the health priorities but will be updating Parliament from time to time on the departments' performance.

The new 10-year Plan (2021-2030) will take us into our county's fiftieth (50th) anniversary, which will be an important landmark in complementing our Governments aspiration for achieving integral human development for our citizen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we will build on our strengths and opportunities available, especially in recognising many of our development partners who have supported us in meeting many of our challenges in the past and will continue into the future.

I welcome the views of the Honourable Members and suggestions in the development of the new National Health Plan that is now under review as we chart our new destiny of hope, renewed commitment and resilience in harnessing all valued stake-holders partnership in improving our health delivery systems for all our citizens.

To all health workers nationwide, I thank you all and encourage you to continue to deliver the much, needed health services to our people.

As Health is everybody's business. I commend this statement to Parliament.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr WERA MORI (Chuave - Minister for Commerce and Industry) – I move –

That Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to commend the Minister for Health for the paper and also his department in trying to manage one of the most important pillars of our country in terms of our social sector, Health.

Apart from health, we should not overlook the significance of transport infrastructure, law and order and also most importantly education. But up in the forefront is the Health sector. It is important we must have an educated healthy population that will create the foundation for this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what I would like to point out is our state of preparedness.

Papua New Guinea is not isolated. It is part of the global community and as such, whatever health problems that are faced in other parts of the world eventually will arrive on our shores

19/02

I have raised this because today our weather patterns are changing as a consequence of global warming. And as such, microbes, bacteria and viruses also mutate and are becoming more resistant to the medicines that we are using now. And I would like to encourage the Health Department, apart from focusing on building more health infrastructure, I would like to see more funding into research so that we can be able to address diseases as they arise.

I am not surprised of the re-occurrence of tuberculosis resistance in the country, especially in Western Province and other areas, as presented by the Minister in his paper. Patients have become more resistant to drugs. This is because those microbes, bacteria and viruses have mutated to respond to the weather patterns such as increased temperatures. This is one particular area that I would like the Health Department to focus on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have a Medical Research Institute in Goroka and it thrives on a mere budget. I would like to see a lot more funding for this institute because if you can recall some 40 to 50 years back, the Medical Research Institute in Goroka took center stage in the world when there was research done into the *Kuru* disease.

Therefore, I am encouraging the Health Department to focus on the area of research. It is encouraging to know that we are going to produce and increase the number of doctors and I am glad the Government through the Health Department is giving us the bearing to establish more institutions to train our doctors.

The most important point to remember when it comes to producing doctors is that we cannot compromise the lives and the safety of our people and quality is of an essence. We must be able to pour more money into training our doctors so that they can be able to provide the standard of service that is on par with the rest of the world.

It is of utmost importance that we produce doctors who are able to perform to international standards. I am thankful to the Minister and his department in trying to improve the facilities in all our hospitals. This is important because our people are noble citizens of this country. They are not guinea pigs and we must not experiment with their lives. And it is important that we have to maintain the quality of service, and that must be reflected in the quality of the materials used and it is also a pathway that will make Papua New Guinea a leader in the Pacific in terms of producing health services.

20/02

Mr Deputy Speaker, before I conclude, and I am sure Members of Parliament are tired of me constantly raising this concern time and again, but I am dumbfounded because here we are talking about providing a cure for cancer and building facilities in this country, yet there is a hospital that is providing '6-star' services.

Mr Sam Akoitai – Point of Order! Mr Deputy Speaker, this Parliament is a Parliament for the people of Papua New Guinea and we allow media personnel or reporters to come in and report to the people of what is happening in here.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not pleased with one of the reporters because he is sitting on the rails as if he is watching a horse racing event. Thank you very much.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER –Your Point of Order is in order. Seargent-At-Arms, please advise the person to leave the Chamber.

Mr WERA MORI – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is a hospital called the Sir Joseph Nombri Hospital in Kundiwai that is providing '6-star' services not only to the people of Simbu but other parts of the Highlands as well as the country. Recently we had trained doctors from other parts of Papua New Guinea as well as the Pacific in Kundiawa. It is one of the facilities that we have built and completed and it has been certified by the International Atomic Energy to provide services to treat cancer. We have a CAT-Scan as well as an MRI that are been installed. We are now only waiting for a Linear Accelerator. This hospital is also linked to the Cairo Hospital in Egypt where it is providing dual services where images are sent there and processed and sent back within 24 hours so that doctors are able to treat patients. We also have IAEA certified oncologists who can treat all types of cancer.

You will not believe it but this hospital has over 30 or close to 40 doctors. What I am trying to say here is that, instead of us waiting for the completion of Angau Hospital or facilities in Port Moresby General Hospital or Kundiawa. There is already a hospital in Kundiawa, so why are you not giving us the Linear Accelerator?

I was very happy when one of the specialist doctors said they should remove those officers at the Head Office of the Health Department. They must not be envious of other facilities that can provide better services and who perform better.

The people of Chimbu are listening to me as I speak and if they want to shut the door for other provinces who are accessing services there, what will you do? So, I want to ask the Health Minister and his secretary to make it their priority. The use of cobalt was a treatment of the past. We are now in a new era where we must do justice.

The facilities that are in Goroka Hospital are also in Kundiawa Hospital. We financed it at our own initiative.

21/02

We intend to provide a quality service to our people since we already have this facility here and the oncologist there is the only one in the country who can treat all forms of cancer. He is a certified doctor. The only responsible thing that we can do for the people of Papua New Guinea is to make that service available to the people. Give it to us so that we can treat our people as well as other Pacific islanders. They do not need to go to Australia, the Philippines or Singapore.

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – Firstly, I want to commend the Minister who I know has just taken office. I want to point out to the Members of Parliament that some of these issues have been outstanding for a long time with several health ministers. I had the opportunity to be the chairman of a hospital looking after a province.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when you talk about the health workforce, we have known for thefor the last eight years that we were short of about 56 per cent of our workforce. It is only now that this minister has brought to the attention of this Parliament that we have a shortfall of staff. But within the health sector we had already known that we were short of staff since 2013 and we knew that this problem existed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, every time we delay an action, particularly in a case like health, real people suffer. The issue of shortage of qualified workers should have been dealt with. There were some discussions by the previous Government to bring in medical workers from overseas. We, however, received much resistance from around the country to that suggestion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my experience as a former hospital board chairman of Boram Hospital was that when I became chairman it was the second-worst hospital in the country. Today, I am proud to stand here and say that even though our facilities are still no-way near the ones in Port Moresby, the services provided by the Boram Hospital are amongst the best in the country. It is because of the people.

My experience in health is that you can treat someone under a tree or anywhere but you need good people. The most important aspect of health care anywhere in the world is the quality and the commitment of the people. I wanted to focus on that particular aspect and to say that if we don't have enough good people then health care will continue to suffer. What I have observed in the last few years is that there is this over-excitement to build more fancy facilities. We are spending so much money on facilities. The building does not provide health care, it is the qualified personnel inside the building that provide the treatment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think those of you in the health sector need to come to us as a Parliament and say we need to provide this many people with these skills so that we can then arrest the service delivery decline within the health sector. When our people turn up in hospitals they expect to see human beings attending to them and not some machine or a bed. They need a human being who is trained and skilled and motivated enough to deal with our people.

22/02

They have to wait there for three or four hours because we are short of personnel and we overwork our specialists.

Many times, I find, and we have one doctor in the House who will confirm this, a lot of our medical workers will actually go to sleep in the hospital because they have spent two or three days working on patients.

This is one of the reasons why many are also leaving the public sector because they cannot continue to overwork themselves, they are human beings also.

So I want to ask this House and I want us to speak to those who are opposing the idea. If we can afford it, Mr Deputy Speaker, I think we need to bring in as a temporary measure - not a permanent measure but as a temporary measure - health expertise from outside. Whether they come from the Philippines or whether they come from Cuba as we have been discussing then we need to. It is not to replace our Papua New Guinean health workers, not at all, it is to bridge this gap.

Mr Deputy Speaker, after we have raised the issue within the sector in 2013, 2015 and 2016 and for it to arrive in Parliament now in 2019, I know that we have a problem with providing services to our people because of this mistake. So we need to strike a balance between our ability to provide services and our need to protect jobs for our own experts. That's the first and the most important point I wanted to make.

The next point is the issue of housing. One of the issues you will find around all the medical facilities is that the old houses that were used by medical staff have been taken over by those staff, their children and their grandchildren. In a lot of cases the houses were owned by the National Housing Corporation. The person living in that house decided to go to the National Housing Corporation and get the title so that house is no longer available for the new medical worker that you want to bring in. And because we are short of housing generally all over the country, you are having difficulties finding people willing to come and work because they have nowhere to stay.

I suggest that going forward, particularly where we are building new facilities, that perhaps the Health Minister can take note and then start to build the capacity of institutional housing around our hospital facilities. And once we have houses dedicated to workers in health or police or whatever sector, we must not sell that house to the tenant occupant and his family. We must maintain the institutional houses. Just like we do for police, we must do for health. Health workers are critical.

We have lost our housing stock because of the ownership arrangements that surround them. The National Housing Corporation owns them, the hospitals need them but where foul play has occurred they are no longer available for health workers.

The third issue I want to raise is that of medical procurement.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we in East Sepik were upset about the arrangements that were in place previously and we have decided, just like the National Doctors Association, that East Sepik will purchase drugs directly from the group called International Dispensary Association.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is my understanding that when they considered those firms who wish to supply medicines to our people, the International Dispensary Association also tendered a bid. Now, even our doctors say they are the right people. The United Nations, the World Health Organisation and every single government in the world recognised them as the appropriate people to provide medicines across the planet.

23/02

Some mistakes were made and those who used to supply medicines over the last four or five years have been awarded the contract again.

I understand that the new government under Prime Minister Marape has intervened and I am happy and thank them for it.

But, Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to encourage the Minister and all of us that, I have doubts when we are dealing with hospitals or churches, with these two areas we should never allow the custom of stealing to creep in. We can steal everywhere but where the lives of people are concerned we must desist all thieving culture. We have to eradicate it completely, Mr Deputy Speaker.

With that I want to say that I would like to see, and I apologise if I have offended anyone in the House, but I want to say that our people deserve the best quality medicines that their country can provide. And if that means that we go to the International Dispensary Association which every other country goes to, then I say to all of you all with great respect, that – that is what we must do.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Dr LINO TOM (Wabag -Minister for Fisheries) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to thank the Health Minister for the good statement he made and I will contribute a little on the statement he made.

I don't have a lot of points but I would like to debate along the lines of the health workforce we have in this country.

Currently in this world, medical literature shows that the best way to improve health indices in any country is to increase the number of health workers. Research has proven this.

Right now we have a big problem. Whilst I was in the Opposition, I raised this on many occasions but I will raise it again today and I think we need to take note.

I saw in the statement that we are looking at establishing the Divine Word Medical School. This is a good move by the Health Minister. I think we need to bring in the necessary people to ensure that the quality assurance process is actually taken care of.

In countries which have multiple medical schools, what they do is, they set the board exams. An independent body actually sets the board exams and every other school that have the medical schools have their students have to go through the single board exam that is set by the country. The reason is that that board exam will bring everybody up to that quality assurance that the country actually requires. So, I think that is one of the things that we, the Health Department needs to look into.

The other reason is why we need to look into that aspect is that there is a lot of foreign health workers coming into this country. I don't know whether the medical board currently in place is actually putting them through some quality assurance checks or not? Whether we are

bringing in qualified doctors or those from the streets who came in with other people's credentials, we wouldn't know. We have had a lot of instances in this country. At PIH, they have reported a lot of deaths under unusual circumstances.

So, I think we need to get the medical board in place and they need to set some kind of quality assurance systems where we can actually check people coming from overseas countries to practice medicine in this country. We don't want our population to be subject as lab animals where unqualified people come and practice medicine on our people.

So I think the establishment of that quality assurance is a very important thing that we need to do because with the new school in Madang coming on board they will need to set an exam that is independent so that both schools can undergo.

Currently the thinking right now is that our students who are graduating from Madang are inferior cousins of our people who are actually graduating from UPNG, so if we set that exam and they sit this same exam, they will realise that they are actually competent. That is a very important point where we need to take into consideration.

24/02

Mr Deputy Speaker, I concur with the Governor of East Sepik that we have a problem with the ratio of doctors to the population. According to WHO, the required or accepted doctor to population ratio is 1:1000. Right now, in the country we have a ratio of 1:17 000 people.

We always complain of the performances of doctors in our hospitals but we must be mindful of the number of doctors in the country.

Over the last ten years we have been graduating 30-50 medical officers every year, whilst at the same time the population of our country keeps on increasing at a rate of three per cent every year. That gap is widening each year. We can bring in doctors from other countries but we do not know if they are well qualified to look after our people. One way to resolve this issue to increase the capacity in the medical school.

Whilst we welcome Divine Word University, I think we need to build a new medical school. For the education sector, the University of Goroka has come on board to educate teachers. For the agricultural sector, Vudal is leading the way. These are universities of special fields. Right now we have a medical school that is operating under the University of Papua New Guinea. However, it is quite difficult for them to bring in the required expertise when they have to subscribe to the current salary scale.

The salary scale right now at the medical school is just enough to attract junior doctors and not qualified doctors to teach, so the salary scale is something we need to look into. It is quite difficult when the current medical school subscribes to an established university with such a salary scale. The importance of actually establishing a new medical university is very urgent as we speak. Otherwise we will continue to go down the track where we only have 50 doctors graduating yearly, and whether they are well qualified is unknown to us. The lecturers that are teaching in the medical school only have single degrees. And junior staff, who probably can't find jobs anywhere, are being put into the university because all qualified lecturers have left the current medical school. The current professors in the medical schools will be retiring soon as most of them are old and we do not have any succession plan. It is therefore important for the health department to look into this seriously.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we need to create a new medical university for this country. Health is everybody's business and is one of the most important sectors in the country and we need to have a university that deals with health.

My next point is in regards to foreign policy. I think we need to write to our counterparts in Australia. Previously we had exchange programs where our doctors go down to Australia to improve on their field of expertise. It was an annual thing but I think ten years ago, they may have made changes to their foreign policies and came up with a policy where everyone has to sit for the English exam.

This exam is tricky and technical and many times our doctors do not make it and that is probably why we have only one oncologist in this country. A lot of people want to go to Australia to actually do studies on oncology but the problem is the difficult English exam that is failing lot of them. I think we need to talk to our counterparts in Australia to relax that policy so that we can send our doctors to further their studies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the other issue that I would like to speak on is funding. Last year I applied for the district hospital funding and I was not listed, so I looked through the list that was made available. I made this statement last year and I will make it again today because health is important. I saw a number of health facilities that were listed and questioned the officers from the Department of Planning as to what requirements they were using to qualify health facilities to be eligible for funding.

25/02

And I ask the people from the Planning Department, what was the requirement you used to actually put these people on the list. They said, that was list they submitted so we just subscribed it. And then I looked at one facility and asked a person who actually went to inspect it, "what's the admission rate for that facility? and he said "two patients in a week". Two patients in a week and if you get K5 million funding, that's how there is a wastage in the system and we are always complaining.

That's why funding must be driven by data. Health Minister that is one of the points I want us to know. Funding of any Health facility must be driven by data. We must be aware of how many people are being admitted each day and week, and then we give funding. We don't just give funding because the Member is in the Government or because of the Member's status in society.

Allocation of funding must be driven by data, without that, poor decisions puts the country through bad financial situations. That is the way to utilize funds wisely.

Final point is, in line with what the Senior Minister Wera Mori has said. I think, treatment of Cancer concept is actually not understood properly.

The Oncologist, come on board to treat a certain part of Cancer. And that's when you are putting some people on medical treatment. Cancer treatment has got; Radiotherapy, Surgery, Immunotherapy, Chemotherapy, and many more aspects.

In the developed world, treatment of Cancer has got multi-disciplinary approach where social workers comes in because it's a terminal illness in most cases. So, you have to have the sources workers who are actually trained to do that work. So, currently the concept of Cancer management is a bit misunderstood in this country.

Oncologists do only a certain part. They come on board when you put people on chemicals treatments, on Chemotherapy. There's a Radio oncologist around. And in this country, the surgeons play a big role. There are some types of Cancer that requires surgery.

So, it's a multi-disciplinary approach but the point he raised is valid. In that, we must support health facilities that can provide these services. If we see that Chimbu Hospital is utilizing its own resources to provide these services then we must support them.

Finally, I commend the Health Minister, he has done many good jobs and as a former health worker, we will provide you the support you need.

There has been media reports where people have been unhappy with the recent decisions you have made but we are supporting you. I think these are very important decisions.

Change is inevitable and we have to progress. If people are sitting in some chairs and they are not performing, we can't blame the people down the system. If you are responsible for an organization, and if that organization is not moving – everything falls and rises on leadership. So the leaders head must fall. We must not be complacent anymore so, Health Minister, I congratulate you for the decisions you have made so far.

Thank you very much.

Mr. LEKWA GURE (Rigo- Minister for Civil Aviation) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to contribute to this debate. Firstly, I want to recommend the Minister for Health for presenting this very important statement on the status of Health and related priorities.

I also want to thank the previous speakers for the important debate they contributed towards this statement.

I want to contribute to the debate in the area of the PHA. And without filling in the place of my governor, a petition was presented on this Floor of Parliament. Talking about important facilities which are missing in Central province.

Central province does not have an airport, sea port; and a provincial hospital.

26/02

One of the important prerequisites of the establishment of a provincial health authority is having a provincial hospital and this is an important facility missing in the Central Province.

In the interim, I would like to suggest that one of the district hospitals of the four districts in Central Province be upgraded and be equivalent to provincial hospital status. It does not have to meet provincial hospital status but equivalent in order to satisfy that requirement wherein the provincial health authority can be established for the Central Province. At the same time, I would like this Government to give the highest priority for a provincial hospital to be established in the Central Province. It is really important for our people because they have been missing out on this important service for so long. Therefore this Government must give the highest priority for a hospital in the Central Province.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I say this with the greatest respect to our medical doctors in this Parliament. Medical opinion changes over time when new evidence comes to light and new knowledge emerges. I guess that is the same in many other fields as well. Because opinions change over time, we take information and use it for our purposes at our own purposes.

For example, in the 80s, they said we should only eat chicken meat and not red meat because it is bad for your health. But sometime later opinions said that chicken skin contained a lot of fat therefore it is also not good for your health and thus you must stick to lean meat. Lean beef was then promoted as the best meat for consumption. And then much later on they said forget about all meat and just eat fish only. This is what I mean when I say medical opinions changes. If all meat are bad then what are we going to eat? Maybe we should eat grass only.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the point I am making in the public domain is that we were told that cholesterol is bad for your health. This was promoted by health specialist and the pharmaceutical companies as well. Only recently, the food and drugs administration of the US have now come out and said cholesterol is good for you and that there is no such thing as bad cholesterol. It is actually good for you because if you avoid food with cholesterol then your liver has to work harder to produce the needed amount for your body.

My advice to my children and whoever else that would like to listen to me is that when it comes to eating healthy, you can eat anything but it must be in moderation. Make sure that you are eating a balance diet after all health is our best wealth. Without our health everything else is not important.

Mr MICHAEL NALI (Mendi- Minister for Works and Implementation) -- I would like to acknowledge the statement that has been presented by the Health Minister.

27/02

You can be the strongest men on Earth but as soon as you are sick all your strength disappears. Sometimes when you are getting very close to dying you start to realise that everything that you have worked hard for and all the money that is in the bank all become useless. And you start to wonder, I have enjoyed life and what have I done. Good luck to those who grow very old and die, but for young people it's not a good story.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I participated in this sector with my DSIP last year and bought lots of equipment for Mendi General Hospital. I don't have a private district hospital for my district but this is the major hospital that includes Southern Highlands, Hela, Engan and some from Gulf come to get medical service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is a sad story that I have for Mendi General Hospital and the same can be said for many other general hospitals if not district hospitals. I spent very close to K1.5 million to buy a lot of equipment and as I speak they are being installed but it is taking a lot of time.

The Minister for Commerce and Member for Chuave made a statement about Chimbu General Hospital. That statement cannot go unheard as a lot of our people are going to Kundiawa Hospital and thanks to the people of Kundiawa and Chimbu as a whole. They have not been greedy, they have really assisted our region. I think a lot of people even down the Momase way and some parts of Papua New Guinea also fly to Kundiawa to get medical service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, last weekend I was at my electorate in Mendi and I went and paid a visit to Mendi School of Nursing which was completely destroyed from the earthquake. All the classrooms are all gone except one which I do not consider as a classroom. There is no accommodation and staff morale is really down. After the earthquake they were assisted to Jiwaka and this also incurred a lot of costs. I am grateful to the the Governor and the Provincial Government that allocated some money. I went and had a look at the facilities and it is not a good story again.

Mr Acting Speaker, if we are to educate young Papua New Guineans, male and female, we need to have a proper facility to educate these people. This is even below substandard and since it is the only college we have in Southern Highlands I was able to contribute a brand new scanning machine.

I would like to ask the Finance Minister if he can please give us a bus for the School of Nursing because they have no vehicle and the same goes for the hospital.

28/02

I think as a Government although we are going through tough times, even from the past, present and maybe in the future we will continue to do the same things that we do with our population growth and we are not able to have enough money to dish out to all the sectors but I think the Health Sector really needs a boost.

Mr Deputy Speaker, equipment purchased must depend on the number of referral hospitals that we have in the country. Basic equipment for pathology or a scanning machine for obstetrics and gynaecology to scan mothers or even patients with stomach problems must be available at these referral hospitals. Computed Tomography (CT) scan and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan costs over a million kina each and we cannot afford that but things simpler machines like X-Ray must be available.

I purchased a digital X-Ray for my hospital from my DSIP which cost me K500 000 but I am happy that I did something good for my people so before the end of the year we will have a brand new digital X-Ray.

But, if we can't allocate money to buy basic equipment like the microscopes, how do we expect the doctors and nurses to carry out their duties efficiently. You can train a lot of doctors and nurses but it will be like sending a mechanic to fix a car without tools.

From my point of view, I see that many doctors and even nurses are finding it difficult to carry out their duties despite their knowledge and experience as they do not have proper equipment's to execute their duties. Doctor must be equipped well so that they can identify the problems and treat the patients properly.

I think that many patients do not get treated well because of lack of proper equipment and facilities at the hospitals to identify what really is wrong.

Mr Deputy Speaker, secondly, in the previous government and even in the current government we did not subsidise enough funding toward purchasing medical drugs.

When you visit the General Hospital here in Port Moresby, the doctors will tell you that we do not have the right drugs to administer to treat this particular sickness and then it raises questions, 'What happened to all the money allocated to pay for drugs?

29/02

There was no communication between the supplier and the Department through its store and medical supplies officers. There are one too many loop holes that are there and I understand the Minister is doing his best with the current difficulties.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would suggest that the Health Department must now prioritize like the rest of the Government Departments. When I say this, I am referring to the data base to identify the number of different disease cases in our country to combat them with the medicines that are been purchased.

I concur with the Fisheries Minister who raised a very important point regarding foreign doctors who come into our country to practise medicine. They must go through a series of qualification tests in this country to ascertain whether they are genuine medical practitioners.

I urge the Minister and the Health Department that when ascertaining these foreign medical practitioners, they must be properly tested and not just simply giving them text books and question and answer sheets but they must take them through complicated life and death scenarios to prove their ability to save lives here in this country.

I also appeal to the Minister to assist Mendi District when he has the funds available, we also need a health centre there.

I have not heard Member of Parliament declaring their support or assistance to purchase medical equipment for their districts, maybe their priorities are elsewhere. As for me, I have spent a lot of money purchasing medical equipment.

I also want to take on the School of Nursing in Mendi. I want to put some money there. I will ask my Governor's partnership in this development. However, the department must also recognise the districts who are prepared in terms of their district health projects and assist them.

With that Mr Speaker, I commend the Health and HIV Minister for his statement and I stand to support the Minister.

Motion (by **Mr Davis Steven**) – agreed to

That the question be now put.

Paper noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Renbo Paita**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 1.p.m.