

## THIRD DAY

Thursday 12 August 2021

## DRAFT HANSARD

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## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

### CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

The Draft Hansard is uncorrected. It is also privileged. Members have one week from the date of this issue of Draft Hansard in which to make corrections to their speeches. Until the expiration of this one week period, Draft Hansard must not be quoted as final and accurate report of the debates of the National Parliament.

Corrections may be 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 authorized 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.



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HARRY MOMOS

Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## THIRD DAY

Thursday 12 August 2021

The Deputy Speaker (**Mr Koni Iguan**) took the Chair at 10 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.45 a.m. and invited the Member for Kompiam-Ambum and Minister for Finance, **Honourable John Pundari**, to say Prayers:

“Father, I stand here to represent all my colleague brothers here today that if we have done anything to go against you, I pray that you can forgive us and send your mercy upon us and also the people of this Nation. And may the power that is in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which we continue to search for His healing grace in times of our anxiety and pandemic.

Thank you, so much Lord that you have blessed us and taken us this far. Lord, I pray that as we are experiencing Covid-19 there be understanding and respect when we are adhering to the new norms. And dear Lord, when we go for vaccinations, may there be understanding, appreciation and respect for each other.

Above all Lord, we pray that in the midst of these challenges may the good name of our Lord be glorified in this Nation.

Today, Lord I pray that in the power of your spirit lead our Speaker in guiding us during this meeting. I pray a special blessing upon the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and also the leaders that you have appointed to be servants to your people.

I pray that you will bless this Nation in a very powerful way and we thank you so much for the promises that you have made with your people for us in a special way will be ours because of your word.

O Lord, we say thank you, giving you praises and glory, and in our gratefulness we all say the Lord’s Prayer together.

Our Father who art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom comes. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.”

02/03

**DEATHS OF FORMER MEMBERS – MESSRS GALLUS KIPANDU YUMBUI  
(WOSERA-GAUI ELECTORATE) AND PAIALE ELO (KOROBA-LAKE  
KOPIAGO ELECTORATE) – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament of the following deaths;

(a) Mr Gallus Kipandu Yumbui on 23 April 2021, a former Member for Wosera-Gau Electorate. He was elected to the Sixth Parliament from 1997 to 2002 and he was re-elected to the Seventh National Parliament from 2002 to 2007 for the same seat.

During those times he held the following positions. He served as a member of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Legislation and Provincial Government Suspensions.

He was appointed briefly as the Deputy Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings, Deputy Chairman of the Permanent Referral Committee on Administrative Services and Primary Resources, member of the Education Services and Administrative Services and a member of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Culture and Tourism and the National Parliament.

He was later appointed as the Vice-Minister for Labour and Employment and Lands and Physical Planning in 2000 and early 2001.

He was recommended for dismissal from Parliament on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2007.

(b) Mr Paiale Elo on 6 July 2021, a former Member for Koroba-Lake Kopiago Electorate. He was first elected to the Second National Parliament from from 1982 to 1987.

As a mark of respect to the memory of the late honourable gentlemen, I invite all honourable members to rise in your places.

*All honourable members present stood in their places for a one-minute silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the late gentlemen.*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF VISITORS (UPNG Political Science Students) –  
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable members, I wish to inform you that we have with us in the Public Gallery, students from the Political Science Students Association and their lecturers from the University of Papua New Guinea.

On behalf of the Parliament, I extend a warm welcome to you.

**QUESTIONS**

**Purchase of Westpac PNG by Kina Securities**

**Mr RICHARD MARU** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to direct my questions to the Prime Minister and I would like the Treasurer to take note.

Mr Speaker, I have been quite concerned about the government's silence in terms of its public policy stance in the recent announcement by Westpac that it had accepted the offer from Kina Securities to buy out Westpac interests in Papua New Guinea, which would have had a net impact of reducing competition to only two banks in Papua New Guinea. And the impact would be very adverse.

Now that the ICCC had made known its position and declined the proposed acquisition, the government is still silent and has not taken a position on this or not even offered support to ICCC on its decision which is the correct decision for our citizens and our country.

It makes me wonder whether the government has a plan for the finance sector to increase competition to grow the sector or not.

Why is it keeping silent?

**03/03**

My questions are:

(1) Can the Prime Minister inform Parliament and the people of this country on the current Government's position on increasing competition in the banking and finance sector and whether he supports the decision of ICCC or not?

(2) When will the Government present a public statement in Parliament on its position?

(3) Does the Government want to increase competition and provide better services to our people in the SME and private sector in terms of banking and finance?

(4) Can the Prime Minister inform this Parliament whether the Government in principle and morally supports the current obligation by the Papua New Guinea Teachers and Savings Loan Society to secure a banking license and startup another bank in PNG owned by the citizens of this country?

I know they have the potential requirements of the Central Bank but does the Government in principle support another new bank coming into the market in PNG.

(5) Can the Prime Minister also advise Parliament and the people on the future plans with NDB in terms of upscaling and commercialization?

Our people want to start a SME bank in PNG and over 30 million have pledged to do so. And the easiest way is to upscale and commercialize NDB. It already has a micro bank and just has to get license from Bank of PNG and it's been operating profitability and can be upscaled. Do you support NDB being reformed and commercialized so it can raise its own funds using public deposits rather than depending on government to recapitalize NDB. You improve governance and it could be another success story like BSP.

Mr Speaker, this is a matter of public interest and policy and I want the Prime Minister to come clear on the government standing and plans. It can grow the sector and bring in more competition and provide more services and funds to our people.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Member of Yangoru-Saussia for his important questions on a matter of public interest. Yes, we are aware of the acquisition of Westpac by Kina Bank through private placement. Westpac had indicated winding down its assets in our country. The arrangement is in progress but I want to inform this House and country that ICCC has an independent process and they are doing their job for the interest of our country to ensure a fair playing field for our customers and allow for competition to exist in our country. But the Government has very little say over what has happened to Westpac and that its intentions are. But in terms of competition, our government still encourages new banks to emerge.

As for NDB(National Development Bank), we support its reform and MiBank to emerge as a commercial bank to assist and fill in the gap that still exists when we have limited banks in our country and economy.

We are very much aware that Westpac assets and interest in our country is being looked at to be subsumed by Kina and that's a market transaction at play. We have little input in what ICCC is doing but they are carrying out their constitutional mandate.

**04/03**

The government, in so far as its responsibilities are concerned, is looking to encourage the National Development Bank to step up. There will be some changes in the bank especially at its board level. And we are now in the process of ensuring that the managing director is appointed. And as a government, we feel this could be an answer to that vacuum that might exist if Westpac eventually pulls out.

The process is ongoing and we have no intention to step into the independent functions of ICCC. They are doing a great job in ensuring that they look into this transaction so that the duopoly in the banking system does not exist when we only have two major banks in the country. This is also to make sure we have competition in the banking space. And this is something good that is being done; we will not step onto that role but encourage them as they have their mandate to ensure that competition still exists in the country.

But to assure our nation, should Westpac decide to pull out, we have little control over that but we are encouraging them in all instances to remain in the country. Our economy will however be still going into the future. And when we talk about the full benefit of the PNG LNG returning around 2025/2026 and when we talk about Papua LNG maturing, Waffi-Golpu progressing and the new Porgera coming on board, our economy will be stronger and better placed around 3-5 years into the future.

At my level I have always been encouraging Westpac and ANZ to remain in the country. However, I am not at the registry nor the board level so they decide what is good for them. If they decide to completely sell out and move away from the country; as a government what we have control over is the NDB. And we are preparing NDB to step up to fill in this vacuum. I know there are some crowd funds being mobilized by senior and concerned citizens of this country and we are monitoring that space and encouraging them. There is space for one or two more banks in the country.

We are a nation of about 10 million people and we have a GDP of K80-100 million. And there is space for maybe a third or fourth bank in the country. And we want locals to participate therefore, we are encouraging NDB. And we are encouraging other local financial institutions like TISA to move into this space by picking up a banking license. The central bank has been informed should they be interested and this also calls for them to comply with its requirements.

The central bank (BPNG) has been advised to be liberal to allow for local participation in the financial sector to come in and pick up banking licenses to allow for competition to exist in the country, if foreign banks want to leave our country.

Let me assure the country through this important country, that the government is conscious for the need to have competition in the banking space. And we in the first instance are working to get NDB to fill in this vacuum, through its subsidiary MiBank. And in the second and third instance, allowing for financial institutions in the country to migrate from just being a financial company to a banking institution while also including those who are doing crowdfunding to put up a third or fourth bank in the future.

05/03

### State-lease Land

**Mr PETER ISOAIMO** – Mr Speaker, I have two questions to ask the Minister for Lands but before I do, I wish to take the cue from leaders this week in welcoming the newly- elected Member for Moresby North-West into Parliament.

Mr Speaker, my first question is in regard to re-claiming of state-lease land in district towns by local landowners after the expiry of the 99-year lease.

Landowners say that after the expiry of the 99- year lease, the land reverts to themselves. They have taken over much of government properties, especially buildings.

(1) Can the Minister explain to the people of Papua New Guinea the legal issues involved and whether landowners have the right to take back land after they expiry of the 99-year lease? It has been a grey area for some time. I think I asked the same question to the former minister in the previous government but he said it was a grey area and that his department would come back to inform the people of Papua New Guinea through this Parliament.

The Minister needs to clarify this issue through the *Land Administration Act* and other relevant laws to ascertain whether landowners have the right.

My second question is in relation to the famous Hivaso Concept.

(2) Can the Minister clarify whether this is a government policy of his department for a greater Port Moresby, and will there be delegated functions to the Central Provincial Government?

Mr Speaker, there needs to be some clarity because there is a lot of confusion in my electorate. Some say that this is happening because the Government intends to take control over Central Province. Therefore, I urge the Minister to explain the reasons behind this particular concept. We, as leaders, should not be playing politics. The people need to know whether the responsibility comes under the provincial land boards or the department itself and whether this is truly an effective government policy.



**Mr JOHN ROSSO** – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Kairuku-Hiri for his very important questions.

Before I proceed, I wish to also take this opportunity to congratulate the Member for Moresby North-West, Honourable Lohia Boe Samuel. Welcome and congratulations on your win. I hope to work together with you to solve the many problems that affect our people in Port Moresby, especially in regard to land issues.

Mr Speaker, there has been a lot of misconception about alienated land. Many think that after the 99-year lease has expired, the land goes back to the landowners. This is not so. The law states unequivocally that after the lease expires, the land reverts to the State, and this applies to all alienated land in Papua New Guinea - and that is by law.

After the expiry, the State takes ownership of the land and as the minister, I am the custodian, as stipulated under the *Lands Act*.

There are two types of land; customary land and alienated land. Customary land is owned by the people, and they have full control over it. If they want to sell their land, it is between them and the buyer or investor.

There is also some misconception that the Lands Department makes deals on selling customary land. That is not true.

**06/03**

Blaming the Department of Lands for entering into deals regarding customary land, is not true. It is a willing deal between the buyer and seller. We are also worried about the land transfers happening all over the city. I am not a landowner here therefore I and the department do not have a say on what happens with their land. We are trying our best to work with the landowners to sort out traditional owners and other related issues.

With regard to the State lease, when the 99-year lease is up, the land ownership returns to the government. The government will assess and see if you can develop the land. If you do not develop it then the government will put the land up for tender for people to develop. This goes for all state alienated land in Papua New Guinea.

Inside the alienated land there are some land that are called freehold which most of our missions are on. The freehold land is with our missions. We cannot interfere with its future; we can only interfere with matters of physical planning. The freehold land remains with the owner of the land especially, with the churches in Papua New Guinea. I hope this clarifies the ownership of alienated land in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, with regard to the Hivaso Concept; it is just a concept of NCDC through our governor that Hiri, Vanapa and Sogeri have a plan to work together to develop these district towns. But all these borders are inside the Central Province so when they want to work then they must work alongside the Central Province. It is up to Central province to give the nod or otherwise. It is a concept that was put in by NCDC and not by law. NCDC cannot over step into the Central Province.

Over the last two years, in my capacity as Minister, I have delegated responsibilities of the Lands Board to the Central Provincial Government who are now managing their own decisions for their land. We have also delegated the Physical Planning Board to the Central Government so that they can make their own decisions for development. The NCDC boundaries are clearly defined from the Central land boundaries. I hope that the two governors can work together and see which land areas to develop. The Lands Department is just there to help facilitate these things. I hope I have sufficiently answered the questions of the Member for Kairuku-Hiri.

**Mr Powes Parkop** – Point of Order! I want to correct what the Minister just mentioned. With due respect, this plan was not created by us in NCDC nor my office. I believe it was a plan formulated by the Department of National Planning. If it is not from the Department of Lands and Physical Planning then it had to come from the Department of National Planning because they had to plan in advance in terms of urban extensions and development.

07/03

**Mr SPEAKER** – Your Point of Order is out of order. You can sort out the matter with the Minister at his department.

#### **Assistance for Arawa Town Power Disruptions**

**Mr SAM AKOITAI** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to raise this brief question. My question is concerning PNG Power Services in Bougainville. As you know, PNG Power operates in Buka and in Arawa. There have been continuous power disruptions in Arawa which has caused a lot of inconvenience for the business houses especially when we are trying to restore services.

My question to the Minister for Public Enterprise is;

For almost three months, power has been disrupted in Arawa, but continuous attempts to seek assistance from the PNG Power Office in Arawa has been to no avail. The PNG Power Office in Arawa has not provided any status report on the continuous disruptions.

Can the Minister assist us to restore power in Arawa town?

There was a time when the power supply was down for a month and when my office enquired, we were informed that the cost of maintenance was only K480. Then power was down for a month because of the K480 which PNG Power could not afford. So, my office intervened to pay for that maintenance cost and this regenerated the power supply. So, can the good Minister assist and assure the people of Arawa town that this matter will be solved.

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for Central Bougainville for that important question.

At this stage, I am not sure of the reason for the power blackouts that we are experiencing on the island. It may be due to the diesel generator break down; the faults in the transmission lines; the incompetence on the part of those who are managing that facility on that island; or maybe their failure to communicate with the head overseer here in Port Moresby. However, if it has to do with a generator break down, we have funds available.

I can assure the Member that we can purchase a new generator for that very important town in Bougainville. If it is to do with faulty lines, again we have identified some funds so we can set them aside.

I would like to assure the Member and his people that we will do everything within our means starting tomorrow to make sure that we don't experience a repeat of this problem.

### **2022 National General Elections**

**Mr RICHARD MASERE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Prime Minister. Before I ask my question, let me take this opportunity on behalf of my family and the people of Ivijitari to congratulate the newly elected Member for Moresby North-West.

My questions are in relation to the National General Elections next year. There are some public concerns and rumours circulating and I believe it is important for the Prime Minister to provide clarification on the event that will take place next year.

My questions are;

(1) Can the Prime Minister confirm whether or not the National General Elections will be conducted next year or will it be deferred?

08/03

(2) Will the National General Election also include the Local-Level Government Elections as well at the same time?

(3) Will there be a reserve seat for the women in the elections next year?

(4) Will the elections be conducted under the present arrangement which is the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system or will it be First-Past-The-Post?

(5) In relation to the Boundaries Commission that is doing a roadshow at the moment conducting awareness on splitting some of the districts. Can the Prime Minister confirm whether there will be new electorates created in the election next year?

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you again Mr Speaker for the opportunity to respond to five very good questions raised by the honourable Member for Ijivitari.

Let me answer his first question. Elections for 2022 will be conducted as per schedule. The Writs will be issued in April allowing 8 weeks campaign period as required by the *Constitution*. That is the way it will be and the Government has no intention to defer the 2022 National Elections. This is an important constitutional provision for our people to exercise their *Constitution section 50* rights to vote for their leaders and through this process, government to be formed.

So, the election will run its course. We know that we are living with Covid-19 but we have adjusted in the last two years to live with it and that is why vaccines are available. We are asking our people to wear masks, practice safe distancing and safety at work places so we are not allowing Covid-19 to stop us from functioning. Therefore, such important functions like the General Elections which is constitutionally required to happen every five years will still be held.

Let me assure the Member, this Parliament and our citizens that the 2022 General Elections will be conducted on schedule.

On the LLG Elections, they were held halfway through this term so there is a proposal that their elections be held when they complete their five years of being in office as required by law. And so that will be looked at in the half of this year and when in the next sitting of Parliament, we will announce to the LLG ward councils, LLG Presidents and our people in the country as to when exactly the elections will take place.

On the third question regarding the reserve seats for women, again, we are looking at a combination of different proposals. One is specialised seats for women only that might require major legal amendments. We are also looking at an option of when women contest the elections

and no women are elected then similar to the “*Samuel Randall’s Election Model*”, the best performing women in the four regions can be given a seat in the Floor of Parliament.

Those proposals are being considered and there will be a meeting organised by the Registrar of Political Parties and Candidates for the political party leaders jointly with the Constitutional Law Reform Commission to discuss this issue.

On the debate on LPV versus first-past-the-post, at the moment, LPV will be used in 2022 National Elections but I have advised that there is a proposed Private Members Bill placed on the Notice Paper to review LPV and first-past-the-post. That is something for this Parliament to deliberate on but existing law only allows for LPV to be used. I personally prefer LPV because it is a fair system for all.

**09/03**

The voting system that we will go by, personally for me, I prefer LPV. It is fair and friendly for all but again this Parliament is at total liberty to discuss this when the private members present it. That is when the parliament will make its call. To give assurance to this house, at the moment LPV is in law and that is the method of voting for next year.

The Electoral Boundaries Commission made a visit to our country. Instead of having a fully-fledged visit throughout the country, only a few of our electorates have huge population and huge land mass of visitors when consulted. Their reports are yet to come before cabinet and then we will allow the process to flow from there but certain areas, for instance; Talasea electorate have over 250 000 people and then you compare other electorates, without naming some have 30 000 or 40 000 people. That is a huge disparity in the responsibility and burden of some members against other members or some electorates against other electorates. So, the Electoral Boundaries Commission have done their part. If we cannot get a fully-fledged review across the nation, then, a proposal will be presented, for those electorates they will be placed on the desk top assessment that is qualified by population size those have been looked at and the proposal will come later before the cabinet to follow due-process for consideration.

Mr Speaker, I hope my answers are sufficient for the questions asked.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **Early Campaigning**

**Mr LEKWA GURE (Rigo)** – Mr Speaker, my supplementary question is in relation to the General Elections next year

Mr Speaker, we all know for sure there is a lot of public commentary regarding this issue and I believe all of us can acknowledge the fact that, there are many individuals and some parties already out there campaigning under the guise of awareness. So, can we get the Electoral Commission to address and issue the laws in relation to early campaigning.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honorable Member, your question is not a supplementary question. It is a new question.

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** – Thank you Mr Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the new Member for Moresby North-West, Honorable Lohia Boe Samuel on his arrival in this Honourable House.

Mr Samuel, wears a very big shoe of another Papuan leader, former Prime Minister, Late Honorable Sir Mekere Morauta. He represents one of the most strategic part of our city, so the burden is on us, he also represents the voice of the Motukoitabuan people, the Indigenous. In a time when their very existence is under threat, in a time when their issues about there land is a big concern.

On behalf of the Esa'ala electorate, I assure our support to the Honourable Leader in pursuing all issues that have now become a national concern.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, is it a supplementary question or a new question?

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** – Mr Speaker, my supplementary question is on elections and adding on to the concerns raised by the Member for Ijivitari. And I seek clarity on the common-  
role update and how the Government intends to approach this issue.

Mr Speaker, firstly....

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, that will be a new question. Supplementary Questions are always in line with previous questions asked. If your question is about the Common Roll then that will be a new question.

**10/03**

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** – With respect, that is part of the question that rhymes to fair and free election the honourable Member.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, the Chair is going to allow you to raise that question as a new one and not as a supplementary question. So, go ahead.

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am grateful.

We read with interest the recent assurance that there will be free, fair and I think my good Prime Minister has added that it will be a friendly election. But, at the background we read the reports of more than a hundred international observers; both Commonwealth and Pacific, our own internal observers in the 2012 Election and 2017 Election.

In 2012 our election was declared chaotic. These were words used by observers. Six electorates were failed for the first time in our country's history.

Twenty seventeen unfortunately, became worse than 2012. The report highlights a very big concern about the common-roll updates. It talks about opportunity for youths and women to vote. The report also challenges us to legislate so, that we deal with the money and violence culture which makes the election process in our country a sham.

It talks about the under-funding of the Electoral Commission and agencies of the State that are called upon to support and ensure that our people cast their votes, and this Honourable House receives leaders that are properly mandated by law.

It highlighted that the last common-roll was rushed. The report shows that the advisory committee is a very important body under the *Organic Law* and it states that they resign.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, what is your question?

### **Election Law Reforms**

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** – I am coming to my questions. These are the challenges we face, if the honourable Member for Madang can wait first.

In the background of all these, we now hear that there will be amendments. That amendment will include the method of voting.

Mr Speaker, that is a constitutional law amendment. That will also include whether or not the Local Level Government (LLG) elections will occur in the same time in 2022 or by extension. My questions are;

(1) Do we have the time, given the process prescribed for amendments of the *Constitutional Law*?

Mr Speaker, that is a very important question. We are coming back from two long adjournments when we should have been here doing this business.

(2) Do we have the funds?

Only last week, Mr Speaker, a national workshop for planners of our country took place here at the Department of Planning. The overwhelming response was that the provinces and districts are not ready. They are not ready to do the update.

(3) How are we going to approach this?

(4) Why do we allow a private Members Bill on a Constitutional Law?

Because it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister and the NEC to protect, guard and amend the *Constitution* where it is needed.

Mr Speaker, you can only amend the *Constitution* on the back of Constitutional and Law Reform Commission (CLRC) reports.

(5) Can the Prime Minister deny or confirm whether or not there is a CLRC report following the 2017 elections?

(6) How do the Members of this House debate on an important issue without such a report from the authorised agencies of State?

(7) Can he table this report before the honorable leaders so we can debate meaningfully?

A Private Member's bill should not be brought against the *Constitution*, because it's the responsibility of the Prime Minister of the day to look after the *Constitution*.

Thank you.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me say thank my good friend, the Member for Esa'ala for his very important questions that is associated with the previous question.

Election is an important occasion for every democratic nation and the Marape/Basil led coalition of Government do not intend to sabotage 2022 General Election. We intend to ensure that our citizens have fair and equal opportunity to cast votes for the leader of their choice and to ensure that 2022 General Election are much better than the past election that have been held in our country. We can't blame the past but we must work better for the future and 2022 presents us an opportunity.

So, those who aspire to become the Prime Minister can also have a fair opportunity to form government and be in government. We do not have time; I concur with him that time is running out for all of us. However, with the seven months we have left, before the writs are issued, we can squeeze the work programs in for all sectors of government to ensure that we



arrive at the 2022 General Election in June and July. This is to have a better place for us to go and cast our votes to ensure that votes cast are processed for counting and declaration.

So, time is running out, but our government through concerted effort will ensure our best endeavors to support few important activities that need to be take place before the 2022 General Elections. As the good member has indicated, updating the Common Roll is an important requirement for us to progress into a good General Election in 2022.

With the election preparations; time and funding are two important prerequisites for a very good and safe election.

Let me inform this House, we are congested we need to ensure adequate funding is secured to get all necessaries preparation for the election ticked off for 2022. So, Treasurer, Planning, Finance Minister, and the all of government is aware of to the fact that we need to have sufficient funds to ensure 2022 General Election is delivered safely.

Let me take this time to inform the House that in the past we do had heavy censuses, NID exercises and common roll update with budget submissions for K300 to K400 million. We do not have luxury of conducting a different census or common roll for that matter. We are just trying to use a cost-efficient approach to get to know our populations through one population database. We could migrate that into a census.

I am taking this question as an opportunity to inform our nation of what our government is doing. We wanted to start in August but the preparations have been slow. So, in September and October, every district and province are informed to prepare to assist our councillors to update the population of the 6000 wards we have nationwide.

The councillors can update the base line population through head count throughout households because they are closers to our people. They know our people so where ever you are Papua New Guineans an important population head count will take place in September.

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The responsibility will be passed back to our councillors so the districts and provinces can assist them to do their job. After the head count is done from the balance of this year, that data verification will take place with the supervision of the Nation Statistic Office.

The Electoral Commission has been informed that the Common Roll can be done but they have to wait for the baseline population data to come in first. And in the latter half of this year the Electoral Commission team will use this population data baseline to verify those 18 years old and above to be migrated into the Common Roll.

These are the things that we want to achieve and time is running out so the onus is on us as the leaders who have the resources at disposals at the district and provincial level to assist this national program that is going to be carried out in order for us to have accurate data to be used in the National General Election in April 2022.

I would like to give assurance to the members and our country that before we go into the 2022 General Elections, we should have a proper sequenced population update by all the councillors.

On the third question regarding the CRLC Report, it is before the Commission and as soon as it is presented to Parliament, it will be debated on. This report might be on the Notice paper. From the Preliminary Report that I have been given, it is almost an even debate between First Pass the Post and the Preferential Voting System.

I will inform the House when it is ready and this Parliament can debate it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA – REPORT OF THE AUDITOR –  
GENERAL ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE ENGA PROVINCIAL HEALTH  
AUTHORITY FOR THE YEARS ENDING 2015 AND 2016 – PAPER –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF THE PAPER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, pursuant to statute I present;

*“Auditor-General of Papua New Guinea – Report of The Auditor-General on The Accounts of The Enga Provincial Health Authority for The Years Ending 2015 And 2016”*

**Motion (by Mr Aiye Tambua) agreed to –**

That the Parliament take note of the Paper and the Report be referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

13/03

**AUDITOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA – ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2019 – PAPER –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, pursuant to statute, I present the Annual Report of the Auditor-General for the year ending 31 December 2019.

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

That the Parliament take note of the paper and the debate be made an order of the day for subsequent sitting.

Debate adjourned.

**CONSTITUTIONAL AND LAW REFORM COMMISSION – FINAL REPORT ON  
THE REVIEW OF THE ORGANIC LAW ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL-LEVEL  
GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, VOLUMES 1 AND 2 – PAPERS AND STATEMENT –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – I present the following Report pursuant to statute on the Constitutional Reform Commission.

*Volume 1 – Review of the Organic Law on National and Local-level Government elections, restoring integrity of the systems; and*

*Volume 2 – Provincial Consultation Report on the enquiry into the Organic Law on National and Local-level Government elections and related laws and systems.*

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

Leave granted.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to present to Parliament the Report on the constitutional directives number two. It's an outstanding report which was submitted to NEC through the Prime Minister and eventually it was approved to be table in Parliament and I am happy to do that.

Mr Speaker, as we know the electoral system of PNG is an integral part of the democratic system of government that the country holds upon Independence and which has served the country

**14/03**

Integral part of the democratic system of government that the country embraced upon Independence and which has since served the country well. For a young nation like ours, it is always important that we continue to have faith in our system as a guarantor for a say in the legislature and the executive government of their own choice.

Such faith was somewhat taken in the way the last National General Election was held. The last government has come under heavy criticism for it and it is now incumbent upon us, not just this serving government but our Parliament to ensure we move early in a charged renewed mandate. To ensure that these and other concerns about the country's electoral systems and processes are substantially addressed and faith is ultimately restored.

It is accordingly proposed that the country's electoral system be immediately subjected to review, with the view to institute major reforms that will improve the existence of the electoral system and thus ensuring the system continues to provide a guarantee for democratic system of government which we adopted since Independence.

These changes are needed before the next elections in 2022. The Cabinet earlier under the leadership of Prime Minister O'Neill under; *Decision No:9/2018* directed for the Constitutional Law Reform Commission to undertake the review of the *Organic Law on National and Local Level Government Elections*. There were 12 terms of review;

- Electoral Roll system;
- Polling system including the polling periods and the polling places.
- Electoral boundaries,
- Women and Special interest representation in Parliament.
- Nomination Fees,
- Eligibility for nominations,
- Election Petition fees,

- Period of filing election petition,
- The Voter Identification system,
- The LLG Elections,
- The Electoral offences and the Power and Functions, and Compositions of the Electoral Commissioners. Also, the decentralization and election responsibilities.
- Other matters that may arise in the course of the review.

As per the direction the review commenced in March 2018 and was completed within 18 months. And when we came into the office we supported this review to reach its final stage. And in September 2019; it ended and the final report was presented in January 2020.

And while the direction was given to CLRC to undertake the review; it brought in key stakeholders and formed a secretariat that travelled the length and breadth of the country to consult and gauge views.

The Report is the work of many hands and minds that worked together to make sure it comes before this Parliament. The report presents in two parts; first part, Restoring Integrity of the Electoral System and it contains recommendations and in the second volume we have the full compilation of the information gathered during the review. Copies of this report are being circulated and I encourage the Parliament to look through the report and contribute towards the discussions.

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

That the Parliament take note of the Paper and the debate be adjourned to a later date.

Debate adjourned

Sitting suspended from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

15/03

**SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE –  
REPORT ON THE INQUIRY INTO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN PNG –  
PAPER AND STATEMENT – REPORT ADOPTED**

Mr CHARLES ABEL (Alotau) – Mr Deputy Speaker, as Chairman of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender Based Violence, it gives me great pleasure to rise to present Part One of the Report of our inquiry into gender-based violence. This is a very important Parliamentary Committee and this is often not the best time to present a report in the afternoon session because we want the widest audience. And that audience includes very important members of Parliament who need to understand these issues and take them on board and respond to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, nevertheless, I am grateful for the opportunity and thankful for the members who are present today. We will do our best through the media and through you all to disseminate this important information.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on behalf of my people of Alotau, I would also like to extend my congratulations to the Honourable Lohia Boe Samuel for being member elect of the Moresby North-West By-Election. We understand the short time he has before the 2022 National General Election but we stand to support him in his endeavours together with the government. We trust in his abilities to take on the legacy of late Sir Mekere Morauta who was a wonderful leader of Moresby North-West and Papua New Guinea.

Mr Deputy Speaker, another issue that I want to raise is that through our Broadcasting Committee, I don't understand why we don't broadcast all the proceedings of our Parliament? I don't think that Question Time is the only relevant agenda for the people of Papua New Guinea. Through you, I would like to make the point that the Broadcasting Committee consider that we broadcast all the proceedings of Parliament. I understand that Parliament is taking steps to install their own in-house broadcasting system but, in the meantime, why don't we use the traditional media that is available and film proceedings and the important work of Parliament like this one, to be disseminated to our people. I don't understand why despite repeating this request through the Speaker outside of the Floor of Parliament, nothing has been done.

Mr Deputy Speaker, coming back, I want to say on the outset that the work of this Committee and this report is dedicated to the victims both past and present of gender-based violence. Categorically, I state that the views of our Committee are that, it is never right to

inflict violence upon your partner primarily on our womenfolk and girls. There are incidences that we see regularly of violence inflicted being on them and that is not acceptable.

**16/03**

This work must lead to outcomes and not just be another report on the Floor of Parliament, nor another report to gather dust because the intention is oriented towards some very specific actions and outcomes.

To all the victims out there we dedicate this work. The wonderful leaders and groups have put in a lot of time into this course and I would like to acknowledge all of them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to present to you and the House, the first report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender Based Violence, that is been distributed.

This report constitutes, Part (1) of our findings from this Inquiry into Gender Based Violence in Papua New Guinea. This Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence was established in 2020 by the National Parliament.

The membership of the Committee comprises of myself and six other members, namely; honourable Allan Bird, honourable Powes Parkop, honourable Michael Dua, honourable Aiye Tambua, honourable Ginson Saonu and Dr Allan Marat.

I wish to thank this House, and specifically the Government headed by Prime Minister, Hon James Marape for supporting the establishment of this Special Parliamentary Committee and it showed very powerful leadership to recognise that the problem of gender-based violence has grown into a critical threat to our national development and to set up this Committee on response. And, on the same token I also want to give special acknowledgement in the absence in the Chamber today, Governor Powes Parkop has been one of the key champions behind this course together with Governor Allan Bird and I want to also acknowledge the Parliamentary Coalition on Gender Based Violence consisting of 20 members with the initiative of honorable governors, Powes Parkop and Allan Bird who began this process. It is an on-going process but in recent times they have been the champions behind this and I appreciate the opportunity to chair the committee which came out of some of their work.

I also want to thank the United Nations Development Programme, which responded to our request for technical and financial assistance through the UN-EU Spotlight Initiative. They supported the National GBV Summit in 2020, which led to the establishment of the Committee, as well as supporting the convening of our May 2021 public hearings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are grateful for the mandate we have been given. We have done our utmost to discharge that mandate in a transparent, inclusive and accountable manner, to

ensure that the Government and the public can understand the approach we have taken and the findings we have made. Our mandate as a Special Parliamentary Committee is time bound.

Once we submit our final report, our mandate comes to an end so let me take this opportunity to ask members to consider making this committee a permanent one so that this work can continue through to the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament and beyond, to ensure that a watchful eye remains on this issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, before going through the recommendations the committee has brought to the House and the Government for consideration, I want to first reflect on the stories of violence that our committee heard in the Inquiry and that we are all aware of in our role as leaders of communities across our great country. I am deeply concerned at the rising rates of violence that we are facing now in Papua New Guinea.

Everyday in the newspapers, we heard stories of GBV, but we are also hearing constant stories of tribal violence, communal violence, rascal violence, knife violence, and even gun violence. Why is this so? What has become of our country that violence now seems to be the first resort for so many people, when they have an argument or when they become angry? Why are we not showing respect to each other respect to our families, to our communities and to our country's laws?

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are a christian country which claims to live by christian values but the teachings of Jesus were of love, kindness to others and forgiveness. We must go back to these teachings and find our humanity to our fellow people once more, we must show more patience, more tolerance and more respect.

Mr. Speaker, these reflections on respect bring me back to this terrible problem of Gender Based Violence in our country. The impact of GBV on women, men, boys and girls is devastating. I worry that there is a growing feeling amongst communities across the country that violence is increasingly raging out of control, with perpetrators facing little accountability.

**17/03**

Mr Deputy Speaker, at the outset, I want to note - which I know that we use the term gender-based violence, but as a man speaking in this House to a Parliament filled only with other men; I must make this clear - that GBV in our country is primarily perpetrated against our women and children.

I know that you may have stories about men suffering violence as well and I agree that violence against anyone is simply unacceptable.



But, Mr Deputy Speaker, if we are to tackle this problem effectively, we must be honest with ourselves; too many men in our communities still think that they have the right to hit their wives and their children with impunity. But, when men hit women and children, we know the result. We are bigger and stronger; our fists can do enormous damage. I am absolutely horrified at the brutal stories we hear every day of women and children who have been brutally beaten and sometimes to the point of death.

Mr Deputy Speaker, our report collects together many very disturbing statistics on GBV in our country. I implore every member of this House to take the time to read the report or at least read the executive summary of the report and I will provide a quick snapshot here.

The 2020 Human Development Report states that Papua New Guinea is ranked 161 out of 162 country on the Gender Inequality Index. This ranks us just above war-torn Yemen which is ranked 162 and conflict-affected Chad in Africa which is ranked 160.

But, what does this mean on the ground for women and children in Papua New Guinea? Papua New Guinea is 28<sup>th</sup> in demographic health and health survey shows us that 56 per cent of women aged from 15-49 have experienced physical violence, 28 per cent have experienced sexual violence and 18 per cent of women experienced violence during pregnancy.

The Demographic and Health Survey data also indicated that 28 per cent of adolescent girls aged 15-19 years had experienced sexual violence. Data from the National Health Information System Data Base states that from 2018-2020, medical care was provided to a total of 18,759 sexual violence cases. Of these, boys under 16 years old accounted for 2,279 cases or 12 per cent. In one study in the National Capital District (NCD), around 60 per cent of children who went to a women's shelter in Port Moresby had been abused.

All of these statistics are horrible, and they make us feel ashamed that we have not done more to protect these vulnerable people from the harm of gender-based violence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am even more worried that among the women who reported any form of physical and or sexual violence and who sought help from anyone; only five per cent sought help from the police, five per cent from medical services and just three per cent from social services.

Why are GBV survivors not willing and very often not able to seek help from government services? Do they not feel safe? Are the services not accessible? Do the services simply not exist where they live? These were some are some of the questions we sort to answer through our inquiry.

How the Inquiry Was Conducted?

Mr Deputy Speaker, the committee conducted our inquiry in an open and transparent manner. The inquiry was advertised through the local newspapers and included an invitation to the public to send us written submissions on topics covered under our Terms of Reference.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as many of you here today will know including a number of the ministers who graciously participated as part of our inquiry and I will acknowledge them as well later. We also held the first-ever public hearings on GBV, on Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 May 2021.

The focus of the hearings was on trying to better understand the challenges currently impacting the national effort to address GBV, in order to identify concrete recommendations for improvement.

In advance of the public hearings, the committee agreed that our focus would be on:

(1) Examining the amount and use of funding provided by the Government to address GBV;

(2) Understanding the delay in establishing the National GBV Secretariat and how to activate that body to be more effective;

(3) Identifying the challenges with investigating and prosecuting GBV cases across the country and how to address them;

(4) Clarifying the Government of Papua New Guinea's current proposals to implement women's reserved seats, as part of a broader commitment to ensure women can lead co-lead the National GBV Response.

**18/03**

Mr Deputy Speaker, a report of the public hearings is attached to our Committee Report, as an annex. We wanted to document these historic hearings for posterity.

On behalf of the committee I want to extend our thanks to the community representatives, government officials and ministers who participated in the hearings, namely:

Minister for Religion, Youth and Community Development, Honourable Wake Goi, Minister for Police, Honourable William Onglo, Treasurer, Honourable Ian Ling Stuckey, Minister for Correctional Service, Honourable Win Daki; and Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Honourable Timothy Masiu. Again, on behalf of the committee I extend our gratitude to those who gave their time by showing their commitment and interest towards this course by being present at the enquiry.

The information we gathered from the hearings was extremely useful to our inquiry. Contributions from NGOs painted a worrying picture of the many problems that GBV survivors continue to face in accessing services and accessing justice.

We also heard from many earnest officials, who I honestly believe want to do more to help vulnerable people in need.

Mr Deputy Speaker, having said that, what we heard almost across the board was a story of GBV services across the country which are simply still not good enough. I will speak about that in more detail shortly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, after the inquiry, the committee also received a total of 36 written submissions from individuals, interested groups, government departments, private sector agencies, and from community-based organizations. I also wish to extend my thanks to the many people who took their time to write to us, to share their insights. Those submissions were extremely useful and have been used to inform the report I have tabled here today.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, let me move on to a summary of our most important findings which I put before this house for discussion but also for action.

#### Key Findings

Mr Deputy Speaker, when the members of this House go through our Report, you will see that we have tried to be comprehensive, in reviewing the many different areas of GBV prevention and crisis response which need to be addressed.

I know this is a lot of recommendations, but they are directed at many different parts of the system and a number of different ministries.

I ask Ministers here to go through the report to see which areas your departments could take action to address. We have not made these recommendations lightly they are each directed at a specific issue which is deficient and which needs to be addressed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are 71 recommendations for action. In particular, there are many recommendations to be considered by Treasury, the Department of Justice and Attorney General, the Royal PNG Constabulary, the magistrates and national courts, the Ministry for Health and HIV/AIDS and of course, the Ministry for Religion, Youth and Community Development, which has primary responsibility for driving the National Gender Based Violence Strategy which was endorsed in 2016.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not intend to go through every recommendation here, but our committee wanted to focus specific attention of the House today on a number of the most critical and urgent recommendations that we want action taken on.

I mentioned at the beginning of the statement about the proposal to make the Committee a permanent, is an immediate recommendation which we will be seeking endorsement from this House.

After that, the committee recommends that Treasury urgently allocate more funding to support the implementation of the already published National GBV Strategy.

Our inquiry has shown that insufficient funding has been provided by the Government of PNG to support GBV, despite the National GBV Strategy proposing a budget of approximately K57 million over 10 years, back in 2016. So, insufficient funding has been provided

We are aware that the Department for Community Development and Religion, which has been responsible for driving the National GBV Strategy since 2016, has not produced strong budget documents to date. This is disappointing.

However, we are also aware that last month the c

department produced a proposal for funding from the Government's Public Investment Program asking for K37 million over five years, or K7 million per year.

**19/03**

Mr Deputy Speaker, we strongly urge our Treasurer and the NEC to give this proposal serious consideration. As I said in the upcoming budget submission, the PIP proposal seeks funding to coordinate better GBV prevention and crisis responses across the country. Money for counselling, funding for more safe houses, funding for community-based prevention activities — and funding to address the Sorcery Accusation Related Violence National Action Plan. All of this is vital and must urgently be ramped up but this cannot be done without proper funding.

I want to say here on the topic of funding that arose out of the inquiry and in the presence of the Treasurer that we noted the significant outside funding had come from our development partners in this area. And one of the issues that needs to be looked at is the scrutiny of that funding which is very significant and how this funding was actually used is one of the important issues to be looked at when you talking about funding issue around GBV.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the PIP funding requested will also be used to address the second major recommendation the ccommittee wanted to highlight, namely the immediate establishment of a well-staffed and well-resourced National GBV Secretariat.

The establishment of the National Gender Based Violence Secretariat was approved by the NEC in 2016, but even to this date, the Secretariat is not in operation and does not even have a permanent director.

In relation to this issue of staffing, we specifically call on the Government to go outside the public service to recruit a dynamic team of GBV specialists who have specific expertise on these issues. The Secretariat cannot be a place where long-term generalist bureaucrats are posted. We need good networkers who have a solid knowledge of GBV practice and partners, who can bring their GBV knowledge to the job and hit the ground running.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we need the Department for Personnel Management to immediately approve the 10 staff positions that have been identified for the National GBV Secretariat. DPM then needs to immediately run recruitments to identify qualified specialists who will be capable of really driving change across the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the committee believes that setting up a well-staffed National GBV Secretariat will also help to address some of the other problems in the system, namely poor coordination. The Secretariat should be empowered to coordinate with provincial level service providers, across all sectors.

The Secretariat should also better coordinate with NGOs and churches who are already working diligently in this space. The NGOs have filled the gap in Government funding for GBV by providing a range of GBV support services across the country, including crisis response, safe house, counselling, legal advice and other support to GBV survivors.

And Mr Deputy Speaker, let me take this opportunity on behalf of our committee to thank many of those NGOs who out there on the ground working under difficult and violent situation where the public has to mobilise sometimes against the particular individual. They have to intervene to rescue them sometimes without the support of police and putting their own lives at risk without any government funding but committing to helping our people.

The committee takes this opportunity to publicly thank them for that commitment and to also highlight that it is these NGOs, the churches that are better qualified and have demonstrated that and part of the response needs to be resourcing those who had already demonstrated commitment to this issue and course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the work that community organisations are doing to address GBV brings me to the third issue prioritised by the Committee, which was raised by a number of NGOs during our May parliamentary hearings and that is, the worrying increase we are seeing in relation to SARV.

Sorcery Accusation Related Violence is a growing problem in our country, with a team of researchers estimating that from 2000 to 2020 there have been over 6000 SARV cases, resulting in an estimated 3000 deaths nationally. Their research data estimates the national harm caused by SARV and suggested that 12 people are killed and a further 14 suffer serious harm as a result of sorcery accusation related violence every month.

**20/03**

Mr Deputy Speaker, we must do more to address this problem. The brutal violence we hear about as a result of sorcery accusations is truly shocking. And the committee wants the SARV National Plan to be properly funded and implemented. The committee also wants the police to do more to investigate and bring charges in SARV cases. We also want the Department of Justice and Attorney General to look into laws related to glassman and glassmeri, they are the main instigators of sorcery-related violence.

It's really a new trend which people use to get information and point fingers at especially old ladies for people to torture. This glassman and meri must be punished because they even make money out from it. We have to consider laws relating to this activity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this issue of sanctions and enforcement brings me to our fourth set of recommendations that the justice institutions which are mandated to investigate, prosecute, adjudicate gender-based violence cases must immediately strengthen their capacity to do their job and protect the GBV survivors.

Our report has more than 20 recommendations which are specifically directed at improving law enforcement and access justice in relation to GBV. Unfortunately, that is representative of how deficient this service currently is; too many GBV survivors will tell you that they simply cannot access justice after the harm has been done to them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the committee was disappointed to hear at the public hearing about how many GBV victims have to wait for a long time for their cases to be investigated and prosecuted with many cases not coming to a conclusion at all.

We heard at the public hearing that last year the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary registered about 15 000 cases but only 300 were prosecuted and 100 convicted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the committee was shocked at the hearings when both the Minister for Police and Police Commissioner spoke honestly to us about the current capacity of the police services to address GBV cases.

When asked the direct question; if a woman comes to a police station seeking help in relation to GBV, can you assure us that you can protect them? The answer from both was no, unfortunately, we cannot.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend them for being honest but this response needs to change. And I want to take the opportunity again through this House to say to our police personnel around the country, with all the difficulties and challenges they have from day to day, you have a duty to the public to protect and serve them. When someone comes to you for help because they are badly beaten then you must help them. You cannot give excuses or use the excuse of culture to accept this behavior. And it applies to all of us as well. So, our good policemen and women out there please do your job by investigating, arresting and prosecuting when evidence is there and protect these victims.

Mr Deputy Speaker we also plan to hold a second set of hearings before the budget session. Therefore, we have informed our police and all the aspects of the justice system on notice that recommendations made in the report have to be made available to us because one of the issues is the funding issues and it's a big challenge.

**21/03**

Mr Deputy Speaker, there are two more recommendations that our committee prioritized which focused more on preventing Gender Based Violence, then just responding once it has happened. So, there is a prevention side and there is a responding side after the damage is done. but it is the prevention part that we need to do more work on.

Firstly, the committee wants to put some resources into offering counselling services across the country. Counselling can offer a safe space that allows for GBV survivors and perpetrators to stop and reflect on what is happening and decide on what to do next. And counselling can be an important way of helping are those who are locked into a negative cycle of violence, to sit down and reflect on their behavior and try to make a change.

We must try to stop violent acts before they manifest and one way is by providing people in distress with counselling. In the longer term our second recommendation focuses much more on holistically building family environment which are more stable and secure by focusing more government resources on family planning. We must all commit to making a change in our life to be more respectful towards our spouses and our children. And family planning must be a part of our homes too.

Mr Deputy Speaker, family planning fundamentally empowers a woman more than any other factor. She furthers her education; she marries late and has less children and is healthier.

It also strengthens the family unit and the children are better loved, educated and the cycle of violence is disrupted. We must address family planning at a personnel level as well at the government level, by properly planning family planning education and related health services

Let me now come to the last major substantive recommendation from our Report that I want to bring to the House's attention today. It is last but let me clear that is by no means the least of our recommendations. In fact, it is my hope that this recommendation can be address in this very parliament session.

Our Committee Report calls on the Government to urgently progress the proposal to reserve seats for women in the National Parliament. I know the comments made by the Prime today in response to the other issues around the election. We understand that there is a relatively controversial topic but our committee report supports the government's initiative and calls on the government to urgently progress a proposal for reserved seats for women in the Parliament. This is a strategy to promote gender equality at the highest levels and will ensure that in the next parliament, women can co-lead the National GBV response. Again, I want to emphasize what I said at the outset, that this measure should be a temporary measure to somehow ensure that we get at least some minimum number of women on to the Floor of Parliament to participate at the highest level. As today there are no women on the Floor of Parliament and yet half of our population are women. And this points to the fact that there are cultural and other issues that are making this difficult. I repeat, it is a relatively controversial issue but we stand behind the Prime Minister and this government's intimations that are supporting a proposal to bring five regional seats to Parliament. The policy has been approved by Cabinet in principle. but the details of the legislative process still need to be determined. At this stage, it is not clear whether the 5 reserved seats will be legislated in time to be implemented at the 2022 national election.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with no women in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, reserving seats for women now appears to be the most viable option ensuring that women are included in the next Parliament. This will ensure that women's voices can be heard within Parliament regarding addressing GBV. Legislation must be brought to the House in this session, so that it can be passed in Three Readings in time for implementation in advance of the 2022

National General Election. There is simply no time to waste.



22/03

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are a big country with our people sprawling across a beautiful landscape but we are also a small country where we all know our neighbours in our communities. We know when a woman or a child is being hurt and we surely know that in those moments we must do something about it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend this Report to Parliament and request that all our Members of Parliament have a good look through it and seriously think about what each and every one of us can do about it. The first thing we can do is to start with our own behaviour. Many of us are long in our ways and sat in our ways but please consider addressing this issue at a personal level. We are all leaders in our own communities where we can use our voices and our district funds to do more. Part of the recommendations is guidelines on PSIP and DSIP Funds to better help Members of Parliament to think about what they can do to contribute positively.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I stand here to make my commitment to do more and I look forward to working with every Member of Parliament to do more together. Let us work together to end GBV and ensure safe and prosperous PNG for every men, women and child.

In conclusion, I want to thank all the hard-working members of this Committee and let us continue working together. I ask for the support of the Members of Parliament for these recommendations. Once you endorse them, it allows us to make the next step in terms of committing it to reality because we have the authority of Parliament. That is what the role of a Parliamentary Committee is. It is seeking endorsement from Parliament which then allows it to progress to the next step.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I hope we have done justice through the Special Parliamentary Committees work and we look forward to bringing a final report to the Floor of Parliament. I thank you all for your patience listening to this long statement this afternoon. Please take the opportunity to debate this Report if you can. Thank you.

I move – That the Report and its recommendations be adopted.

**Mr BRYAN KRAMMER** (Madang – Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) – I move –

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to commend the Chairman of the Special Committee on Gender Based Violence and the members of that committee including the Governor for East Sepik, the Governor for National Capital District, the Governor for Chimbu, the Member for Goroka, the Governor for Morobe and the Member for Rabaul.

I, as the Member for Madang, and a minister in the Marape-Basil Government fully and completely support the recommendations, comments and issues raised in this Report. Gender Based Violence is an extremely complex and challenging national issue. There is no quick fix. It essentially deals with people's behaviour and people are both the problem and solution.

The Gender Based Violence issue is an ongoing issue with studies in most developing countries and other parts of the world. It is an essential issue because in every society or nation the core is our family. This is an issue that is a threat to our families. With most of the recommendations raised in the issue of justice and law enforcement under the ministry that I hold and also the Police. Law is a piece of paper until someone decides to enforce it. That enforcement not only begins in the community but in policing to the judiciary and ends with CS. While policing can investigate and arrest someone for committing a crime like GBV, it then goes through our courts and finally serving a sentence with the CS. It is complex issue and police can talk about resources but at the end of the day.

**23/03**

What is the point in resourcing our police, and our Judiciary or justice system and not resource our Correctional Services because all the people who committed crimes end up in Correctional Services. While I would also like to acknowledge the committee because in such a short time, on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> hearing, in less than two and half months you were able to submit a report, where typically hearings and committees can sit for months and years before an actual report is presented, I would like to commend the Committee members and also the Chairman for ensuring that this report is brought in here in less than two and half months, I note the 71 recommendations, the majority of which lie within justice reform as well as Police enforcement, this issues will not be addressed overnight. We look forward to DJAG to look into these issues but again as we all know, even in basic service delivery, all of us struggle just to build something.

When you are talking about Gender Based Violence you are talking at a complex issue where the perpetrators are known to each other. They sleep in the same house and in many are policemen or police reservists. The challenges faced by Police is; in this case when a complaint is filed and then police investigate and when they want to take the matter further the victim

decides to withdraw the charges, unfortunately, this happens repeatedly, to a point where the arresting officer is no longer interested in pursuing the matter. Many times, the victim decides to withdraw the case and therefore they cannot progress it so they lose interest in these matters and pursue other more serious matters. What is also of concern about Gender Based Violence, the crime is usually committed where both, the victim and the perpetrator sleep and wake up in the same house every day.

The 71 recommendations I can make a commitment to the member for Alotau and the Committee and on behalf of the Government as the Minister for Justice that DJAG will table this tomorrow morning in our meeting and then we will put an action plan on our part as the DJAG and Justice system on how we will be able to assist and provide a road map going forward and working with police and Correctional Services in some cases if it's an area of funding but funding is not essential, What is essential is a plan. The essential component is the ability to implement that plan which deals with people and, is the critical component? So, while there are many discussions over funding, we have funded many things and money has gone missing. So, I look forward to working with the committee and with other respective agencies and also with Open Members because some of these areas talk about village courts and policing and all that will require funding. Most of the Budget funding now are directed to Districts, we look forward to working with Open Members in some areas, if there's budget gaps, you can identify officers that we can work together with to either put on the payroll through the districts or DPM to make sure that laws are enforced.

Some cases are still sitting in our courts for months and years and as the Chairman of LFC I will raise these issues with the Judiciary on why some cases are taking that long. Recently there was a case of a human rights abuse, 12 officers in Wewak burnt down a village and the trial was vacated because the Public Prosecutor had no funding, when brought to my attention, I then communicated with the Treasurer and released a warrant funding for the Public Prosecutor to proceed with the trial only be told that the Public Prosecutor didn't get the funds, so then the trial was vacated for two months. These are institutional issues that we are facing to just get the normal crimes to be addressed.

For the member's benefits to highlight some of these issues that we face in the system, I look forward to the next meeting that we will have something to present in relation to all these recommendations, what has been acted on? And what is not been acted on?

24/03

**Sir PETER IPATAS (Enga)** – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also want to join in this debate but firstly, let me congratulate the new Member for Moresby North-West for his victory and joining us here in Parliament.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the committee headed by the honourable Charles Abel. They have done a terrific job on the Gender-based Violence inquiry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, for about eight years; this is one symptom of law and order problem we have in this country. We do not go around solving problems in peaceful manner. The Government needs to take on Law and Order. The people generally think that there is no authority. People do not seem to understand that they are safe in their own country.

Whilst, commending the committee for a good job on Gender-Based Violence I just want to repeat again; when are we going to be serious about law and order? We can talk about projects and many things in this nation, but if we do not manage law and order we will lose this country. I am tired of talking about law and order here in Parliament and many people may think that, Enga is not manageable in terms of law and order and I am continuously talking about law and order.

That is not the case. I have many tribal fight issues and that is the biggest issue I have in my province. Look around the country; as Members of Parliament, do we feel safe running around? If leaders of this country do not feel safe, what about our citizens? They do not have escorts or police. We owe it to them to make this country safe. It is not about women or girls only; it is about everybody.

Mr Deputy Speaker, through you, why are we not addressing the call that I have made for so many years? Law and order is a problem that we cannot fix internally. We have to be leaders enough to say that there is a problem that we cannot manage. We need external help.

Just now, the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General told Parliament that there are issues. Are we going to fix them?

I have always said that let us set up strategies to put a stop to all these things which are happening, by bringing in police. We are just amending Laws here on this Floor of Parliament to suit our own political agenda, but we are not able to be leaders to give immunity to people who can come and help us. I am telling you, not very long you will not be respected as leaders out there in the communities.

The trend is that, people seem to think that they can continue to do what they do because, there is no authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, taking this opportunity I just want to say it again. I do not know why my former colleague the Governor for Morobe who challenged the ECP program to try and bring our country under control; it is escalating.

25/03

I want the Government to seriously look into this issue whilst we are discussing about the Gender Base Violence.

This morning we were discussing about the elections, who is going to make sure that the Elections are going to go smoothly?

So, I call once again for the Government to seek external assistance to help us to manage law and order. When we get the Police to be effective and doing the right thing then corruption will stop, law and order issues will be minimised. When citizens are aware that they will be prosecuted for their crimes they will stop causing crime. Currently, they are getting away with crime so they continue to commit it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, while supporting the Committee, we should really address the bigger problem which is the Police. I believe that this will be the first step to bringing law and order back into this country.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr GARRY JUFFA** (Northern) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker for giving me an opportunity to speak on this very important subject matter. I totally support the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and the Governor of Enga Province, who have spoken many times on this particular issue; not on the issue of Gender Based Violence but specifically on the issue of Law and Order. And, I just want to add some comments to what he has said.

Some time ago, in the 1980's Australia had serious issues with a number of its state police whereby they were involved in activities that were deemed corrupt or corrupted by organised crime syndicates. Now, as a result they took it upon themselves to overhaul their Police Forces and under a cooperation program that was undertaken in partnership with the UK Government, they brought in Police into Australia and placed them in a number of states. Basically, what I am saying is that it can be done here in Papua New Guinea.

If you look at the current Policing situation, our police are in dire need of assistance. If you look at the ratio of Policeman to citizens, I have said this statistic many times here on this Floor but it hasn't improved since 2012.

26/03

According to the United Nations the ratio of policemen to citizen is supposed to be 1:400 but in Papua New Guinea it is 1:1200. This is in Papua New Guinea, a developing nation that difficult to police with the geography terrains that are quiet challenging and also the challenge of peoples' perception.

We are only 40 years old as a nation, where once upon time we were 830 tribes now trying to merged together and become a country. It is challenging to police a nation like this. We need more people to be involved in this effort.

I totally agree with Governor Ipatas and I believe that's something we need to look at it seriously. Bring in external help. Look at the possibility of putting in provincial police commanders from foreign countries to manage, restructure and rebuild the management and capacity of the provincial commands.

The same with police headquarters and the special forces. For example, the forensic unit. The forensic unit are supposed to be the first people that turn up at the scene of a crime but they are usually never there. The crime scene is contaminated before they even turn up in 24-hours. If you cannot investigate that case you might as well forget it. That's why many cases are going uninvestigated. Even if investigated it is not done properly.

Let me provide an interesting statistic from my own experience, when I worked with Customs and I was in the investigation division, we had an understanding with our police force and we worked with them on a number of cases. I was horrified of the case load for policemen at Boroko CID. One police officer was handling about 30 cases. They have six units and each unit had a car that was barely functional. Each unit had laptops or standalone computers that hardly functioned and every day the caseloads piled on.

The burden on each case officer is so humungous to be able to effectively investigate these cases. They had to collect witness statement, collect evidence, identify suspects, bring them into conduct records of interviews and then prepare a prosecution brief.

I totally agree with Governor Ipatas, this is something that we must pay attention to seriously. On the matter of withdrawing complaints, just because a complaint is withdrawn, doesn't meant that the crime has not been committed. If a crime has been committed its should be investigated regardless of whether someone withdraws the complaint or not. So, we should look at amending those laws.

Crime continues to escalate in this country because criminals get away with committing crimes. The general perception is that you can get away with committing a crime, even a very serious one.

In regards to gender-based violence, we have had photographs of people surrounding a victim, naked, tied, tortured and all those people are actually involved in this crime. None of them will be arrested and apprehended and this will continue.

Then you have the glass-man industry that is on the rise, you know people who are hired to basically identify suspected sorcerers and usually this suspected sorcerer is a very vulnerable person living by themselves; an elderly person. Soon enough this person is brought and tortured and out of pain and fear usually a female sometime a male will admit to having committed a crime when they didn't.

It escalates and the glass-man becomes a person of credibility so more people turn up to this glass-man. Anytime when something goes wrong in their family, clan and tribes, instead of looking at the real reasons, they would turn to a glass-man. The glass-man is feeding from this industry and makes money for it.

That issue is not being investigated or addressed. These are criminals. They are perpetrating crimes and should be arrested and prosecuted. Again, it all goes back to the policing situation. We need to really look at ourselves and examine where we are as a nation approaching 50 years. Where have we gone and if we need help then so be it.

We have development partners who are willing to assist us like US, New Zealand, Australia and they are willing to assist so let's get their help.

**27/03**

I agree, if the policing or security issues are not in order then there won't be any progress in any aspect of development in this country. Or, if there is progress then it will be incomplete and not properly managed. To have structured progress, you need to get policing and security issues right. We need to help the police personnel and when we do that then they will be able to help and protect us and the society and they will keep the criminals at bay. Thank you.

**Sir PUKA TEMU (Abau)** – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also want to join with the leaders that have supported the presentation by Honorable Charles Abel, who is the Chairman of this Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Committee. I stand behind all the recommendations stated today. Let's take action on it and ensure the permanent parliamentary committee take multisectoral approaches led by all the Ministers of State affecting your ministry.

I want to emphasise on two points. While I agree on the two governors' debate on law and order situation in the country. This particular issue of GBV must be given more special attention than the general law and order issue. We all have been debating on it for a long time.

The issues of policing and lawlessness that is happening all around the country have been debated. But, the issue of GBV must be given special focus and attention by all of us and the recommendations in the presentation encompass many of those; however, it's the implementation side of it.

I now challenge our Prime Minister who is leading in supporting the establishment of this committee to provide the leadership to give this very special attention.

With that, I want to highlight two amongst the many recommendations that the Chairman of the Committee has highlighted today.

One of them is a special mention in the report it's in blue color and its on page eight and signed by the Chairman, Charles Abel.

It reads; *'the prevalence and increasing rate of gender-based violence in PNG in its many forms is cause for great concern.*

*To fully understand the issue, it has to be reviewed within the context of the wider issue of the acceptance of violence as a response to social issues at a community or individual level in our country.*

*The examination of the broader underlying causalities of this are not the subject of this report, however if I were to point out one critical element that drives the disempowerment, poverty, family instability, violence cycle-it would be the inability of the woman to plan the timing of and number of children she has'.*

I fully buy this sentiment and I am glad that the Chairman highlighted this in blue in this report because there lies the example; one of the development issues in our country is the high maternal mortality rate in this country.

**28/03**

This GBV links the high maternal mortality and the poor empowerment of the women to plan and time her children. In the midst of that is the violence issue that is present.

I just want to make one recommendation to the Minister for Health and the Treasurer to fully fund the family planning programs. These programs are already available they need to be funded in order to be accessible. The billions of kina that you are spending on building roads which, we can't even maintain in the medium to long term.

But if spend money on family planning programs which are already set, so that mothers like those who are being abused can have access to family planning options, many are simple but very effective empowerment tools.



My second and final point that I want to highlight is based on my strong belief and it is a principle that I have always held. That when you educate a girl child, you educate the nation. And therefore, treating that girl in Papua New Guinea under this GBV debate as a very precious person; whether for example; in our school subsidy schemes, if the family has three children and the parents can only afford for one, the government should pay for the girl child to be educated.

Those specific interventions to manage this precious thing called a girl child right from primary education through to the university or tertiary level education, we must cater for her health. We create a leader in these girls that we are educating for our future and their future as well. I strongly recommend that special attention be given to the 'girl child of Papua New Guinea as soon as she is born to any family. Our focus should be particularly based on ensuring this girl child is educated from elementary right through to the tertiary level. And should she drop out along the way, alternative learning pathways should be created so that she gets trained in other areas to be successful and fruitful in life. The other point which I wish to raise is in relation to recommendation *no: 7.2 on page 41*.

This recommendation calls for what can be done now but what about the future? What will become of the child who is born today, and as we are debating there are 100 children being born. So, in 18 years' time, what will become of the child that is born today? With due respect to the debate on GBV, the education system and our upbringing, nurturing them and teaching them respect, trust and abiding with set laws of our country. We need to start educating our children at an early age. From to day on wards if we manage and create a good curriculum for a child that is born today and instill it early; a child born today will be different from our generation.

**29/03**

Many times, I have heard us talking about creating more seats for women representatives in Parliament. I have heard male MPs saying they will not support this agenda. They say women must contest and win elections to be here. Why don't we give them a special attention rather than covering it up under law and order issues?

Mr Deputy Speaker, I strongly recommend that this Gender Based Violence be given special attention beyond just law and order. I think that we can find solutions if we do a few things properly. Thank you.

**Mr WAKA GOI** (Jimi – Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion) –  
I rise to thank the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender Base Violence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I come from a different background and I apologise if I have not been addressing some of the very important issues concerning our country and our people. In my lifetime, I have not witnessed my parents argue and fight. I am now bald and grey but I have held these principles and have not fought with my wife. I never grew in such an environment therefore I am very pleased to hear most of what is being highlighted. Most men spend half of their time, consuming alcohol and not giving enough attention to their families especially in a city like Port Moresby. This is probably one of the main causes of the issue at hand.

Mr Deputy Speaker, some men marry two to three wives and leave them to fend for themselves and politicians are no exception. We have a lot of children without a father. Who is going to raise them and meet their needs when growing up? In my time growing up, the family met and shared household duties. You will hardly find it happening today. Just by driving around the city, you will find families still moving around endlessly when they should be sitting down together for dinner. This is a post or a precondition to encouraging GBV. We must look at the causes and reasons why we have this problem. We cannot treat it as GBV and forget the causes of this problem. It starts there and ends up as GBV. For example, we find a whole family being on the mobile with no concern for each other. The father is on the mobile, the mother on hers and the kids are on the TV so who will look out for the family?

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to hear Members of Parliament discussing this issue and a lot of genuine concern has been raised like in budgeting money to address this issue. We need money to address these issues but there are also other factors attached to it too. I was at Islander Hotel the other time and witnessed a fight between a couple. When we tried stopping the man, the wife assisted him and started fighting us. I was confused as to what was actually happening. Being such a situation; they usually end up withdrawing the case when in court. I do not know the reason but maybe the husband is probably a dangerous guy. Maybe after serving time, he would come back and inflict more harm. Another probable reason would be that he is the only bread winner. These may only be some of the reasons but I think and believe that this issue needs a wholistic approach.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that our leaders are starting off on a very good note. Our public service must be brought in line to assist and part-take in addressing this issue. If a working father is drinking too much then we should deduct money from his salary and remit to the wife's account so that she can take care of the family.

30/02

These are issues that need to be addressed which will holistically help the families. Otherwise, all we will do is talk and there will be no change.

I am in charge of the Youths, Censorship, Child and Family, and GBV, and I tell you, we can talk about growing our economy and make plans for the next 20 years but we will never have any success at the end, if our peoples' lives are in disarray. They will create problems for us. Even if we had a K100 billion Budget, we will still have law and order issues. I understand the plight of our youths. Gender-based violence is becoming a major challenge for me to the extent that I've lost a lot of hair and it is wearing me out. Its okay, I have taken an oath to serve this ministry and I am happy that we are making a concerted effort to address this challenge.

The Government, through Finance and Treasury can work together with us and put our budget through. If I should return to Government in the future, I would like to see that the Secretariats be empowered so that if the justice system cannot address these issues, they can make an independent arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of gender-based violence.

When we set up a body, let us empower them to function effectively.

Thank you, this is my brief contribution. I am pleased of the combined efforts to establish the working committee. You have also interrogated me at times but I am the responsible and it is my duty to bear this challenge and to improve in my capacity as Minister, likewise all others can do the same and we move this country forward so that in the next 20 years, we will not have any regrets because our economy will be prosperous and so will our peoples' lives. Our people's attitudes and behaviour will change, and we can all move forward.

**Mr WILLIAM SAMB** (Goilala – Transport and Infrastructure) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Before I speak, on behalf of my people of Goilala and the Department of Transport, I would like to welcome the Member for Moresby North-West, Honourable Lohia Boe Samuel to Parliament. You are of the products of a by-election so we will do our best to assist you.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to commend our team for producing this important report. I will only make three points.

Firstly, we talked about funding and involving all the departments, I am a product of a polygamous relationship. My father had two wives. I didn't live with my biological mother but with my step-mother but they hardly had conflicts. Today, in this House, we must all be responsible too. I have not seen anything in the report regarding polygamy. We men who like to have multiple wives also contribute to this problem. So, we should also look at ways to prevent polygamous relationships.

In the highlands, they manage their polygamous relationships, but for the coastal region, this is not our practice. So, we should address this polygamy issue.

Secondly, alcohol is contributing to this. How did we give approvals to companies like Vitis to produce alcohol? The alcohol content in their products exceeds the normal ratio.

**31/03**

Some alcohols contain a high percentage which causes consumers to go out of hand. We also control the issuing of SP licence, yet we go ahead and give licence to other brewery companies. We are hypocrites here.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, and my colleagues who have presented the report which is an issue that needs to be addressed. In that way we can come up with solutions before issues arise. It is not good funding only the Police Force but some of these things can be addressed.

There are lot of things which I want to say but I will come up with my third point which is on drugs. In my area, marijuana just grows even though they are cleared.

There are some discussions on the medical benefits of the plant called marijuana and if we could address the good parts of this plant, it may help.

Those are few of my points which I wish to debate, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY** (Kavieng – Minister for Treasury) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise to support the establishment of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-based Violence and support the work of its Chairman, Honourable Charles Abel and his committee. In a very short space of time with limited funding, they were able to complete quite a comprehensive report. The report did not only identify the issues that they have, but provided some recommendations.

In my response this afternoon I would like to give some assurances to this House and especially to the chairman and his committee that we will be on standby.

Mr Deputy Speaker, gender-based violence really is an issue of national importance. Growing up here in Papua New Guinea, many of us were part of gender-based violence and in some of our cases, it was normal. I would probably say that even some of us in this House today; in an earlier life may have even been a part of this problem.

I suggest to all of us that we do accept it. It has been a problem even in our own personal circumstances and with that we can start to try and address it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also want to assure the Chairman and his committee that most of us sitting here today and those of us who are not here, share the shame that you and your

committee have felt, knowing that you should have probably done more to protect the vulnerable; we all share that with you.

To read some of the statistics, 60 per cent of our children that went to a women's shelter in Port Moresby were abused; that really comes home. You know we are all fathers, grandfathers; some of us not all of us, uncles and brothers, and it really drives home the point.

I note from the report that you have identified four areas to focus on. The first being to examine the amount and the use of funding that has been provided by the government. Further to that I note from my portfolio's perspective 71 recommendations per action, and I noticed that the first one relates to the Treasury, requesting us to allocate more funding to support the implementation of the National GBV Strategy.

### **32/03**

I have noticed we've budgeted approximately K57 million over ten years since 2016 and I am pleased that the Department of National Planning has produced a proposal for funding under our PIP Program of K37 million over 5 years and broken down to K7 million per year.

Mr Chairman and your committee, whilst I cannot promise that we'll get K7 million in the Budget, be assured that I will give this particular proposal a greater than the normal attention that we do with our budget proposals, and will endeavor to try and come as close to that. So be assured that we will give it serious consideration.

I was shocked to learn from the report that in the last 20 years, we've had 3000 deaths which equates to 14 deaths per month. When I read the statistics regarding sorcery related violence, I can only think back of my home province and share with this Parliament to say how blessed we are in New Ireland that this kind of horrible acts haven't reach our province. And it makes me more determine that it won't.

To those provinces that have been subjected to these kinds of practices, all I can say is work with us in government. It is just something we need to address. There was an article in the Papers three or four months ago that shocked most of us to see a woman tied to a pole with dreadful things done to her. It makes you angry and if we respond in the same way, then we are no better.

Police registration of 15 000 cases, 300 prosecutions, 100 convictions is a wake-up call to all of us sitting here today. So, Mr Chairman, I can say to you and your committee is that, we hear you. I think you have done pretty well under difficult circumstances.

Finally, and in concluding, your calls to progress reserve seats for women in Parliament, as Member for Kavieng, I have always supported this proposal and will continue to do so whilst

I am a Member of Parliament. I look forward to working with this side of the House to progress this as soon as practically possible.

So, with that, Mr Speaker, I assure the House and the people of our nation that the Treasury stands by ready to implement and to achieve the recommendations that your Committee has worked very hard to produce. I thank you for your efforts.

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** (Esa'ala) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I too rise to express my support for this very important report. I want to add to the debate, certain points which I think should help us, going forward, working with the government.

**33/03**

I start off by saying that this issue must be regarded as an evil; we must see it for what it is. We must come to a point as a nation where as leaders we must look at this with horror and regard it as a national crisis. I say this because when you look at the report, it makes references to earlier studies and reports. What the Minister for Justice is saying is true; our government and leadership has been actively involved in addressing this issue.

Mr Speaker, if you look at the manner in which the issue has been addressed, we go right back to the challenge that was presented in 2013 and before that. You will see that relevant departments have come up with certain policies and the work has continued to a point where its crystalized in the national family sexual violence policy. Which is one of the main policies that is currently guiding our efforts in addressing gender-based violence.

In 2013, this honorable House, in response to this issue, passed the *Family Protection Act* and it is true when this committee tells us that the systems are established and our people are trying their best especially those in the law and justice sector.

It is true that we just need to declare it a crisis and start treating it that way. All these recommendations are going to affect us individually, but also affects us as leaders. These recommendations should cause us to react in terms of our efforts to finding solutions. When the pandemic came in and it was elevated from a health issue to a pandemic, we reacted accordingly because our people's health was at risk and as a responsible government, we felt that it was necessary that we take immediate and very strong stringent action. Until the discussion gravitates to a point where we see the seriousness of the issue we are talking about, we will still be here talking about the same things.

I want to at this juncture commend the government and in particular the Prime Minister in supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Goal number 5 deals with gender

equality and our government has done well in adopting this SDG focus in our medium-term development plan. So, the MPD 3, which the chairman of the committee was responsible, is already there and it is precise.

But when the Prime Minister last took up the challenge on this voluntarily reporting to the United Nation on SDG, we actually admitted that some work had been done here in our country. Some positive progress but a lot more needs to be done.

So, in my contribution I want to draw the attention of the committee to the SDG report that was published by our own officials perhaps in National Planning Department where very useful recommendations have been highlighted under gender violence and equality. There are five major recommendations in that report for this committee to take note of but the main one which I wish to highlight is the number two, where it is recommended that government of Papua New Guinea must now resource and fund the strategies and the efforts of our agencies like the police, perhaps in training and helping agencies like the Public Solicitor where legal representation is needed by these women.

**34/03**

The halfway house caters for women whilst waiting for counseling. According to recommendations made we can be able to seek funding from non-government sectors, or even draw from the willingness of the corporate communities.

This report shows that the funding comes from outside partners to facilitate the gender-based violence strategy and nothing from our government. When will leaders realise the importance of this issue and allocate funds?

The Department of Planning must now start to bring together coordinated effort so that partnership of funding coming through is properly coordinated.

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

Motion – That the Report and its recommendations be adopted – agreed to.

Report adopted.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 3.48 p.m.