

**THIRD DAY**

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**Thursday 9 September 2021**

**DRAFT HANSARD**

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<b><u>Subject:</u></b>	<b><u>Page No.:</u></b>
<b>ANSWER TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS –</b>	
<b>PAC Inquiry into Propofol Deaths .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS –</b>	
<b>STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	
<b>Trade Arrangements.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Madang Town Road.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>MOTION BY LEAVE .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS</b>	
<b>ORGANIC LAW ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL-LEVEL GOVERNMENT</b>	
<b>ELECTIONS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>First Reading .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>NATIONAL UPDATE – BOUGAINVILLE PEACE PROCESS –</b>	
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ADJOURNMENT .....</b>	<b>65</b>

## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

### CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

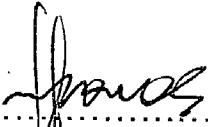
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Corrections should be authorized by signature and contain the name, office and telephone number of the person transmitting/making corrections.

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**HARRY MOMOS**

Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## THIRD DAY

Thursday 9 September 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 ring of the Bells.

Sitting suspended

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.50 a.m, and invited the Member for West New Britain, Honourable **Sasindran Muthuvel** to say Prayers.

'Oh my Lord, can you not see us here? Please bless us all with love for you, so that we can remember you with faith. Forgive us for the sins we have done, please help us and guide us now. Lord, fill in thy Grace, thy presence and radiance. You are our source of strength; our path and destination and we are always connected to you. Nothing of us but everything of you. Lord lead us higher deeper and beyond, but most of all towards you. O Lord today is a gift that you have given to us and how we use today is our gift back to you, Amen!'

### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS – PAC Inquiry into Propofol Deaths

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members yesterday the honorable Member for Abau, Sir Puka Temu, referred a question to the Chair regarding the deaths related to the use of a medical drug called Propofol. The question was; can the Chair ensure that the Public Accounts Committee is called immediately to investigate this very serious and sad matter. The Public Accounts Committee is established under section 216 of the *Constitution* that same provision and part five (5) of the *Public Finances Management Act* provides for the powers and functions of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Public Accounts Committees primary function is to examine and report to the Parliament on the public accounts of Papua New Guinea. And on the control of and on

transactions with or concerning the public monies and property of Papua New Guinea. This extends to any account, finance and or property that are subject to inspection and audit by the Auditor-General.

Any member of the parliament may move for the reference to the committee for any question in connection with the public accounts for a report to the Parliament. Recently the Public Accounts Committee tabled a very comprehensive report on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 exactly a year ago on the Department of Health's procurement of medicines. From that report, fifteen recommendations were tabled and adopted by the Parliament.

I believe all Members of Parliament have that report and the recommendations. I signed these recommendations and forwarded them to the office of the Prime Minister for consideration and appropriate action. The Public Accounts Committee examined the public accounts of the Health Department and other matters that the committee considered to be of national importance. And it is important to note that the PAC examines and reports on financial related matters.

Honorable Members after careful consultation with the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the investigation of deaths related to the drug propofol may not be within the jurisdiction of the Public Accounts Committee.

**02/03**

I agree that this is a serious matter concerning the welfare of our people and I'm certain the deaths in our hospitals could have been avoided. I encourage those responsible to ensure that the investigations are completed in a timely manner so that accurate corrective measures can be taken by responsible authorities.

Thank you.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I inform the Parliament that;

- (a) The second group of students of the Public Policy Management Students Association at the University of Papua New Guinea are present in the Public Gallery, and
- (b) Teachers and students of St. Patrick's Primary School, Gabone, Central Province are present in the Public Gallery; and

(c) Councilors from the Tambul-Nebilyer Open electorate in the Western Highlands Province are present in the Public Gallery.

On behalf of the National Parliament, I welcome them.

## QUESTIONS

### Trade Arrangements

**Mr RICHARD MARU** — Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise to ask a series of questions to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, specifically in relation to our trade priorities. It is key to building our economy and the country and the Parliament needs to know what are the government plans on the future of trade and which countries we are going to prioritise trade with into the future.

Mr Speaker, as you know, Papua New Guinea is part of our world system called WTO multilateral trading system which is a rule-based trading system and trading in the world is administered by the World Trade Organisation based in Geneva.

Mr Speaker, Papua New Guinea can't do without world trade and trade partnerships and trade arrangements. The most important one we currently have is the interim partnership agreement between Papua New Guinea and the European Union. This trade agreement is the most successful agreement we have that allows us to have duty-free market access to European market of five hundred million people basically for our Tuna and our fisheries products. This trade agreement gave rise to the growth of our Fisheries Sector and in particular, the manufacturing sector in fisheries because we have direct market access to that market. It's the most important market access we have.

In the region we have the MSG trade agreement. That trade agreement allows us to export goods into MSG member countries.

Mr Speaker, I am sure all of you recall the trade war we had with Fiji which we won and finally we were allowed to export Ox&Palm, biscuits and other goods to Fiji.

Mr Speaker, it has been concerning that our country after the launch of the trade policy, we haven't done much work in the trade area. We all know that most important trade market and potential market for us is in Indonesia. That's where our future is in terms of International Trade.

In terms of Australia, we have knocked back their push to get Papua New Guinea to sign the trade agreement called PACER Plus because it would have been a one-sided trade agreement favouring Australia.

03/03

They can't allow us to export pawpaw and taro into the Australian market because of their very strict Phyto sanitary but they are able to allow Fiji, Tonga and Samoa to export all agriculture products into their market.

Mr Speaker, in order for Papua New Guinea to open trade with Indonesia, with a population of 218 million and an annual economy growth of five percent, population growth of 1.1 per cent, we have a land base border with them and we have done nothing to enhance to trade with Indonesia. It is a goldmine waiting to be open.

Mr Speaker, to do trade with Indonesia, we must have a wharf in Vanimo and Wewak. We are still waiting for these wharves to be funded. We need to have a duty-free market trade agreement with Indonesia.

My question to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade are;

(1) Does the Government realise the biggest activity of foreign trade is with Indonesia?

(2) What is the government doing to develop a trade agreement with Indonesia? We started a feasibility on the liability on an arrangement and we started negotiations leading to free-trade agreement. Australia just concluded theirs with Indonesia.

We don't even have the basic infrastructure to do trade with Indonesia, like, wharves in Vanimo and Wewak.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, may I interrupt you for a while.

As per the house rules, all Honourable Members and visitors in the public gallery that all phones are to be switched off or put on silent mode during sitting.

I will not hesitate to ask the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove your phones and you can take them back after sitting.

**Mr RICHARD MARU** – Mr Speaker, my last question is, can the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, give an undertaking to Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea that he will make it his business to work with the Planning Minister and the Transport Minister to check their funding for these two important wharves for Wewak and Vanimo, so we can start to talk about trade agreement and work towards building a strong trading relationship with Indonesia, which is our biggest trading opportunity. Our coffee, cattle, oil palm, rice and other crops need to go that market next door.

**Mr SOROI EOE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank you member for Yangoru-Saussia for the series of questions.

Of course, trade is very important to any economy and country. It is a life blood of any country, ensuring that we raise adequate revenue to meet our expenditures, therefore, it is very important. In terms of the questions, international trade comes under Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It is one area that has been moved from one organization to another 14 times in the last 20 years, I guess. Eventually, it has gone back to Foreign Affairs and now it is part of my ministry. We take international trade very seriously as an important component of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, particularly, in terms of connecting the outside economies to PNG to do business. Without outside intervention and connecting with other economies, we cannot grow the economy.

Mr Speaker, the situation is obvious, our economy has been affected by Covid-19 and its not only PNG but all over the world. Covid-19 is affecting the way people do business today and how we do business between countries, especially concerning international investments, particularly direct foreign investment into our economic space.

**04/03**

Now coming back to what has been raised by the honourable Member, of course, there are a lot of agreements which exist. And the important one he made reference to is the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which is the universal base; Third Organisation. The trade agreement that we have entered into still exists and functions. That is the reason why, our fisheries product is being sold to the European market and it is one of the biggest revenue earners for Papua New Guinea.

In the regional setting which he made reference, especially, Melanesian spearhead Group trade agreement, that policy exists. Also, he pointed out the issue with Fiji which has been a contentious issue and as the then Minister for Commerce and Industry, he pushed for accessing Fiji markets for our products. He succeeded with that, but the issue still remains that it is these two countries that continue to invite and accept each other's goods under this agreement.

He also made reference to Pacer Plus which is the Australian trade agreement. This particular issue is of concern to our country. It is more of a requirement that is bio related which we cannot export any agricultural food to Australia, unless we meet certain requirements and that comes under NAQIA.

We have been having ongoing discussions on these issues. In one of the recent discussions we had, we came up with some points like reviewing and asking the Australians to

look at this issue seriously so that we can access the markets of Australia by exporting our agricultural food into their country. Yes, it raises a question as to why there has been preferential treatment in relation to Fiji accessing the Australian markets, in terms of its food crops.

The member made reference to Indonesia as an important and bigger market --

**Mr Garry Juffa** – Point of Order! Thank you, Mr Speaker. In just a matter of clarification; the reasons why our products cannot enter Australian markets has nothing to do with preferential treatments.

It has got everything to do with the fact that they have very strict biosecurity phytosanitary requirements, that we have not met. And basically, it is our fault. Fiji, Samoa and other countries have gone ahead and they have met their requirements and have put in place necessary policies and infrastructure, so that it can allow them to enter their market.

We simply have not done that; someone has fallen asleep in NAQIA or the Department of Agriculture or one of these organisations, they have simply not done that.

I just wanted to clarify that, thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SOROI EOE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Governor of Northern for explaining that. Actually, that is the most important requirement that is lacking and he has rightly pointed out; somebody somewhere is not doing his or her part. That is the reason why our garden produces are not accessing Australian markets because of biosecurity issues.

This is something that the Minister for Agriculture can take note of and fast track insofar as addressing this issue that has been outstanding for some time.

Mr Speaker, coming back to the issue that Indonesia has been one of the biggest markets; yes, we have neighbours who have very big markets and Indonesia is one of them. So is China, Japan, and Korea. These markets exist and it is up to our country to prepare ourselves to get access to these markets.

**05/03**

Sometimes it requires the private sector intervention. I think there were several such interventions made. One of which if I can remember correctly was the former Prime Minister leading a delegation to South China thus creating the needed connections for markets in China and suppliers in PNG. Our closest neighbour, Indonesia, happens to be one of those important markets.



Mr Speaker, if we enter into these kinds of markets then it is incumbent on our suppliers to constantly supply the demands that are created. Do we have the potential to do that? I think this is one of the weaknesses that we have that we need to address as a country, particularly, as we go and seek overseas markets for our products. We need to constantly supply those markets.

In relation to the Member's question infrastructure is one of the most important issues that is now prohibiting us. He made reference to Vanimo and Wewak which are very important centres which connect us to Indonesia. I know of Special Economic Zones were established back in 2000. There was this Free Trade Zone in which Vanimo and Wewak were part of that concept to develop better wharfage. The current Governments and the previous Government also looked at four such locations to develop proper wharfage.

I think the Government is looking at it under the Special Economic Zone concept. I can take it up as you have asked me to do so with the Minister for Planning as well as the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

In terms of finding markets, it is an ongoing issue. How do we connect overseas markets? In order to keep these markets, we have to promote our products but because of the Covid-19 pandemic, everything has come to a standstill except Exposition 2020 which is now opened in Dubai. This is an important occasion in which Papua New Guinea can expose its potential in terms of natural resources as well as tourism.

Mr Speaker, in preparation for that, the Government has established a ministerial committee in which I chair and which encompasses different ministries including Finance and Planning. It also includes senior inter-departmental committees that also looks at these two to ensure that Exposition 2022 be successful to adequately promote our country. This is to expose our potential to those that will be attending. I am told that there will be about 200 participants from different parts of the world. It is a good opportunity for us to market our produce, culture, tourism potential and many others.

Mr Speaker, exposition overseas are expensive options. It has been the experience of this country in the last 40 years. It raises the question of whether we really are benefiting from these exposures. What I have done is ensuring that people who are now participating are those that are involved in agriculture, tourism and other activities that we are promoting overseas.

**06/03**

In doing so these people can make connections rather than public servants going there and when they come back, they try to pass on experience to people who are the service providers and we find that there is no connection.

So, this exposition is slightly different because I made it clear in the beginning that we should involve people who are directly involved in this business so when they come back, they can connect and also benefit.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr BENJAMIN PHILIP** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before, I ask my question, I would like to pass on greetings from the people of Menyamya to you all.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister and I would like the Minister for Works and Implementation to take note.

Mr Speaker, there was an official ground breaking ceremony on 18 June 2021, in Bulolo to launch the Lae to Bulolo Highway road maintenance and re-sealing of this important highway. The occasion was witnessed by Prime Minister, Honourable Jame Marape, the Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Sam Basil, the Minister for Works, Honourable Michael Nali, Department of Works Secretary, Mr David Werch and the Australian High Commissioner.

Mr Speaker, it has been exactly two months and three weeks since the ground breaking ceremony however work has not yet started and this road is in a deteriorating state. The highway starting at Nine Mile, all the way up to Pine Top, Bulolo and Menyamya, I refer to this highway as, “Lus Tingting Highway”.

Mr Speaker, the Lae, Bulolo, Wau and Menyamya Highway is very important in the Morobe Province and the country too because it is an economic corridor which transports coffee, PNG Forest Products, Zenag farm produce, Wafi-Project Prospects and small-scale miners. This highway services a large population which live along it. It also connects the people of Obura-Wonenara, in the Eastern Highlands Province and also parts of the Gulf Province who we share borders with.

Mr Speaker, the new idea of Connect PNG to build roads and the slogan, ‘Kisim Bek PNG’.

My questions are:

- (1) When will work or resealing start on the Lae to Bulolo Highway?
- (2) Can you tell us who is going to fund this highway and how much it is going to cost?

And;

- (3) If the Government is not funding the highway then can the Government take this highway back and fund it?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I would also like to thank the Member for Menyamya for asking these questions about this important highway.

I want to inform the Member that last week Thursday, I was at the Mumeng Station, attending the opening of the Wafi-Golpu Pre-Development Forum with the landowners, district and provincial authorities.

**07/03**

After the meeting I drive down on this road from 6pm - 7pm to rest in Lae. I have seen the condition of the road and confirming that it is not in a good state. In fact, it is a very important economic road serving Zenag farm, PNG Forest, Hidden Valley, other small alluvial mining activities and coffee. But and not just into Wau and Garina but also the other turn off goes to Menyamya where people are.

I do acknowledge that the funding that was allocated through the program with the Australian Government grant is just for maintenance and not for permanent intervention. So, I am looking at how we can bridge this maintenance program with the national government permanent intervention to restore it back.

Especially, when I drive out from Mumeng coming down I saw the passage coming out from the area into Markham Valley and was in terrible state. I have tasked the Works Department to do costing and scoping of this section of the road under PNG government funding.

In fact, last year, and this year we have put close to K40 million to this section of the road as part of our Connect PNG program to cross over into Kaintiba and Kerema, which will be a 5-10-year consistent funding program we will give to open up this road.

So, Mr Speaker the maintenance funding where the Australia Government, through the support of the road DSSIP program they are funding, throughout the country. This segment of the road we are holding it back on how we can bridge our own government's permanent program rather maintenance only.

The K66 million for a three-year maintenance program, I felt that we can convert it into government program and instead of patching potholes, drainage and maintenance work, we could upgrade it to a proper road at least first stage going into Mumeng and turn off to Menyamya as well. If we seal that road it's will be much better than just maintenance work and the road deteriorating thereafter.

Mr Speaker, we are holding it back and to how best Works Department and contract issue expires could be married into, not just a maintenance, but proper upgrade and sealing in this important road.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Ask the supplementary question and Chair will not allow you to ask a new question.

### Supplementary

**Mr PETER YAMA** – My supplementary questions go to the Prime Minister. I am delighted for his tour around the country to address the issues of roads and projects. I am happy for this government.

My question is that Prime Minister was in every main towns in Papua New Guinea and they have sealed roads for instance, if you go to Manus, Alotau, Lae, Kimbe and even Tari. When will the Prime Minister come to Madang? elected you as Prime Minister twice, while some members here in Parliament haven't elected you. You are avoiding Madang when you visited Bogia, Bundi and Simbai because you have flown in on a helicopter.

**Mr SPEAKER** - Can you resume your seat because the question you raising is a new question and not supplementary.

**08/03**

**Mr PETER YAMA** – Mr Speaker coming to my question when will he fix the roads of Madang town. When will the roads in Madang be fixed as I have allocated money from my PIP budget and have submitted to Parliament for approval? Funds are being given here and there for so many other things, when will the roads in Madang be fixed?

I have been promised on two occasions, and still nothing has come of this promise, the former Prime Minister put K10 million and sealed our roads. Madang is so beautiful but while every other province in the country has sealed roads, Madang doesn't have sealed roads. That is my question and please relay this to him.

**Mr SPEAKER** – This not a supplementary question. It is a new question so, I will not let the Prime Minister respond to it, I will have another question please!

**Mr EMIL TAMMUR** - Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak. My question is directed to the Minister for State Enterprises. In 2014 Kokopo was declared as the fourth city of Papua New Guinea. In doing so a big construction design was done for the sewerage system for Kokopo. It cost about K88 million.

Construction of the Kokopo sewerage system began in March 2016 and ended in 2019. The construction involved four parties; that is the Provincial Government, design contractor and the major contractor GRA (Gazelle Restoration Authority). I take this opportunity to thank the former government for their assistance towards this huge construction.

However, in doing so, this project is now sleeping idle for almost four years. I do not know the reasons as to why Water PNG has not stepped up to connect the residential areas to the system. The pond itself is an eyesore surrounded with overgrown shrub.

1) Is Water PNG going to connect the sewerage system to the residents of Kokopo and that the system will be fully operational or not?

2) Is it because in the initial stages, they were not included in the design and construction of the project?

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** -- I would like to thank the Member for Kokopo for these questions. As he himself as stated, it is true that in the initial stages of design, planning and construction; Water PNG was not involved or included. They were not a party to this contract.

The contract was negotiated between the Department of National Planning, GRA and the East New Britain Provincial Government for an amount of K87.8 million. Unfortunately, this contract did not extend to the connection of the sewerage system to residential and commercial properties. Water PNG is uncertain at this stage as to whether the required environmental permits were issued for this project. It was only after the project was completed when Water PNG was invited to come in.

By that time most of the work had been done and even the incomplete works could not be rectified. Although Water PNG is now in Kokopo and Rabaul, initially under this project Water PNG was not involved. Water PNG however, at this stage has engaged an independent consulting engineer to review the work carried out by the contractor. And the findings have now being brought to their attention. And they (Water PNG) is now reviewing them.

As we are aware the issue of connection to residential and commercial property requires an additional contract. We have the system that is already there. The initial contractor has built water reticulation systems, sludge tanks and pumps but these are yet to be connected.

09/03

So, Mr Speaker, to cut a long story short, Water PNG has now been allowed to take over this project and it has already engaged engineers to conduct the review. The report is now before the Water PNG and we are now looking at funding it. So, I can assure the good Member for Kokopo that although it was not involved in the initial stages, Water PNG being a responsible company, will do what is required to ensure that the sewerage system is connected to the households and the business houses.

So, Mr Speaker, I can assure the Member once again that Water PNG will look at it and hopefully within the next couple of months, Water PNG should be able to work out the costings and then engage a contractor to work on the connection systems.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** — Honourable Members, the Chair would like to announce that we must not use the Supplementary Question time to ask new questions. This is because since Parliament resumed on Tuesday, the Chair has seen most of the honourable Members who stood up to ask a question without notice but due to limited time they were not given the opportunity. The Chair saw them continue to stand up and want to choose them but those of you honourable Members who stood up to ask Supplementary Questions went ahead and asked new questions. Those Members who are using Supplementary Provisions to ask a new question will not be entertained by the Chair. So, I ask the honourable Members, you have the right to ask a new question, but don't use the Supplementary Provisions for a new question.

With that, the Chair now recognizes the Member for Central Bougainville to ask a question because you have been standing since Tuesday.

**Mr SAM AKOITAI** — Thank you, Mr Speaker, my question goes to the Minister for Lands and the Minister for Bougainville Affairs who is the Prime Minister to take note.

For the benefit of the applicants of a land, my question falls within the Part 14 of the Papua New Guinea *Constitution*, the *Organic Law on Peace Building* for Bougainville and the *Bougainville Peace Agreement*.

In line with transfer of powers;

(1) Can the Minister confirm that the lands powers have been transferred to Bougainville?

(2) Can the Minister also inform this honourable House and Papua New Guineans or Bougainvilleans who are lodging their applications as to the Lands Department to where they should be lodging those applications?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr JOHN ROSSO** — Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for Central Province for your very important questions.

I would like to inform you that couple of months ago, in my capacity as the Lands Minister, I and my department, and acting under the Bougainville Peace Agreement, transferred the functions and powers of the Minister and Department of Lands to the people of Bougainville through the ABG.

So, all the land applications, physical planning and other related things for lands are now with you. So, you can carry out the physical planning powers and other functions of the Lands Department to plan and direct your future.

It was a very momentous moment and I was very privileged to be the Minister to pave the way for the people of Bougainville.

So, I want to make it clear that we have appointed a physical planning board and also gave the land board powers at the same time. Lands Department now stands together to give guidance and technical advice so that we will continue to live with and help Bougainville to make sure that work and technical backup is supported to make sure everything happens there.

Thank you.

**10/03**

**Mr Peter Yama** – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, I would appreciate the Honourable Prime Minister to answer my questions for our understanding and also give recognition to the people of Madang.

Mr Speaker, I need your support as well as for your recognition for the people of Madang. This is due to the bad roads in Madang, all PMVs in town are using first and second gear to travel. I am not talking about the roads connecting to Bundi, Simbai or Bogia road, I am talking about the heart of Madang Town. For the interest and the betterment of my people of Madang, I did approach the Prime Minister several times at his office because they must know.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Thank you, honourable Governor, your point of order is out of order. The Chair will entertain you after the Honourable Member for Wewak ask his question.

**Mr KEVIN ISIFU** – Thank you, Mr Speaker for your recognizing the people of Wewak. My question is short and is directed to the Minister for Works.

Mr Speaker, firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Minister for delivering a good service in the country and is always visible in his functions, especially in the implementation of infrastructure around the country and putting together a National Road and Corporate Plan and the Development Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2030.

Lately, the launching of Connect PNG Program, where power and other functions can be connected to all provinces and districts, and, I commend and thank the minister for his visibility and deliverance in our country.

Mr Speaker, when a Minister delivers good work, there is always someone out there to bring you down and also talk negative about you. When the Government funded Connect PNG Program, many provinces and districts roads were upgraded and I would like to say thank you. However, when it comes to road upgrading, we spend a lot of money on private contractors.

Mr Speaker, my question is, are you aware of the machines allocated through the PDDI arrangement and is located in East Sepik Province and unfortunately other districts are not allowed to use the machines to cut down costings on road works.

Some of the machines have been taken to Sundaun Province and are being kept there and also the contractors there do not have the capacity as well. So how does your department award these contracts and what criteria is used. Do you award the contract to the contractors that have machines or without machines? I would like to know whether the machines were sold or not, because the contractors took the machines to Vanimo and also removed the DOW stickers on the machines and are now operating in other provinces.

**11/03**

Can you confirm if the machine will go back to Wewak?

East Sepik is also one of the biggest province and we have a lot of work to be done especially, my electorate in Wewak and other districts as well. And we depend on this equipment provided by the government.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr MICHAEL NALI** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the honourable Member for Wewak for his questions.



Mr Speaker, in his first question, he asked about the criteria used by the Works Department to award contracts and the contractors who apply despite not having the equipment and the capacity to cater for the projects?

In his second question, he mentioned the equipment for East Sepik under PTD that been in Sandaun. and whether those equipment will be brought back?

Mr Speaker, I already responded previously to one of the member's question on how the Department of Works awards contracts. There are two kinds of contracts that we award to the contractors.

One is the proforma contract, where any contract below K500, 000 is entrusted to the provincial works managers, and they asses for urgent projects to take place. The proforma invoices are raised by the provincial works manager then it goes to the regional works manager for endorsement and finally it reaches the table of the Secretary for Works Department.

So that is how the provincial and regional works managers do their job before approval from the Secretary for Works Department.

I believe this process is better because we entrust our officers by delegating those responsibilities, but there may be one or two who abuse those offices and we are aware of that. When we are notified of those inappropriate actions, we conduct investigations and those officers are penalised for their actions.

The second type of contract goes through normal process of tender. Projects below K10 million, NPC and National Tenders Board deal with them. Any figure above K10 million comes through me where I take it to the National Executive Council for approval and contracts are awarded.

Mr Speaker, the important thing I want to say here is, we have the capacity to look at contracts to get the job done. I have been here as the Minister for Works for about four years and I do my job. I have seen companies who have the capacity to do the job.

In the case for East and West Sepik, Green Hill company is operating there and it is one of the biggest contractors we have in East and West Sepik. Also, there are little contractors operating there.

There are processes involved here. If the Member sees that those contactors are using the Works Department equipment to do their job, I must be alerted so I can speak with the Secretary for Works to notify his provincial and regional managers and appropriate actions to be taken.

To bring back the machines from East Sepik to West Sepik, Mr Speaker, those are government equipment's

12/03

There is no emergency work in East Sepik or West Sepik. Those equipment are there for emergencies. I am not aware that they have removed the government stickers and used this equipment for private work but I will investigate through my department and advise the Member and the Parliament at a later date. Thank you.

**Mr Kevin Isifu** – Point of Order! I asked whether those machinery in Vanimo belong to Wewak PTB. Can he assure me that he will bring them back? Who brought them there? How did they freight those machines there? Who is responsible for bringing them back? I have a lot to do in Wewak.

**Mr MICHAEL NALI** – Under the assistance program of the Japanese Government, there are areas where the Government identifies as disaster areas. For example, in East New Britain and West New Britain –

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, I think the Member for Wewak asked you a direct question so can you please answer him.

**Mr MICHAEL NALI** – Yes, Mr Speaker, I am coming to that now. I respect you but you are interjecting for without any good reason.

The Japanese Government has given equipment to the people of Papua New Guinea and as such has allocated equipment per region. Therefore, any machinery that is in East Sepik can be used in the Momase Region. It cannot be claimed and be used only in Wewak. The same goes for the Island Region. What is sitting in Rabaul can also be used in West New Britain.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Now you have answered the questions properly. You have dragged on too long with your answers and that has wasted time for other Members of Parliament to ask their questions.

### **Madang Town Road**

**Mr PETER YAMA** – I direct my question to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Works to take note.

Mr Prime Minister, the main road in Madang Town is declared national road and the Ministers for Works and Transport are both aware. When I was a Minister for Works and

Transport in a previous government, this road was declared a national road. This is the same with the main road in Mt Hagen and elsewhere where the main highway passes through.

I thank Honourable Peter O'Neill who was then the finance minister and for allocating money to fix this road in the heart of Madang. Can the Minister come in person and see for himself the condition of the road?

13/03

**Bryan Kramer** – Point of Order! My point of order is in relation to the question that is being crafted by the Governor of Madang. He is asking a question on the State of the Madang roads and when they will be sealed. I understand the question is directed to the Prime Minister. What the Governor failed to state is that this issue is before the National Court.

The National Court commenced proceedings in January 2021, summoning the Madang Provincial Government, the DDA, the Governor and myself to establish who is responsible for the repairs to Madang Town roads.

After making enquiries, the National Court gave specific orders both dated 11 January and 12 June, directing responsibility specifically on sections of the road to both the Madang Provincial Government and the Madang DDA; also directing that the Madang Provincial Government make available the funds, as well as the DDA in terms of spending the funds appropriated by the National Government.

So, if the question is in relation to what is the future plans on the Madang Town roads then the Prime Minister will be able to answer that but if he is delving into an issue that is currently before the National Court then it may be sub-judice.

*(Mr Peter Yama interjecting)*

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Mr Speaker, I would like to correct his statement saying by that the K10 million, was made available by the former government. The K10 million was made available in 2020 Budget. And was fortunately released in December. Those funds are with the DDA and the National Court has issued directions on how that money will be expended in the repairs. Another k10 million was released this year –

*(Opposition Members interjecting)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, the Chair will interrupt you here. I believe your point of Order is out of order. The question is directed to the Prime Minister but it seems that you are answering the question which the honourable Governor of Madang is asking.

Honourable Governor, ask your question.

**Mr PETER YAMA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. The young member is all over the place because the K10 million is the money that sealed the roads in the heart of Madang Town. If you drive around in Madang town, the road has been already sealed and funds were appropriated in 2011.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, may you ask your question to the Prime Minister.

**Mr PETER YAMA** – Mr Speaker, my question is simple, I want that road to be sealed because Madang is the heart of Papua New Guinea and not for Peter Yama. Madang has a university and nearly everything; it is a big city just like Mount Hagen Lae, Rabaul and other places throughout Papua New Guinea.

I want to see that the money appropriated for Madang being used for the purpose of sealing the roads to standards.

I appreciate that the last government and the current for allocating K39 million for Bogia Road which ADB is building and the people of Madang gladly welcome this development.

But the problem is, Bogia is on one side of Madang and the road will not service the whole of Madang; however, if that K39 million is diverted to Madang Town it will be more proper because the whole of Madang will benefit from it. This is a similar situation to the Gerehu to 9 Mile Road and Taurama Road. So much money is being spent on roads that are on one side of the city but what about the main roads that run through the city where everyone benefits from.

Mr Speaker, all I am saying, is when will such funds be appropriated for Madang Town roads. The town is accessed by everyone including members who visit the Divine Word University to see their children. Currently, that road is not sealed and full of dust and I do not have money to seal it.

I need answers, I have attempted to get to the Prime Minister but I have not received a response. The Member for Madang is partly responsible for this because he is putting a stop to this.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, please ask your question?

You are just making statements after statements.

**Mr PETER YAMA** – When will the Prime Minister appropriate money for the road that runs from Divine Word University to the Madang Airport, as he promised me and the people of Madang?

**14/03**

I have six months left before National General Election. You have gone all over to Papua New Guinea but you didn't come to Madang. When are you coming to Madang? Why are you listening to the member? That's his last time in the Parliament.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Governor has every right to ask the question on behalf of his people. I appeal to other members and ministers please don't be upset when any member of Parliament is asking questions. We are in Government to listen to such question and to help to the best of our ability.

Mr Speaker, funding allocation to Madang is not our problem. We have tried to the best of our ability to distribute ever money under the development budget in 2019, 2020 and 2021, we distributed fairly to every town. All the big town roads we have allocated K10 million and district roads received K4 to K5 million, including K5 million for Last Wiru road. To put the record straight, we are not unfair.

Likewise, in Madang, we have allocated the funds and we know who tells more lies than us. So, like Last Wiru road, many parts of the country we are allocated funds to get the work started. I want to sincerely apologize to the Governor of Madang if the work hasn't been started in Madang.

About K10 million was allocated last year and the Member for Madang and Justice for Minister just confirm that K10.9 million was awarded for this road. The advertisement was done and money was allocated in the budget but the fight amongst members and governor are getting out of hand and the government becomes the scapegoat.

The problem is not the money because we tried our best to allocate funds fairly. Many times, the contest between the Governor and member sabotage and harmed these projects. But I want to say that whether the provincial government, governor, or member DDA the national

government of the Department of Works these contracts are awarded all in the interest and business of developing that area.

I want to apologize to the people of Madang and I understand where the Governor is coming from because sometimes our hide out is Madang and I understand him fairly. For visit to Madang, I will set a date, but I want to see the progress of the road. the moment the National Court directs us all at the national government, province and district to find a solution.

The National government released K10 million in last year's budget to Works Department but the DDA went to court and the court gave an Order and I understand that the money is with DDA. Some work is taking place from the wharf, Mildas, Yomba to Divine Word and will be finish at 4 mile and back to the airport. The first five kilometer in the program for sealing.

The Governor said former government did some work, there and I've been in and out there for the last 10 years and haven't seen any work, to put record straight. The 400-meter concrete work was developed at the cost of K3 million in the center of town. I know Madang very well.

But we allocated K10 million last year, and K10 million was also allocated this year. whether provincial government or district sponsored procurement if there are further delays, the national government procurement is available. further delay national government. Let us build the road for the people of Madang instead of infighting. The K20 million can seal the road from the wharf to Yomba to the turn-off.

**15/03**

Ask the leaders of Madang and every one of us here that instead of running around circles, please leave it to the National Government to do its work, if we are not delivering then, you can step in and say why are you not doing what you supposed to do?

To the people of Madang, I would also like to thank the Kramer Ausenco Group who are freely providing their services to assess the road, because it is their hometown road.

**Mr Peter Yama** – Point of Order! Frank Ausenco Kramer group, it's really a conflict of interest. He is the Uncle of the Member for Madang. That is where the money is. You cannot allow from this highest office. The Prime Minister must put his foot down and say what he is doing is wrong. That is clear conflict of interest, giving money to his own uncle. Now what has been hidden is coming out, right from the PMs mouth.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Mr Speaker, I did not complete my statement and he interjected. The firm, Kramer Ausenco, indicated through the Department of Works and the DDA that they will carry out these works free to assist their town and province. The road works that they will carry out must be done to specification.

As I know, this company was not responsible for the maintenance of these roads but a DDA company that used the works department machinery. I don't know but they have indicated to me that work has started.

I would like to assure the people of Madang that work has started but I just have to find out how far and how long.

**Mr Belden Namah** – Point of Order! I do not want the Prime Minister to mislead the parliament, because no private company will give free of charge service. If you check properly that particular engineering company has been paid money to do the job. Please do check your records properly.

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Point of Order! I will make it brief. A statement has been made, if other members including the Opposition Leader wants to make allegations. He can go out and make those allegations and be held accountable for them and try to prove them too. The Prime Minister has made a statement and I can reaffirm that, Ausenco Kramer has not received any payment. They are a national company and has its mark around the pacific. They have agreed to provide, Pro Bono! Companies do provide pro bono; those who have reputable background.

**Mr SPEAKER** – I wish to inform you all that the Chair will not entertain any more Point of Orders in relation to this question. I will let the Prime Minister complete his response.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – I will keep it short, if anyone has any issue in relation to these companies, you have the Court House and the Ombudsman Commission, report them, if you want to do the right thing. However, work on the roads has commenced. I would however want to sincerely apologise to the Madang Provincial Government, that this arrangement did not come through your office but work has begun. And I will make it my business to follow up.

Madang town road like all other town roads in the country remain our important priority. We have over 100 km of town road in our country. If you spend K2 million per kilometer for a standard two-way lane; that is almost K200 million just for a town road. So, for Madang we

do not have the full money. Every year we commit K10 million on all our major town roads, this will continue till 2025.

We will fix all our town roads by the time our country is celebrating 50 years of Independence in 2025. As we have done in Madang, this will continue for other town roads as well. And with time Madang will change and smile again as the beautiful Madang we all know.

16/03

### **MOTION BY LEAVE**

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen – Minister for National Planning and Monitoring) –

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

Leave granted.

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

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent:

- (a) Notice number 247 of Government Business being called on forthwith, and
- (b) the Prime Minister and Minister for Bougainville Affairs presenting a Ministerial Statement on the National Update on Bougainville Peace Process.

### **ORGANIC LAW ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL-LEVEL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

#### **First Reading**

Proposed Law presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Ordered – That the Proposed Law now stands referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Laws and Acts and Subordinate Legislation.



**NATIONAL UPDATE – BOUGAINVILLE PEACE PROCESS –  
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED**

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Mr Speaker, I rise today in my capacity as Minister for Bougainville Affairs to update this House on the important work that continues to take place to secure a long and lasting peace in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

As all members of this Honourable House know, sustaining peace and reaching a lasting political settlement for the people of Bougainville has been a long-term national objective. It is an objective that I as Prime Minister and us as body of leaders have faced head on.

Mr Speaker, we have come a long way from that day in 2001 when the Bougainville Peace Agreement was signed. We have fulfilled many of our obligations; the establishment of autonomous government in Bougainville, the transfer of a range of powers and functions, and significant economic investment to restore services and infrastructure destroyed during the conflict.

This was the work of successive governments, and I say thank you for all governments since the governments of the late Sir Mekere Morauta, late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, Honourable Peter O’Neill and up until today, and whilst the pace of change has not always been as quick as all of us would have liked, we have, however, significantly sustained peace in the region for 20 years.

But, Mr Speaker, this does not mean that there is room for complacency.

As all members of this House are aware, a key pillar of the Bougainville Peace Agreement was a non-binding referendum on Bougainville's political future. And as members of this House are also aware, it was this Government that finally delivered on that commitment.

**17/03**

Whilst the successful conduct of the referendum is both important and symbolic, we must not lose sight of the steps that must now be followed. Under the terms of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the *National Constitution*, the two governments must consult on the outcome and a proposed long-term political settlement.

Mr Speaker, as members are very aware, the referendum was conducted in November 2019. It resulted in 97.7 per cent of eligible voters selecting the independence option over the alternative of greater autonomy.

In January of this year, President Ishmael Toroama and I issued a Joint Communiqué where we committed to a process of consultation on the outcome of the referendum to deliver on the next stage of the peace process.

Mr Speaker, to date, two post-referendum consultations have taken place: the first in Kokopo, East New Britain Province in May 2021, followed by a second in Wabag, Enga Province, just last month. Allow me to place on record my thank you and appreciation to both the East New Britain and Enga provincial governments for hosting these important meetings. I will now brief the House on the details of these meetings, and other actions that have taken place over the course of this year.

Mr Speaker, the first meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body (JSB) for 2021 took place in Arawa on 5th February 2021. This meeting provided the two governments with the opportunity to consider a range of issues related to the broader peace process. Discussions included resolutions carried forward from previous meetings, the process for accelerating the drawdown of powers to the ABG, and the framework to guide post referendum consultations.

Mr Speaker, the meeting resolved to address several critical issues. These included a commitment to sign the Sharp Agreement which will accelerate the transfer of powers from the National Government to the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG), an Economic and Investment Summit to be held in Bougainville later this year, and a recommitment to transfer the National Government's shareholding in Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) to the ABG.

We also discussed continued work to support the fisheries sector, which as members of this House well know is a critical part of our economy. We spoke about the development of a fisheries revenue sharing arrangement and the need for broader taxation reform. We considered how we could jointly support and empower SMEs, and resolved to continue to address legacy financial issues, including the establishment of a one-line-budget system for the ABG.

Mr Speaker, a key outcome of the meeting was an agreement to sign what is known as the Sharp agreement, (named for the Sharp Memorial Centre where our meeting took place) and I am pleased to advise this House that ABG President Ishmael Toroama and I signed the agreement on 13 May 2021.

Under the terms of the Agreement, the two governments have agreed to vary the 12-month notification process and the capacity assessment requirement outlined in *section 295* of the *Constitution* so that immediate work on the transfer of powers can take place.

Mr Speaker, the intention of the Sharp Agreement is to put in place a process that enables the rapid transfer of powers and resources to the ABG, with a priority on those powers that

support economic development and growth. Clearly, this will require continued efforts and momentum on the part of both the National Government and the ABG. Simply put, we cannot transfer powers unless we transfer the capacity and resources required for the ABG to administer those functions.

That is why the two governments have also agreed that work to implement the Sharp Agreement will take place using a sector-based approach.

Mr Speaker, under this approach, the National Coordination Office for Bougainville Affairs (NCOBA) will coordinate with key national government agencies by sector to develop a comprehensive plan to facilitate the draw-down of powers and support the transfer of all necessary resources and capacity to ABG agencies.

**18/03**

This process is already underway. Since my government was elected, we have transferred powers in relation to lands policy and we have finalised the full transfer of Human Resource powers to the ABG Public Service. We are also well advanced in work to drawdown law and justice powers, enabling the ABG to strengthen and support mechanisms that sustain peace and law and order.

Mr Speaker, this work has been aided by continued funding support, including the transfer of much needed funds held in trust by the Internal Revenue Commission and continued interim payments to support the fisheries sector. All of this is laying the foundation to secure Bougainville's long-term economic future, but much more remains to be done. That is why I intend to convene a summit of key department and agency heads, along with responsible ministers later this month, so that we can continue to make substantial progress over the coming year.

Mr Speaker, the first Joint Post-Referendum Consultation between the two Governments was held from Monday 17th to Wednesday 19th May 2021 at the Gazelle International Hotel in Kokopo, East New Britain.

The former United Nations Resident Coordinator, His Excellency Mr. Gianluca Rampolla, chaired the meeting, and I want to place on record my deep appreciation for Mr Rampolla's support, not just to the Bougainville Peace Process, but throughout Papua New Guinea during his three-year term.

Mr Speaker, the first Consultation provided an opportunity for both Teams to come together to negotiate how best to put forward respective positions, and to consider an approach moving forward.

The key outcomes from the first Joint Consultations were as follows:

- A Joint Leaders Statement agreeing to consult on the definition and the process of ratification and to identify the constitutional issues relating to the referendum result and the tabling of the consultation outcomes in the National Parliament;
- Commitment to develop a Joint Roadmap on Post-Referendum Consultations;
- Agreement to fully implement the Sharp Agreement as a matter of priority.

Mr Speaker, leaders also agreed to the immediate establishment of a Joint Secretariat for the Post-Referendum Consultation process, and that 2025 be set as the target date for the outcome of the joint consultation process to be tabled before the National Parliament.

Mr Speaker, the second Post-Referendum Joint Consultation took place in Wabag on 6th July 2021. The meeting provided an opportunity for the two governments to take further steps. The meeting focused on the development of a timeline for the full implementation of an agreed political settlement.

Mr Speaker, at this juncture I should note that during the meeting, the ABG put forward a range of proposals and steps to guide the process. In reviewing these, the National Government team formed the view that many of these steps were neither practical nor lawful within the context of the process prescribed under the *National Constitution*.

Examples included a request from the ABG to assume powers and functions prescribed under section 289 of the *Constitution* that are national government sovereign functions, such as defence, border control, foreign relations, and the regulation of telecommunications. opportunity for the two governments to discuss next steps.

Mr Speaker, our legal advice has indicated that it is not possible to progress constitutional amendments to transfer these powers to the ABG until such time as the National Parliament, as the final decision-making authority, has decided in accordance with section 342 of the *Constitution* what form the final political settlement should take.

This extends to any declaration of a political settlement, and any associated constitutional amendments that may be required for the settlement to be fully implemented.

Mr Speaker, other issues raised by the ABG included convening a Constitutional Planning Commission, establishment of "SelfGovernment" in Bougainville, amendments to repeal the existing autonomy provisions under Part XIV (14) of the *Constitution* and the finalisation of a treaty to govern relations between Papua New Guinea.

19/03

Legal advice is that all these actions cannot take place lawfully until the National Parliament has determined the final political settlement, and these will be matters for further discussion when the two governments next meet.

Mr Speaker, notwithstanding these technical issues, the proposed roadmap does include two important milestones. The first is that a final proposed political settlement together with the referendum results will be put to the National Parliament for a vote in 2025.

Mr Speaker, may I add a small note here. From 2001 till today, the word was ratification in the two consultations that took place in Kokopo and Wabag. It cleared the view on what ratification entail came into picture. I want to thank our team from Bougainville and the ABG for recognising that the *National Constitution* reigns supreme and the authority to discuss these issues are only on the National Parliament Floor. I thank the Wabag Meeting that the final move towards a political settlement and the decisions must be made in the National Parliament. We did have an indication in 2025 that matters regarding constitutional amendments and concerned will be brought in around that time. Then, subject to the National Parliament agreeing to that proposed political settlement, in whatever form that may take, implementation will occur in 2027.

Mr Speaker, I want to be clear on this point. Despite some in the media reporting otherwise, neither I nor the Government have made any commitment to the ABG that independence will be the final outcome. In fact, neither I nor the Government have the lawful authority to make any such commitment. I did make a point in Wabag that any commitment from anyone from us will be seditious because our *Constitution* is absolutely silent on notion of independence for one part of our country. Having said this, I appeal to Parliament to understand Bougainville and the peculiarity Bougainville is and the process in discussion that has started from the birth of the 2001 Peace Agreement.

Mr Speaker, the final decision-making authority is vested in the Parliament, and only this House may determine what the final outcome will be.

As I have already said, the ABG have proposed a range of activities and actions as part of the proposed joint roadmap. Many of these cannot lawfully occur until such time as the Parliament has made a final decision opening up the pathway of the next phase to take place.

In view of this, I have asked that all necessary resources be made available to map and support the legal process going forward. This will involve key agencies which include the

Department of Justice and Attorney General, the Office of the State Solicitor and the Constitutional Law Reform Commission working together to provide practical advice and guidance to support consultations going forward.

Mr Speaker, it is critical that the ABG and all Papua New Guineans understand the legal process, and the limitations under existing constitutional arrangements. In short, at no time should the consultations and any proposed political settlement get ahead of the process prescribed in the *Constitution*. The stakes for our nation are higher than they have ever been before, and we must ensure that the *Constitution* and the rule of law prevails at all times. This must be based on the will of the Parliament, not pre-determined timelines.

Until a final decision is made, the existing Constitutional provisions in relation to Autonomous Government in Bougainville will prevail, and nothing shall undermine the sovereignty of our nation.

Mr Speaker, allow me to now briefly report on the outcomes of the Wabag meeting of the joint supervisory body that took place on the side-lines of the post referendum consultations.

The key outcomes from that meeting included updates on implementation of the Sharp Agreement, and a resolution to adopt the sector wide approach for implementation that I discussed before, an update on the Bougainville Economic and Investment Summit to be held in November 2021, and an update on the transfer of BCL shares.

**20/03**

Mr Speaker, the meeting also resolved to undertake a process to repurpose and restructure NCOBA to better equip it to support work in the post referendum environment, including the post-referendum environment including the post-secretariat.

As the Vice-Minister for Bougainville Affairs, the Honourable Peter Tsiamilili, will note in his update, this work is already well underway and we hope to have some firm recommendations to enhance the operational and institutional capacity of NCOBA in the coming month.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude let me address the issue of National Awareness in relation to the post-referendum consultation process.

A critical part of the Consultation process will involve a National Awareness Campaign to educate all Papua New Guineans, including Bougainvilleans on the process going forward. I repeat, a very critical part will take during the national consultation.

In Wabag, we made it absolutely clear that to give birth to this country there was national consultation and our *Constitution* secured the boundaries that we have today. To possibly unbundle one part of our country away from us may require the same process on nationwide consultation, including consulting Bougainville. And during this awareness the peculiarity of Bougainville issue will be raised so that the whole nation can take recognition of it. And, hopefully in the next three years in 2025, we are all better educated about Bougainville and what needs to be done. By then Parliament can confidently with clear conscience make its call.

Mr Speaker, it is clear from some of the statements that have been made by Bougainville leaders, that expectations for independence are being laid. This is expected and they took mandate on leadership on the island right at the back of Independence and they have made these statements but they cannot be spoken in isolation. We must give all of our people factual information so that they can understand the context of the process that must be followed and the process that is prescribed by our constitutional laws. Which means that consultation and constitutional amendments must take precedence.

The fact is that Independence is one possible option. But as I have consistently said, nothing can be pre-determined. The consultations must be allowed to take their course, and then the Parliament will decide.

Mr Speaker, this is why it is crucial that all Papua New Guineans have a say on this process. The future of our nation is at stake which is why Cabinet recently endorsed a National Communications and Awareness Strategy that will see us consult across the length and breadth of this nation.

Mr Speaker, to conclude, I have made it clear to all ministers that they must ensure that they remain engaged in the consultation process. The fact is that when the National Government meets with the ABG team, we must have an informed and unified position.

This requires that ministers be briefed by respective department and agency heads on progress that is being made in respect of the drawdown of powers, and issues and implications related to a future political settlement.

By ensuring that we put in place strong systems and processes to enhance ministerial engagement, we can be better prepared and able to respond to and address any concerns that may be raised.

At this juncture let me encourage all our government agencies to ensure they stay engaged with Bougainville. We want to transfer all powers to Bougainville except the sovereignty powers and to ensure that Bougainville functions as a special region in our country. All ministers have been tasked that whatever powers as agreed to must be transferred.

Mr Speaker, I have spoken for a long time. This is indicative of just how important the issue of Bougainville's long-term future is to the Parliament and to our nation.

We must continue to adhere to the Bougainville Peace Agreement and our Constitutional Laws.

In doing so, we must hold firm to that which was agreed almost 20 years ago, ensuring that we lay the foundation for an enduring peace.

**21/03**

It was agreed almost 20 years ago, ensuring that will lay the foundation for enduring peace but not just peace.

Mr Speaker, if I could add to conclude, to establish final political settlement in Bougainville that is a win for them and there is also a win for us in the context of us maintaining our national sovereignty.

Thank you, very much Mr Speaker, I commend the statement to the House.

Sitting suspended from 2.33pm to 2 p.m.

**22/03**

**Mr PETER TSIAMALILI (Bougainville) – I move –**

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, before I deliver a statement of support to our Prime Minister, I would like to, on behalf of my people of Bougainville, take this opportunity to recognize the New Member for Moresby North-West, Honourable Lohia Boe Samuel. I wish to send our sincere congratulations on your election to this seat.

I rise to commend the Prime Minister's statement and to speak more broadly about my work as the vice Minister to support the people of Bougainville and the reforms we plan to put in place to support the National Coordination office for Bougainville Affairs. It is a fact that the people of Bougainville have endured far too much for far too long the legacy of the conflict.

The longest and deadliest since the end of the Second World War. The services are weak and the systems do not work and our people continue to struggle in their endeavors to contribute to our economy due to poor transport links and aging infrastructure but I am optimistic that in



the short time that I have been the Regional Member for Bougainville and the vice minister for Bougainville Affairs, I have seen firsthand, hope and the optimism of our people.

The Referendum that resulted in a resounding 97.7 per cent of Bougainvilleans expressing their desire for independence has given renewed to the work that needs to take place to conclude this historic journey to peace. And since the beginning of this year as our country continues to address the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen genuine and ongoing consultations between the ABG and the National Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to commend the Prime Minister for his leadership in this regard. At no point has he stepped back from his obligations, nor refused meetings with President Toroama. And he has ensured that the meetings of the Joint Supervisory Body and the Joint Post Referendum Consultation take place. The Prime Minister has noted earlier this year, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021, President Toroama and himself signed the sharp agreement, which seeks to accelerate the transfer of powers to the ABG.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a long outstanding commitment that is enshrined in our *Constitution*, which is the cornerstone of the Bougainville Peace process and no matter what form of political settlement may take, we must first ensure that we equip and empower the Bougainville people to manage their own affairs. The drawdown of powers from the National Government to the ABG is a critical part of the process. It is the means by which we can transfer functions and build capacity for the ABG to deliver critical services in areas such as health, education, community affairs and he needs the basis on which the ABG can invest economic enabling institutions that will allow us – the woman and men of Bougainville rebuild our economy to what it was once was.

Mr Deputy Speaker, all of this requires a collective effort, support and will of every single Member of this Parliament and every public servant in Waigani. Change cannot occur without this partnership. And as the vice minister and regional Member, I stand with my fellow Bougainville Members of this Parliament House, committing here and now to investing every ounce of energy that I have to meet our goals.

**23/03**

The future of our nation and the continuation of peace demands it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the fact is that over the years not enough that should have been done has been done. I don't want to seek to blame and I don't want to seek to point fingers. The past is the past, what is done is done. But, what we must do is learn from where mistakes have been made and ensure that they do not occur again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when NCOBA was established in 2007 the then government of the beloved leader late great Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare made it clear what needed to be done. His vision was that an organization that would coordinate and support all aspects of the peace process. And while NCOBA has done a very good job in maintaining momentum that time has come for it to transform and to do more.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is why early this month NEC approved for work to commence to reposition NCOBA so that it can better meet its mandate. This work requires careful consideration of the current NCOBA structure to ensure that it is relevant to our times and that it can support the work that will now take place in the post referendum environment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with the support of our international partners, diagnostic review of NCOBA has begun and it is at its advance stage. It is my hope that as Vice Minister for Bougainville Affairs that we can put in place a refined organizational structure for NCOBA in the coming months together with appropriate institutional arrangements that underpins its mandate to support both government in addressing the complexities of the peace process.

Mr Deputy Speaker, to conclude, as I have said, I am optimistic, I believe in transformative change and the capacity of our public servants to step up and deliver on the commitments contained in the Bougainville peace agreement. I stand shoulder to shoulder with the Prime Minister and my president Mr Ishmael Toroama in my commitment to reach our goal of sustaining peace and a long-term political settlement. The very future of our nation depends on us reaching our long-term goal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not let the people of Bougainville down.

Thank you.

**Mr WERA MORI** (Chuave – Minister for Environment, Conservation and Climate Change) — Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also want to make few contributions on Bougainville.

Firstly, I must commend and congratulate the Prime Minister Honourable James Marape and of course the President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville on the outcome they have progressed to date.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is not an easy challenge, but it must be done with due care. Having said that, I would like to put on record and state that we Papua New Guinea owed the biggest debt of gratitude to the people of Bougainville. This is simply because it was the Panguna Mine that underpinned Papua New Guinea as a nation when it gained independent in 1975.

Mr Deputy Speaker, arising out of the Bougainville crisis we have learned lessons but to some extent we in PNG now are able to realise our potential as landowners. We are able to realise as a nation that we owned the resources that are hosted in this country. As a consequence, landowners from project areas are now able to come to the negotiation table and ask for better deals.

**24/03**

We have seen what's happening now in Porgera and OK-Tedi and I am pretty sure that into the future, following the same trend that Papua New Guineans will be able to ask for more, but we must not forget our historical connections with Bougainville, apart from Panguna mine, it was Bougainville's public servants, those in the health sector, education, primary industries and others who went right around the country, who helped us not only to be educated but also to access and benefit from other government services. And therefore, it is important that as we deal with this. I would like to call upon all of us to give the necessary support to the process that is in place. Thankfully what has been the outcome of the successful meeting in Wabag, Enga province must be pursued with due diligence. There is no time, there is no need, and there is no space for politics to be involved and divert the attention and the focus of what we have to deal with, we must respect this process and more so, respect the people of Bougainville. It is not easy because the people of Bougainville who are our people have sacrificed the lives of 20,000 people and these must be done in a way that will find a lasting solution, it is not an easy task.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what can we do to go forward? I would like to see that we have got to start helping the Government of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and restore services. We need to ensure that there are economic activities on the island of Bougainville. Despite the fact that the Panguna Mine remained closed. Bougainville had the most resource in terms of agriculture. There were plantations after plantations of cocoa and coconut which must be restored. We have to ensure the plantations are up and going, if it needs be. We need to assist them to put in processes so they can be able to ensure that those plantations get to go into production and restore the economy of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

We must help them to create a supply chain, so that what is produced can reach the market for revenue to go back to the region.

Infrastructure, we must make sure that those roads that were washed away or impacted by the consequences of climate change. Many of those infrastructures are now beyond repair. We have got to ensure that the roads that connect to the outer parts of Bougainville must be

repaired. Bougainville is only the road along the east coast, not the whole population of Bougainville live along the east coast, we have to also look at the west coast coming into Kunuwa and down to Torokina and back into Bana. Their roads must be connected as this is their accessibility because they have good agricultural land of which it must come into production.

Mr Deputy Speaker, one of the goldmines that Bougainville have is a potential for tourism. Bougainville have some of the most pristine scenery in the world. And we must, as the government, as part of the restoration process for Bougainville and driving towards these processes, we need to ensure the economic activities of Bougainville must be restored. Tourism is one area that has got the potential.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have to restore our connectivity with the people of Bougainville. It must not only be seen as government to government but we must have people to people connections and interactions with the people of Bougainville.

**25/03**

This is important because we have to make sure whilst, the process is ongoing, we all have our part to play.

One of the things I want to stress here is that we are managing the processes as the outcome of the referendum, we must not forget also to give opportunities back to the people of Bougainville. We must restore the economic activities in Bougainville which are agriculturally based.

Bougainville has one of the biggest maritime resource this country. I am pretty sure that they will be able to harvest the marine resources they have got available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, but, the final outcome of this is by us giving them support so that they will know that we have not deserted them.

On this note, I would like to commend the Prime Minister and the team on both sides of the House that is basically driving the outcome of the referendum.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DAVIS STEVEN** (Esa'ala) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to be the first to express my support and also raise some points in relation to this very important national debate, on an issue that concerns our country and the supremacy of our *Constitution* and our Parliament.

I thank the Prime Minister for presenting this paper. It is an informative paper that brings us up to date in relation to the progress of the referendum. It is the paper that highlights commitments that were made by the National Executive Council and notably, the agreement to extend time before Parliament was called upon to exercise its powers of ratification.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to also commend the leadership of this country from both sides of the aisle, former Prime Ministers and Leaders who have been involved in the process so far.

I also want to use this opportunity to place on record, a sincere appreciation to the international community led by the United Nations, our Regional Partners including New Zealand and Australia who have been there from day one and continue to stand with us.

As the other speakers have said and the Prime Minister highlighted, this is an issue that is a present leadership challenge. It is a leadership challenge that faces this generation of leaders. We were not there when the CPC adopted the *Constitution* in 1975.

The issue of breakaway province was not within the anticipation of our Founding Fathers, who put together our *Constitution*. We were not there when the question was asked about, why the *Constitution* in 1975 ought to be amended to include the Provincial Government System.

But we know from reading literature that the National Parliament and the National Government at that time had to accommodate the issue which was pressed and spearheaded by the Bougainville leaders at that time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, many of us were not here in Parliament in 2001 when the peace accord was signed. Contrary to certain beliefs out there in the society, in our communities, our *Constitution* was amended to accommodate the peace agreement and the process that has led up to where it is now.

We are now entering a new marathon where Parliament is going to be asked to listen to the voice, the outcome of our people in the Autonomous Region.

**26/03**

The voice of our people in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville has been expressed in the Referendum held last year. There are two issues that I want to highlight to support this debate.

Firstly, in the wisdom of leaders past and present, we have maintained this supreme place of Parliament in the debate and in the discussions so far. At the same time when the leaders of

both the ABG and our National Parliament decided to amend the *Constitution*; we were admitting that this process now must be guided within the framework of our *Constitution*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, those two points form the basis of my contribution to this debate this afternoon. Firstly, Bougainville is not a matter to politicize. The issue of Bougainville's request for independence should not be taken lightly. It goes to the very core of our union as a nation of multiple tribes who are diverse in our regions. We are different groups of people coming together under one *Constitution*.

The issue of Bougainville must not be politicized. It is something much greater than politics. I pay particular attention to the Prime Minister's reference to the activities beyond the Wabag dialogue. I want to say both sides of the House must realise that our *Constitution* forms the very foundation of our country and our legal systems should never be tempered with unless it is the common and clear unequivocal will of our people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when we speak about the way forward, the Opposition will want to support any effort that seeks the consensus of our people. I want to draw the attention of the honourable House to the intention of the Constitutional Planning Committee in 1975, when they adopted the *Constitution* of Papua New Guinea.

In part of the *Constitution*, there is reference to provisions for constitutional review. The intention of our founding fathers was that within three years of the commencement of our Independence Day, Parliament would have passed what was called a law to establish a general constitutional commission. If honourable members of Parliament would take the trouble to read through *Section 260 to 263*, you will see that our founding fathers anticipated a time when a challenge like this would be before us.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my contribution is this; instead of just the team of ministers or relying on CLRC; here the *Constitution* provides the mechanism. Here the *Constitution* is saying that the will of Parliament must be expressed in a bipartisan way, that there will be a law setting up a constitutional commission. It is now late but never too late, particularly in view of this important challenge that we face. A bill in which leaders from both sides of the House and certain prescribed authorities in *section 260(3)*. This is the authority that must be mandated by Parliament to support the National Executive Council in the way forward. This is the authority that must be specifically and clearly tasked. It must not only look at the National Government's opinion or the mainland of our country but to also look at the issues that our people in Bougainville are now articulating and raising.

The way we have progressed so far, up to the point that the Prime Minister is reporting to us about the Wabag dialogue, reveals a very important signal to us leaders as of the present hour, that our Nation cannot continue to operate with a centralised government. Wagani's power of controlling resources and funds must be broken. As we deal more and more with the Bougainville issue, you will see that the answer is in giving more powers just as our Prime Minister and former prime minister keep saying.

Political independence or political decentralisation under the provincial governments has not worked. We have governors on both sides of the House who are asking for more autonomy and decentralisation; they want the liberty to prioritise.

In 1975, it was the Bougainville leadership that said decentralise and create provincial government systems. Today, they are asking for more autonomy or independence. And the answer from the Prime Minister and the past leaders shows us as leaders of this generation that Waigani cannot continue to pretend that it is taking care of all our districts and provinces adequately.

Waigani is corrupt, inefficient, unfair and insensitive so the lessons that we are learning as the leader of the day as we observe the Bougainville Peace Process moving forward, reminds us that our nation was meant to be decentralised.

Mr Speaker, I can recall the debates at the House of Assembly, the *Hansard* will show, visionary leaders like the late Sir John Guise said, you cannot centralise this nation and expect it to survive. There was a strong debate on federal or decentralised governments.

Even there was a suggestion that the Prime Minister should be elected directly by the people so he doesn't manage the politics that we are always concerned about but he runs his agenda. If he wants to take back Papua New Guinea, let it be so but the current systems won't allow him.

Mr Speaker, my second last point is that, much good work has been put into the *Organic Law on Decentralisation*. It is already in the Notice Paper which is before us so honourable leaders should take time to read it.

I served on that side of the House under two different Prime Ministers and this was a task that we took to heart with the CLRC and our officials because we knew that the debate on Bougainville is going to expose some hidden pre-existing dynamics.

Many leaders will acknowledge that before the bill on decentralisation was formalised, we were already finding MoU's with provinces for greater autonomy. Long before, we came this far, the DDA concept came up once again to deal with Waigani's grasps over money so

that we can bypass bureaucracy and money can go straight to the districts where DDA's can use that to effect the change and attend to the issues prevalent in our communities.

**28/03**

But we also know that the governors took a very drastic stand and as we speak, there is a Supreme Court references, that will one day deal with the legality of the DDAs and maybe the Service Implementation Plans.

My point is that we have been trying different approaches but now before us as we do by-partisan support and approach to the issue of Bougainville, we should be rewriting the templates that will guide our future and the shape and form that our nation should take going into the future.

In fact, we all acknowledge that significant radical transformation or reform must take place everywhere from the civil service, State-owned Enterprises and from how we are dealing with our resources. There is a bill now before Parliament to commercialize the assets of the State. These are radical reforms depart from the status quo.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I conclude, I want to say that whilst Bougainville is a current challenge for the leadership of today, it also provides the opportunity the country needs. This is a debate that take us beyond the next election the next 5 years and it matters not who next sits over there as Prime Minister or who sits in the NEC. This is about the nation and the next 50 years so hard question must asked and answered.

I know that our Prime Minister has issued a warning against secessionist sentiments because our leaders are unrestrained. Some have even said openly in the public space that what's good for Bougainville is good for us too. And the way we are going, controlling and politicizing DSIP monies and mistreating the systems of government and continuing to corrupt ourselves is not going to help.

Mr Deputy Speaker, from this side, I can assure you my support, if our officials together with the prescriptions that the Prime Minister has highlighted, our officials can look seriously at forming this National Commission to review the *Constitution* reviewing every aspect of it including section 209 where finances are concerned; one budget, consolidated revenue through the bill that comes to Parliament.

We passed that and not on the side making cargo cult activities and commitments here and there. Not allowing for agencies that are not accountable to the Parliament to take hold of the public monies because that is creating distrust.



Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you, for the opportunity and once again I thank the Prime Minister and express my support for this important bill going forward.

Thank you.

**Mr WILLIAM POWI** (Southern Highland) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I wish to contribute on this debate and I want to commend the Prime Minister and the current government for taking a very bold decision and approach in dealing with one of PNG's very challenging matter of national issue.

So far, the level of confidence from the Autonomous region and of course from the wider PNG in so far as the government's approach to this very important issue, in my view, is very comforting and gives greater hope that there is some positive progress on a win-win situation.

Having said that, I wish to commend the debate of the shadow minister of Attorney General. I think the by-partisan approach, in my view, is something we should expound on as Parliament. The Parliament can go through the process of ratification on the issue of Bougainville.

**29/03**

I am not too sure of this but when the former government made me the Chairman of the Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee on the Referendum, a lot of issues became clear and I think Bougainville is a matter of national importance where leaders must debate on it because this will affect our future going forward.

What we do in here now and how we handle this issue going forward will determine issues about greater autonomy and the future of governance 50 years from now. I once thought Bougainville was a province but today in my view it is not province, it is now an autonomous region.

Through the visits of the Parliamentary Committee I have seen that a lot of the elements of the *Organic Law* still applies in Bougainville, like the DDA, PSIP, DSIP and capacity issues. These features of the *Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments* still apply in a region that is autonomous by the *Constitution*. There is a mismatch on functions, we need to look into this. As much as the *Constitution* created the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, it also created the autonomous government with full powers except the five that we have already talked about.

Those five are Defense, border control, foreign relations, telecommunications and others that we heard from the Prime Ministers statement. Those are the only functions and powers that the National Government of PNG retained. All other functions as per the *Organic Law* is constitutionally given to the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

The Bougainville Peace Agreement has three important pillars; the first one is the transfer of functions. As we have heard from the Minister for Lands, the lands functions were recently transferred. I am not sure whether all the functions of the government have been transferred to the autonomous region; but that was part of the pillar in the peace agreement. Which includes the capacity to raise revenue, procurement and implementation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the second pillar talks about weapons' disposal. I really do not know if all the weapons have been disposed up to this day, although the peace agreement has been fulfilled. The third pillar talks about the Referendum which is already delivered. The outcome of the Referendum has now fulfilled the Bougainville Peace Agreement. From the Referendum process, 97 per cent of the people have voted for Independence.

The other option that the Referendum is asking from us is to be given greater autonomy. And I bring to Parliament this question; what is greater autonomy? We need to qualify this thing as they already have autonomy that was provided for under the *Constitution* so, what does greater autonomy imply.

**30/03**

Does it mean giving back the five powers we have? As a country I think we need to debate and expound on this.

The other issue is that 97 per cent of the people in the referendum voted for independence and we have debated widely here in Parliament saying 'independence' is not provided for in the *Constitution*. So, these are matters of national importance that will affect our country going forward and I encourage the leaders to take a serious interest on this and we must not let it become the Executive Government's business.

In the numerous requests for greater autonomy, we need to qualify these things because if we don't do that we may go into a very dangerous part where we come to a blockage like this.

*Constitution* doesn't provide for independence and now you talk about a greater autonomy which is not very clear. What do you really mean by greater autonomy? They are already fully autonomized to run their own affairs under the *Constitution* just like the Independent State of PNG.

During the other debate, the Honourable Member, Sir Puka Temu said something about Joint Supervisory Body and the National Executive Council meeting and setting the agenda on these things. He debated that it shouldn't be the JSB, it should be some other forums. But, I think, JSB consists of leadership from both the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and PNG as well who discuss issues about the transition future which affects us all. In my view, that the right forum to discuss this issue.

I also want to propose that the Parliament must take note of the ratification process that the Executive Government is providing for us to debate. Before I prepared my statement yesterday, I didn't know that the Prime Minister was going to come with a prepared statement but I thought that one option was to go and discuss; consult with the people of Papua New Guinea, the 22 provinces to see how they feel about this.

Another option is as Members of Parliament, make it our responsibility because we are representing the people and we can discuss and articulate the ways on how to go about the ratification process.

My view is that, we should take a bipartisan approach and lead both sides of the Parliament to debate this ratification process and not let the executive government deal with this alone. We will have to live with the implications of our decision in the future.

Before I conclude, let me say that from 1975 to 1995, for 20 years, the country was setting its pace and approach on governance and setting the priorities. And from 1995 to 2005, we've had our challenges of leadership transition taking place. Now, from 2010 to 2025 and going into the future, we will have 50 years as a country so let's talk stock of where we have come from in terms of governance, law and order issues, education, health, and all the service delivery including the much talked about autonomy issue. But, we must clarify 'autonomy', in so far as the constitutional applications and its implications are concerned. So, we must not preach unnecessarily about autonomy because it is a word that is here to stay. We need to know what are you really looking at because there will come a time where we will come into conflict with the *Constitutional* provisions of our forefathers and now the Bougainville's referendum result is a clear *example*.

**31/03**

I am proposing to Parliament that we take the Bipartisan approach, whether we go by province to province and by region to region consulting our people and bringing their opinions and views to Parliament, or we as parliamentarians take their positions and represent our people. We must take this process effectively.

The Prime Ministers statement regarding the Wabag joint statement stat both Bougainville and PNG Government leaders agreed on the definition of the process of ratification and identifying the constitutional issues relating to the referendum result and tabling of the consultation outcome in the National Parliament is a very good window of opportunity for us to take on board. The younger generation of leaders who joined the 9th and 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, this is your time to set the future we would want for this country. And in my view, this centralization system is the pillar of unity in a country of diverse languages, cultures and society. So, I think this centralized system in this country is a important institution, therefore, government and also leaders of this country must see it to protect it.

In conclusion, the Bipartisan approach to seeing and supporting the executive governments on dealing with the Bougainville referendum outcome is the way to go. I am encouraging leaders to speak their minds on this and don't sit back this matter of National importance.

Thank you.

**Mr DON POLYE** (Kandep) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on an issue that is unprecedentedly very strategic and important. It will impact this whole nation, not just today but for many years to come. In terms of maintaining and keeping the sovereignty of PNG intact, it is very important in every aspect, and I am honoured to contribute to the statement given by the Prime Minister on the Bougainville peace process.

Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge our two great leaders of Papua New Guinea, the Prime Minister, Hon James Marape, and President of ABG, Hon Ishmael Toroama, on coming up with the sub-agreement, after holding previous discussions and events leading up to it.

Mr Speaker, I humbly say that I am thankful to the Government and the President of ABG for giving the honour to the people of Enga in participating and hosting the meeting, because this will go down in history and like what I said; this issue is unprecedented.

As stated by the Governor of Southern Highlands, the former Deputy Prime Minister on the opposition side, the Regional Member for Bougainville and the Minister for Environment, we have to address this holistically not only as a government, not only as politicians but must be seen in every perspective, because it is important to the future of this country.

I acknowledge that this is the Bougainville Peace Agreement that we are discussing here. And the Prime Minister's statement is an update of the Bougainville Peace Process that

emanates from the Peace Agreement. So, the focus of this discussion in this country is not on self-determination or independence.

**32/03**

Therefore, previous governments, public servants and leaders of this country thought wisely and called this a peace agreement. We had to go through the process and some were very clearly outlined by the Governor of Southern Highlands; we had to come with strategic things like the referendum.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also note that the referendum is non-binding. That also must be looked at in perspective; it is not a binding referendum. Although, 97 per cent of the people of Bougainville decided in the referendum for self-determination, but it is non-binding, therefore, the agreement that both parties agreed to in the Wabag talks about the sub-agreement where the established secretariat will continue to define what ratification is to the referendum results. And the Prime Minister and the President have both agreed to define the *Constitution*, as to the ratification of the results of the referendum.

So, that is where this update is bringing us to. We should not be signifying the term self-determination or independence because that is only a strategy that will bring us peace. What we must look at is the peace that must exist in Bougainville. Bougainville can be used as an example to also establish process of peace that is needed in other parts of the country.

I would like to mention three areas that I see as very important to this. The first one is; whether it is self-determination that might be in the process or additional autonomy like it has been discussed.

The three fundamental areas, I think, we must get it correct. We cannot call a country Independent just because of the name Independent. We cannot call a province or region autonomous because of the name.

There are certain conditions; there are things that must be met by this Parliament. The Parliament is responsible through the Executive Government. The Opposition is responsible through this Parliament in addressing issues like we have been doing to making sure that we do create a conducive environment.

In the case of Bougainville, if it is going for self-determination the responsibility is in this House in creating that conducive environment, if it will be the wish of the people of Papua New Guinea and not just the people of Bougainville. If it is going to be additional autonomous power, that environment must be conducive which will also lie with this House. So, this House is responsible and we are the ones that will decide on these issues.

Mr Speaker, I would agree with the Member for Esa'ala. What he has said is very true. It is not a political issue but a political matter, it must be seen in a bi-partisan approach.

He also discussed about capability. Before you become autonomous or independent or as a sovereign nation, you have to have the capability to justify what you want to be. You have to have the capacity. Now let us admit to the fact that we as leaders on this Floor of Parliament, overlooked and spoke quietly about it. We have spoken adequately, we have been so proficient when we talk about those issues, but what has been lacking is action. Action must go with what we say.

We have never built a capacity on the ground. Not just in Bougainville, but all throughout Papua New Guinea and what the former Attorney General said is very true the capacity is not they're in our provincial and local-level government system and now the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

The people of Bougainville will know this and they will agree with me. Even if there is a strong sentiment in the form of 97 per cent seeking self-determination or independence, their capability to service as a nation is just not there.

**33/03**

We also do agree so let's be honest. If we judge ourselves in a just way as Papua New Guineans then we will admit that some parts of us have failed to govern. Some of our government departments have also failed, for instance, the Police Force. If we are called a failed nation then we would not stand much ground to argue our case.

Mr Deputy Speaker, before we can talk about anything else, we must address the issues of capability and capacity. For example, our public service machinery. We sit on the Floor of Parliament and continue to debate and criticise this public service. We blame somebody for not doing his or her job properly so we bring our brother or sister in to replace him. If that is not enough, we bring our political support or cronies in for the job. It goes on and on from one government to another; from one parliament to another. This has been going on for the last 45 years and we have compromised the public service. We have compromised all our service providers and yet we blame them for non-performance.

We must start to learn about the systems of governance. They are very important and work properly without political influence. For example, I see the difference between the Governor of Madang and the Member for Madang. The same with the Member for Kandep and the Governor of Enga. These political differences have destroyed the public service machinery.

Mr Deputy Speaker, if we are going to see Bougainville come out through the ratification process then we must make sure that our capacity and capability are established. We must understand these things not just for Bougainville but also for Papua New Guinea. There is no point in establishing a Bougainville when the parent country as in PNG has not established its own systems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, secondly, the Prime Minister mentioned about establishing a separate secretariat and carrying out public awareness. I agree that we should allow Papua New Guineans to determine and make a decision regarding this issue. There should also be another referendum conducted by another country to verify or address the issue of independence that 97 per cent of Bougainvilleans want. This is not about Bougainville alone but about the solidarity of Papua New Guinea.

We all know that our country is culturally diversified. This is something that we should seriously consider when making important decisions. When we allow one part of the country to have such a government then we are opening the flood gates of other parts of the country joining in and following suite. When we have so much corruption everywhere, it would only encourage other parts of the country to seek independence or self-determination. For example, if we encourage Bougainville then the New Guinea Islands Region would want to follow suite and ask for an autonomous island region.

These issues need to be addressed carefully at the national perspective. These means that every Papua New Guinean in this country needs to make a decision on it. We could run another national referendum on the Bougainville issue. The joint secretariat that is looking at the issue of ratification could go down that road. The bipartisan authorities can also assess this issue or we can give that responsibility to another body that we want to create. This is to look at the national referendum that determines or makes decisions as to the independence by the people of Bougainville.

**34/03**

Finally, I want to suggest that political, economic, fiscal and law or legal structures in this country needs new reforms and we have to fix this House.

I was the Opposition Leader for some time, seated where the Honourable Member for Vanimu-Green, Belden Namah is sitting, is a good place and some of our colleagues were on this side and I realised that we really need to restructure this House's democracy to make it more effective and efficient in its decision making.

One example is the Budget. Any government can come into office, bulldoze the numbers and pass the Budget making the Opposition useless. Whatever the Opposition wants to express will not matter because there is no upper layer of government to look at legislation or the laws. We should have an upper house and a lower house like the bicameral system to restructure the laws and it gives more checks and balances. The bicameral system will be a better system to look at this kind of laws where a law is made at the lower house and the upper house can review the law. In this case the ratification as per the *Constitution* that the Prime Minister has stated; we should be doing something like that.

Look at the committee system in the Parliament; it doesn't work but it should be the most powerful system because every minister is supposed to report to the committees. The Committee on Infrastructure, the Committee on Health, the Committee on Finance and Accounts, and the committee on Works should be the most powerful committees in the Parliament so that every minister report to them so there is a check and balance.

We have to restructure our political system because the way we are going, we have not isolated most of the problems we have seen perpetuating in this country. We need to have a structure that is completely different.

Now, look at the Public Service machinery in the country. We have many public service bodies that are duplicating functions. For example, the Public Service Commission and the Department of Personnel Management; in the petroleum sector we have the National Gas Cooperation, Petromin, and Kumul Petroleum and so forth.

There are just so many bodies performing the same function and the operational costs are so high, therefore, you cannot satisfy the development programs of government. So, to really address these issues, we have to put in checks and balance systems in place and encourage good governance and accountability. We have to stand up for what is right by continuing to strengthen the systems of government.

When we cut down the excessive expenditure on areas that are not necessary and we are consistent in the next 20 to 30 years, you will find addressing issues like Bougainville Peace process will be much easier, as there are so many things in disarray. We are even compounded by our culture that we live, our people want us to give them money for bride price and so forth.

Mr Speaker, we should have positions created in the electorates for those members who will only deal with national issues. Those members can become ministers to oversee national issues.

If the Member for Kandep becomes a minister, he is the Member for Kandep, with other portfolio and is overloaded with so much work which he never gets done. Most times we do



not seem to understand how we should function or we do not even know our jobs well. All the Members of Parliament think that their job is to go and present cheques to the villagers and that is not our job, we are legislators. We have to restructure ourselves to change first.

So, if ministers come from electorates then we will call them Minister Electorate and they address national issues which are very important. If we see those issues as very important and if we change our structures to align with them to providing quality service to our people, we will not see another Bougainville because their government and parliament are properly positioned and structured, therefore, the culture and ground will be good.

**35/03**

Then you find translation of policies and services down to the ground level will be effective and efficient and therefore, people will be happy. Bougainvillians went to war because they were not happy because somebody was cheating, deceiving and not listening to them. These are top-level structural that need to be addressed. So, those three played a major role not just in Bougainville but also in the rest of the country.

To conclude Bougainville is part of Papua New Guinea, we must not talk on independence yet. The agreement here is a peace agreement and processes, it is not a self-determination agreement or self-determination process.

It is a peace agreement, let's look at how we empower and build capability; how do we address the ratification issue with the context of law and how do we structure ourselves as Papua New Guineans to change the culture. So, we administer the government properly and you will cut down and diffuse any other people who might be dissatisfied in future in term of provinces and districts and our region.

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Sir PUKA TEMU (Abau)** - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also wish to commend the Prime Minister for presenting this updated statement on this very important issue, the political future of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

Also, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for appointing me as Minister for Bougainville Affairs when he became the Prime Minister when I led the referendum process. It dawned on me the lack of information out there in Bougainville and more so here in the mainland on the Bougainville issue. Therefore, in my intervention today, I wish to make some very strong recommendations for the government to take heed off.

Just a little bit of a background, the thought of independent state of Bougainville is not new. In fact, when we declared independence on 16 September 1975, the then leadership of Bougainville did say bye, we are going for independence.

And if you read the history there has been two unilateral declarations of independence which haven't been recognized by the UN and Papua New Guinea. Then the crisis came upon us and, therefore, in an effort to bring peace to the island and the country we went for the Bougainville peace agreement which was signed on 31 of August, 2001, by the then late Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta.

Since then we have to acknowledge that successive government here really never honored the Bougainville peace agreement to its letter. And my observation was because it was a new experience for the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. This concept of autonomous region and therefore Parliament struggle to amend the *National Constitution* to allow for this autonomous arrangement.

The political leadership as well as the bureaucratic leadership also was not sure how to handle an autonomous region and, therefore, the delays in different leadership whether prime minister or ministers of State in this question for example; how and when do you transfer certain powers that they were still holding in Waigani. So that delayed a lot of that and also the debate on the restoration development grant was only cleared just before the referendum.

### 36/03

The Development grant was only cleared before the referendum so, for nineteen years the confusion of how much we should give to Bougainville RDG so that they can have a restoration program in preparation for the three pillars that were agreed upon.

Therefore, my strong recommendation right now to support the Prime Minister's call is to undertake a major awareness program throughout the country and leadership here in Parliament. This is because you and I are the ones; this Parliament is recognized and if we come back in 2022, the onus will be on us and the final authority rests with the National Parliament. The education and awareness must start here and go out and therefore, I support the call made by the honorable Governor for Southern Highlands and I note in the bi-partisan committee today; that since the then chairman became a Minister of State the bi-partisan committee of Bougainville now only has three members, they have no chairman and two other members are yet to be appointed by Parliament.

This is to give credence to this issue and I strongly recommend that before we rise we must appoint a chairman for the Bougainville Bi-partisan Committee as well as the other two

members of the committee. This issue should be sorted out quickly during this sitting of Parliament. There is one other matter which I believe the Prime Minister in his future statement will mention.

But you will recall that we brought the former president, Dr John Momis to address us in this Parliament and there was also an MOA between our National Parliament and the Bougainville House of Representatives that needs to be brought into this entire process of how we respond to the post-referendum matters. And I strongly recommend that the agreement between the two institutions must also be brought into the loop so, that there is that interaction at that level.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the third recommendation is what our shadow Attorney- General has said and because Parliament will have to address this as a national issue and it requires and has been acknowledged in the Wabag Meeting, that we will have to review the entire *Constitution*. In fact, the Prime Minister has made a statement that you would want to review some of the laws that have been outdated. This is in preparation for 2025, which is going to be in the Eleventh Parliament. I recommend that we pass the legislation that the shadow Attorney-General has talked about as it will have to address the Bougainville post-referendum issue to include the other calls for autonomous arrangements by other provinces. And it will also address the new Organic Law or the Bill that is before Parliament right now.

It also recommends that provinces can integrate and merge and these are big issues for this House, to structure and process, so that it is a call for the Parliament to pass a constitutional review by law.

### 37/03

But this is a major undertaking by this Honourable House in preparation for the changes that we need to bring on the Floor of Parliament to get ready for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and going forward into the next fifty years as an independent State.

There was mention in the early years before and by the then Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee Honourable John Momis. A serious thought about regional governments rather than a centralized government and in fact Sir John Guise lost his race to become the first Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea because of that argument. And then when John Momis came in, we granted the Provincial Government System as I've been saying on the Floor of Parliament, we gain Independence in 1975. Organic Law on Provincial Government came in two years later in 1977 and we reviewed it in 1995, embodying the local level government so we have three levels of governments.

So, in this process, difficulties in service delivery have come about. We establish three levels of governments and four levels of bureaucracies and I've been saying on the Floor of Parliament, we really brought on to ourselves major structural impediments. These are the structural impediments that this honorable House really has to seriously look at and what an opportune time for us to seriously look at all the structural impediments in view of the issue of Bougainville's political future. I think it's time and Prime Minister, you are on the right trend. When I was listening to you, you were actually on the right trend but you really need to incorporate the bigger picture as you've been saying on how are we going to amend all these bad pieces of legislation to clean up the *Constitution*, Organic Laws and enabling legislation so that issues like autonomy can be institutionalized. I commend the Vice Minister for Bougainville Affairs and regional Member for Bougainville. Now, who has, in his incentive, relook at and restructure NCOBA.

My view is, and because of my experience when I was the Bougainville Affairs Minister, that I think we have stuck NCOBA by itself. Therefore, we've lost the institutionalization of this autonomous conversation. So, my strong recommendation is, bring it into the Ministry of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs because that's where this institutional process takes place.

So, my recommendation is, that the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs should focus on autonomous arrangements, including Bougainville and other autonomous conversations that will come into the future. Therefore, we have now institutional capacity to address politically aligned autonomous arguments.

I want to inform the nation that our granting of autonomous status to Bougainville actually is one of the greater autonomous arrangements in any part of the world. That means Papua New Guinea actually has a very good experience on managing autonomous regions and also on record, I want to say that the Bougainville Peace Agreement has been recognized as one of the most effective peace agreements anywhere on the face of this planet.

**38/03**

We have actually very good experience but we are not properly institutionalizing the process so it becomes a national knowledge or an institution where we can actually use that experience and data-base to quickly address these issues. For example; on autonomy or the proposed changes on the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Government, I can see that there are areas that we really need to improve on. Laws can be passed and we can always amend that, to help us amend them we need to know institutional capability. So, in the reform

of the national code for Bougainville, I am recommending this honourable House that we need to bring the Department and the Ministry of Inter Government Relations into the process because that is very important.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my concern, while I was Minister for Bougainville Affairs was the Secretary for Inter-Government Relations and the Minister for Inter-Government Relations were not part of the entire process. So the agency managing Inter-Government Relations was not part of it, we need to now bring it in, in order to build the institutional capability this is very important.

I am very happy that the economic summit is going to be held this November in Bougainville and I would like to thank the Prime Minister, the ABG President and the Vice Minister. My strong recommendation before I left the office, I actually had a meeting with a European Union representative and told him that we needed a special package for Bougainville. I strongly recommend a good loan, whether it is from the Asian Development Bank, European Union or another bi-lateral or multi-lateral partner that after the summit or the 2022 Budget. We need to have a PIP, approved and fully funded so that the outcomes of the economic summit can then be delivered on a timely basis because economic growth is what you and I want, not only for Bougainville but the rest of the country as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my final point, is the process that we are currently engaging in the post-referendum. I want to highlight a couple issues that emanated when we were concluding the vote on the referendum process. A question was raised by a Bougainville leader on whether the next ABG will be structured under the same arrangement of the Bougainville Peace Agreement or should the ABG or be a transitional government. We argued until we finally agreed, unless we change the laws it will be the same, then the Prime Minister stand is right in that instance. But, the question came up by the current ABG lead by President Toroama that is this structure okay or should we have a different arrangement and therefore relook at the Bougainville Peace Agreement which in some others view, concluded after the referendum. In my view, the Bougainville Peace Agreement is a continuous process. And, the Member for Kandep is absolutely right that we must not forget the ultimate goal of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and that is to maintain peace in Bougainville through peaceful processes only. This is why, the weapons disposal came in as a pillar, this is why we allowed governance and when the two previous elections of ABG came in, they went through peaceful election processes

Those questions are still hanging and perhaps, there need to be a review on the Bougainville Peace Agreement while we are on the post-referendum phase. This is a post-referendum phase and post-Bougainville Peace Agreement phase. So, the leadership will have to re-look it.

In the point that I raised, when the Prime Minister, in the last session of Parliament discussed the issue on Bougainville, I mentioned that the consultation process must not be confused with the Joint Supervisory Body process. The JSB process is to oversee routing of Government Administration processes, it is a supervisory process rather than a consultation process.

The consultation process; the way myself and the then Minister responsible, honourable Albert Punhau, the way we were structuring it was for them to have a cross selection of leadership in their consultation team. Women, youth, chiefs and non-members of the council representative.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** – Honourable Member for Abau, your time for debate is up.

**Sir PUKA TEMU** – I will leave it to that and hopefully another time will come for further debate.

Thank you.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I know that many of you are taking this issue very seriously and would like to debate. I just want to inform the House that I will give preference to our Bougainville Members to have a say on this debate.

I am not depriving your rights to speak. I will allow you to speak if the time allows us, but for now I will give the opportunity to the Bougainville Members to debate. I will ask the Minister for Communication to make his statement.

**Mr TIMOTHY MASIU** (South Bougainville – Minister for Information and Communication Technology) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I also want to be a part of this debate, in as far as the statement on Bougainville, made by the Prime Minister this morning.

I am really thankful for the Prime Minister that he, as the then Minister for Bougainville Affairs, can make a statement on the affairs of Bougainville. This is the first time I have actually heard a Prime Minister talking about Bougainville and bringing a statement to Parliament.

But before I say a few things in my support to this statement, I want to also stand here and pay tribute to all the former Prime Ministers and former governments, for their support in bringing Bougainville to where we are today. You have all done your best and your part; for that I thank you all from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of my people of South Bougainville and Bougainville as a whole.

I also want to thank our peace building partners; countries like Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu etcetera and of course our donor agencies for supporting Bougainville in those years of struggle to be where we are today.

Coming to the present time, I want to thank the Prime Minister and this Government for making Bougainville your number one priority. Prime Minister, you have always stated that Bougainville is your priority and stated that Bougainville will continue to get your attention. For that I salute you and I urge you to continue to do that for the good of Bougainville and this country as a whole.

The statement again demonstrates your commitment to Bougainville. In fact, the people of Bougainville are being updated through the statement on when this government is addressing the issues of Bougainville.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the issues of Bougainville and other related issues on Bougainville are not impossible to address. And this government is doing that and I know that as a Parliament we can address some of those issues on Bougainville.

**40/03**

We are looking for a long-lasting peace on Bougainville and therefore it is our obligation to make sure that we find that lasting peace. I am very thankful that since coming into office, this government has taken Bougainville as its priority and for that, has been working very closely through the JSB and through the consultation processes, in making sure that leadership on both sides, know what is going on especially on the issue of the 97.7 per cent vote referendum. That is very important because that is the wish of the people of Bougainville and that wish must be respected at all times because we went through a process that was recognise both locally and internationally. The statement today amplifies and signifies that this government is focused on Bougainville-focused meaning that the issues that are being raised and those still pending, will be addressed and will continue to be addressed through the interactions with the Bougainville leadership.

I want to thank the Prime Minister and the President of the government of Bougainville, Honourable Ismael Toroama, and their teams for making sure discussions continue. It is very

important that conversation continues. This government and any other government that comes after the 2022 National Elections must continue to put Bougainville as one of its priorities because if we bring an amicable Bougainville solution than we would be bringing the country to recognize that we are capable as Papua New Guineans helping each other.

I acknowledged the other Members of Parliament who have spoken ahead of me and I thank you all for your concerns and how you would like to see Bougainville progress through this period.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the issue of NCOBA is a sticking issue on Bougainville. NCOBA is the National Coordinating of Bougainville Affairs. It needs to be re-purposed and I am happy that both the Prime Minister and the Vice Minister have made the statement that NCOBA must re-organize itself. There are a lot of people sitting on NCOBA with no work to do. They just come in and sit around all day and then go out at 4.06 p.m. and get paid for doing nothing. The Office must be a mean and lean office with only a few people co-ordinating between the National Government and Bougainville. Its staff strength has increased dramatically and we should as a matter of priority, deal with it and get NCOBA to focus on what it is supposed to do as a co-ordinating office for both governments.

The national awareness cited in this report is a must. It means Papua New Guinea is one country and we sing it all the time. So, Papua New Guinea should be involved in whatever is happening in Bougainville because the impact of the crisis was felt throughout the whole country.

#### **41/03**

It is true that Bougainville went through this situation and decided its future through the referendum.

Bougainville has already spoken and we want to become independent so I believe that creating awareness throughout the country is very important. The people of this country have the right to know what is happening to Bougainville. They also have the right to know how the Government is handling the Bougainville issue.

As many of the leaders have mentioned, the bipartisan approach is a tool to help us to get the citizens of this country. So, they understand better and accept the move. Otherwise, there are other ways where we can let Bougainville remain as a part of PNG.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that Bougainville is an achievable situation and we can achieve it but the leadership must work in unity, both in the Government and Opposition. We all must attend the JSB and consultations together. The Government will not achieve this on



its own thus we need the Oppositions to address it. There are many senior members present who are very experienced and we can use them to help tackle the issue at hand.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will stop here to allow my fellow colleague, the Member for Central Bougainville time to debate. But this is my contribution and I am very happy with the statement although it is long overdue.

This statement will make the people of Bougainville to focus on the Government of Papua New Guinea on how we are handling the Bougainville Peace Agreement. There are many issues surrounding the Bougainville Peace Agreement and I believe that you all have your own problems in your area. But I am convinced that we can make it happen if we all work together in unity.

I want to thank the governments of the past and the current government for continuing to help us. The Members of Bougainville to continue to fund infrastructure for our people of Bougainville. You will notice the changes in the electorates, I do not know how or where some large amounts are being spent. The government must ask for acquittals from ABG so that we all know where and how the funds are being used.

But, Mr Prime Minister, thank you for this statement, it very clear and simple and I know that the people of Bougainville will be acknowledge this statement and support it.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**SAM AKOITAI** (Central Bougainville) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I too would like to join my fellow colleagues to contribute to the debate on the statement that the Prime Minister presented.

**42/03**

The Governor, provincial government and the people of Enga for allowing the leaders of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville to go through the process of consultations.

I wish to join other speakers to thank the other former prime ministers who have played a major part in making sure that we continued with the policy of achieving peace in Bougainville. Without that policy, we would not have been able to come up with the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Those former prime ministers and ministers of Bougainville Affairs, just to name a few, Sir Michael Somare and Sir Moi Ave who had played a major part to conclude this Bougainville Peace Agreement.

With that, we also have former prime ministers who played a major part after the signing of the peace agreement. I want to make it clear to the nation that many people say that

Bougainville crisis was about Paguna, yes, it started off with the Paguna issue. I've said this many times on the Floor of Parliament, the Paguna issue was just on the surface, the fire that is underneath, as I have stated before, was started not by Papua New Guinea, but by British and Germany way back in the 1980s. Papua New Guinea became a victim of somebody else's decision to come to this stage, where many people lost their lives, not just Bougainvillians but Papua New Guineans too.

Today, I want to thank the Prime Minister for bringing this updated report of the progress of implementation for the Bougainville Peace Agreement. As the honourable Governor of Southern Highland and the former Minister for Bougainville Affairs, Sir Puka Temu, have mentioned this afternoon, Bougainville Peace Agreement came out from many other agreements and understandings. That argument was discussed everywhere within the country and outside as well.

It took many hours and days to actually come up with this peace agreement. And when that Bougainville Peace Agreement was signed then the amendments to the *Organic Law* gave that legal effect. So, the implementation of the peace agreement was a joint creation by both governments and they must implement the peace agreement.

There are three pillars in the peace agreement;

- (1) Weapon disposal
- (2) Autonomy
- (3) Referendum

Many people have the wrong interpretation of these pillars of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. All three pillars have been addressed since the signing of the peace agreement but the disappointing part is that the people of Bougainville wished that we had fully implemented the peace agreement. So, that the people will see the benefit of having an autonomous arrangement.

When the National Government wasn't fully engaged in implementing Bougainville Peace Agreement, the autonomous arrangement became unattractive for Bougainvillians. This must be clear. Many discussions were targeted around the autonomous arrangement but the people of Bougainville are no longer talking about autonomy, they are talking about the independence.

**43/03**

I want to clarify here that I have gone around my electorate and have collected the views of the people. When the discussions on the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the Referendum

were being brought forward, the Referendum was supervised by a commission, which was led by an independent chairman, who was not a local nor a Papua New Guinean for that matter. He was the former Prime Minister for Ireland and when it was concluded; the commission reported that 97.7 per cent of the people of Bougainville chose to be independent.

Mr Deputy, when this announcement was made, the chairman also said that it was a credible result. And in my view, the coming elections will be one of the worst elections ever in the history of our country. This is because, those who deal with the common roll have yet to go out and confirm the actual number of eligible voters and keep the common roll updated. And I here I thought Papua New Guinea would have learnt from the Bougainville experience.

Bougainvilleans living outside the province, the country and even those who were sick were catered for, to have their say in the Referendum, but to come up with such a result for PNG, I am afraid to say that the electoral process in this country is no way near, what happened during the referendum. We are always late and I support the Prime Minister's call for sensitivity on how we express our views on this.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is also very important to note that, the other MPs are expressing their views on behalf of their people. I have spoken before and am speaking again, if we need to end the crisis, we have to respect the views of the people. I can go against my people but who am I to do so, when 97.7 per cent want independence. My actions in the past is history because my view is that the national government has failed me, by not fully implementing the peace agreement.

I also want to remind you all here that there were two Unilateral Declaration of Independences; the first UDI was not after but before Independence on September 1, 1975 and it was not recognized; the second was declared in 1990 when the security forces left Bougainville. Bougainville was again declared independent on May 17. And I see that if we do not address this issue properly, I want to fore warn you all that there will be another UDI by the people of Bougainville if we do not handle this carefully.

**44/03**

There are good proposals that have already been put up by certain speakers here and I want us to look at those proposals together in a bipartisan approach to addressing the Bougainville issue because I see that the Bougainville Referendum was authorized by the *Constitution* of this country and the people of Bougainville have conducted this. If we allow the people of Bougainville to go through this Referendum and all of a sudden you deviate from what they want, then the same instances that has happened in the past will happen again.

People fought for Independence even before Panguna Mine operate and then what happened was that the Australian Government and Papua New Guinea House of Assembly brought in the Panguna Mine and then our land owners were not part of that agreement except the Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Developer and that was the mistreatment of Bougainvilleans.

Then in 1989, when the crisis begins, after so many attempts by the Bougainvilleans or land owners to address the issues of Panguna, Waigani refused to review the agreement, and continued the mistreatment of Bougainvilleans until gun shots were fired at the government to settle it but what happened was the government of the day had declared a State of Emergency where it victimized over 20 000 people and that has continued.

So, we have to be very sensitive about how we are going to address the issue of Referendum because what I continue to see now is that our people in Bougainville think that the leaders of Papua New Guinea do not care about the people who have died. Their big question is, how best this leadership is going to deal with the issue of self-determination in where the people have decided already that they want Bougainville to be independent.

Now, with this, I thank the Prime Minister and the President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, they have a good relationship which they should continue because it will keep alive the dream to achieve good ending, because the main objective of the Bougainville Peace Agreement is to restore total peace to Bougainville and Papua New Guinea.

So, with this paper, I am also happy that the Prime Minister and the Vice Minister are looking at reforming the NCOBA office or Bougainville affairs office. The performance of the NCOBA officers in Wabag, if the Enga Governor was not there, it would been a disaster. I noticed that the officers of NCOBA who travelled to Enga, were like tourists.

So, I thank the local Member who took part that time. Without his support, those consultations would not have happened the way they did. So, with the information that is going out from the Prime Minister, it's good that Members are updated on what is happening with the process.

**45/03**

What we are doing now about this peace process has not being concluded in this term of parliament. It is now setting everything back to the next parliament. That is my concern.

The Prime Minister is here, he is taking the lead on this issue but what happens if he does not come back? Do we start all over again?

All the discussions that happened in the Wabag community rose because of certain issues but they don't have the support which Bougainville has, like the peace agreement through the *Constitution*.

It is unfortunate that it is going to happen in the next Parliament and not this Parliament but there have been good preparations happening, towards a better outcome, maybe in the next Parliament.

With this, I would like to encourage all members to feel free to express yourselves regarding this issue of Bougainville. It is very important because Bougainville has contributed economically to this country. I am seeing another chapter again in the history of this country; and that Bougainville issue is going to reshape the political structure of this nation.

There are some who talked about provincial autonomy. My experience is that provincial autonomy will not work because of what we have faced in Bougainville. But regional autonomy will work because of two issues; the province must have capacity and resources. These will ensure to sustain the autonomous arrangement. I think we need to look into what the shadow Attorney General Minister has proposed for Papua New Guinea.

In addition, I assure you my support and also would like to acknowledge your continuous support and thank the people of Papua New Guinea in restoring peace for the people of Bougainville, but there is still more work to do.

I thank the Prime Minister and your cabinet ministers, especially Minister for Lands, Minister for Fisheries and Minister for Agriculture for your support and commitment.

**Mr WILLIAM NAKIN** (North Bougainville) – Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to be part of this debate.

Thank you, Mr Prime Minister, for all that you have done for the people of Bougainville. Your leadership has shown your support for the people of Bougainville. And leadership is very important in that case. In Parliament, the Prime Minister is the leader. Members in this House are also leaders, mandated to represent our people.

**46/03**

I really appreciate the Prime Minister for presenting this statement and also promoting the goodness and the kindness of Bougainville people through his visits.

We have missed out on a lot of chances and through his visits to the people of Bougainville we are very grateful, and I thank the Prime Minister for making this presentation

here on the Floor of Parliament. The people of Bougainville really appreciate your contributions.

We have the JSB and consultation process going on but it needs that leadership to show that genuinely to the people of Bougainville. So, the presentation today demonstrated to the people of Bougainville which the National Government cares for them and cares for us.

It is true that unity is being fostered and that is being addressed by the leaders who have been chosen in this House to represent this goodness and kindness which must stay in the hearts of the Bougainville people.

That is why there are processes involved in JSB and in consultation. It is very important and there is a need for good leadership to give that opportunity to the people to express themselves.

The first consultation process took place in Kokopo, East New Britain but the representative members of Bougainville did not fully participate in the consultation process until it eventuated and that is when they realised the importance of members of Bougainville to involve in these consultation processes.

Today we have the Regional Member and we really appreciate that he has been chosen the Vice Minister for Bougainville Affairs. He contributes much and he will help the Prime Minister to provide that genuinity or the expression by the people of Bougainville.

I am very happy with the people of Bougainville and their leaders; the President Ismael Toroma which has got a good relationship with the Prime Minister. They have been communicating and that is one big thing that must be kept which is the relationship between the two governments; MABG and the National Government.

They are addressing all these issues and the leadership which they provide is outstanding.

**47/03**

They chose to meet frequently to jointly address issues affecting our people, both in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. That is my small contribution in this debate and I am happy that the Prime Minister has made this statement as an issue to be addressed by leaders who have already expressed their thoughts. I want to thank them for that.

Other provinces have important issues to attend to but the Bougainville issue which we are dealing with is for the common good of the people. I would like to again thank the Prime Minister and the President of Bougainville for the good relationship which they have established. This is evident in their resolve to continue working together especially in agreeing to the extension of the time to 2027 when the final outcome would take place.

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** (East Sepik) – Let me first of all thank the Prime Minister; I think he needs to be acknowledged because he has given Bougainvilleans a very willing ear.

I can recall while in the Opposition, raising the Bougainville issue three times and with much respect to the Member for Ialibu-Pangia and the former Prime Minister (Mr Peter O'Neill), his approach to Bougainville was quite the opposite to what we see from Prime Minister Marape.

I am a little sad standing here after seeing the result of the referendum and I think to myself, if we had a more sympathetic prime minister then, the outcome of the referendum would have been different. I note the debate from the Member for Central Bougainville, Honourable Sam Akoitai, and thank him for speaking so plainly on how the Bougainvilleans are feeling. In matters such as this, sometimes we beat around the bush and do not address the real issue. We Sepiks often feel like the Bougainvilleans do.

I want to draw from the debate by Honourable Sir Puka Temu. It's time to look again at the union of Papua New Guinea. Many of us were too young to understand what our forefathers were thinking when they put the country together. The Bougainville issue began in 1989 and many Papua New Guineans do not understand it. Many do not care but the Bougainvilleans care because it affected them. So, it puts this House in a difficult dilemma and actually shows us that there were many, many failures that led to that result.

#### **48/03**

The problem occurred in 1989, maybe we should not have sent the forces in but we did. Or maybe we should not have abandoned those who wanted to stay as Papua New Guinea but we withdrew. Up until the time we signed the agreement, the Papua New Guinean Government was supposed to apologise and accept them back but instead we pushed them further away. As the saying goes, "Maybe the horse has bolted"; it has already left us. There were many opportunities where we could have fixed this.

Many members throughout the years, have worked very hard on this issue on both sides of the House, and I would like to recognise them all. I have also seen a change in the approach with this Prime Minister. So, on behalf of the people of East Sepik, it is only appropriate that I thank him for his approach and attention to this very vital issue. Whether we like it or not, the calls for autonomy, justice and fairness are getting louder. Recently, we have seen in Court cases that the public is screaming for justice.

Mr Speaker, the issue on justice and fairness are human requirements. and is not only the cries of the people of Bougainville or Papua New Guinea but a call from people all over the world. It is a human trait; human being wants to be treated fairly and justice.

Our *Constitution* recognises all of these things yet we do not follow it. We write nice things down but we fail to follow them. A nice peace agreement was written down but we did not follow it. We lack the ability to compel ourselves to do the right things.

Yesterday, I heard the Honourable Don Polye speaking about the systems, good governance, accountability and checks and balances. We cannot deny that there were no checks and balances when Bougainville collapsed because it was unbalanced. Even now, our country is precariously sitting on the brink.

Mr Speaker, I see elements of this in the previous and present government. A member will invite others to accompany him to present funds to his district and because this member might have political value, the government will exceed to his request, never mind the greater community. Now, there is no check and balance system in place to stop this member from taking what he wants. We have seen this situation occur time and time again. However, when you are in the Opposition, you will complain about it but when you are on this side nothing is being said.

Mr Speaker, the arguments over resources, justice and fairness for our people. I understand that in the Government, we have disadvantaged the Opposition because we have cut their DSIP's. We use this financial resource to play games with each other not realising that the ones we are hurting are the people in the rural areas. Now, so long as we continue to play the blame-game, there is a group of people who continue to suffer.

Mr Speaker, there needs to be a greater level of maturity amongst our people to raise their visions.

In 2009, as part of the Vision 2050 we proposed a bicameral House and it was not entertained. In that bicameral House we proposed a senate type arrangement, where the regional MPs would sit and also special seats for women and they would also sit in the upper house.

This proposal that was written up by Sir Barry Holloway and his team must be sitting somewhere in Waigani, collecting dust. It is a very good proposal presenting a restructure and it sets in checks and balances that this country has not had in 45 years.

Mr Speaker, if we had good checks and balances the issue on Bougainville would not have gone as far as it had because there was no checks and balances. It solely was the decision of the prime minister.



49/03

When we come here and elect the Prime Minister, he becomes a democratically elected dictator. But I want to say this about the Prime Minister; he listens. This is the reason why I have supported him because when I have issues with East Sepik, he has the time to listen. And I am sure President Toroama when he got issues with Bougainville this Prime Minister is willing to listen.

We cannot pin the hopes of an entire country on the goodness of one man, we need a system that ensures that we get a fair hearing regardless of the who is the Prime Minister. We need that if not Bougainville will be the first one to walk off and mark my words other provinces will want to walk.

It is not just about the Bougainvilleans and their injustice. It's about the injustice about every Papua New Guinean feels and we need to fix it. The Bougainvilleans I am sure were not thinking about running their country; they were only concern that they were unfairly treated and out of frustration they did it. And that anger and resentment is creeping up in many parts of our country and this House needs to do something about it.

We have National General Elections coming up next year, let's not worry about that election. Let's worry about doing things properly so that we prevent this sort of thing occurring again. If we don't then we have learned absolutely nothing from Bougainville. We need to look at our entire system.

As a provincial government I cannot be held accountable to a department secretary. The people of East Sepik should hold me accountable just like the people of Bougainville should hold their President accountable. But no, even though we are empowered under the Organic Law a secretary administering an Act will actually overpower the operations of a provincial government. There is no check and balance in our system.

Mr Speaker, even you said that yesterday and I agree on that there is no support for parliamentary committees. We disempowered the whole thing. When we talk about Ombudsman and even, we passed ICAC on this Floor but there is no check and balance. And until we address this issue, we cannot balance this issue when corruption creeps in or when one man becomes powerful and they decide their way through Parliament like they did in 2011, we can't do much.

Mr Speaker, so we need to go back; it's 50 years soon, Sir Puka Temu is right; before reaching 50 years we need to review our system. And don't just go and do it half-heartedly like what we did with the DDA Act, and saying that it will work.

We look at the entire system and re-design it and make sure it works. Don't do feast meal effort. Its feast meal effort that resulting the source of injustice and the outcry from the people of Bougainville.

Mr Speaker, I will finish shortly but I want to repeat again that we are fortunate enough to have such a Prime Minister who has the heart for the people of Bougainville and the steps we are following.

But I don't want to leave it to luck, I want a system that guarantees to hold a prime minister to account. Right now, we cannot and with all the-sliding, we need a system that stops us from doing that. We need systems that delivers value and outcome to our people.

We need to build the roads that deliver economic benefits to our people, we have an K800 million wharf in Lae, what's it doing? We paid K1.2 billion for Motukea and how much return are we getting? We can list all the fancy projects with huge price tags but there are no tangible benefits reaching our people.

Mr Speaker, simply because our system of government and administration has zero checks and balances.

**50/03**

If we are to do something that our children and grandchildren will be thankful for in the next generation, it is up to us to build that in. And if we build that in, perhaps the people of Bougainville may change their minds but without that, they have no guarantee that things are going to change in Papua New Guinea.

In fact, none of us have any guarantee that things are going to change, we all are not sure if things are going to change. We will always look forward to one powerful leader to come in and run his own agenda and we all become spectators. This will continue until we change the structure and build in a strong parliamentary system where the legislature can hold the executive accountable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, right now we do not have that system.

Motion – That the question be put – agreed to.

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

## ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 4.30 p.m.