

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 17 January 2023

DRAFT HANSARD

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**BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE
OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDONESIA ON BORDER ARRANGEMENTS – PAPER AND STATEMENT – MOTION
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ADJOURNMENT 29

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 17 January 2023

The Assistant Speaker (**Mr Johnson Wapunai**) took the Chair at 10 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Deputy Speaker, (**Mr Koni Iguan**), took the Chair, at 10.35 am, and invited the Member for Hiri-Koiari, **Honourable Keith Iduhu**, to say prayers.

‘Abraham ena dirava, Iakobo ena dirava bona Isako ena dirava. Papua Niugini besena emai dirava. Atanikiu henimu badina ina daba hora lalonai Papua Niugini ena palamen lalonai ame helai kubou emai taunimanima bona emai bese daidiai. Emai tano daidiai, emai davara bona emai kohu momo ohenimai daidiai. Tamamamai ina horai aguna henimumu, oi ese laloparara bona aonega bamehenimai, oi emu wisdom, knowledge bona understanding. Ini gaudia daidiai, agunamumu oise bame agoadamai bona bame ahiravamai. Ina horai danu, dirava emai Prime Minister James Marape mai ena Minista logora iboudiai ida, emai Opposition lida bona orea egunalaidia taudia. Emai Speaker, Deputy Speaker bona ia ese egunalaidia taudia, ena bese bona gaukara taudia iboudiai daidiai ini nagini tomamu bona oi emuai anoinoi hegamemu. Emai bese momo gabudaudauai nonoho alalodiamu, haidia ai badidiai nonoho, idia danu alalodiamu. Hospele lalodiai, sikuli gabudiai bona gaukara bogaetahu gabudiai hari daba horana se evaemai tao adiho emai heubu gaudia daidiai. Badurumai bona bahakaumai, hadorahi baia lou emai ruma, oi baia imodaimu bona baia heatolaimu. Tamamai I na horai danu 2023 ome kehoa bona mauri ome henimai, mauri ahodia dainai agwau ten kyu. Ini gau iboudiai, oi ese oahavara dainai oi emuai atabekaum bona oi emuai abidadamamu, Amen.’

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS- STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Honourable Members, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the Public Gallery of the Members of the George Brown Women's Ministry of the United Church in Papua New Guinea, North Port Moresby Circuit, Urban Region. On behalf of the National Parliament, I extend a very warm welcome.

QUESTIONS

Wewak Airport Upgrade

Mr GABRIEL KAPRIS - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Before I ask my question, I would like to take this time to convey my belated New Year greetings to everyone. To the Prime Minister, the Ministers and all the Members of Parliament, including the Leader of the Opposition and his Members.

I direct my question to the Prime Minister, since the Minister for Transport and Civil Aviation is not available. I was happy that the Prime Minister with the Visiting Prime Minister of Australia visited Wewak last week.

02/05

The infrastructure where the plane lands is at Wewak Boram Airport. I've seen other airports and terminals in other centers have being refurbished and new facilities being built at the airports; for example, in Vanimo and Manus.

My question to the Prime Minister is; when will the Government build a new airport for Wewak? The airport receives a lot of important dignitaries or visitors and tourists including the recent visit of the Australian Prime Minister and our Prime Minister. There will be more visitors to the province in the future, and therefore on behalf of my people, when will we be allocated funding for our airport.

Currently, the toilets are not good and there is no VIP lounge for the important visitors to go and sit and relax and wait for their flight. Therefore, can you advise the people of Sepik when will we have a new airport built for Wewak. Thank you

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Maprik for his question. I want to appreciate our members of Parliament including our Speaker and everyone for allowing our guest to our country, the Australian Prime Minister Honourable Anthony Albanese, and for his presence in our National Parliament and the address to our people.

I will make a statement on this later when we resume in March. But sincerely I thank all members of Parliament for allowing the Prime Minister of Australia to be part of us last week Thursday and of course on Friday we visited Wewak, paid our respects to the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare including visiting one or two places in Wewak before we made an official send off at Wewak and he made his transition out of Port Moresby. So a big thank you to all the members of Parliament from the Speaker down who allowed him to be in our Parliament last week Thursday

In responding to the question raised by the Member for Maprik, thank you for your question. I would like to assure the people of Wewak and the travelling public who use the Boram Airport including the visitors and tourists who visit that part of our country, Wewak Airport is a strategic airport. The airport extension has been completed but I want to inform this House and the people of Wewak, East Sepik, that we are asking the National Airports Corporation and the Transport Department to extend the program to allow for the extension of the runway and also including a new terminal building to be built would be fitting as Wewak is an economic hub as well as one of the busiest airports we have in our country, now and going forward into the future. So to answer your question, we will not only do the terminal, we will also extend the runway as well as building a new and better terminal relevant for Wewak going forward. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Build Police Station

Mr RAPHAEL TONPI – Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Internal Security.

03/05

The Mendi-Munihi Open Electorate has almost 144,000 people of which 90 per cent is rural based. It's not an urban electorate as many people think. When we have problems within the electorate like tribal fights or law and order issues, we go to seek assistance from the Mendi police. Many times, it happens to be the PPC that we face, who is the overall boss of the province.

I have found out that Mendi-Munihi electorate doesn't have its own police station while other districts have their own police stations. Therefore, I want to ask a simple question to the Minister, if he has plans to build police station in each district, can I have a police station built in Mendi Munihi rural government station.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr PETER TSIAMALILI – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I take this time to thank the honourable Member for Mendi-Munihi for raising an important question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, firstly for the purpose of all members of the House, we have funding allocation under our DSIP for the NID program. It is very important to encourage all of us and for those that have carried out the process of establishing an NID office or Registry in the districts or the provinces, I congratulate you all; so far, we have four.

In any development we are all subject to our population so first and foremost, I am encouraging you all. If you have not done so in terms of putting aside funding support for your district or province for NID program, please do so that we can substantiate the type of development we want in our province and district.

Coming back to Mendi, early this year all PPCs were asked to interface with their members so that under our district development plan, we capture the type of infrastructure we require. I direct it to the Member, certainly the development that you have identified regarding the police station, it must be captured in your plan and all PPCs were encouraged to interface with the Open members. I hope many of them have and so that to capture your plans within your districts.

So, I can assure you that as long as your identify it in you plan and consult with the PPC and you have signed off, we will certainly support and intervene in providing that infrastructure support.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Update on Election Violation Cases

Mr MUGUWA DILU – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My question is also directed to the Minister for Internal Security.

This is in relation to many serious police cases that have been left in limbo for some time now and the public need to know the status of those investigations and cases that were being investigated.

The first question is in relation to the election mayhem in 2022 National General Election. The police informed the media some time ago that there's a list of high-profile cases that they will investigate and prosecute and make some arrest where necessary.

(1) Can the minister inform the House on the progress of those investigations? Has anyone whether it be candidates or supporters being arrested for election violation particularly in the highland region?

Investigation on Cocaine Case

The second question is in relation to the cocaine that was found in a small plane outside of the LNG processing plant outside of Port Moresby.

04/05

The Australian pilot was arrested, but no Papua New Guinean was arrested for being perpetually involved. And for such a clandestine operation, we know there are many players involved. Can the Minister share some light on the police investigations, if there is going to be any arrests? Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr PETER TSIAMALILI – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and the Honourable Member. These are two very important questions, so if you allow me, I will provide an informed and detailed report on your questions in the next Sitting. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Household Assistance Package

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA – Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. My questions are directed to the Prime Minister. Since last week, I have been waiting to ask these questions to the Treasurer, but unfortunately, he was absent for the sitting. So, can the Prime Minister answer my questions on behalf of the Treasurer?

Mr Deputy Speaker, before I do so, may I seek leave to address you?

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I want to inform this Parliament that, two of our colleagues are attending to their election- related court matters, and the Opposition Leader is un-well at the moment.

My questions to the Prime Minister is in relation to the household assistance package. Before I get to my question, I would like to talk about the wages paid to our workers, especially company workers.

Recently, there were some disturbing news from Milne Bay Province. After talking to certain young people who were working in the private sector, I have been told, that a lot of them are still paid below the minimum wage of K3.50 per hour. They are paid at the hourly rate of K2 and K2.50, and are yet to receive any payslips. They need the payslips to go to the Department of Labour to complain for being underpaid and so forth.

These questions are for the Minister for Labour, but since he is not available, can the Prime Minister do a background check? These people are struggling and we know that the home relief package is to assist families.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my questions are as follows;

Some of the people working in shops and hotels, work during the weekends and on public holidays, they are still paid on their regular minimum wage rate of K2, K2.50 or K3.50.

(1) When can we have an organisation that will check on people working in those organisations so that they can be paid correctly?

We are going through some tough times, and it is only proper that they are paid correctly so that they can look after their families.

In the Supplementary Budget, the Treasurer announced a K610 million for relief package. During the Budget in November, he announced that due to some legal issues, the K610 million would be effective in January. We have also captured in the 2023 Budget, a sum of K590 million.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have created a very positive hope in the hearts of our people right throughout the country.

(2) Is this a positive hope in the lives of our people?

05/05

A lot of struggling families are looking forward to buying Ox & Palm, sugar, rice and even chicken at a reduced price.

I have a receipt right before me and no one on this Floor will disagree with me on this issue. A packet of chicken with only four pieces will cost a family K37 and Ox & Palm, rice have gone through the ceilings.

(3) When can our government effect the much-talked about home relief package that was announced in the Budget of 2023?

(4) What is the delay in effecting this relief package?

We are in mid-January and prices have not gone down and that also goes for the fuel too.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Mr Deputy Speaker, let me thank the good deputy Opposition Leader for his question in regards to the announced relief package and yes, I will confirm last year it was announced that close to K610 -K611 million was directed towards Papua New Guineans in this tough times. We also have allocated money in the Education sector from elementary right up to tertiary education. These programs are all geared towards helping our people in this tough times.

I will get the Treasurer to inform this House on the measures we have put in place integrating last year's help and this year's commitment so that our people are fully informed and their burdens are enlightened.

Also our Superfunds have thanked the government for those who are earning low salaries below K20 000 that they are now experiencing no tax deducted from their salary and they are taking a little bit above K60 – K70 home every fortnight. These are intended not to alleviate all the problems but enlighten the burdens as we go forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask that this question be reserved and when the Treasurer comes it is a matter of public interest and he can give a detailed response so the country is fully informed on the different relief packages that the government initiated.

Implement Inquiry Recommendations

Mr ALLAN BIRD – Mr Deputy Speaker, my questions are directed to the Prime Minister. Last year, we were presented with the findings of the UBS inquiry in this Parliament and they are very significant findings. One of the concerns most of us have is that we spend a lot of money on public inquiries and the issue arises that we hardly see any action on the recommendation that comes from those inquiries.

Now that we have a very detailed report that has been presented, my questions are as follows;

(1) Can the Prime Minister inform this House which agencies will be taking action on those recommendations?

(2) How soon can we expect that the perpetrators of this fraud will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law?

06/05

(3) And one of my personal favourites; when can we expect that the resources of the people of Papua New Guinea that were squandered in this instance be recovered and brought back to the country.

Mr JAMES MARAPE - Mr Deputy Speaker. I would want to thank the Governor of East Sepik for asking the question on UBS inquiry. With respect, I would say this upfront that inquiry will not be collecting dust like many other inquiries that have been conducted in the past. This inquiry is being progressed into the prosecution stage, the report is being assessed to be prosecuted by police, by ICAC and Ombudsman Commission is being asked to look into the findings of the inquiry as further evidence has already been collected to firstly prosecute those who have found to have breached our country's law.

Secondly, and more importantly, one of our core objectives of this inquiry is for us to seek restitution or bring back some of the money that we have wasted through this unfortunate transaction that the Papua New Guinea people have lost over a billion Kina. And so, we are on a look out for a litigation firm to go after UBS as they found out that UBS can pay Papua New Guinea over three hundred million dollars. It is stated in the inquiry report and we are in the process of engaging an international litigation firm to go after UBS to pay back the money where the enquiry has found out that it had illegally siphoned off through the UBS transaction. I want to assure Papua New Guinea and the Governor of East Sepik, hat the inquiry will not collect dust. Whoever that has their hands dirty and the inquiry has pointed out their offence, the police is doing their job, the Ombudsman Commission is doing their job, as well as the Independent Commission against Corruption. We have already appointed three people; two of which are from Australia and one from New Zealand. Outside of our own networking here, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have already been appointed. As soon as they start off their job, all of this will go and we will let the process of charging and imprisoning those who have been implicated in this UBS transaction as well as to ask the UBS to pay back the country's money and the work will start.

I want to assure, that the litigation firm has been sorted out as well as police, IRC, Ombudsman Commission and ICAC has been tasked to prosecute the matter. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr LUTHER WENGE – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for giving me the leave to ask questions not on notice. But before I raise those questions, I'd like to thank the Prime Minister, Member for Tari-Pori, and his NEC to give their approval to the Australian Prime Minister to address this Parliament, which is exclusively by constitution reserved for the members of Parliament of Papua New Guinea. I want to thank you on behalf of the Morobe people that you brought him.

It is the Labour party of Australia under the leadership of Gough Whitlam and his Government that granted and sanctioned and gave the okay for the Territory of Papua New Guinea, as it then was, to acquire political independence. It was working with the PANGU Party, the first party of Papua New Guinea, to make sure that we acquire the political independence, and it's only fitting that the PANGU party leadership, with your leadership as the leader of the party and the Government to make sure that the Prime Minister of Australia addressed this Parliament. And I want to unreservedly thank you for a very good historically event that has occurred for the betterment of Australia and for Papua New Guinea.

07/05

Engage Foreign Doctors

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to ask a question to the Health Minister.

The topography of Morobe is such that it is very difficult to construct roads in a speedy way in every corner of Morobe and the seas of Morobe is very tough for the boats and dinghies to get to their destination smoothly. And people are right in the locations where their ancestors have lived in time immemorial. They are not stock or goods like Niugini Table Birds where we can move them around, not at all. They are human beings and they prefer to live in those areas.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is very difficult to bring medical services to those areas. As it is now, the PNG National doctors are not willing to get to those rural areas to provide medical services and we were required at a minimum level to get to the general hospitals. In Morobe Province, we have a number of general hospitals including Etep General Hospital in Tewai-Siassi District, Butaweng General Hospital in Finschhafen, Bulolo Hospital in Bulolo and Mutzing Hospital in Markham. All those infrastructures in those hospitals are in order to enable the doctors to come to those areas and serve the people. We are in dire need of medical doctors and medication. We are now dealing with complicated illnesses that need doctors to be present to find out the diseases.

So my very important question to the Health Minister is; can we engage foreign doctors to come and serve here?

There are countries like the Philippines, Brazil, India, Sri Lanka who have abundant medical doctors. They are looking for jobs. We need doctors.

Can we get the government's approval? If we do bring the doctors in, I will make sure I step up a 100 percent to achieve this mission of delivering doctors to Morobe Province and then look at other provinces with the same scenario as Morobe. We need foreign doctors now. You don't bargain with your life, nobody bargains with life, if you fall sick and die then you

die, it would be too late to ask God to restore your life. But we are entitled to live longer and doctors can help us live longer. Thank you, Mr Minister and Mr Deputy Speaker. I'm sure the Deputy Speaker can appreciate this question as it also includes his district.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Thank you Governor, before the Minister responds, I just want to inform you all the House that when a member of Parliaments raising a question on the Floor of Parliament, other members should refrain from walking past him. This is according to our *Standing Orders*. You should wait until he completes his question and takes his seat before you can walk past him.

Dr LINO TOM – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Firstly, let me thank the good Governor of Morobe, Mr Wenge for this important question. If you have seen the 100-day plan that I put out, you will notice that health workforce is the number one priority.

08/05

To put this question into perspective let me just give you a couple of figures. In this country today, we have about 602 doctors and the normal accepted doctor to population ratio set by WHO is one doctor to a thousand people.

The current doctor to population ratio in the country is one doctor to 17,000 people and the medical school that we have here has been producing a constant number of doctors and it has not gone past 60. The numbers have ranged between 50 -30 over the last 20 to 30 years but the population is growing at an increased rate. There lies our problem, we have a population that is growing out of order and yet we do not produce enough doctors annually. To make matters worse we had 50 doctors who contested the 2022 General Elections and to bring these practicing doctors back on board is taking a long time.

The doctor to patient ratio is not only a problem in Morobe but nationwide because we have one doctor attending to 17,000 people. You have proposed some good ideas in terms of bringing in more doctors because we do not have enough as some short-term measure to look within our region; to find doctors who are competent and compatible to the system that we have in this country.

There were some propositions in the past where they looked at bringing in Cuban doctors. There were some Cuban doctors brought to other Pacific Island countries but there seem to have been many problems in terms of their competencies. We are a country and we

have our standards, and doctors that we bring into the country must meet those standards as well and that is where the medical board of Papua New Guinea comes into play.

But the bigger problem that we have is with funding so we can't outsource for such assistance outside of the country so, the Government is looking at some long-term measures and one such measure is to increase our enrollment capacity in the medical faculty so that we can increase the number of doctors that we produce in the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Government has given the direction to our university to allow the medical faculty to become a university of its own so that it can increase capacity therefore we see an increase in graduating doctors annually. We have also allowed another university from Madang to come on board to help out in this shortage. We are also encouraging other universities for instance PAU in the short term as well as other measures to address this issue.

This is a very big issue and we will not have any answers in the near future in the way that we are progressing. Unless we grow our economy, we will still have problems with employing more people. The capacities at our universities are not able to produce enough doctors, so these things are being addressed by our government right now. We may not have answers in the short term but into the future possibly if we have some space in the Budget we may look into the proposition that you are putting right now.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to share some figures also; with nurses we have about 4,500 nurses in the country. The ratio for nurse to patient is one nurse to ten patients but in this country, one nurse is attending to over 1,000 people.

Health worker shortage is a big issue in the country and I wish to thank you for raising this issue and hopefully this government will be on track to increase capacity at all our health institutions so that we can produce more health workers to make up for the shortages, due to people leaving the medical field due to attrition. We also need to look at ways to address the issue of producing quality doctors as besides producing enough manpower, we still have to produce quality which is very crucial in the health care of our people.

09/05

Recently there was a visit by the Australian team and we have raised that point with them and they are looking at this attachment program that a lot of people like Sir Puka Temu and a lot of our doctors in the past used to have and those are being addressed now.

So thank you, Governor, I think we probably might not have answers in the near future but one thing your PHA in Morobe can do, they can do those attachment programs where

doctors are actually sent to rural areas to make sure that they provide those services on a consultancy basis.

We are also asking them to come onto the E-Medicine platform where rural doctors can actually know now with the network, widely available, they can come on board and do real live consultation with doctors in the major canters

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Supplementary Question

Chinese Doctors – Extend Engagement

Mr KEITH IDUHU – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My supplementary question is in line with the Governor's proposition for foreign doctors to fill the gap in the short to medium term. I understand that the Port Moresby General Hospital is heavily congested and more so there are fifty doctors who have resigned and went for elections and it's going to take a while to get them back on. I also understand that there is an agreement with the Chinese Government who are providing doctors for the time being. I understand that, that agreement is coming to a very close. Is there a plan to review this arrangement? If so, maybe that can cater for 25 per cent of the fifty doctors that have gone for elections in the short term? That might be something we might want to look into.

Central Province Hospital

And while we are talking about the drastic figures of doctor to patient, there was a good proposition put forward by the Marape-Basil government before the elections to construct a Central Province hospital, the ground breaking ceremony was conducted and I noticed from the Budget 2023 paper was that K50 million was allocated. I'm not sure if we can build a hospital with K50 million but what I do want to query is if there are works in place.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Member, I will allow for your first supplementary question, it's related to the doctors but if you are continuing asking questions on the Central hospital that's a new question that I will not allow you to ask.

Mr KEITH IDUHU – Deputy Speaker, if you will allow this explanation, it is connected to the question of congestion and I was hoping to rational that out on my analysis.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – I'll allow you to elaborate on that.

Mr KEITH IDUHU – Only for that purpose. Is there work in progress already so that the people understand that this was not just another talkfest but there's work in progress probably for financing possibility? If that is the case, what is the status of that financing possibility with the bilaterals we discussed.

Thank you honourable Minister for Health, I was hoping that the Treasury Minister would be present to answer this query.

Dr LINO TOM – Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, and I thank the honorable leader for the good question. In terms of the Chinese doctors we are looking at renewing their contracts. One of the biggest problem we have with these batch of doctors coming to assist us is the language barrier. They usually bring their interpreter but there's a lot of convenience issues associated with that and we are looking at other options as well. For example, currently we have a doctor from Vietnam who is working in our intervention cardiology unit. And that doctor has actually done a thousand cases basically doing intervention cardiology and procedures and these are very highly technical procedures. If we are to send our patients overseas it will cost for one patient, about K100 000 in the cheapest regional hospital in places like Manila. But this doctor has already done about 1000 cases, basically saving this country close to K72 million.

So looking at those propositions we are looking at bringing those doctors for some areas where there is no language barrier and it's easier to communicate but with the Chinese Government offering us doctors I think that we hope to renew that in the coming months.

In reference to the Central hospital, I think it's a good point raised as we all experience the level of congestion at the Port Moresby General Hospital, and it is very difficult for our doctors there.

10/05

In the recent past, we had some incidences of Defence Force personnel storming into hospital and destroying medical equipment. We had a lot of issues with Port Moresby General Hospital and it is this Government's priority project to make sure the Central hospital comes on foot so that it will relieve the congestion we've faced at the current hospital.

So, the Government has already allocated K50 million in the Budget this year and hopefully we are going into partnership arrangement with some of our bilateral and look at loan arrangements. With the K50 million we have I think they are putting out the tender for a

masterplan which will go out soon. Once that's done, hopefully, we will start work on the construction with K50 million to start off the work at the new hospital that we hope to build. It is this Government's priority to make sure that hospital gets off the ground to relieve the congestion that we face at the current hospital.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Bring in Australian Police

Mr JAMES NOMANE – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Internal Security.

Firstly, I would like to thank our Prime Minister for what was a momentous, significant and unprecedented event last week with the Australian Prime Minister addressing this Honourable House. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, we can see that we are charting a new pathway and bilateral relationship with Australia and this is really welcomed.

After the Honourable Prime Minister Albanese's visit we had Australian critics saying that 'Papua New Guinea was asking for more money' and this side of the Tasman, we had Papua New Guineans criticizing the Australian Government saying they were here pushing an agenda of blackbirding where it is akin to kidnapping and slavery back in the day.

I just want to re-affirm my support to the Prime Minister that Australia still remains our number one partner in this part of the world and so important. I salute you for taking the initiative to bring the Australian Prime Minister to the House and having the meeting that we had last week.

My questions to Minister for Internal Security is with reference to the Australian Prime Minister visit here. The 2016 Australian Defence White Paper, clearly states that Australia seeks to be the principal partner to Papua New Guinea with respect to all security matters because of our geographic proximity. Our security, stability, and cohesion directly adds to Australia's security and resilience.

So, in line with the Marape-Rosso policy mandate to be innovative, I also ask the Ministers for Defence and Agriculture to take note.

My questions are:

- (1) Why can't we go and approach the Australian Government to come and help us with the police shortfall here?
- (2) Why can't we invite 10,000 Australian police personnel to come and support us in the 96 districts?
- (3) Is this part of the strategy and the new dialogue that we are pushing with Australia?

If you could just advise the House because we continue to have a law and order manpower shortages throughout the country and this continues to be our problem. So, we have to look at the out of the box solutions to address the law and order issues

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr PETER TSIAMALILI – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I thank the honourable Member for Chuave for asking very important questions in regards to our relationship with Australia and particularly with security.

11/05

Our Prime Minister highlighted the importance of the country that gave independence and have been supporting us over the last 45 years, as we are entering into our 50 years of independence.

In terms of the white-paper and of our relationship with Australia, and how they will support us because of their geographic position, we are also developing our white-paper that I will present very shortly. It will take into consideration, the support they have put forward to us, and at the same time, we will look at not only drawing alignment with Australia, but to keep open our relationship with our other bilateral nations.

In terms of numbers, we will look at how they can provide manpower support. First and foremost, we are taking the first steps with our recruitment to try and fill in the gaps. Hopefully, in the next three to five years, we will have 6 000 to 10 000 police personnel to our population ratio.

For direct support, we already have a relationship with the Australian Federal Police who are providing macro policy support to our team. We are also looking at specific areas for policing, for instance, investigation and forensic. These are areas that will have a greater stand in their support to us.

We have a treaty that will be bastioned later in February between Australia and Papua New Guinea. These are some of the items that will be discussed at the treaty, and will hopefully give us a better foundation to assist our policing and border security.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable members, our question time has lapsed.

**BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT
STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF INDONESIA ON BORDER ARRANGEMENTS – PAPER AND STATEMENT –
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

Mr JUSTIN TKATCHENKO (Moresby-South – Minister for Foreign Affairs) – Mr Deputy Speaker, pursuant to statute, I present the following paper:

*Basic Agreement Between the Government of Papua New Guinea and the
Government of the Republic of Indonesia on Border Arrangements.*

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

Leave granted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to seek leave of the Parliament to make this policy statement on the Basic Border Agreement between Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Indonesia, initially entered into in 1983 and subject to review after every ten years.

Since its inception in 1983, the agreement has undergone three reviews; the first review was undertaken in 1993, the second was in 2003, and the third was undertaken in 2013, after which Indonesia formally ratified the 2013 revised agreement whilst PNG is yet to do so.

12/05

Mr Deputy. Speaker, this agreement is now up for review but before that takes place, PNG must ratify the agreement and thereafter have it subjected for review by both the two contracting parties.

The Basic Border Agreement

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Basic Border Agreement between PNG and Indonesia is a very important border management framework that governs all border issues, including the management and administration of the land border between PNG and Indonesia.

This agreement sets out regulations that guide the border management agencies of our two countries in the administration and development of the 800 kilometers land border between the

two countries. It defines the border areas, sets out the avenue in which the officials and leaders of both countries can deal with issues relating to the border and the areas adjacent, and the people within a certain prescribed corridor.

The Intent of the Agreement

Mr Deputy Speaker, the intent of the Basic Border Agreement is to foster cooperation, good will and understanding between Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Indonesia, in the administration of the land border to the mutual benefit of both the countries.

The Agreement entails cooperation between the respective Governments of Papua New Guinea the Republic of Indonesia .in the administration and development of the border area for mutual benefit and to also mutually recognize and respect the traditional rights and customs of the people living in the border areas.

The Benefit of the Agreement

Mr. Deputy Speaker, both countries have practically benefitted immensely from this agreement. It sets the regulations and the guidelines towards managing issues and developments relating to the land border. It helps manage tension and regulates activities of people living in and along the border and their issues thereto.

The Basic Border Agreement further provides an avenue for the two countries to effectively and efficiently exchange information and develop policies and guidelines to counter external challenges as well as it affects their cross-border jurisdictions.

Importantly, the Agreement provides for the recognition of and respect for the rights of the indigenous people living along the border areas, including ensuring consultation between the parties (PNG & Indonesia) to make necessary arrangements for the survey and demarcation of the boundary and mapping of the area through mutually agreed method.

Under the Agreement, apart from generic information, both countries can also request from each other qualified security and intelligence information on illegal activities that threaten the peace and good standing of the border and its people straddled alone it on both sides of the divide and seek training and other assistance from each other to effectively and efficiently safe guard the border for their mutual benefit.

Ratification

Mr Deputy. Speaker the Republic of Indonesia has formally ratified the Basic Border Agreement in 2013 soon after it was signed.

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Papua New Guinea however, has not formally rectified the said agreement despite of an NEC directive to do so through NEC decision 0283/2015 dated on 1st of October 2015, nearly eight years ago. It is now more ever urgent for this Parliament to ratify this agreement as this year 2023 will be the revision year for this arrangement. I, therefore, through you Deputy Speaker, present this agreement to Parliament to ratify. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr BELDEN NAMAHA (Vanimu-Green) – I move –

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to debate on this statement. I acknowledge the Paper that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has presented and I believe this Paper needs to be reviewed before the government rectifies it. I, as the member for Vanimu-Green share a common border with Indonesia and I have seen that there are some serious issues the Papua New Guinea Government needs to address before we ratify this Paper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker there are a plenty of security issues and cross border issues pending. We cannot present Papers for rectification if there are so many pending issues that affect two countries. Papua New Guinea is probably the only country within our region that shares the common border with a populous Muslim country of more than 330 million people. As such, Mr. Deputy Speaker we need to be really careful on how we address the issues with our neighbour, while we respect them. I say this with due respect.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot of cross border issues and let me go on some of the issues we need to really address as a country. Number one, Mr Deputy Speaker, as a country we have not seriously looked at the border demarcation. Whether it's the responsibility of the Foreign Affairs or Provincial Affairs, we have not really addressed it. You will find that, when you go to the border, Indonesians have already crossed into Papua New Guinea side of the border. They have already engaged in activities on our side and we have turned a blind eye on them for encroaching on our side of the border. Our soldiers are no longer patrolling the border. Before there used to be a cross patrol on the border with the Police and Defence, its not happening. Let's take for example in the mouth of the River Toresi in Western Province. Indonesians have built their naval base within the waters of Papua New Guinea and we have raised no issue on this. We have raised no issue on this. Why are we so silent?

We go to Wutung border; Papua New Guineans have been pushed to the edge of Wutung Border when in actual fact our land stretches all the way to River Tami and we have

allowed Indonesians to cross over to our side of the border building their infrastructure on our border now we call Batas. They should be operating on the other side of the River Tami. The river should be used as a natural demarcation between the two countries. The land that stretches from Wutung to Tami belongs to the people of Wutung, they are Papua New Guineans, Mr Deputy Speaker and most of our resources lies within this land; oil and gas, gold and copper. When are we going to raise these issues? Every time a border liaison meeting is held, we are taking our people to Jakarta, they go and drink beer, they go and do illegal activities and they don't go and attend the border liaison meeting representing our country.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, this is a serious national issue. This is a serious security issue. We need to carefully look at these treaties before we bring them to Parliament to get it signed. Do we know what is happening on the border? More than 12, 000 citizens from West Sepik especially in my electorate and in Teleformin have crossed over to Indonesia because the National Government is not providing the basic services to people living along the border.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to have a look at this treaty before the Government passes it and have it rectified. I am arguing now as the Permanent Parliamentary Committee Chairman for Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I want to have a look at it before it is rectified. I want to raise the issues over our land. Why has Indonesia encroached on our side of the border. We need to raise these issues. Its high time, maybe we should close the Batas Centre in Wutung and have the Indonesia's move to the other side of river Tami. Maybe we should look at the Naval Base that's being built at the mouth of river Torressi in Western Province and ask the Indonesians to dismantle the Naval Base and move it to their side of the waters. We must make hard decisions and take a hard stand, we are a sovereign nation. We cannot go and conduct border liaison meeting all the time in Jakarta. They get our officers drunk, give them women and then next day they are drunk sitting there saying yes sir, yes sir. I am proposing that every border liaison meeting should be held outside of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. Somewhere neutral. So that we can raise these issues. These are important sovereign issues. We cannot turn a blind eye on this.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I propose that this particular treaty be withheld, allow my committee as the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Defence, Foreign Affairs to review it before we actually sign it. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the Minister for Foreign Affairs for bringing the treaty to this House. I take note of the valid points raised by my brother and Member for Vanimo-Green and I also want to raise a concern.

I raised a similar concern when I was sitting in the Opposition. I remember the Bill to approve the use of atomic energy for cancer treatment actually came to the Parliament about nine years too late. I am embarrassed to see that this treaty was approved by NEC in 2015 and it will expire this year. We have just brought it when it is reaching its expiration date. This is just like the issue of radiation treatment for cancer, similarly it took nine years to reach Parliament and just two minutes to pass it.

I just heard my brother raise some very serious issues. All these officers that represented our county in these overseas meetings, what have they been doing? Why does it take so long for an important border treaty to arrive on the Floor of Parliament? It surely isn't the Minister's fault; he was just recently appointed. What about all the other Foreign Affairs ministers and their secretaries. What have they done over the last eight years?

The issues raised by the Member for Vanimo-Green is because of our own fault. We are so lazy when it comes to doing things in the interest of our own country. When it comes to constructing roads, bridges and schools in this country, we are very competitive but when it comes to looking out for our border, that is not the case.

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We all race to build roads, bridges and classrooms but to look into border issues no one is racing to do that. Shame on every one that has been involved in this terrible state of affairs. We do not have any excuses, this will expire this year and we want to approve it now.

I noted the grievances raised by brother Member for Vanimo-Green and I would like to say that the new treaty must be negotiated upon this year. It is good that the Parliament takes note and let us not be lazy and embarrass ourselves on the Floor of this Parliament.

This House belongs to the people and we need to respect that and try and protect our people and surveillance and all other borders must be prioritized. If you listen and follow all of the days of Parliament, all we ever do is talk about roads, bridges, money and what projects, this project and all that kind of stuff but we hardly talk about issues of national sovereignty.

Until a hardworking Minister after so many years brings a treaty and then we start talking. I propose that we should establish a working committee, consisting of MPs from the

border provinces, especially the good Member for Vanimo-Green and others, including the Minister for Defense to collaborate and take control of issues surrounding our border areas.

When the next treaty is ready let us not wait another nine years to bring it to the Floor. Those responsible do your work and bring it to the Floor of this Parliament. I have always said that we run this country like we are operating a tucker-box and this is a clear evidence of tucker-box management. Every professional public servant that was involved ought to be ashamed of themselves. Stop embarrassing us and the people of this country.

I want to commend the Minister for Foreign Affairs and appeal to the Members of this House that this has been long overdue and to cover our embarrassment for not looking into it, let us ratify this treaty and endorse those who are responsible to take on the next phase do their work. Please ensure that all of the issues that were raised by the Member for Vanimo-Green are incorporated into the new treaty. Enough of sleeping and doing other things let us work with all relevant agencies to protect our people by working together to protect our border areas, most importantly our sovereignty.

Mr SOLAN MIRISIM (Telefomin – Minister Works and Highway) – I wish to join my colleague Members to make a statement on this issue. I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs for bring this statement on the treaty to the Floor of this Parliament. I represent a district along the border where I have three council wards with about 4,0000 population bordering with Indonesia. When they have to access basic services, they have to walk some distance into the district to access these services and return back along the border with Indonesia. For the last three reviews of this particular agreement that took place on the border there were no presence of any government officer on the ground. Thank you for bringing this statement to Parliament as this will shed some light as to who should take the lead on this issue.

As we have signed this treaty, border district Members and all relevant agencies must now work together. I appeal to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to send a team to these areas and talk to the people, assess or see for themselves the border boundaries. These boundaries were put in the colonial era and we need to review and see what needs to be done. We either move the boundary markers back or bring them out but we need actual assessment on the ground and liaison with the people to do that. Right now our people are living in Indonesia but the border markers are in Papua New Guinea so this needs to be really looked into.

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Because when our people from the border of Indonesia see a helicopter or an airplane fly up in the sky, they run away and hide because they think Papua New Guineans will start a war. This is timely for this agreement and I request the Minister and his team, to bring this Statement to the people and get their views on this agreement. When you come back, the members will support you and do this agreement. Thankyou Deputy Speaker.

Mr LUTHER WENGE (Morobe) – Thankyou Deputy Speaker for allowing me to speak on this treaty which was signed by the representative of the Indonesian Government for the people of Indonesia and the Papua New Guinean government on the issue of border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

Just going through the agreement and I am satisfied that some important work has taken place on the borders. It is important that we have a treaty which recognizes the customary landowners of both countries. Before the white man or outsiders came to this countries, our people knew their boundaries. The land on the border that we are talking about is a land belonging to the Melanesian people. Melanesian on the Indonesian side and Papua New Guinean side. That land belongs to the indigenous people who are primarily Melanesians. We know for a fact that there are Melanesian people being killed by the Indonesian soldiers along the border particularly, people who are rising up to fight for their rights; their political and indigenous rights. They are fighting and many of them are getting killed along the border.

The United Nations in September of 2007 passed a treaty to recognize the rights of the indigenous people of this world, and that treaty was to be rectified by this Parliament. To recognize the rights of the indigenous people on resources whatever resources you may name them including the self determination of the indigenous people in the world. That treaty has not been rectified by this Parliament. That Treaty is lacking production in this Parliament for debate and rectification, to recognize the rights of the indigenous people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I say, traditionally we own land. By customary law, we own everything on the surface of the land. We own the land in the rivers, we own the land beneath the land, beyond our knowledge, the existence of whatever that may be, beyond our knowledge but as long as it is our land. By custom we own them by customary law of this country. That is to be enjoyed by the people of Indonesia particularly the Melanesian people and Papua New Guinean Melanesia along those borders that we are talking about.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, so that being the case, it is very paramount that we need to know the extent of Papua New Guinea land and those people living on the boarder. It may exit the boundaries of the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, and extend beyond that. And when it extends beyond on that, whatever that is entitled to the Papua New Guinea people by the United Nation declaration of September 2007.

Similarly, so Mr Deputy Speaker, the Melanesian people who are becoming Indonesian people and living on the other side of the boarder, whose land extend beyond the boundaries to the Papua New Guinea people by custom. Whatever, that is in the land, they are entitled to it by international law, which was not ratified by this parliament.

Mr Deputy Speaker, that is why I will support the Member for Vanim-Green that we don't ratified this treaty now. This proposed ratification should be deferred in my humble view. If we defer to the committee to assess the substance of the text of this treaty. It must be assessed thoroughly. The Member for Vanim-Green is the proper person to raise his view. Why, because he comes from the boarder electorate on the PNG side.

Mr Deputy Speaker, he's raising a very important point. The committee needs to thoroughly consider the substance of this proposed treaty. We don't want to be in Indonesia, considering a treaty that's going to bind both countries and in which manner treated as the Member is saying, to enticed the people representing Papua New Guinea to agree to what is being proposed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we have to have it in a neutral ground. Like when the Papua New Guinean Government and Bougainville Government negotiated the Peace Treaty. They discussed the proposed Peace Treaty in New Zealand on a neutral ground where inducement of bribery or any kind of that action would most likely not take place. The representative of both sides has an independent minority induce by any other forms and kind, they discussed freely for the interest of the people of country they represent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I think it is a very important treaty and we have the records of Indonesia killing Melanesian I will not hide, and we need to discuss and deal with this treaty in a most serious way.

Mr Deputy Speaker, and I would like to ask this Parliament to adopt the recommendations for the Member for Vanim-Green, to have the committee establish and take the matter to Australia or to New Zealand, as what we did in the Peace Treaty in Bougainville, on a neutral ground to discuss the substance of this treaty.

At the end Mr Deputy Speaker, we can agree to it. If we don't agree in substance, then by the constitutional law we have every right not to ratify the treaty.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, this country is very important in the sense that we share border the with them and we have to treat it with respect. The rights of the people on both sides of these two countries are important and are guaranteed by customary laws, which is recognised by the *Constitution* of this country, and international law which governs the international community.

Therefore, I would like to support the Member for Vanimö – Green River to have the Parliament defer this treaty and have the committee discuss it. We are not resenting it or the Minister for Foreign Affairs. We commend you for bringing this treaty to the Parliament.

For the interest of the landowners on the border area, the sovereignty of this country and the international law which states the rights of the indigenous people, we must defer it and have the committee discuss it in a foreign and neutral land, that is free from potential inducement, not in Jayapura of Indonesia or Vanimö of Papua New Guinea.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. To the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I am not disagreeing with the rectification of this treaty. I am supporting you but more work needs to be done on the treaty.

Mr JAMES DONALD (North Fly) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. To place on record, Western Province is 98,000 square kilometres and is the biggest province in PNG. We share two international borders; down-south is Australia and by treaty we cross over the sea, and to the west is Indonesia, which is just a walking distance across by land.

Western Province is the only province that shares two international borders. It is very strategic for us when it comes to matters around the border issues. I thought that I should also contribute to this debate and, I agree that a proper dialogue needs to be done.

For Western Province, it is so big and it has four electorates; North Fly, Middle Fly, Delta Fly and South Fly. There is a lot of border posts and crossings. To place on record, we have seriously not done enough as a country to look after the border.

It is very serious and more work needs to be done. To place on record for my electorates purposes and to inform the House, I have been struggling to build a border post because I couldn't come to Port Moresby for goods and services. We have punch up a road into a monument point called MM8.1. We have agreed to do a sister-district arrangement with a district in Papua Province called Bofendigo.

We started building the border post five years ago, unfortunately after our understanding, the Indonesians have gone ahead of us and they have built all the facilities. I have been updating the Minister and the Prime Minister on what we are doing.

Unfortunately for Papua New Guinea, I have been struggling because there is no facility. We have only punched roads. It has not been upgraded and that is embarrassing. Similarly, for Sotowehem and down to South – Fly. There is an entry point in Middle Fly that can be seen on the PNG map, that people crossed every day.

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It is very serious now that this Parliament should work on the border issues now. When we don't have measures on our border it is a threat and I fully endorse the statement by the Member for Vanim Green and I ask that those electorates that share the various borders around our country from West Sepik to Telifom, North Fly, Delta Fly, Middle Fly and South Fly and also our Governors should be involved so that we can collectively discuss the issues on how best we can work as a government with host districts going forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is saddening to understand that this treaty has been sitting here the last how many years. It is embarrassing. We are committed to the Minister and Chairman to assist in any way possible going forward.

Mr RICHARD MARU (Yangoru-Saussia – Minister for International Trade and Investment) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I am really happy that the issues of the border have been raised by Members from the border regions. I think we must not miss the crust of this Paper today.

Both countries have already agreed in context in 2013 with the basic border agreement. There is no treaty here. I don't know where you getting the treaty from. This is a basic border agreement and we have to get it right here.

All this Paper wants is for Parliament to ratify. Indonesians have done their part and we haven't.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this agreement will lapse this year since 2013. All that the Minister is asking for in this Parliament is to ratify the agreement so that provinces will kick in, to start the review now.

I am pleased that the Parliament have appointed the Member for Vanim Green to be the new Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It's the perfect opportunity for this committee to preside over this review now and let's get it right for the first

time. It must not be foreign affairs and government officials but Members of Parliament must take charge now. The time has come to ensure that we go and talk about a new agreement, fix the flaws of the past and structure an agreement that we can be happy with.

Mr Deputy Speaker all that the Minister is asking for is that we ratify so that we can invoke the provisions of the agreement to start the new negotiations.

Based on what we are hearing today, the Chairman of this new Committee will start the border and negotiations for the new agreement for the next 10 years in my opinion must be the Honourable Belden Namah and Members of Parliament in the border areas must all be in that committee to preside over those negotiations leading to another 10-year agreement. The old agreement has lapsed this year so we should be looking forward now.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Mr Deputy Speaker, let me firstly thank the Foreign Affairs Minister for bringing what is an overdue opportunity to ratify this Treaty. The arrangement of our country and Indonesia in as far as this treaty was concerned was signed by the then Foreign Affairs Minister the Honourable Rimbink Pato on the 17th of June 2013.

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Especially the Chairman of our Foreign affairs and International Trade. All points raised are important, Indonesia is a very important partner with us. We will be forever sharing borders with them. It's just unfortunate that the treaty that was being signed early, there was no annual review that was done since 2013 as required by these treaty arrangements and we have now come to the end of this term. It is really incumbent in all of us in good faith. When the other party has signed we have kept it unsigned up till today. In fact, unratified till today.

I would suggest to this Honorable House that we keep this treaty as presented on the floor of Parliament for 10 days as required by our Standing Orders. Allow the committee chaired by the Honorable Belden Namah to go through what was then signed in 2013 as approved by the cabinet in 2015. Mind you, we have now come to the end of the life of this treaty. Indonesia-PNG border will forever remain. We have to be mature, and approach this in a tactical manner.

Many of the issues raised in the treaty are all these issues in conversations we have between the two countries. I point to you for instance the discussions on consultations, article two talks about the requirement of consultation. We should have consultations every year, but unfortunately none of us were sensitive to the need for consultation. Until we made a call to

Indonesia, we also made visits and they pointed to us that the ratification is still upsetting on our part.

There is already provision for yearly consultations. Provision for the joint-board areas in which we look into the issues where for instance demarcation of borders lies. Provisions for border crossing by traditional and customary users. Provisions for liaisons article three, provision for traditional border crossing article four. In article five exercise of traditional rights to land and waters in the border area. Article five border crossing by none traditional inhabitants. Article seven on security matters, article eight on disaster and accidents.

And if I go through all the 23 articles in my view many of the contemporary as well as traditional issues that lies in the border areas in between our side and Indonesia are addressed. I would suggest Mr Speaker, that we leave this treaty on Parliament notice for 10 days, as we allow the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Committee to look into this matter and to ensure they are satisfied of all matters that we feel needs to be addressed are covered. But also more importantly give basis for the Parliamentary Committee to advice the National Government on the next course to take, because we will reactivate a new treaty based on what is already signed and progressed. We want to also go into a new treaty at the very earliest.

Let me remind all of us that about 270 or 260 million people on the other side are our neighbors. Just like Australia is our closest neighbor, Indonesian is our closest neighbor, as much as Solomon Islands is our closest neighbor. We need to have active real time and relevant treaties with them and it is important. For Indonesia many time we look at them from reserved islands. I want to encourage all of us that the big opportunity for better improved relationships can only happen on the basis of us clearing the ground.

Many of the sensitivities on the border issues are embraced in this treaty. I want this Parliament to be made sure about this discussion. Some issues that have happened in the past, only the future through the due process can look into whatever the issues are like, especially in and around the border areas. Papua New Guinea ourselves have our own internal domestic issues. We have our own sovereignty issues, we cannot dwell so much on sovereignty and borders of sovereignty that as established in the past. We could only discuss on matters of our interest, especially border transactions, maintenance of our current border, improvement

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For instance, the Honourable James Donald Member for North Fly continues to, in a good way, send me photos. And I must admit, I am embarrassed that on our side nothing has happened. On the other side, many work has been done. They are bringing development right

to your face. We need this document to be relevant so that this can be the working document where all our interests are anchored on.

So that the National Government and all who live around the borders, the two provinces and the four districts based on one working document and a treaty, we hold ourselves to account and work with Indonesia and West Papua for the betterment of both sides. We are brothers and sisters on both sides but in two sovereignties. The respect of those sovereignties must be maintained and improvement on our people's lives on both sides must be done. The traditional border crossers are relatives. We cannot ignore the fact that most are relatives on either side.

We need this document to be relevant and alive so that we work to embrace the relations that we have at the borders and improve the lives of our people there.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I spent the day and evening of 26 December last year at Wiom and in Bench back in the border areas. It is rather sad that we have left those places to decay in the last 48 years.

As Head of this Government, I do not want the status quo to remain. We want to improve the border areas so that there is free flow of traditional border crossers, legal economic crossers, legal service providers can be exchanged between the borders. We could develop the border because it is also an economic strategy and not just a social conversation. Thank you very much Mr Deputy Speaker,

I move that we take note of the proposal by the Foreign Affairs Minister and the treaty be placed on Government Notice for the next 10 days allowing the committee to get to work and look at what has already been signed. As Minister Maru already said, this is already coming to a lapse very soon and this is the basis of which we advance our next treaty with the Indonesia.

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

That the debate be adjourned to a subsequent sitting.

Debate adjourned.

Mr RAINBO PAITA – Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the members of Parliament for attending Parliament this week. I thank the Government members on our side including the Deputy Leader of Opposition and respective members on the Opposition side.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.25 p.m.