

## **FOURTH DAY**

**Friday 6 October 2023**

## **DRAFT HANSARD**

**Subject:**

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## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

### CORRECTIONS TO DAILY HANSARD

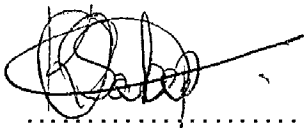
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**KENNETH SEBEPMIN**

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## **FOURTH DAY**

**Friday 2 October 2023**

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

There being no quorum present, he stated that he would resume the Chair after the further ringing of the Bells.

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 10.46 a.m., and invited the Member for Nawaeb, **Honourable Theo Pelgen**, to say Prayers;

'Our Father, we need you today, we need your direction to ensure that we do not lose focus on why we are mandated leaders. We need your wisdom to give us the foresight to focus on today as we steer to a better and brighter future. Let us move forward and not waste our energy on the past.

We believe that you are the consoler in us all. Guide us today with your belief in us and your will to be providers to all. In your Son's name, Jesus, Amen!'

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

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the presence of;

- (a) Councilors from Rai Coast District of Madang province, and
- (b) 41 teachers from St John Primary School, Tokarara, in the National Capital District

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

## QUESTIONS

### Seal and Upgrade Mt Wilhem Road

**Sir PETER IPATAS** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Works and are about tourism.

Mr Speaker, in this country, we need to support very popular tourist destinations and do everything possible to ensure that the tourists who frequent these destinations continue to come into the country. And of course, the local tourists can also visit and participate in seeing these wonderful sites we have.

Mr Speaker, I just want to ask the Minister, if one of these destinations which is frequented by local and overseas tourists is Mt Wilhelm in Chimbu province. The road from Kundiawa to Gembogl has been sealed. However, there's a small section of six to seven kilometres up to the foot of Mt Wilhelm that needs to be upgraded and sealed.

Can the Minister please allocate some funds urgently to make sure that this destination continues to bring tourists into the Highlands region? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SOLAN MIRISIM** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I acknowledge you for resuming your seat this morning. I also take this time to thank the Governor of Enga for his good questions regarding roads.

02/04

The Governor is correct in saying that there must be road links and access to boost economic activities and tourism is one of those that can boost the people's participation in growing our economy. For tourism to thrive we need road access to sites that will be of interest to our local and international visitors.

A lot of international tourists visit Mt Wilhelm and the road there is important, therefore, the Government will look into that road link under the Connect PNG Program. I want to assure the Member for Kundiawa-Gembogl that after this session, do come to see me and let us discuss how best we can include this road access into the Connect PNG Program.

I would also like to mention here that tourists flock to the Highlands region because the provinces still celebrate their cultural shows. I appeal to other regions to get involved in promoting tourism through the diverse cultures that we have. Under the Connect PNG Program, roads are being built and we are creating access not only to tourism but other economic activities as well.

I wish to say that most of the roads from Lae to Mt Hagen are in good condition. I just met with ADB officials yesterday and the road works will continue from Hela to Kopiago, Enga, and reach the Gulf as well.

Mr Speaker, I encourage and urge other areas to tap into tourism and market PNG to the world; showcase your culture so we have visitors flocking into the country.

With that, I wish to assure the Honourable Member that this road has been identified and prioritized under the Connect PNG Program.

### **Engagement Process for Community-Based Police**

**Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE** – Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister for Internal Security.

Firstly, let me thank the Prime Minister on behalf of my people for visiting Pomio district last week.

Papua New Guinea has an estimated police personnel of 6,200 which is a ratio of one police officer to about 1,800 civilians. This is four times below the United Nations requirement to maintain law and order in our country. The required appropriate number of police personnel in the country as per our population should be between 24,000 and 26,000. I acknowledge the government for the current recruitment and training at Bomana. I am aware of the Police Constabulary Strategic Plan 2021-2030 which emphasizes community policing.

The Pomio district currently has only two regular police officers looking after 90,000-100,000 people in the district. We would like to see at least five to 10 community-based police in our respective LLGs.

(1) Can the Minister clarify the process required to identify, train, and engage community-based police in our respective LLGs?

**03/04**

(2) Can this arrangement be expedited so that we can have our police in our respective areas so that we can also maintain and support the government to assist in maintaining law and order in our rural communities?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr PETER TSIAMALILI JUNIOR** – Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for Pomio, Mr. Elias Kapavore, for his questions.

Before I respond to his questions, I want to acknowledge and congratulate him and his people for the work that he has been doing in his district.

Mr Speaker, in response to the questions, given the limited manpower that we currently have in the country, our government has already started recruitment. We have the first 500 that have started training and we should in the next nine months start capturing the next 500 which will increase the number up to 1000 by 2024. And hopefully, by February, we will open our satellite center in Gusap where we will also have additional recruitment of 200 to 300 recruits to capture our regulars including our cadets.

Mr Speaker, we have an MoU that structures that each province can sign up with the RPNGC for us to initiate the Reservist Program in our communities. It is a matter of discussion between the PPC and the districts. There are a few of our districts that have taken up the initiative to engage with the RPNGC to start the program in their districts.

To answer the questions, we have an MoU already in place. All you have to do is have a discussion preferably with your governor, PPC and the RPNGC headquarters because we have a standing MoU. You do not need to look outside of your community. In the recruitment that we carried out last year, almost 30,000 young men and women applied for the job so there is a greater pool of young men and women who have already shown enthusiasm to be part of the RPNGC.

There is already a pool of young men and women in your districts that you can pick from to start your Reservist Program. It is good because what could happen is that those become your preliminary candidates so that when the next recruitment opens, they will be in a good position to be recruited in the next phase of our recruitment.

Mr Speaker, I hope I have answered the questions successfully. Thank you.

### **Preparations For El Nino**

**Mr RICKY MORRIS** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to raise my question. I am also happy to see you seated in your Chair again.

My question is directed to the Minister for National Emergency and Disaster, but since he is not here, I will re-direct it to the Prime Minister.

Before I ask my question, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Minister for Defence for inviting me to join him two weeks ago and acknowledge the Government for choosing Alotau to be the second naval base for our Navy.

Mr Speaker, in a recent news report from the PNG National Weather Service under the seasonal climate outlook for September to November, the National Weather Service has indicated long dry spells and the likelihood of El Nino in certain areas of the country.

04/04

My district is also included in the drought alert as one of the areas including parts of West New Britain, Hela, Southern Highlands, and West Sepik. For the last six months, some of these areas have experienced long dry spells.

Does the Government have any plans and is it prepared and ready to allocate resources for this likelihood of El Nino being declared in the country?

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Alotau for asking a very important question.

Firstly, I would like to thank the students and other visitors in the Public Gallery. Thank you for coming by.

Mr Speaker, we have received information that El Nino might happen as there has been prolonged dry season in some areas. I have asked the Finance Department in the first instance to ensure that the financial instructions have enough flexibility to assist affected districts whilst awaiting help from the National Government or the provincial government. If the district development authorities want to utilize some resources to ensure we support our people then the financial instructions should be able to allow for districts to be the frontline drawing from resources you already have, as we disburse the district support grants or the district infrastructure development grants or the district services improvement funds.

The National Government will overlay support where there is pronounced dry season. Where our people are suffering that's our duty and responsibility, we will take care of our people wherever pronounced dry season is taking place.

I want to give full assurance to our people right around the length and breadth of our country, whether it's dry season or any other disaster the National Government will be on standby to assist wherever possible. But, as I indicated earlier, we will tailor the financial instruction in a way where districts face extraordinary circumstances in their areas. You could deploy resources that are funneled through the district treasury at the very earliest whilst the National Government comes in to assist.

Mr Speaker, I think this is a sufficient response to the question asked by the Honourable Member.

### **Illegal Firearms**

**Mr RAPHAEL TONPI** – Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Internal Security.

Firstly, I would like to welcome all the students and teachers who are in the Public Gallery. Yesterday was World Teachers Day, so Happy Teachers Day to those teachers who are working tirelessly throughout the country.

My question is in relation to illegal guns. In the Highlands, there are a lot of high-powered illegal guns in every village, in every tribe, and in many of the houses. This is the cause of many of the law and order issues we are facing in this country. When people have these guns, they think they have all the power to do anything or say anything. For example, in Mendi, people are carrying guns around freely. They used them during the elections and after the elections, they hid the guns again and nothing is being said about it.

**05/04**

When the next election comes, we will still face the same problem. In the report presented by the Minister for Internal Security, I haven't seen anything about illegal firearms. Many illegal firearms are brought in by prominent people, purposely to cause harm and destruction to society.

Even members of Parliament are bringing in guns. I don't have a gun so that's why I am speaking out. Although a Highlands man, I don't own any guns but members of Parliament and intending candidates own a lot of guns.

My simple question is, what is the department doing to get rid of these illegal guns?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr PETER TSIAMALILI JNR** –Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for Mendi for raising this important question.

Firstly, I acknowledge the students who are present in the Chamber with their teachers. I think a couple of days ago was World Teachers Day, so I just want to acknowledge the teachers in the Chamber.

Mr Speaker, this is one of the important questions that keeps being asked by many. As a Police Force, our position going forward is to address this issue apart from taking note from the Singirok Report. We have drafted and completed our terrorism bill which we would like to



table in Parliament. It will go before Cabinet, so that will give us time in regulating and commencing enforcement and put to rest the procurement of illegal firearms.

Give the Police Force a bit more time so that the terrorism bill is completed and it will be put through the process through Cabinet before it gets tabled on the Floor of Parliament. It will allow the Police Force at any time to have access to anyone who is deemed as a threat in facilitating firearms at any point, regardless of what your status is.

Many of our firearms are being procured by citizens who have access to funds, whether it be in the private or public sector. Honourable members of this House, once the terrorism act comes into action, I put everyone on notice now that it is going to hunt down those that have access to procuring illegal firearms. Those who have access to funds are the only ones who can pay for such high-powered expensive firearms.

So, hopefully, Mr Speaker, I have answered the Honourable Member's question about how we are going to contain and manage the risk that we have in the country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **Roads in Eastern Highlands Province**

**Mr SAKI SOLOMA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity and recognizing the people of Okapa.

Mr Speaker, I also want to acknowledge the presence of the teachers in the Public Gallery because I am a former teacher. I am happy to be present in the Chamber and wish a happy World Teachers Day to all the teachers across the country.

Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Works and Highways. I am happy with the Marape-Rosso government for the Connect PNG Program. We know many people are living in the hinterlands and will be really happy when connected by road through the Connect PNG Program.

**06/04**

My question is about the road from Kainantu to Okapa to Lufa and then to Unggai-Bena. This is one of the biggest roads in the Eastern Highlands province. Many times this question has been raised in this House but up until today, I have not seen any work that is happening. This road is very important and it connects five districts and in these districts, there is many social infrastructures and more than a millions worth of coffee is transported out from this road.

Can the Minister for Works and Highways give an undertaking to my people in this district so that they may know what your plans are for this road?

I am glad that he has already given K10 million to start work on the upgrade of the road and work is in progress as I speak but I also want this road to be sealed. It is an existing road and it serves a population of 300,000 on that side of the Eastern Highlands Province.

**Mr SOLAN MIRISIM** –Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Okapa for asking this important question.

My team and I have already been to Goroka in the Eastern Highlands province, and we met with the governor and all his provincial members. They mentioned almost four to five main roads in the province which my team has taken note and included in the budget for 2024.

This particular road runs to five districts and the member is right to say it is a very important road under the Connect PNG Program and has been included in the 2024 Budget. We have already allocated K10 million to start work and for any emergencies that need to be dealt with such as rehabilitation and maintenance. By next year the contract will be awarded for sealing of this road

Mr Speaker, yes, this is a very important road and it is already on the Connect PNG list under the Department of Works and Highways.

Thank you.

### **Foreign Exchange Shortage**

**Mr SASINDRAN MUTHUVEL** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Treasurer but since he is not here, I would like the Prime Minister to take note of the question.

Mr Speaker, in light of the notice currently issued by Puma Energy on fuel rationing due to their claim of shortage of foreign exchange, what are the steps being taken since the last time we formed a committee to negotiate with Puma Energy and Bank of Papua New Guinea to resolve this issue?

Mr Speaker, this issue of shortage of fuel will be affecting the airline industry, electricity, water, and many other energy sectors so as it is a National Security issue, what step is the Government taking to address this issue?

Thank you.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I am glad to give a response to this question from the Governor of West New Britain.

The issue with Puma Energy has resurfaced again. We had temporary relief arrangements and around that time the Bank of Papua New Guinea was able to uplift the release of Forex to the market from what was a US\$30 million monthly release to now over a US\$100 million release. Puma Energy is at the front of the queue concerning receiving a substantial part of those distributions monthly for the procurement of fuel into our country.

**07/04**

I am surprised to learn that we have an issue right now. Minister Kerenga Kua is representing the Cabinet and government under his portfolio as Minister for Energy and is in a meeting with the Central Bank right now to look into this matter as we work to find temporary solutions, including giving Puma Energy the relief they need.

But Puma Energy must also understand that we have other essential services to supply Forex to, including those who import into our country. Central Bank has worked with Puma to assist them in utilizing profits of their sales outside to also pick up in terms of supply from Forex to buy and procure fuels to come into our country.

Going long term, we are also looking at having alternate fuel arrangements. I have indicated to the country and I am indicating through this question again, that ExxonMobil and MRDC are working with us for an alternate option. We do not want to be reliant on only one supply forever. That was a deal of the past where we were trying to unbundle and uncircle. We are looking at alternate fuel supplies in our country.

There is also a possibility of us looking into emergency loss further to compel not just fuel supply but the loss of infrastructure. I just want to put to Puma that I know that they are operating a business but they also have to be fair and rational as they operate in our country. We are doing everything possible within the cap of Forex we have to supply to them and allow them to pick up earlier and quicker than most so that they can continue to supply fuel to our country.

This short-term experience that we are having, hopefully by this time next year, if not within the next six months, should be no more when we have an alternate fuel supply that is readily available to supply fuel to our country.

At the moment, we have worked with the other fuel suppliers to ensure that they keep on supplying to the sectors where they can supply. The only area of stress that we might be facing

is the aviation sector supply because that is where Puma has market dominance and supply contracts.

We are in the business of unbundling this monopoly and domination. As I speak in Parliament today, I want Puma to know that we have given them our full support and they have to assist the market here in which they operate.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **Status of Ramu 2 Hydropower Project**

**Mr KINOKA HOTUNE FEO** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to ask my questions to the Minister for State Enterprises. Currently, towers have been constructed for the transmission of high-voltage power lines between Mt Hagen and Yonki Dam. There is a general resentment from some of our people that may jeopardize this important project because of two assumptions; firstly, gas power energy will be transmitted from Hela through to Lae and Wafi-Golpu and that may not allow for the Ramu 2 Project to proceed, and secondly, this will be done by Dirio Power.

These are two assumptions that will need clarification from the good Minister.

Can the Minister shed some light on the delay of the Ramu 2 Project for the benefit of our people and is there a possibility of including that as an agenda for the upcoming PM's meeting in China?

We understand that a Chinese investor or contractor is signed to do the Ramu 2 Project.

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and welcome back to your Chair. I also want to thank the Member for Unggai-Bena for his question.

**08/04**

Mr Speaker, I want to emphasize the point that gas from our Hides gas field is not yet connected to any power supply. There's a small portion that was used to power the Porgera Mine and that is a continued relationship. However, the gas from any field in Hides has not yet been connected, and the power transmitter lines have not yet been linked to any source in Hides. What is happening now is that there is a big Chinese contractor using funds that have been provided to our Government from the Eximbank of China to undertake and upgrade the very old and aging infrastructure starting from Mendi, Tari to Yonki. It is a major transmission upgrade that has been undertaken by PNG Power.

As most of us will appreciate in many other countries or all countries power, transmission reviews are done every five years or so. Unfortunately, for our country and especially for PNG Power none of that has been done over many years so those big transmission towers and lines are more than 40 years old and are inherently risky and they can drop down anytime.

It is incumbent upon our government to take steps to fix it and that has been done and we were able to obtain a loan from the Eximbank of China. There are two phases; the first phase has been completed from Mendi to Mt Hagen, and the second phase has started from Mt Hagen to Yonki. Another contractor is working on Yonki to Lae and is funded by a Japanese contractor. I think most of you have noticed work being done there.

To answer the question, no gas is being extracted and no gas will be used to power this energy. All we are doing now is to upgrade and change the existing major transmission lines and to enable power or energy source in Yonki, or eventually when you can transmit gas and if there is a disaster in Yonki, we can get from Hides so that the country continues to have uninterrupted power. If there is a redundancy from other sources like Paundo or even Hides if it does come on board later on, then Yonki will power the entire region.

Mr Speaker, it is incumbent upon us as a country or government to make sure that there is uninterrupted power from two sources, but to emphasize my answer, no gas from Hides will be used to supply our part of this country or the Highlands region. We are relying heavily on the Yonki. Much upgrade work has been done and that is why Lae is facing a lot of issues. Yonki has been affected due to ongoing upgrading and rehabilitation work being done. Eventually, we think Yonki will come back to full production next year and Lae will have full power available complemented by the other sources of Morobe province itself.

In the case of Ramu 2, I must point out that eventually when Ramu 2 does come on board that will still not be enough to provide power for Lae, Highlands region, and also Madang due to the increasing population, the expanding cities and additional business activities which are likely to come on board.

You are looking at a population of nearly four to five million people living in that corridor so even when Ramu 2 comes on board there will still be a need for additional power sources, therefore, we must continue with our efforts to look at additional hydropower sources even from Finschhafen or even from the Chimbu province. We must all work together to make sure that we have a lot of hydro sources available so that we can cater to our increasing population. Factories and developments and even the mines can come onstream. In the case of Ramu 2, there are processes that we have to follow.

09/04

The issue of a guarantee is one of the many boxes that we need to tick. And Treasury is now evaluating and we must also understand that the Treasury has a responsibility to make sure that whatever arrangements that we have do not necessarily expose our country to unnecessary risk. So, they are doing what is expected of them and we expect them to give us an answer.

If they can give us a guarantee then that's one box that has to be ticked. And then we also have to work together with the Wafi-Golpu Mine and see their energy needs and if they are satisfied that power from Ramu 2 will be able to meet their needs, they will then make a commercial decision based on their interests.

They are a different type of private business entity so if all the boxes are ticked, of course, Ramu 2 will be a goer. So, we have the issue of guarantee. So once again, if the Treasury does issue a guarantee then of course it will be incumbent upon our Government and our Prime Minister to act. If it is a profit and guarantee has been issued then no doubt the Prime Minister will then be pushing for our case when he visits Beijing.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **Creation of One Million Jobs**

**Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, we are happy to see you in your chair again.

My questions are directed to the good Madam Minister for Labour. But before I ask the questions, I'd like to also say that my question is in relation to one of the questions that was asked the previous day. In response to a question without notice on the Floor, the Honourable Minister for Labour again highlighted her ministry's desire to create one million jobs for Papua New Guinea by the amazing year of 2027. One million jobs! That is about one-tenth of our population.

Mr Speaker, this is not only ambitious and good for the nation but it is something that I think Papua New Guineans and we all leaders want to see come to realization. Having a desire is different from having a plan because a plan must be accompanied by a clear strategy and a definite budget to implement it, otherwise this is just wishful thinking.

Mr Speaker, we all know very recently that Ela Motors advertised several positions and there were about one thousand plus applicants who went for an interview at Lamana just for around 10 jobs. We also know from history, Mr Speaker, that Stanley Hotel had 40 jobs out in the market and there were more than 3,000 people who lined up for the jobs.

Mr Speaker, my questions to the good Madam Minister are;

As a former senior public servant, does she believe in that figure that she has been touting, or is that content to being part of.

**Mr Richard Masere** – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, my point of order is that the recently launched MTDP 4 has clearly outlined where those jobs will come from. So, if the good Deputy Opposition Leader has not read through the document, he needs to do that first before he asks that question on the Floor. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Deputy Opposition Leader, you may continue your questions.

**Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA** – My good friend, the good Public Accounts Committee Chairman, if you are patient enough, I'm getting there. It's on page 15 and unfortunately, he's not patient enough to listen to my questions.

Mr Speaker, as a former senior public servant, does the Minister believe in that figure that she has been touting, or is that content to being part of the Government's propaganda machine where everything that happens is either a new event or a new record?

For example, yesterday or the previous day, the Prime Minister stated that the Australian Labour Mobility Scheme is a first-time event in PNG created by this Government.

**10/04**

Everyone can recall that the scheme was introduced to PNG as part of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme during the time of the then Minister for Labour and Member for Kavieng Open, Mr Martin Aini, in the late 1990s.

We now have the Member for Kavieng again, the Treasurer Honourable Ian Ling-Stuckey, spearheading the same program. Also, yesterday, in his response to a question by the Leader of the Opposition –

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Deputy Opposition Leader, are you airing your grievances or are you going to ask your question?

**Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA** - The one million target employment that the madame Minister has been referring to is on *page 15* of the Medium-Term Development Plan. Is this

just propaganda as there is no real accompanying strategy to indicate how the numbers will be achieved?

Mr Speaker, let me make it clear that the data shows that our annual employment figures are somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000. Even if this is raised to 10,000 annually, that will bring it to less than 100,000 employees. For example, does the madame Minister truly believe that 15,000 jobs will be created by each of the 19 DDAs just because the government has decreed that it must happen as it is stated on page 15 of the Medium-Term Development Plan?

**Ms KESSY SAWANG** – Mr Speaker, before I respond, I would like to acknowledge your presence in the Chair today. I want to thank the Deputy Opposition Leader for his question. It is a very good question because unemployment is a big issue and we have a lot of unemployed people. We have a growing population with a small economy. This government's strategy in these five years and the previous two years has been to grow the economy and shift away from the extractive and move onto the non-resource sector.

The statistics that have been published by the NSO and Treasury show that growth has been in the non-resource in the last three years. The opposition must consult these papers to see where the growth is.

Mr Speaker, in terms of the one million jobs that he is talking about, it is not my desire or my personal view; it is the government's policy and plan and falls under the MTD4 which states that by 2027, we must create one million jobs.

I wish to remind the Deputy Opposition Leader of the Vision 2050 that was launched in 2009 and there is also the PNG Strategic Development Plan that was implemented. This is a 30-year plan from 2010 to 2030. In that plan, it talks about the creation of two million jobs in 30 years.

As a responsible government, we are trying to look into these visions and try to bring them to fruition in the next five years. Is that achievable or not? It is an ambitious plan but it is achievable. Before I move onto that, I wish to remind the Deputy Opposition Leader, that he was the Minister for Forests and under the MTDP4, we have 120, 000 jobs created under this sector.

If he had done his job by rehabilitating plantations et cetera, then he would have created some jobs, so before speaking, think about what you should have done but did not do.

11/04

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*



Mr Speaker, that target is achievable, each sector has that target. If our Deputy Opposition Leader can go back and look at the strategies that we have now, downstream processing of our resources, investment in Special Economic Zones, and all these investments in Connect PNG will be creating jobs.

The government is spending a lot of money on the economy and that will trickle down to the creation of jobs. For our people out there, we understand the population problem but it is not the government's fault that our population is increasing.

All of us are responsible and we have to do something about it. Of course, we are trying to address the issue of unemployment, and that one million jobs, Deputy Opposition Leader, all of us are responsible for working together to create it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER** –Honourable members, 45 minutes of questions without notice has lapsed. We've come to Grievance Debate. Before I allow the debates to begin, I just want to comment from the Chair that most of the time during Grievance Debate, Members of Parliament raise a lot of important points which we agree to have being noted, but who is going to make it happen?

Many times, I have observed that the area above where our implementers should be seated is vacant. So who is taking note to implement the points that are being raised? We raise and hear the grievances but are left here to be ignored. That is what I wanted to say as the Chair taking the lead.

## **GRIEVANCE DEBATE**

Question proposed –

That grievances be noted.

### **Nature of Questions Raised to the Prime Minister**

**Mr PILA NININGI** (Imbongu – Minister for Justice and Attorney General) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I now speak as the Member for Imbongu.

I would like to speak on the points raised by the opposition leader raised this week to the Prime Minister. I think the opposition leader has responsibility regarding the questions he asked. The questions we ask and the answers we give must have some sense of responsibility.

The question without notice that he raised had deprived the character of a leader. The leader was our Prime Minister and we have only one Prime Minister and not two. The Prime Minister has talked with a lot of the world leaders such as the Indonesian President, the United States President, the King of England and the Prime Minister of Australia. That is why we must always contemplate things before promulgating them. The Prime Minister is representing us from the outside view and if we make such inferences like that in this House, how will they see us?

**12/04**

We must make responsible statements, not statements that will demean ourselves and our Parliament. We have all been mandated to come to this House to talk about issues affecting our country and we must respect the Parliament while we make our comments.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

#### **Private Business Bills**

**Sir PUKA TEMU** (Abau) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and welcome back. My grievance debate is short and concerns only two matters that the Honourable Chair may take note.

One of my observations over the years has been that there are very few Private Business bills being presented on the Floor of Parliament and, therefore, having been exposed to a backbencher position, I have been trying to look at certain provisions of the law and in my last attempt to provide a Private Business bill both of us discussed the lack of clarity of the Standing Orders with regards to the facilitation of the Private Members bill process.

So, I would want a strong recommendation during this grievance debate for you as the head of the Legislator, if we can progress it and that is, the Private Business bill goes to the Private Members' Committee of the House. The Private Business Committee as per the Standing Orders only meets during sittings of Parliament at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. And so, it took a long time for my Private Business Bill to be cleared because of that particular provision.

The only provision in that Private Business Bill is that when there is no quorum, the Speaker can then make a decision and maybe that opens up some allowance for Private Business. I'm recommending, Honourable Speaker, that we provide another provision underneath the Standing Orders. I think it is Standing Order Section 22, subsection 5, and that

is for the Private Business Committee to not only sit on Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. but on other days as well on the call of the Chairman of the Private Business Committee.

Because the provision of 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday relates to the provision under the vote of no confidence provision, the Private Business Committee established to address the motion of vote of no confidence and it comes on Thursday as a private business, I strongly recommend through this Grievance Debate if that can be looked at so that we can facilitate a Private Members Bill to come to the Floor rather than only the Government bringing in bills on the Floor of Parliament. That has been my observation, Honourable Speaker. I hope that we can provide a solution to it and make it easy.

### **Build Abau Roads**

My second debate is on behalf of my people of Amazon Bay and I'm sorry that the Minister for Works and Highways has left the House. This year I am a supporter of the Connect PNG policy and I have expressed it in this Honourable House. But I take the cue from my Honourable Governor of the Central Province that the priority should be given to connecting the provinces to their service centers rather than connecting other provinces to Port Moresby.

For example, that's my strong position and so for me, the reason why I supported Connect PNG is because half of Abau is not covered by road. I travel 4 to 5 hours by dinghy to the last Local Level Government called Amazon Bay which connects to the Alotau electorate.

**13/04**

My grievance is that only K10 million was allocated to Amazon Local-Level Government to seal the road on the unconnected part of the Magi Highway, which is in Cloudy Bay. And that has finished now, so they only sealed 10 kilometres and they've stopped.

And so, in February, I brought the Minister for Forest hoping that the Minister for Works and Highways would sit down together to discuss a way forward because we've got two forest companies operating there; one in Cloudy Bay and the other in Amazon Bay. They are already sealing the roads.

And so, rather than the government spending a lot of funds, the Works and Forest departments must work together with the forest company to connect the road to Amazon Bay. So, work together and seal the road rather than spending K10 million and cease work.

But, I want to thank the government on behalf of the people of Abau because there is a 33-kilometre sealing from Emalia Bridge to Moreguina. That work was started by Global company and it's looking really good, thank you. And hopefully, in three years there will be another 33 kilometres, I'm not too sure of the amount, maybe K100 million or so.

I think that should be reversed and K100 million should be spent on connecting the unconnected part of Abau because there are three big rivers to cross. I think K10 million is too small, therefore, I was going to request through this Grievance Debate to the Prime Minister and Minister for Works and Highways to increase the component in the supplementary budget so that the sealing of the road can continue towards Amazon Bay, or the Minister for Works and Forests can work together with the two existing forest companies and then make it quicker. And because they are existing old forest roads, it's difficult to clean those roads to connect Cloudy Bay to Amazon Bay.

Mr Speaker, my last grievance debate is about the Connect PNG. The Works Department awarded a local company to go and clean up the end of the Magi Highway, which is the responsibility of the Forest Management Authority (FMA). And so, I rang the Minister for Works and said, 'Why are you wasting money when the FMA is responsible for all those roads?' Other sections of the Magi Highway are deteriorating, why didn't they come and fix those sides of the Magi Highway rather than going to an area where a forest company is already doing the job? We wasted money!

So, for all these little things can we connect the dots properly so that we are gaining traction rather than just by talking?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

### **Create Employment Opportunities**

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** (East Sepik) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, it's good to have you back in the Chair.

Mr Speaker, this particular grievance is about the question raised by the deputy opposition leader and the response from the Minister for Labour and Employment. And I think it's a big issue, we've spoken about it at length but again, I regret to say we still have no firm strategy. Our population sits at around 14 million, there are predictions that within another 10 years, our population will be over 20 million people.

So, the debate about how many jobs we need to create is going to get even more pronounced over the next five to 10 years. So, this government and this Parliament now needw to come up with a strategy.

Now if that strategy involves diversifying our economy away from the extractive sector then we need to see that strategy. We need a team of people who are sitting down right now to construct and vet that particular strategy.

And so far, despite many debates and questions on the Floor, that hasn't happened. Now, I'm not sure if that is the responsibility of the Minister for Labour and Employment.

14/04

I think that it is the responsibility of the Ministerial Economic Committee because it cuts across many different ministries and not just one. I do not think it should necessarily sit under Planning or Treasury and I think therein lies the confusion because whilst we may want to blame the previous government or the governments before that; shifting blame here and there does not solve the problem.

Our young people remain unemployed and long-term unemployed are still unemployed so until the jobs are created the problem remains and we sit in this House and throw mud at each other which doesn't help. One government needs to take ownership of this particular issue within our economy.

The idea of trickle-down economics works well in Western countries or in first-world countries because their economic systems are clearly defined but it does not work here because more than 90 percent of land is owned by traditional landowners and it has become almost inaccessible.

But, let me just congratulate the Government on appointing a Special Committee to look at lands, and let me congratulate the Honourable Keith Iduhu, who has some ideas as to where he wants to take us in that particular aspect.

Let me come back to some of the things we can do if you look at the Strategy for Responsible Sustainable Development which was produced under the Honourable Charles Abel and launched by Honourable Peter O'Neill who was the Prime Minister at the time. A lot of the strategies that we need have already been written and are sitting under Planning. I am not sure how much of it is already been deployed because if you look at that strategy it talks about three things in particular; forestry, fisheries, and agriculture but more than that it looks at things like eco-tourism which are some of the things that we have been talking about in a lot of our debates and questioning.

Now, beneath that you look at forestry and this is where the criticism from the Deputy Opposition Leader is correct. We increased the tariff on the export of logs to 50 per cent and then up to 70 per cent. That is fine because we wanted to make sure that the state's policy on banning round log export will happen through a tariff but what we failed to do was on the flip side. I am not sure if we sat down with the logging operators and stated the incentives that the government is willing to give them to go into downstream processing and create jobs in the

rural areas. We simply gave them a tariff, closed the door and many of them packed up and left.

Now, I am not sure who is taking responsibility for that particular action but that is on this Government. Our Government passed the Appropriation Bill on this Floor and we closed the gates on the logging sector.

We should have been a little bit smarter on that by taking our time and going to the logging sector and proposing that if they build the factories, employed the people, and created the jobs then these are the incentives that we will give them, and they wouldn't have gone. We never did that so that is on us but it is not too late.

We have a Budget coming up in the next couple of months and we can reverse that but we need it to go with a bunch of regulations. In that particular regulation, we should specify what sort of benefits and incentives are we going to offer to the logging sector for them to create jobs.

If there is a logging company like we just heard that is operating in Abau, and if we give the incentive for it to build a factory there and it employs 3,000 people in the Abau district then suddenly, we will have a small economy going.

We have a similar situation in Kanduwanum in East Sepik, where a company went ahead and built a factory and employed 3,000 people but they are struggling because what we have done is also that we have hit them with a massive tariff.

**15/04**

There should be a 'think tank' whether sitting in the Office of the Prime Minister or sitting within the Ministerial Economic Committee, to devise these things so that they work in balance. We have to provide incentives for people to move forward instead of putting them there.

The same thing can be done in fisheries and I do not know if the Minister for Fisheries and his team are handling that. I know that there is a strong push to try to put a lot more tuna factories in Papua New Guinea. But I understand that some tuna plants in Morobe and Madang are also closing down and laying workers off.

So again, what is the policy imperative there? What are we doing? How are we adjusting these policies to help these companies? The truth of the matter is this, for every K1 that the government invests to develop the economy, the private sector can bring in K100 for every kina that we put down.

A smart government would construct policies that attract private sector investment to create jobs, but we seem to be shutting the door on the private sector everywhere. And the biggest complaints are coming from the private sector. If the government enables the private sector, we will sit back and relax because they will be creating the jobs that we need.

The real engine room for jobs is in the private sector, not with the government. I want to urge all the ministers to think like this; let us enable the private sector, let us construct rules about the conduct of the private sector and then we set them free. This is the part of our economy that we have been denying for so long.

If we want the jobs, whatever strategy anyone is working on or if they are going to work on, they must be thinking about deploying the energy and creative minds in the private sector to come and do this for us. Let us not make it an exclusive thing and think that the government knows everything.

The most important part of any economy, the one that generates the biggest taxes is the private sector. What we have been doing is taxing ourselves. We have been taxing our own DSIP through the GST. When we increase our Budget, 10 per cent of that Budget goes back to IRC and comes back to the Budget, and we think the Budget is growing but it is not. When we write cheques from our Treasury, 10 per cent goes back to the Finance Department.

So that is where your K2.5 billion is coming from. It is coming from taxing government expenditure. We can't keep doing this. We need to grow that part of the economy that is paying true taxes. We cannot be taxing taxes again because that is what we have been doing. Let me urge those ministers, if the Ministerial Economic Committee is functioning, can you use this so that when the November Budget session comes, bring a job strategy here and let all the Members of Parliament debate it. But I will urge all of you, without the private sector you can forget about the jobs.

Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker.

### **Papua LNG – Establish Consultation Process**

**Mr SOROI EOE** (Kikori – Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs and Commerce Industry) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for allowing me to contribute to the Grievance Debate.

This morning I would like to contribute to this discussion about resource benefits and resource laws in this country as it applies to the Papua LNG Project which is coming up in the next few months and we will be looking at a development forum.

But before I do so, let me also recognize and welcome the students who are in the Public Gallery and all the other people who are observing the Parliament. Before I start my debate, let me acknowledge the God Almighty for giving us this beautiful country, the resources that he has so richly blessed us with and above all, the people that he has put in this country to manage the resources.

**16/04**

Having said that, let me also thank our government for taking leadership in addressing some of the issues that I'm going to raise this morning. Papua LNG is coming up and it has been speculated that by the end of October, we will be having a development forum. I am concerned that there is no communication and consultation between the government departments or ministries responsible for this particular project about consulting my people, myself, and the provincial governments as to the progress of preparation on behalf of the Government to ensure that by 2025 FID will take place.

I raised this issue mainly because what has happened in the past is a lesson that we have to learn from, particularly as it applies to PNG LNG.

Our people up there, so many of them are still waiting for benefits to reach them. I don't wish to see that my people are also found to be in the same category. History must teach us so that we can improve our performances hence the importance of consultation with landowners and leadership that come from that district or province where the development projects are taking place. This has to be consistent so that our people are prepared to be involved in this particular important resource project.

Gulf province has a big landmass but its population is small including Kikori district which has a big landmass but its population is quite small. When it applies to the project that is coming up, yes, the benefit will be big but the question is whether this benefit will trickle down to people. I am concerned.

My concern is that we have to be prepared. We have to prepare our people to be included before the project comes into operation. So far, I've been getting complaints from many clans and many people have been left out in the studies that have been carried out. I raise this issue because there has not been a proper social mapping done by the Government. Unfortunately, the reports that have been used or the social mapping result that is being used have been sanctioned by the developer. Under the law, we should have our social mapping report to cross-check the information that has been provided by developers. The developer aims to maximise profits and in doing so lots of people or communities are left out. This has been my concern.



I've already raised these issues with the Minister for Petroleum and I've been told that there was a study sanctioned by the Government. How come, I've not been told? This issue should have been done in close consultation with me.

The fact that I've also been trained in that field in my professional life where I have dealt with social mapping as it applies to international and developmental projects in the country, I've been disappointed simply because there's no consultation going on. My people are kind of left to wonder.

Recently, I've been told that Department of Petroleum officers have gone down and then got five people from each clan in every village and they decided that they would be the representatives.

**17/04**

I'd like to know who these people are; because there are so many complaints coming in from the villagers. I want to be prepared as I have always maintained that as a government minister, my job is to ensure that we represent the Government's interest as well so that everything that we do ensures that our people are prepared. So, when the project comes into operation, there is no problem on the ground, I want to reiterate that point.

I would like to be consulted and I need to work with the government so that we can ensure that this project takes off without any problem. There is an issue also of national content. This has been a problem for a very long time. Often times we find that landowners are left out.

Insofar as the national content plan is concerned, I thank the Commerce and Petroleum ministries for coming up with the National Content Plan. I need to see that the plan is implemented properly and that my people are given the first right of refusal in any projects that are emanating from this project. I am hearing rumors saying that international companies and national companies are vying for contracts with the Papua LNG Project. They need to discuss the matter with my people and me so that at least my people are given the first right of refusal.

When it comes to logistics, transportation, security, and catering, these are some of the things that we can do. I want to raise this issue because it has been rumored that by the end of this month, the development forum will take place. The main concern here is that I need to be informed so that I can prepare my people for this project.

### **Take Note of Grievances**

**Mr JAMES DONALD** (North Fly) - Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I have two or three points, I wish to air during this debate. Before I do so, I would like to support the Speaker who made the comment earlier.

My observation here is that usually on Friday's sessions for Grievance Debate; key Ministers are not available to listen to issues we would like to raise. So, who is going to attend to us?

Our debates are just a waste and that is how I have been observing so far. It has become the norm so something has to be done to stop this. It is my observation of the Parliament meetings for the last five years and it is still happening so we need to do something about it.

### **Logging Issues**

My second issue of grievance here relates to a logging project in my district. I heard the Governor of East Sepik speaking about logging and probably the consequences of that decision that we made by increasing the logging tariff is affecting this project badly.

That was one of the reasons why I asked a supplementary question on Tuesday, but I did not get to ask because I was told it was a different question. The fact is that the East Awin FMA project commenced in 2019 and last year it was shut down.

**18/04**

I was wondering what caused the problem and when I investigated, I found out that people in that area thought, I shut down the project because I was angry with them for not voting for me in the election. After thorough investigations, I realized that the East Awin FMA Project sits 900 miles upstream of Fly River right opposite Kiunga. The operational cost of that project is very expensive. They burn thousands of liters to export. It is one of those projects that sits among the Western Province's projects.

Their reason for shutting down the project was, it was very hard for them to sustain the project, the tariff was very high and the market was not favourable to them. I was having problems understanding and that is why I wanted to ask the Minister, if the Forestry department has any answers about that. Did we cause the problems? If yes, can we be able to review that and reconsider some factors? As mentioned by Governor Allan Bird, did we cause them to start having these problems?

This is one of the concerns that I have for my district because 500 of my people are now jobless and the landowners that get the royalty payments, do not get it anymore. The people that are building a road there also left. The place is deserted and I am concerned about my

people there. The people on the other side are all right because they are near Ok Tedi and benefit from it, but on the other side, are just the natives of that area. They are in the middle of Nomad and Kiunga.

### **Create Jobs in Agriculture Sector**

My second point of debate is regarding creating employment. The very important sector that will create employment for our people is agriculture. The fact of that matter is, we haven't done enough for our agriculture sector. The department has to be clear about that. We have created the ministries of Coffee, Oil Palm, and Livestock. When I go to enquire about something at the Department of Livestock, I am told that they do not know what they are supposed to be doing because the Department of Agriculture is the parent ministry for Livestock.

This is a real issue. I was wondering if there can be specific indicators and targets that each department should be doing. We are talking about downstreaming a lot of these agriculture work but where is the volume and target?

For instance, if I want to do a deal with China about our coffee and they ask me about the volume of our coffee, I would not know how to respond because we do not have a coffee volume. The same is the case for livestock and oil palm. Let us be specific. The Department of Agriculture needs to rise immediately and create resources and employment, be specific and put down resources. Do not waste time talking. We have been talking and nothing has happened yet.

If we are building roads in rural areas, agriculture officers must be the first ones to travel in. We are still sitting and talking and what will happen? We have not created any jobs yet. We are just going in circles. That is my honest opinion from observing.

There was a recent announcement by the Minister who stepped down. He said that there are two things that his department wants to do; rehabilitation and volume. That is correct but how far have we gone? To date, there has been no announcement from that department telling us how many volumes of coffee bags have we produced as a country. Nothing!

**19/04**

The demand is out there but where is the volume? Please allocate money to agriculture commodities and cut down on unnecessary work. Put down money also for other commodities like rubber. That is what we must do to create employment. These things are already there. We are just talking but the actual work of producing the volume, we have not done it yet.

In my province, we are venturing into vanilla to compete with East Sepik province. The other provinces are into oil palm. Put down money for oil palm, vanilla, and rice! The people of Rigo have been asking for money for the rice project in their district. We are wasting time talking when thousands of people would have already been employed had we provided funds for these agricultural commodities. Let us get this done because time is running out.

Governor Peter Ipatas sent 130 people to Australia for fruit picking and they are now stranded there because of no employment. Why don't we create employment here instead of sending them overseas looking for employment?

These are my thoughts regarding employment in PNG. We have thousands of people here so let us forget about the extractive industries. Those proceeds that we get from the mining sector should be put back into agriculture. I urge the departments of Agriculture, Livestock, Coffee and Oil Palm to not just be sitting there; do your jobs and create employment for our people! Thank you.

### **Illegal Firearms'**

**Mr JACOB KOP MAKI** (Mul-Baiyer) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for recognizing the people of Mul-Baiyer to participate in this Grievance Debate. I think it would only be right if we had everyone present during the Grievance Debate.

I thank the Member for Mendi for raising some very good points today. I want to add to what he said because I heard that there is someone taking note of what we are debating about. The Minister for Internal Security has given us some good answers and raised some very good questions.

My debate is regarding firearms in the villages. We are talking about creating job opportunities for our people through agriculture; coffee, coconut, cocoa, tea, et cetera. All these commodities are not grown in urban areas but in our villages. Our villages are now homes to unlicensed firearms. Our people in the villages are now fighting back with us and creating a lot of law and order problems because they have access to firearms. Our Police and Defence Forces cannot control our communities because it is also not safe for them.

Firearms should only be owned by people who have a firearm license. For those who have licenses, they are only allowed to own pistols. Other firearms like the M16, AR15, and stick rifles were only issued by the disciplinary forces. Right now, in our communities, some people have these kinds of firearms. Everyone knows about the people who own them.

20/04

Our people know that Members of Parliament have guns and we are considering it as our last line of defense. We must put some measures in place in this term of Parliament to repossess those guns.

People are displaying guns publicly in ceremonial places, during house cries and tribal fights. Human beings have firearms and we are ignoring it, even in the face of our security forces.

During my campaign period, people were carrying guns around and what would I do as an ex-policeman, I couldn't do much. We know it well where the guns are and I'm begging here whilst someone is taking note of this request to repossess all the illegal firearms. They are not Police, Defence Force, and none other than any disciplinary forces. They are not trained to hold the guns.

Under the law people are committing offenses, we are still letting them go. We must repossess all those firearms but how soon? We must put a strategy in place. One way or the other, if a politician has guns like AR15 and rifle, please return the firearms to the police. Take the lead and do it; council presidents, councilors, church leaders, former politicians, aspiring politicians, and everyone should be doing that to return the guns. It is not our property.

We are claiming that we are Christians and attending church service during Sabbath and Sunday but we are still in possession of guns. We are great pretenders, firearms should be returned immediately. The firearms are not intended to kill wild animals but purposely to kill human beings.

We want development to reach our electorates and provinces but people with guns are defensive and claiming a portion of state land. Last time, I tore the court paper and said, 'I'm here for development.' Such things are happening so, please let's lead the way.

My sincere apology for raising my voice because we are not addressing it and we must start acting today. If we don't, the 2027 National General Elections will be disastrous. The disciplinary forces and people who want to assist us in the election process will be facing a hard time.

As the government of the day, I want us to put some operation measures in place so we can start implementing. We have a Police Force, a Defence Force, and some intelligence people who are at the back of us. We have to do something to repossess all the illegal firearms because whoever has the gun is well known by the communities.

If we go to community by community, council ward by council ward, district by district, we will recoup those illegal firearms, especially in the Highlands region and coastal as well to

repossess all the firearms. These guns are supposed to be with disciplinary forces. We need to get them back.

Thank you.

21/04

### **Replace F100 aircrafts**

**Mr RICHARD MARU** (Yangoru-Saussia – Minister for International Trade and Investment) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I have some short grievances to air here.

My first grievance debate is on the NEC decision and the government's decision to replace all the F100 aircraft because it is unsafe for us to be using due to unavailability of spare parts. So, by 2025, we should do away with all the F100s and our airports will be serviced by jets which we should be bringing in.

However, two provincial airports have short runways; one in Madang and the other in Wewak. We need to increase the runway size to 1000 metres and I am very concerned because I have not seen any definite vote or plan for next year to have these both airports extended with new appropriate terminals to be built.

### **Extend Runways**

I am raising it on the Floor so that our people from these two provinces and the country must realize that with the coming of the jets and all our airports being serviced by larger aircrafts, they will require a minimum landing strip of 1,900 meters which these two airports do not have. I am grateful to the Government for doing up the airport in Vanimo but I think that these two other airports too need to be considered as well.

I had to raise this so that these two airports be given absolute priority to build longer airstrips but not only that they must also have new terminals built. This is very important and the Government needs to take note.

### **Army Barracks - Improve Roads**

The other issue that I would like to debate on is the National Institutions and their infrastructures. One example is the Moem Barracks in East Sepik, it is not a provincial institution and it is not the responsibility of the East Sepik Provincial Government.

If you go to Moem now, the road going into the Barracks has eroded by the sea; I was there last week and I'm travelled on the sand to go to the barracks, and there has been no road leading into the barracks for almost five years. This barrack serves our soldiers who sacrifice their lives to serve this Nation by taking care of the border posts and borders of our country.

I am happy for Connect PNG, we were announcing some very big funding and that is a good thing but please, I also talk about Goldie Barracks where I see the same thing is happening there, the state of the roads in these barracks. Who is going to take responsibility for these? Who is going to build the roads?

Recently, we brought the Australian Prime Minister to Moem Barracks and I must tell you, I was very embarrassed with the state of the road because we do not have a road there can we include that in Connect PNG or some other program so that we get these roads done?

In Goldie, we must do it well because it is the pride of our nation and somebody must be responsible for the key infrastructure to our key institutions like Goldie and Moem and all the other barracks.

**Mr James Donald** – Point of Order! With due respect to the Honourable Minister, but I think that the Minister who is in the NEC Cabinet has ultimate powers to discuss this at the Cabinet level, therefore, he should allow backbenchers to debate.

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** –Honourable for North Fly, your Point of Order is in order. Mr Minister, you can raise your grievance when you meet with NEC in caucus and discuss this but I will give the Floor to you to finish your debate.

### **Classification of Roads**

**Mr RICHARD MARU** – I think that I should raise it on the Floor so that our people can know about it as leaders of this country that is why I raise it.

My last grievance is on the classification of roads in the country. We have national, provincial, and district roads.

**22/04**

In the allocation of resources, some of us understand that provincial governments are responsible for provincial roads, districts are responsible for district roads and the national government is responsible for national and international roads.

But I have observed members of parliament coming here and asking for their district and provincial roads to be funded by the Connect PNG Program thus creating a lot of confusion for some of us. Which roads come under the Connect PNG Program; which roads can be funded by the provincial government, and which roads come under districts?

That clarification needs to be made clear so that we are fair to all districts, provinces, and members. There is a lot of confusion regarding who should access Connect PNG and under what criteria. I will leave this here for everyone to think about.

### **Increase Funding for Disadvantaged Provinces**

**Mr NOAH KOOL** (Chimbu) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to raise my grievances on this Floor.

Firstly, let me start with a background so you can understand where I am coming from. My province is the second biggest province in the Highlands region. It has six districts with around 400,000 people. Our economy is dominated by the agriculture sector; small-scale coffee, cocoa, and fresh produce.

In our capital, we have only five supermarkets and 10 trade stores. My internal revenue is a little bit more than K5 million. It is a disadvantaged province. I need to start implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) set out both by the United Nations and the Government of PNG with the theme ‘leave no one behind’ or ‘leave no child behind’.

My government does not want to leave anybody behind, we are a committed government and I have confidence in the elected leaders from the six districts. We are working together to do what is necessary for the good of the people of Chimbu. We are invested in major projects like the SUZ, our hydro, limestone, roads, networks, and human resources, to name a few. We hope to be self-sufficient going forward.

However, these investments will take time and resources. The different groups of human beings in the province, the Papua New Guineans living in Chimbu need to move forward now with the rest of Papua New Guinea. That is why we need present intervention by the government.

Whilst I thank the National Government for the TFF Policy, the SIP grants, and the infrastructure grants, I can assure the government that it is making wonders and translating every toea into developments.

The moral of my grievances is that some provinces are resource-rich with oil, gas, gold, copper, timber, oil palm, and fish, some are industrialized and some have a lot of economic activities happening there. It is not fair and equal when they get tens of millions of kina on top of their SIP, the infrastructure grants. These provinces will have enough money to start dissing out money for their development, unlike my province.



My humble plea is for the government to consider the disadvantaged provinces and allocate K15 million to K30 million in the form of block grants depending on the situation of each province. We can at least have some resources to cater to all the MTDP and SDG.

I want all Papua New Guineans to play rugby league on a level playing field. That is the kind of society our people want.

23/04

**Mr KEITH IDUHU** (Hiri-Koiari) – Thank you, Mr. Assistant Speaker. Thank you for acknowledging the people of Hiri-Koiari for the grievance debate today. Very basic but before I express some views here, I want to take this time to express heartfelt gratitude and thanks to the Marape-Rosso government where I raised a very important question this week about the issues as per my constituents in Koiari.

And thank you, very much on behalf of my people for responding very swiftly and thank you, very much on behalf of the four to five hundred thousand people of Port Moresby. I must say thank you very much publicly and openly for the commitment and swift action of the government in attending to this important need for the people of Port Moresby.

Thank you and God bless on that very important point.

#### **More Participation for Resource Owners**

In terms of grievances, I want to just add to the debate expressed by the Minister for Inter-Government Relations about participation in our resources. Water and power is a very important resource. God indeed gave it and just like gold and copper, oil and gas God gave too. So, this conversation when we have it, please do not belittle my people when they express their views and express it harshly as other resource owners in this country would do and they always do. I only excuse that aspect and repent on their behalf if we have offended anybody but to the point and more importantly, our good minister has raised a very important question, a very important concern.

Papua LNG will be in the stage of discussions and negotiations and for some reason, my office and I as the district MP of the plant site, have yet to receive an official letter, notice, advice, or status report to get my people in order.

Where do I align as the local MP? How do I facilitate for my people? This is exactly the grievance that is expressed by the Minister today. And other members of this House are also affected by this situation. We are going to keep talking and talking until the cows come home but who is going to act for that? Certain stakeholders who should not be entertained are getting entertained by the proceeds of these resources.

Special Purpose Authorities for example; who do they account to? And how on earth are they even part of discussions at the table? Why are we creating all sorts of bureaucratic red tape to give ourselves more and more problems? What mandate do they carry for the people of Papua New Guinea to participate in round table discussions to cut a pie they never cooked?

In *section 93* of the *Organic Law*, please, if it's too difficult just insert the word 'district' and bring it to Parliament and let's pass this law. What is so hard about that? Who is responsible? Why is the bureaucracy holding up this? I'm sure there is political welfare for the good minister. What support does he have?

I hope all our good bureaucrats are listening to me right now. How are we going to solve this? Simple! Insert the word 'district' in *section 93* of the *Organic Law* instead of Provincial Local Governments. Then we will have legitimate standing to be sitting at the table to discuss. It's not rocket science.

**24/04**

Then we have legitimate standing to be sitting at the table to discuss. We keep talking as if it is a mammoth task. We need to look into this very quickly.

On October 11, 2022, I took the Floor and asked the question to the good Minister for Trade about the Konebada Petroleum Park Authority and that the report or an answer would be brought back in three months. We are almost going to celebrate the first anniversary of my question, maybe I should buy a cake to celebrate this occasion.

It's not a laughing matter, people have been pestering my phone for almost twelve months. How am I going to respond to my people? What answers am I going to give to my people? I do not want to buy that cake, it is too expensive. I want an answer for my people. Twelve months is too long; I am aggrieved.

These grievances will go to waste if people do not act on them and my encouragement is this, we come here and take out our grievances, and for the sake of our people of Papua New Guinea, this government has 32 Ministers but out of this we only have 12 sitting here. This is not very good and please give us respect and let us work as a team. When we talk, listen to us, give us the respect of being present, hear us, and take notes.

I am hoping that *section 93* can have its amendment bill introduced on the Notice Paper the next time we meet. It is simple because Papua LNG before it goes to FID, the Open Member sits down, folds his hands, and has no idea what is going on. The same goes for Wafi-Golpu. Not only Papua LNG has this issue, but Kutubu, Morobe, and others too. Everybody is affected by this situation. We walk on the streets and our landowners are standing on the streets

mobilizing themselves and asking so many questions; we only respond with sorry I appreciate and support you but I can't help you because I do not even have legal standing.

I am hopeful that while you have done quite nicely for Wafi-Golpu, you will do likewise for the Papua LNG Project to serve the people of Gulf and Central provinces and that their interests in this will be looked at favorably in this budget session. We need mobilization and infrastructure development so that we can organize our people as well.

We are peace-loving people and we are ready I am happy to note that there are more reserve findings in the Gulf and there will be some announcements made shortly. I am happy to also hear about some reserves in Wanigela and that all of these reserve resource bases are in Papua. Note also that all roads will lead back to Hiri-Koiari, particularly Hiri-West where the plant site sits. Let us make this amendment and let us work from here.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister, the Leader of Government Business yesterday appointed me as the Committee Chairman of the Reform on Customary Land. I strongly believe that the economy has its foundations on the land and then grows out or upwards. The land is one issue we must fix. I will endeavor with my committee to ensure I bring a report to this Parliament and successfully bring necessary amendments in the foreseeable future.

Thank you all and God Bless, hope you all have a great weekend.,

**25/04**

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** (Morobe) – Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, for allowing me to speak on this matter. I endorse the comment by the Speaker, Honourable Job Pomat, about the lack of attention and consideration given to matters which members raise in Parliament.

There should be serious consideration done and serious action taken so that all matters raised in this House by way of debate or questions or through grievances, must be seriously attended to. When we stood for elections, every candidate, either in LLG, the provincial, or the open electorate. We told the people, our voters, that we are the right people, elect us so that we will carry your problems to Parliament.

Mr Assistant Speaker, that is what we tell the people to convince them; we told them that we are the fit and proper persons to be voted into this House, who will represent you on the Floor of the Parliament and raise important issues affecting the electorate.

And based on that statement and commitment we are elected to Parliament. This is where the buck stops, the highest forum of this country where all grievances are to be made and responded to.

When we come here we are fired up carrying the burdens of our people. We are legally mandated to come to this Parliament, to tell the government our grievances so that it can assist and implement policies to satisfy our people in the rural areas. Papua New Guinea is a very difficult country, I do not have to remind you, we are separated by mountains and rivers. We cannot relocate our people but have to make basic services accessible.

When we are elected we are tasked to attend to the people's problems, we are the mandated representatives to tell the Government and secretaries of every department what our people need but what's happening here is we can talk as much as we would like to but at the end of the day, we have achieved nothing because we have no-one attending to us. We are made to look like fools and people who are responsible for taking charge of those problems and ensuring they are implemented must see to it that they are implemented.

I congratulate the Prime Minister as he has been sitting right throughout these sessions. You sacrifice to sit and listen. And Mr Speaker, if you are listening from your office, please do take note. Please set up a parliamentary committee to deal with all matters raised during the Grievance Debate.

**26/04**

You set up a committee to look into the grievances being debated that are recorded in the *Hansard*. Deliver the report to that Committee and then you set up an administration to make sure that all the problems raised by the Members are addressed. If the members refer to a particular department that they are aggrieved about, that department must be referred to this committee to attend to the member's grievance. This must be the same for other institutions or bodies.

Mr Assistant Speaker, this must be done. All of the problems or matters raised by the members of this Parliament – and remember that they are honourable members – cannot collect dust in this Parliament. They cannot be just heard and no action is taken. That's an insult, not just to us but because we don't represent ourselves in this parliament, we represent our people. They gave us the mandate to represent them in this Parliament.

I represent one million people in this Parliament including the ones who are still in their mothers' wombs. The figure will go up to two million people of Morobe. And these people have all sorts of problems in this country. All of us have been mandated to represent our people and all these people have their problems in their electorates. They gave us the mandate to attend to the problems that we have in our electorates.

Therefore, Mr Prime Minister, I will not come here and just air my grievances and nothing will be done about it on this Floor of Parliament; action must be taken. And the Speaker's part is to establish this parliamentary committee to attend to our grievances, this has to be done. And there must be an administrative body to deal with matters that need the attention of government departments or other organizations. They must be made aware of these grievances so they can deal with them. We can then be satisfied that they have attended to the matters that were raised during the grievance debates and go back and tell our people that the matter has been actioned. If the matter has not been actioned, we can always go back to the Committee to check if it has been done.

Therefore, Mr Speaker and Honourable Prime Minister, this issue must be addressed so we can know that action has been taken and we are not just talking for nothing on the Floor of Parliament.

Thank you.

**27/04**

**Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, our Grievance Debate time has lapsed.

Motion – That the grievance be noted – agreed to.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister – Minister for Foreign Affairs) – Mr Assistant Speaker, thank you, for sitting in the Chair and I thank all the leaders who have seated right through Question Time and Grievance Debate, and raising some valid points.

I want to give assurance that we have a team in the Prime Minister's Department; they may not be physically here but because of internet access, *EMTV*, and *NBC*, they are all sitting there taking notes on every conversation that is uttered.

We are given respect in many other avenues and if ministers are not here, I'm sure they have organized for their officials to also take note on matters of importance that are raised. We also pick up copies of the *Hansard* and go through them so that what can be relied upon is done or processed.

So full assurance, just because no one sits at the advisory box doesn't mean no one is listening in. As we speak all departments are listening through TV and the internet for uplinks that are taking place in all transactions in Parliament.

I appreciate all the commentary. Rome was not built in one day or one month, things take time, a thousand years to develop their countries. We have had only 48 years of independence and you know the past is past, we need to construct the future together. All recommendations made are considered and we will be working on progressing them as we go through.

With this, Mr Assistant Speaker, I seek your indulgence to adjourn Parliament to Tuesday 10 a.m. next week.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion (by **Mr James Marape**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 1 p.m.