

SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 22 February 2024

DRAFT HANSARD

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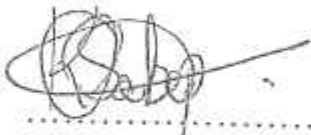
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KENNETH SEBEPMIN

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 22 February 2024

The Acting Speaker (**Mr Koni Iguan**), took the Chair at 10.40 a.m. and said Prayers:

“O God the creator, you are the ruler of the world and of this country, our country, our people, our Parliament. Grant that the members of this Parliament may fulfill our office with honesty and integrity. May our first concern be for the good of our people. Guide our deliberations for this day. Bless our decision, your divine design for our beloved country may be realized through us. Amen!”

ADMISSION OF PALLBEARERS INTO THE CHAMBER – CONCURRENCE OF PARLIAMENT

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I wish to inform Parliament that Pall-bearers carrying the casket of Late Honourable Jimmy Uguro MP, Member for Usino-Bundi, and Minister for Education will be admitted into the Chamber. With the concurrence of Parliament, the Pall-bearers will be admitted into the Chamber.

Motion – That the Pall-bearers be admitted into the Chamber – agreed to.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Admit the pallbearers!

02/07

(With the concurrence of Parliament, the casket of the late Honourable Jimmy Uguro, MP and Minister for Education, was brought into the Chamber to lie in State)

03/07

Mr ACTING SPEAKER - Honourable Members, you may be seated. The Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori–Prime Minister and Minister for Treasury) – Mr Acting Speaker, I move that this Parliament expresses its deep regret at the untimely passing

and death of the Honourable Jimmy Uguro, the Member for Usuno-Bundi Open Electorate, and our National Minister for Education on the 6th of February 2024, and places on our record its appreciation for his meritorious public service. We tender our profound sympathy to the family who are in bereavement.

Mr Acting Speaker, today is one of these days where you don't like to wake up. I entered Parliament this morning to go to our Government Caucus with drizzles of rain, and it just befits the occasion where a comrade, a brother-in-arm in the course of our people's service, was being transported in a casket into our people's House.

Mr Acting Speaker, up in the public gallery we have family, dear wife and children, representing immediate family, representing the extended family, people of Usuno-Bundi, people of Madang. And of course, the entire country who are mourning the passing of our National Leader, a very, very strong, committed, dedicated leader who has fallen in the course of his duty.

I, on behalf of my wife Rachel, our children, not just the people of Tari-Pori but the greater people of our country, especially also in the network and family hood of the great PANGU Pati, want to offer our sincerest condolences, sympathies and well wishes in this occasion where our brother, our comrade, is now laying in state, awaiting the final respects that we will give him before he is laid to rest.

04/07

The Honourable Jimmy Uguro typifies a leader committed to his duties even to the extent of his well-being.

Mr Acting Speaker, we work in a thankless job not that we want to thank you and appreciation but we labor on and work on despite personal effects on ourselves. I speak knowing very well the conditions of my brother.

A couple of years back he had a massive stroke but he has labored on and shouldered making his utmost best to recover from the stroke he had and he died in his sleep while attending to a call of duty to the people of his country in the education sector up in the East Sepik Province. He was working during the day and night and he clocked off work at around 11 o'clock, just before midnight when he breathed his last breath.

I want to say to my brother Jimmy, on behalf of his comrades who started the movement and changed the government in 2019, I just want to say thank you very much because he was a co-foundation of this movement and we will miss him.

But, Mr Acting Speaker, it reminds us of the peril of life that we live in today. We are here for a short time to work for our people and I want to thank him for the work he has done in the education sector.

He was a true blue-blooded educationist, an example of many Papua New Guineans who left school out of grade 10 or grade 8, who are out there in our society. He came through the Flexible Open Distance Education system; in those days it was called CODE. Under his watch, we revolutionized the Flexible Open Distance Education system which over 100, 000 Papua New Guineans have been brought back through second chance learning, matriculating into grade 12, and sitting examinations like those that are sitting in classrooms; those were the work he put in.

Now, we focus on the next 50 years of education revolution for our country where education becomes a tool to give informed decisions to our citizens so they too can live a life of self-sustaining. His work will be remembered and the work in the education sector will go on honoring the blueprint he cast to modernize and reform lower education so that quality wholesome citizens can be produced for our country. Brother Jimmy, I will miss you.

You have run your race, God created you and you are rested in his presence and he knew exactly the night you took your last breath, may you rest in peace. We will honor you fully in your last leg of the journey before you are rested but I shall commit the said aspirations of better wholesome education to our people to continue in that work.

Thank you for your service to your country and may God bless you.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA (Kiriwina-Goodenough – Leader of the Opposition) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Firstly, on behalf of the people of Kiriwina-Goodenough, Milne Bay Province, the greater Opposition, PNG, and my immediate family, I would like to convey my condolences to the family of the late Jimmy Uguro, more so to his good wife and children.

05/07

Mr Acting Speaker, I came to know Jimmy Uguro and has our brother who now lay in State this morning with us. I do not always call him Jimmy but I address him as Uguro.

On the day that he passed after getting the news from the social media, I rang the Works Minister to confirm. I rang the Works Minister because he is one of a couple of us who always teams up and says hello to each other including our late colleague and he said yes, our brother

has departed. Today as I stand here to deliver a short message I would like to reflect on the life of this man, Late Honourable Jimmy Uguro.

I got to know him during the past vote of no confidence when we moved into Laguna and our good Prime Minister seated before us asked me if I could stay at his place and I asked him kindly if I could share the room with the Late Uguro. That is when I got to know this great and humble man. I thank you my dear brother for the times we spent and the times we discussed some great and important things for this nation and especially for your people of Usino-Bundi.

Our Late brother who is before us is a very humble man. He is a man of very few words but a man who'd like to be seen by the work he does. He does not want to blow the trumpet for everyone to hear of what he does, no. I think his work signifies the type of person he is.

Mr Acting Speaker, I'd like to say that, may we like our departed brother, leader, friend, and colleague thank him for his humble service to our country. He is a person with a high level of humility and courage for our people and for this great nation. I think he saw the highest calling in his life and he took it with dedication as the Prime Minister has already mentioned he was on duty travel and he passed doing his work.

May I suggest to this Parliament many of our brothers who are the leaders of this nation in this Parliament and the past Parliament have died and we forgot the young families that they have lost. Can this Parliament do and legislate for us to do and care and cherish the leadership that they've taken with them, but left their families behind? What are some of the things that we can do? During the last funeral here, I spoke and I said this; we have only two appointments in this world. Appointment number one is when we are born and appointment number two is when we are called to go back to our creator.

Mr Acting Speaker, let me conclude by putting this to us. I've mentioned this and I will mention it time and time again. The best way to mourn for the death is to care for the living and I want to put this back to us this Parliament and our listeners out there and the people of Papua New Guinean and in all things that we do, let's love one another.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

06/07

Mr RAMSEY PARIWA (Madang) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, State ministers and Honourable members of this House. Today I rise on this sad and solemn occasion to pay tribute to the Minister for Education and the Member for Usino-Bundi, Gama district in Madang.

Mr Acting Speaker, from the outset, I, for and on behalf of myself, my family and the people of Madang pass my sincere, heartfelt condolences to Mrs Uguro and the children, Donald, Margaret, Darryl, Maureen, Milly, and the granddaughters, Hope and Faith Uguro. I extend my condolences to the people of Usino-Bundi Gama District and the people of greater Madang for the untimely loss and passing of Madang's very own son and leader, the late Minister Honourable Jimmy Uguro who lies in State before us.

Mr Acting Speaker, Madang mourns the death of its son and a great leader and I sympathize with my people at such a time as this is for our loss. It is not only a loss for the late Minister's family and the people of Usino-Bundi Gama District but it is a loss to the people of Madang Province, the Education ministry and department, the Government, and this nation. Mr Acting Speaker, I acknowledge the accolades, commendations, and tributes by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and I would like to say a few.

Mr Acting Speaker, the late Minister walked a long journey of life of determination through triumphs and tribulations in life. He graduated from grade 10 in 1991 from Brahman High School in Usino-Bundi Gama, Madang. But he did not stop from his dream of pursuing education. He attended FODE to do grade 11 and 12 and graduated in 1993 but that was not enough for him.

Mr Acting Speaker, he pursued his dream with a diploma in primary teaching at the Madang Teacher's College in 1995. He was not settled as he had a dream that grew bigger as time went by and he went on to graduate with a bachelor's Degree in Education at the University of Goroka in 2001.

Mr Acting Speaker, after graduating from the University of Goroka, his dream grew even greater and bigger and he couldn't settle for less he went on to graduate with a Master's Degree in Education at the University of Divine Word in 2005. Mr Acting Speaker, with a master's Degree at hand, was not enough for him as there was an urge that drove him even further to impart what he had learned back to the community as much as possible in 2017.

07/06

Mr Acting Speaker, his dream grew much greater when entered Parliament for the first time as a Member of Usino-Bundi, Gama District in Madang.

Mr Acting Speaker, in December 2020, I thank the Prime Minister for recognising the late Minister's dream as an educationalist and appointing him to the Cabinet as Minister for Education. The people of Usino-Bundi Gama District had begun to realise the significant dream the Minister had and they returned him to the 11th Parliament in 2022.

Mr Acting Speaker, as an educationalist in the Ministry of Education Department, and one of the greatest contributions he has made to the journey of this great nation since independence was the establishment of PNG Education Transformation Vision 2025 to 2075. He carried that dream all alone and laid it down as a 50th vision for education in this country, he was indeed a visionary leader. The only minister that I know had a 50-year vision for his ministry and the department.

Mr Acting Speaker, apart from being a minister was an outstanding and performing Member of Parliament in Madang in terms of service delivery, the Usino-Bundi Gama District and Madang Province never had such a leader before. The services he had delivered for his district speak for themselves.

Mr Acting Speaker, throughout his career the late Minister unwavering commitment to the betterment of our education system with his visionary leadership he championed initiatives to enhance access to quality education for all irrespective of socio-economic background and geographical location. His tireless efforts were instrumental in pasturing innovation, equality, and excellence within our schools, empowering countless young minds to reach their fullest potential. I can correctly state here that he was a reformer in the education system of our country.

Mr Acting Speaker, beyond his role as a legislator and State Minister, the late Honourable Jimmy Uguro was a beacon of integrity, compassion, and hope for the unfortunate ones who couldn't continue with their standard formal education system and gave them hope through FODE that he came through. He approached every challenge with grace and humility and earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and constitution alike. His genuine concern for the welfare of the students and educators alike was evident in every policy he pursued and the decisions he made.

Mr Acting Speaker, the late Honourable Jimmy Uguro had something special in him. He was full of positivity and never have I seen him without a smile on his face. The smile silently tells you that all will be okay.

Mr Acting Speaker, we say thank you to his family, clan, tribe and the people of Usino-Bundi and Madang for lending us the late Minister, he was a larger than his personality in our country's education sector.

08/07

Mr Acting Speaker, as we mourn the loss of the late Minister, let us also celebrate his remarkable contributions to our great nation. Though he may no longer walk amongst us, his

legacy will echo through the countless lives he had touched and the transformative change that he had established. Let us honour his memory by continuing the work that he so passionately pursued the PNG Education Transformation Vision 2025 to 2075 and I ask the Government to implement it to embrace and not to forget.

Mr Acting Speaker, let me finish by saying this, the late Minister Honourable Jimmy Uguro was not sick and away from duty when he passed on. He died while on his duty as a State Minister. He died doing what he loves the most as an educationist. He died serving his country.

On that note, my late Minister, Member, and Awai, I salute you for you died giving life to the spirits of our forefathers reflected in their first goal of our National Goals and Directive Principles enshrined in the preambles of the *National Constitution* that calls for Integral Human Development. For you died giving life to the spirit of education in our great nation.

May your soul rest in eternal peace and may your legacy continue to inspire generations to come in this great nation.

Mr Acting Speaker, I finish off by quoting one of his favourite quotes that says ‘as an educationist you can be qualified but not educated enough to do the right thing’ which is the centre of his PNG Education Transformation Vision 2025 to 2075.

Awaio, you may rest in peace now. Thank you.

Mr JOHN ROSSO (Lae–Minister for Lands, Physical Planning, Urbanisation and Immigration) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I’d like to take this time also to join the condolences on the Late Education Minister. On behalf of my family, the people of Lae, the people of Morobe, greater Momase, and the Pangu Parti caucus I’d like to extend my heartfelt condolences to the wife, family, the clan of the Late Honourable Jimmy Uguro. It’s not an easy task when we stay here in the Chamber and say a bit of farewell to our comrade with whom we have shared meals, shared meeting rooms, and shared stories. It is not an easy task.

Unfortunately, we are all meant to go one day and Jimmy’s journey ended last week. What can you say? The Late Honourable Jimmy Uguro, everything that has been said about him, but the biggest thing that we learn from his journey is a man of quiet words but a lot of actions and a man who believed in his dreams, an education reformist who loved this job and his own life story emulates that. A perfect example is someone who finished grade 10 but didn’t say that was enough.

09/07

He went on to FODE, finished FODE, and said that was not enough. He got a diploma, ended up getting a master's degree, ended up becoming the member for Usino Bundi, ended up becoming the Education Minister of Papua New Guinea. His story is a story of an example of perseverance in the face of adversity. He rose through challenges and overcome all those obstacles. His story, his legacy should be the ones that a lot of our people should follow, a lot of our people, children should know that the journey, the footsteps, and the examples that the late Honorable Jimmy Uguro did were what can be easily emulated. And that is a story and the legacy that he leaves behind. His dreams of a better education for Papua New Guinea were also discussed in numerous cabinet meetings in numerous discussions with all of us. His only dream was to make certain, the Education Department reform and every person, every child no matter their upbringing, no matter where they came from, no matter their education level that they should be given a chance for an equal opportunity in terms of education.

To his family, you have lost a father that would never be replaced, to his tribe, you have lost a son that will never be replaced. We have lost an exceptional person that will never be replaced. Let us all emulate his legacy; let us all keep him in our spirits and memories and let us continue that journey that makes and remembers the Honorable Uguro's legacy for Papua New Guinea and for the children of our great nation.

Once again, I'd like to pass my sincere condolences to the family of the late Uguro. Words will never take away your loss, and words will never replace the Honorable Uguro in your lives, after all this is said and gone, you will be the only persons left with the memories, and Honorable Jimmy Uguro walks between us in our thoughts and his actions and his legacy. Thank you very much; God bless you, my brother, we'll see you on the other side.

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – I stand to pay respect to a brother who died while visiting my province. Therefore, on behalf of my people of East Sepik and especially the people of West Yangoru and Yamil Tamawi, I convey my deepest sympathies to the family and the people of Madang and I say thank you for giving us this great man who was very passionate about his work, where my people benefitted from, whom he last visited before his passing. Secondly, I say thank you again, to the Honorable Jimmy Uguro for your service to the people of East Sepik and the people of Papua New Guinea.

To the family, his tribesman, and the people of Madang you have lost a great man and we the people of East Sepik convey our deepest condolences to you all. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Sir JOHN PUNDARI (Kompiam-Ambum) – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker. Fellow members of Parliament I also rise on this solemn occasion to pay my last respect to the Late Honourable Jimmy Uguro.

Another casket of a comrade lies before us and this will be his last visit to the people's House and the final opportunity for us to bid him farewell before he is taken to rest in the lands of his forefathers.

10/07

Mr Acting Speaker, this moment reminds us again that life is short and is a gift. We are only passing through and have a limited time to make a difference. When we sit in sombre moments life this, it is also a good time to reflect.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible, it said that there is a time for everything; a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.

Brother Jimmy, this is your time to rest and it is our time to weep. My heart goes out to the family of our brother, the late Honourable Jimmy Uguro; his wife, children, and grandchildren, his immediate family, the people of Usino-Bundi and the people of Madang.

I pay my sincerest of respect to his life and pass condolences from my family, the people of Kompiam-Ambum, the people of Enga, and the executives, supporters, and the members of the Liberal Party.

Nothing we say will lessen the pain and sorrow at this time, but we tell you sincerely that as leaders with families like you, we hold you in our hearts today and we mourn for you and thank you for sharing the late Honourable Jimmy Uguro with the nation and the people of Papua New Guinea. We are grateful for the productive life and the contribution of the late Member for Usino-Bundi and the Minister for Education.

Mr Acting Speaker, recently, we passed the amendment as a Christian nation and we must never forget that despite our differences and diversity, Christianity is the common denominator that unites us. We have a 400-plus-year-old Christian Holy Bible before us and may the promises in the Holy Bible cover our brother as he rests.

Do rest well, brother Jimmy. Your race is run and your maker has called you to rest. May God give your family peace, and may he bless Usino-Bundi, Madang, and Papua New Guinea. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT (Namatanai – Minister for Transport and Civil Aviation) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I stand here as the Party Leader of National Alliance representing my family and the people of Namatanai, the National Alliance Party executives and its membership nationwide, and the NGI region to offer our sincere condolences to the family, clan, and the people of Usino-Bundi for the loss of their leader.

I first met him when I was the President of the National Alliance Party. I was part of the selection committee that endorsed him as a candidate during that time. I stand here to proudly say that we have selected a great leader to represent the people of Usino-Bundi in Parliament with his credentials and qualifications and we have seen that through the wisdom of the Prime Minister, he was chosen as the Minister for Education.

11/07

Many have shared their heartfelt sentiments and have told of his contributions to the people of his electorate and the country. I am privileged to share that through the NEC, he always sat at my right-hand side.

We used to share stories of his passion to deliver as the Minister for Education undoubtedly and he was committed to the task. We have lost a good leader, he was someone who carried his portfolio with integrity and passion. Someone who, I saw as a true leader. We have lost a great leader and my heart breaks to say this as it will be impossible to replace him.

We the leaders in this generation and those of us here today must see the type of leadership he portrayed and try to emulate it, and be committed and dedicated to the task on hand. Once again, sincere condolences go out to the family of the late Honourable Member. My brother, you are now in the hands of the Heavenly Father. I wish to say that we will not forget your deeds Honourable Jimmy Uguro, may your soul rest in eternal peace.

Mr WILLIAM DUMA (Hagen–Minister for State Enterprises) – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, I also like the others stand here before you to on behalf of the people of Hagen, Western Highlands, and the party I lead wish to convey my sincere condolences to the family and the people of Usino- Bundi for the loss of their son, father and leader. The late Honourable Jimmy Uguro. He came from a powerful tribe in Usino-Bundi, the people of Gama who now lost one of their finest. Someone they held in the highest regard and looked upon him as a leader.

I must say I was very surprised when I received the news early that morning the Minister had passed on while on official duties. I was very surprised because a few days ago that I had

met with him, he gave me a huge smile, we shook hands and hugged each other. He was indeed someone I respected as a fellow leader and a brother.

I first met Him in the middle of 2013 when he was the district administrator for the very electorate that he represented. And when I heard of his story from his humble beginnings, starting with the job as a store-keeper back in 1992. And then his dedication and commitment to make himself a better person and by firstly educating himself and achieving firstly a diploma in primary teaching. And then working very hard to get a bachelor's degree in education. And finally getting a Master's degree in the profession that he loved.

12/07

Mr Acting Speaker, here we have someone who was a very determined person who wanted to do the best for himself, his people and of course the country.

When he first became the Minister for Education, in the Marape-Rosso Government in December 2022, I started to work with him in Cabinet and I found him to be someone who was very determined to carry out his job and over the two to three years that he has been working.

I have found him to be someone who wanted to improve our education system. Many of us regarded him as a reformist minister. Even during those times when we were under pressure, Mr Jimmy Uguro was someone who was always calm and had that smiling face.

So, for him to leave us so suddenly still leaves a lot of unanswered questions especially when he died while on duty performing the job that he loved as the Minister for Education.

Mr Acting Speaker was someone who was at the pinnacle of his career with the people of Usino-Bundi, the people of Gama and his tribe, and the people of Madang. He had achieved everything that he had wanted to achieve and of course, we all know that he died while on duty.

Mr Acting Speaker, you do not get to hear stories about a determined person who started from humble beginnings and finally reached the pinnacle of his career as a State Minister and died at a young age while doing the job that he does best.

It leaves us with a lot of questions but as we all know God gives and takes so as a mere immortal who am I to question God's timing however, all we know is that we will indeed know when our time comes to follow him. That alone gives us that confidence.

Mr Acting Speaker, all I can say is that I wish to ask God to give his people of Gama, Usino-Bundi, his family, and children, peace and wisdom in this very dark time of their lives.

Brother Jimmy, may your soul rest in peace.

Sir PUKA TEMU (Abau) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I would like to rise on behalf of the people of Abau to pass on our deepest condolences to the wife and the children of the honourable leader whose people of Usino-Bundi, Gama, and Madang. Also, in the absence of the honourable Governor for Central Province, I would like to pass on our deepest condolences to the family and say thank you to the late Minister. And, on behalf of all the teachers and all the children of Abau and Central Province

Mr Acting Speaker, I just want to share a short message that demonstrates all the qualities that we all here know about this honorable late Minister for Education.

On 23 January 2023, some children who attended Carr Memorial Adventist School, complained about the school charging fees so I sent a text to the late minister with the list of the charges. The message was sent a 14. 56p.m. and at 15. 01 p.m. which is five minutes later the minister replied. I admired the late Minister Jimmy Uguro because not many ministers do that, he replied within five minutes.

13/07

From then on when I used to listen to his statements and his responses to the questions I realized that he was a true educationist. He had a real passion for the job and loved his job. On behalf of the children and teachers of Abau and Central Province, we will miss this, Minister. Thank you family and thank you God for giving us this leader. May his soul rest in God's eternal peace.

Mr RICHARD MARU (Yangoru-Saussia – Minister for International Trade and Investment) – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker. I too rise this morning with a very heavy heart to offer my deepest condolences to his wife, children, grandchildren, the people of Usino-Bundi, the people of Madang, and our nation for losing one of the greatest Education ministers of our time.

I stand here to represent not only my family and the people of Yangoru-Saussia, East Sepik, and the Greater Sepik, but also to represent my PAP Party. It was in 2017 that he came into power and I remember very well Mr Acting Speaker when I was the Minister for Planning and he called and wanted to see me. In his words he said; tambu Usino-Bundi is one of the most underdeveloped districts of this country, we have a mine but we continue to be undeveloped. Please in the 2018 budget could you include a road in my district because we need to be unlocked? I ensured we did just that and I'm so thankful that I went to Usino-Bundi to deliver the funding for that road when he was still alive.

Mr Acting Speaker, I had invited him to come to my district to launch a new secondary school and announced two science lab projects because my district is focusing on quality education. It was not just for the sake of education but for quality and I wanted the measures to be driven by the Minister himself. I thank God that he gave me only two days' notice and did come on Sunday the fourth of February together with the Secretary and a small team. I accompanied him on the flight to Wewak and we were received by the Provincial Education Division. We were welcomed at the Airport and we had a really good evening together where he met the whole East Sepik Division of Education.

Mr Acting Speaker, I'm so thankful that in the discussions during the dinner I hosted, he supported our plan in East Sepik to have three inspectors rather than one in the 56 high schools that we have in the province because one was not enough. I was so thankful because he and the secretary agreed to give us two more inspectors. When we get them, they'll go down as reckoned as one of his greatest contributions to the education of the sons and daughters of East Sepik.

Mr Acting Speaker, he visited the electorate on a helicopter on Monday. There he visited two schools and pronounced Wingei High School to be upgraded to a secondary school next year and he also announced a million kina commitment for three science labs. He further visited the Polmalmal High School also in West Yangoru to open four new classrooms and announce that he would support the funding of three new science labs. He came to bless us, but unfortunately, he left us. Today my district and province are in mourning, we are completely shocked at such a great sense of loss for a Minister who came to our province to bless us and left us in the way he did.

14/07

Mr Acting Speaker, the great chief brought many leaders of this nation to our province over the last 50 years. Never have we experienced a situation like this which we were totally unprepared for.

Today, I want to place on record in this honourable House my thank you to the people of East Sepik, the provincial government, and the administration, for pulling together and making sure within four hours we were able to deliver the body to the airport in record time. In a coffin that was fitted for the state minister. The courthouse worked and Air Niugini worked, thank you Prime Minister and Honourable Duma. The PHA moved. Education moved. The Deputy Governor was there on the ground. Police moved and the PPC moved. We all pulled together and ensured that within four hours the body was at the airport ready to be airlifted.

That is a record. I want to thank my people of Sepik. I'm extremely proud of what you did. Thank you very much.

Mr Acting Speaker, my DDA has met and we have committed to building the two science complexes in these two high schools whether the National Government honours its commitment or not, we will this year complete it and bring his wife and children to open these two science labs and name them the Uguro school of science in both high schools in his memory. I want to pledge before this honourable House as Minister of Cabinet and assure the people of Madang and the people of this country that Minister Maru will do everything within my means to support the completion of the formulation of the new Uguro 2025 – 2075 Education Transformation Plan that is yet to be completed in terms of the write-up and approval and I will make sure as long as I'm in Parliament that we will support its implementation.

I remember in the last dinner we had in the evening; he was full of life and he shared with me that something was wrong with the psyche of our people. You just have to look at Black Wednesday, Mr Acting Speaker. I want to get to a point where in the new system - when you leave your mobile phone in the market, you should come back there and find your phone. That's what I want to achieve in my new plan, the Uguro Plan. I will never forget that. He wanted a complete mind shift in the hearts and minds of our people and the attitude of our people. This is the Uguro Plan and I'm so thankful that I spent the last evenings with him and he outlined his vision and his dream and I will do everything within my power and means to support him to realise that dream and forever remember him and allow his legacy to leave on in our great nation.

Finally, Mr Acting Speaker, we Sepiks follow our custom strongly. We are kind people. I want to assure the Governor and his people of Madang and the people of Usino-Bundi that we will come with our chiefs, we will come with our custom and we will come with our grief and sorrow to Madang next week. With Members of Parliament and our presidents, we will come to say thank you to this great man, his family, and his tribe for giving us such a great Minister and a leader of our nation. We will do everything to support him, pay respects to him, and support him to make sure his dream and legacy live on in this nation. Only God will understand why he took him at this time and we'll know in the by and bye. But to you my brother, the late Honourable Jimmy Uguro, may God keep you, may an angel look after your grave, may God reward you for your great effort, and may we see you on that golden morning. Goodbye.

15/07

Mr LUTHER WENGE (Morobe) – Mr Acting Speaker, I stand here today to pass my sincere condolences to my young brother, who was called home by the Lord and is now seated with Father God.

I regard him as a small brother, and he used to call me big brother, this brother of mine is a unique man in our country PNG.

Firstly, I want to pass my condolences to the wife of this small brother, when a father dies, we cry a lot and surely you will miss him a lot in times of hardship because he is the one who holds the family together, but now, Father God called him home.

One day if I die my wife will feel the same and with these thoughts, I share my condolences with you and your family. If you are present in the precincts of this Parliament and hear my speech, my heartfelt condolences to you and the kids, and not for the sake of saying it.

Mr Acting Speaker, our country is surrounded by rough seas and fast-flowing rivers which at times people find it hard to sail or even cross the fast-flowing rivers. Our country is geographically surrounded by huge mountains and most times it rains continually, which helicopters find it hard to land.

When I was the Chairman of the Momase Governors Council, I traveled in the helicopter and toured all over the Momase Region. The helicopter flew right above the treetops so I could clearly see the grassland below. I flew all over Markham Valley and onto Wantuat and flew over the mountains of Rai-Coast and crossed over to Usino-Bundi and Simbai and Angoram.

To my amazement and surprise, I realized that our country, especially the Momoase Region is covered with huge mountains but people lived at the foot of the mountain because that's their ancestral land, and generation after generation they lived there for many years up till now. They can't leave this place because that's where they were born and raised.

I was surprised and even very hard to understand them because they lived their life and at times, they would carry building materials like iron roofing through these rugged mountains to build their houses and even connect water supply for the villages.

Mr Acting Speaker, all these places are mostly covered with rugged mountains compared with mountains from other regions like up in the highlands. I once traveled to Hagen, Ialibu and other parts of the highlands but have not seen huge mountains like the mountains from Momase, our mountains are so huge compared to the Highlands mountains.

I must not compare and get angry over it because it's God's creation and God alone knows why we are placed in there, but we survive in this hard life and land. And all Christians normally pray to God to give a good leader.

The strong prayers of the people of Usino-Bundi for one of their children. And now their prayers have been answered and one of their sons who was born and raised at the foot of this mountain now lying before us with no noise at all.

Therefore, when God hears the cry of the people in times of trouble he answers and that's the result of their prayers. God answered the people of Usino-Bundi's prayer.

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In 2022, I was on my way to Madang to get an endorsement from the Peoples Labour Party and I saw a billboard poster of my brother there at Sausi and stopped there to get some betel nut. While I was there, people called me Sogan as they were aware of me and I asked them, it's election time so who are you going to vote for? They pointed at the billboard poster and said they would vote for him because he has some recognition for us. They said he was a very good man who stayed close to his people in the village and never lived in towns and cities.

This Late Honourable leader doesn't require any evidence from his people because he has witnessed it through the education ministry portfolio. God has answered him because he knows the people's needs.

Firstly, I thank God for giving us this Late young leader Mr Jimmy Uguro because he has answered our people's prayers. Secondly, the people of Papua New Guinea need an education minister who is well-vested with a wealth of experience in the education system of our country. Many dropout students are struggling to continue their education at high schools because the education system in our country does not allow them. Some of these students may be good at some subjects like mathematics, and science and may be poor in other subjects like English and others.

The Late Minister Jimmy Uguro had a lot of experiences in his educational journey as well as being an educationist in the education sector and accorded him with the education ministry was an answer to the prayers of our people of Papua New Guinea.

The FODE is a second chance education for our school dropouts and our government system is not clear about it, but this Late Minister is an educationist and he knows it. God knew that he was an educationist so the Marape-Rosso Government had given him the education ministry, that's why he has seen our problems with the education system in Papua New Guinea. He had come in at the right time which is why a lot of our school dropouts had a second chance

at education through FODE and I am happy with the Prime Minister for appointing him the education minister. I used to ask him a lot of questions on the Floor of Parliament but he never looked for answers, he is a master in control of the education system in this country. That is why he will answer every question well and what Sir Puka Temu said was correct. He will answer straight away and you will be satisfied. The Late Minister was the master in control of the Department of Education and the formulation of the policies of education.

When I invite him to Morobe, not at one time he will give excuses and reject. When my invitation reaches him, he's going to come. Even if I don't invite him but other school principals and head teachers send an invitation, he will come because his heart is at education of our country.

He comes from the remotest place in the Usino-Bundi district and he knew the lives of his people in the mountainous place. The hardship and desire to serve his people have driven him to give a good education system to this country. My Late small brother, I pay my respects to you. Your contribution is here very clear and we will never forget about it.

When the Prime Minister appoints a new Education Minister, I hope and believe that the appointment will be according to God's plan and it will continue the good work from where he has stopped.

Thank you.

Motion – That condolences be noted – agreed to.

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(Casket departs Chamber)

18/07

Pallbearers escort the casket of the Late Honourable Jimmy Uguro, Member for Usino-Bundi and the Minister for Education, out of the Chamber.

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Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Minister, I have been informed that you are trying to respond to a question being raised and you will respond after the question time. When the question time lapsed than you can respond to the question that was previously asked.

QUESTIONS

Taxes

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My questions are directed to the Prime Minister as the Treasurer. And these questions are on the subject of taxes. These series of questions that I raise to the Prime Minister are in respect to the recent decision made by the Government this year to do away with the dependent's rebates allowed on taxes paid by income taxpayers.

Mr Acting Speaker, the dependent rebates allow the taxpayers earning an income through formal employment to claim rebates for up to three dependents. These are most often their children, their spouse, their parents, or other dependents that they may be taking care of as their children. As we know we have a lot of responsibilities to our extended families. As you are aware most PNG families are taking care of a lot of dependents besides their own and these rebates which range from about K60-K300 per fortnight help these families during this very difficult time.

I believe that the decision made by the government to remove these rebates was based on the advice from the IRC and to be effective this year. I believe that this decision was temporarily suspended primarily due to the events of January 10 2024 as per the IRC website, where the Commissioner General states that.

Despite the decision to suspend the implementation of the removal of the rebates, many organizations are still implementing it and depriving taxpayers entitled to this rebate from receiving it, and my questions to the Prime Minister are as follows;

- (1) Will the current suspension be lifted and the implementation of the removal of the withdrawal continue?
- (2) Will they remain in force and if so, for how long?
- (3) Can the Government immediately consider repealing this decision and allow income tax earners entitled to these rebates to continue receiving them?
- (4) Can the Government ensure a thorough effort is undertaken by the IRC, by way of relevant awareness, such as full-page newspaper, television, and radio advertisements to inform the people and those companies responsible for implementing the rebates?
- (5) Will the Government have the tax-review report of 2015 reviewed and its various recommendations considered and coordinated by the Treasury Office?
- (6) Can the Government ensure that in the future all tax policies be reviewed by the Treasury and the team of credibly relevant educated persons so that it is not implemented just by an individual or individuals, without consultation of stakeholders?

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker. I wish to thank the Governor for his series of questions. Let me be upfront that the Cabinet has decided we will review this decision and in terms of allowing the rebate to be removed, the Cabinet's decision stands at the moment instructions have gone out to Treasury and IRC to look into withdrawing this bill from our budget bills in the next sitting of Parliament.

Appropriate and corrective measures will be taken for our Budget 2024 and this dependency rebate will be restored to ensure our taxpayers are not given support in the spectrum of dependents that they look after. I want to give some context to where this matter emanated from when our treasury was going into budget preparations for 2024,

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Mr Acting Speaker, the Nagora Bogan Report, was brought into the conversations. In the report, it states that if the Government were to increase the non-tax paying threshold at any time, then consideration must be given for us to remove the dependency rebate. So, the Cabinet in its considered view felt that the uplift of non-threshold taxpayers to K20,000 is much higher than the value of the dependency rebate.

What this technically means is that for the lower wage earners who are earning around K20,000, around K63 plus would be a net increase take for them as a result of us lifting the non-tax paying threshold to K20,000 but the dependency rate will mean that we will go flow back around K20 to K30 so the result is that at least they are taking home a little increase.

In my review, this came on the greater part of our Pangu Caucus, this policy consideration for the Nagora Bougan Report, was contrary to what the Government Caucus wanted full relief to our people in tough times.

The Budget documents last year considered that report also and it removed the rebates based on what had happened and the administrative inquiry as a result of the 10 January Mayhem. It was considered that the rebates be restored and we are making those corrective measures administratively and that instruction had gone to IRC not to implement the rebate for us to restore it at the earliest. I want to inform Parliament, that in the next Sitting of Parliament, we will make the corrections.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Hidden Valley Lease

Mr SAM BASIL JUNIOR – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Before I start, I want to inform the Speaker the earpieces are not working. This is a perfect example of a glitch.

My question is directed to the Minister for Mining and can the Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Attorney-General take note?

Mr Acting Speaker, let me briefly outline the background of the series of my questions and they are short questions.

Since 1999, Bulolo district has continued to have alluvial in small-scale, medium, and big mines including Hidden Valley and now, the Wafi-Golpu Mine.

Mr Acting Speaker, my questions are as follows;

(1) Does the Ministry and its agencies know that all reserves and the expected mine life including benefits accrue to the State?

(2) Hidden Valley was said to have a mine life of 10 years but mining has continued over 10 years. How long is the mine expected to continue?

(3) A mining lease was issued instead of a Special Mining Lease so can the State acquire 10 per cent equity for the people given the loss?

(4) Is the Minister aware that the Hidden Valley Mining MOA, has gone over the review period so what is the position of the State in this matter?

(5) Can the Minister, inform the people of Morobe if the company has now expanded mining extraction and operations into a new lease with Tamata and Kierimanga?

(6) If so, is it a new lease and why is there no MOA being negotiated?

(7) The Bulolo District has no representation in the Bulolo District Funds or no input in deciding projects under the Special Service Grants (SSG) including the maintenance and upgrade of the Wau-Bulolo Highway.

Has the Minister conducted any review and assessment of the various provisions in the MOA, with the view to improving the benefits to the people and the State of Papua New Guinea?

(8) The Bulolo district continues to be ignored, even in the recent distribution of K50 million Infrastructure Development Grants (IDG) for the Wafi-Golpu Mine. Does your Ministry expect the Bulolo district to be stepped all over on the negotiations for the Wafi-Golpu Mine?

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(9) Bulolo District signed a supplementary agreement with the Morobe Provincial Government on the distribution of royalties. What is the position of the government on the inclusion of the DDA in the mining MoA?

(10) Is the Ministry considering the position of Bulolo District that any mining township whether for Hidden-Valley Mine or Wapi-Golpu Mine must be located inside the Bulolo Mine including the operations of MRA, SEPA, and other departments?

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr MUGUWA DILU – Thank you Member for Bulolo for your good series of questions. Firstly, I'd like to state that the alluvial mining sector in this country is a very big sector that accounts for about K1 billion. That is the money that goes directly into the local miners and the communities around the country.

That industry is big relative to the fisheries industry. The fisheries industry pays about K600-700 million annually into the government coffers but alluvial mining itself is a big industry that needs proper policy development and the standards in the industries that must be complied with and regulated properly so we will maximize benefits to our local communities around the country and in alluvial mining districts. I have pointed out recently that I have spoken to the Mineral Resource Authority (MRA) that we focus on developing alluvial mining policy in this country so that we can be able to develop this sector effectively for meaningful participation in the sector.

In terms of the MoA benefits for Hidden Valley, I'll consult with MRA including benefit-sharing between districts within Wau-Bulolo, Wau-Waria and other surrounding districts in the project areas. I will consult the MRA and provide a detailed response to your series of questions.

With that thank you Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr KINOKA HOTUNE FEO – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I have a question to ask the Health Minister but I think he is not here. I would probably direct the question to the Prime Minister.

In 2019 and 2020 we had COVID-19 pandemic that struck the world and of course Papua New Guinea. Few of us in our private capacities gathered to help in the Eastern Highlands. In the process of helping with the support of the former Health Minister and former late Chairman of PHA, we installed an oxygen plant at a cost of K4.8 million. The plant has a capacity of producing 87,600 cubic meters of oxygen or equivalent to 11,680 cylinders in a year.

Mr Elias Kapavore – Point Of Order! I think the Minister for Health is in the Chamber!

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable member for Unggai-Bena since then you wish to ask your question to the Minister for Health, he is now in the House. I will leave it to you whether you want to direct your question straight to the Minister.

Oxygen Plant

Mr KINOKA HOTUNE FEO – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, and thank you Health Minister for coming in. Firstly, before I begin the question, I want to thank you for visiting our hospital recently at Goroka and presenting K15 million to our PHA. So, once again thank you very much.

My question is regarding the oxygen plant that was installed in 2022. It was completed on the 12 of April 2022 and as I have mentioned earlier it is the largest oxygen plant in PNG.

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It has a capacity of 87 600 cubic metres of gas equivalent to 11 680 cylinders or 50 litres that has a value of K4.5 million. Currently, the Department of Health buys gases from BOC and supplies the entire Highlands region.

In the initial proposal that we did, the purpose of the oxygen plant was not just for the Eastern Highlands but for the entire Highlands region. Ten months on, the oxygen plant has not been commissioned as yet. Two and a half weeks ago, I was there at the hospital. I visited my aunty and I witnessed first-hand five deaths – three at the emergency and two at the ward simply because there was no oxygen. That could have been prevented but we didn't prevent it.

We have a multi-million-kina oxygen plant sitting there idle and yet people are dying. I do not know what the delay is in commissioning the plant and I don't know when the plant can be commissioned. Minister, you know I've been following up so many times on this. People are dying. When are we going to commission the plant? Are we going to wait for more lives to go? The department is spending more money. You can save more money; you can save up to K4.5 million every year just from this plant. I don't see any reason why we are sitting on this. So, my question to you Mr Minister;

- (1) Why is the oxygen plant being delayed from commissioning?
- (2) When will the plant be commissioned?

Thank you.

Dr LINO TOM – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to thank the good Member of Unggai-Bena for his questions. Firstly, to give some clearance, let me also mention that the K15 million being presented to all the PHAs is an amount of money that is being budgeted during the Covid-19 period for all provinces. The disbursement of those funds is based on the work plan being submitted to the National Department of Health. In the recent past, we know that there are a lot of allegations about funds being managed under PHA so what the National Department of Health did was to hold onto the funds until proper work plans have been submitted. So, PHA from Eastern Highlands got theirs when they submitted a work plan.

Mr Acting Speaker, about the question being put and presented this morning, firstly, a technical assessment of the oxygen plant was completed by the National Department of Health Pharmaceutical Standards Branch and the Health Facilities Standards Branch in the fourth quarter of last year. An assessment report has been completed and sent to the Eastern Highlands PHA and the supplier. The National Department of Health Pharmaceutical Standards Branch is working on the therapeutic requirements for oxygen as a medicine. Different oxygen plants provide different concentrations of oxygen and it is quite important for us to maintain some standards. Because of that compliance process, it is taking a bit of time. The plant can be operated once the National Department of Health Pharmaceutical Standards Branch gives its approval for operation after its due diligence and compliance checks. From the report I've received, work is in progress. The oxygen plant in Goroka is being worked on together with the PHA oxygen plant for Port Moresby General Hospital, Mount Hagen Hospital, Nonga Hospital, and Angau Hospital.

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So once the compliance test has been completed then they will be approved to use. Now we can't use the lack of oxygen as a reason for deaths, because deaths go through a proper audit process and we can't say because of lack of oxygen people have passed on. That's a serious allegation that needs to be varied by the authorities concerned.

All other sites are also waiting for the National Department of Health Pharmaceutical Services branch to clear the therapeutic aspects including good manufacturing practices for oxygen as a therapeutic product or medicine. I will also provide a fully detailed written explanation to the good member. I appreciate his question because he has been following up and he is one member who is helping the Goroka base hospital in terms of funding from his

DSIP and I thank him for that. We need to work with our local leadership to see health services being delivered to our people.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Supplementary Questions

Utilization of New Hospital

Mr AIYE TAMBUA – Mr Acting Speaker, I just like to add onto what the good Member for Unggai-Bena has asked. I also want to thank the good Minister for allocating funding to the hospital in Goroka. The Goroka base hospital was built by a company called Verma Group of Company, which did a very good job. Unfortunately, this hospital is sitting idol and we have no staff to maintain this hospital because of technical issues within the department and treasury.

My question is:

(1) When will they consider fully utilizing this hospital with qualified staff?

Dr LINO TOM – Mr Acting Speaker, let me also thank the Member for Goroka for his question. It's very important and illustrates the current problems we have in the country and that's the acute shortage of health workers. This is one of the policies I am trying to drive before we embark on big infrastructure projects, we have to make sure that the clinical services plan is in place and approved by the PHA. What it means is that there must be a structure in place before we start building infrastructures. If you build good health facilities, but if there are no health workers then it will remain the same. That's the problem so now I am suggesting strongly to our NEC and Government that before we start building new facilities, we must make sure that the staff structure for those facilities is approved and funded by the treasury. Because what we are doing right now is putting the cart before the horse. The same problem with the new Engan hospital, the good facility is being built but we are realizing that to get the appropriate staff to make this hospital work would be a problem. So that's the same thing with the new extension to the Goroka base hospital and let me thank the Treasurer and Minister assisting the Prime Minister, we were able to get a bit of improvement in the last budget, we got about K121 million and it has been remitted directly to the PHA's to increase the number of workforces.

Whilst I have the Floor, it's a very serious issue facing this country right now and it's the acute shortage of health workforce in the country. Leaders, before you start building new

facilities in your districts or provinces, you have to make sure that it's being done in collaboration with the Provincial Health Authority. If they say that no positions are available for those facilities, then don't go ahead and build because you will waste money, they will be like a white elephant sitting there.

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So, before you start embarking on any projects, it's always important to make sure that there is part of what we call the clinical services plan and if that clinical services plan reflects that facility, then that means that they are funded positions for that facility so you can go ahead and start constructing those facilities so, let me thank the good Member for Goroka. He points out a very important aspect of how we are managing health in this country. A lot of us because of the political demands placed on us want to make our supporters happy so we are going ahead and building facilities without approval from the Health Department. It must come with the approval from the Provincial Health Authorities and the Health Department because when that's done you have a staff already there ready to facilitate or ready to carry out operations on those facilities that you build. And I'm pretty sure that's one problem with the new extension at the Goroka-based hospital and I've rested it with the management. Hopefully, they get to create positions to fill those positions quickly.

Thank you.

National Court House – Kokopo

Mr EREMAN TOBAINING JNR – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for recognising the people of Kokopo. Before, I dissect my question to the Minister for Justice and Attorney General, the National Court House in East New Britain is not only for East New Britain alone but for the entire New Guinea Island Region was on fire 5 weeks ago. But thank you to the service providers for their support in putting down the fire and we didn't lose the building. The building is almost 26 years old after the Tavurvur volcanic eruption.

Mr Acting Speaker, today there is a backlog of National Court and it is affecting the people of East New Britain as well as the entire New Guinea Island Region.

My question to the Minister is this, do we have any plans for building a new courthouse facility in Kokopo which is the regional hub of the New Guinea Islands, or not?

Mr Acting Speaker, on top of that, we have made land available but we want the Minister to assure the people of the New Guinea Islands Region, particularly the people of East New Britain and the fourth city in Papua New Guinea as to when we will build this court

facility? This is because there are backlogs of National Court today in New Guinea Islands and Papua New Guinea as a whole.

Thank you.

Mr PILA NININGI – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Thank you to the Member of Kokopo for asking a very important question. The destruction and burning down of court house he has alluded to me took place some five weeks ago. It takes time for planning so we will certainly look into this. I have also discussed this with the Chief Justice as to how we would go about building a new courthouse.

Mr Acting Speaker, having said this, while I have this opportunity, I want to say that, not long ago we appointed 5 Judges and one of them is national while the other four are expatriate Judges. So we are addressing the backlog of cases and it is a serious matter we are taking on board. Those Judges who delay judgments will be given a notice and at the moment, five Judges have been served with notices already.

So, the arrangements we have made is, for six months, the conclusion of the case and the Judge himself will take charge.

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After 6 months Chief Justice takes over and after that, the Judicial and Legal Committee takes over and I am the Chairman and that's a serious matter. Delaying judgment is one of the concerns that we have and at the same time, Papua New Guinea demands that justice be delivered. That is why we are looking at this matter as a serious matter and we will look into the matter.

Mr MASO HEWABI – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Inter-Government Relations. We have seven new districts and we are working on creating some more LLGs. We have finished all the endorsements from DDA to the PEC Assembly and we have delivered the documents to the department and I hope they will attend to the matter.

The LLG elections are coming up in June and so far, we haven't received any response for that yet. Most of the LLGs that we created have not come up yet so we are still waiting. My question is when will the creation of the seven new LLGs be affected? We might not have them ready before the LLG elections. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker

Mr SOROI EROE – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, my headset is not working and I did not hear what the honorable Minister asked. Can you repeat your question minister?

LLGs in Middle Fly

Mr MASO HEWABI – I will repeat my question, Minister, can you hear me? Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

We have seven new districts and we would like to create new LLGs, all the paperwork for endorsements has been done and I know that the paper is now in your department, and I hope you are aware of that. Now that the LLG elections are coming up, we have the remaining three months left.

My question is, when will the NEC give recognition to the new LLGs, and will it be gazetted so that when we have the elections these new LLGs in the new seven districts will take part in the election? We might go into the elections without these new LLGs and they will end up without presidents.

26/07

Mr SOROI EOE – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, and the Member for Middle Fly for your very important question in relation to the LLG elections that are coming up.

To answer your question in regard to the new LLGs that you have made reference to, the process is being done. We have already received your request. The requests have to follow proper procedures within the law, and that means your request has been made to your PEC, and then your PEC will recommend it to my office for consideration.

If that has been done, then that is okay because it is within the procedures defined by the law. However, if that is not done, then we will have to refer it back to your provincial government which will be the Western Provincial Government to have a look at it.

Now, coming back to the questions about the new LLGs or wards being recommended by different districts to their PECs for consideration, that process is being finalized. My department has already advised me that a lot of such requests have been received from many provinces to be included for consideration by the NEC.

So, that process is being finalized and we are wondering where we will cut off due to the overwhelming number of requests coming in. As far as the last request we received, which was last week, we are now making it as a cutoff point so that we can address this issue in relation to those who have already submitted their request so that we can submit it to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Once that is done, we can then give notice to those new LLGs that have been approved so that they can participate in the coming LLG elections. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Sir Joseph Nombri General Hospital – Kundiawa

Mr LUCAS DEKENA – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister for Health. Before I proceed with my questions, I would like to thank the Minister for the K15 million he delivered on behalf of the Marape-Rosso Government to Kundiawa Sir Joseph Nombri General Hospital during the Christmas and New Year period.

Right after he delivered the money, on the 13th of February we saw on social media pictures of dead bodies being dumped in the car park in front of the hospital. The money was already delivered, so why were bodies being dumped on the streets?

My series of questions are;

(1) What was the reason for dumping corpses at the car park in front of the Kundiawa General Hospital?

(2) Whose job is it to ensure that the dead, in a respectable hospital are treated with respect?

(3) Will the Minister order an investigation into the operations of the Kundiawa Sir Joseph Nombri General Hospital?

Thank you.

Dr LINO TOM – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Let me also thank the Member for his series of questions. I would like to make it clear that the K15 million that was given to all the PHAs was money put aside to address the capacity issues we have in the country.

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When Covid-19 came we realized that it exposed us to a lot of issues with our health system. We realized that our health system was quite fragile in terms of capacity in both infrastructure and human resources.

So, our good Prime Minister and their Cabinet in their wisdom decided to put money aside to address those capacity issues and some PHAs got their money in advance. And others who did not have a clear plan, their monies were retained until they came up with their expenditure plan and we started investing those monies. In the process, I had to meet up with all the PHAs, CEOs, and their boards and it was important that we met with them to ensure

they understood the functions and responsibilities of PHA and how they can work in collaboration with the leadership on the ground.

Thank you for those questions on PHA and I want to say here that PHAs were created to ensure that the service delivery mechanism is closer to the people than far remote in Port Moresby. So, if you look at it, it is a decentralization process where power is devolved to the people on the ground. And studies throughout the world have shown that when you bring those decision-making processes closer to the people, you get more impact. So, in answering your question, I don't know the reasons why the bodies were dumped at the hospital grounds.

The second question whose job, is it? ultimately PHAs are an autonomous organization that deals with health for any province. and that means that they have to answer to the board. They respond to their board. Ultimately the issue lies with the board. The board should hold them to account and if the board fails to do so, then it comes back to my office. The National Department of Health in this new arrangement provides policy oversight. With amendments that we passed last time, we realized that a lot of the boards sometimes are politically appointed so they are basically cronies and they do not do their jobs well.

With the new amendments part of the power has been given back to the Minister's office, so if I do not get any written complaints from leaders from Simbu or people from Simbu, I won't act, unless a formal complaint is written because the ground you already have a board that is supposed to look into the provincial health authority's performance.

Mr Acting Speaker, through you I want to make this very clear to the Parliament that it is important to appoint good boards. When you have good boards in place they will hold the PHAs to account. And to conclude; what the PHAs have done through this reform is that it has given so much power to the PHAs. And sometimes they abuse the power that is given to them. That is why it is important to appoint good boards so that the boards can provide the necessary oversight that we refer to. In this new arrangement and with the amendment we have done, the Provincial Administrator becomes a voting member of that board. So, the Provincial Government has direct visibility in the performance of any PHAs.

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My question is directed to the Prime Minister as the Minister for Petroleum is not present. Before I ask my question, I wish to take this opportunity to thank former Prime Minister Peter O'Neill and his former Government for coming up with a good agreement where he consulted with me, my colleague Minister Soroi Eoe, and his former Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, since we have the Minister for Petroleum now entering the Parliament. You might want to direct your question to him?

Papua LNG Project

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA – That is ok, I already asked my question so I wish to continue, if that is ok with you?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – You may proceed.

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So, I would like to say thank you to the former Prime Minister and the Member for Ialibu-Pangia for making a good agreement for the Papua LNG. We were all consulted and the gas agreement was done.

I want to say thank you to the Prime Minister and his government because when he came in he settled the fiscal stability agreement and also he took the position where he had to review the agreement.

I would like to thank the former Minister for Petroleum because he made a plan that is now in effect where the national content and participation are clear.

So, for this question it is simple, the former Prime Minister has done well but last week he made a statement, 'Papua LNG Project is now a sitting duck or a dead duck in the water.'

Now, I would like to ask the Prime Minister if this statement is true or false. The people of the Gulf and the people of PNG must know. The former Prime Minister has done good work but why is he making statements like that as it affects everyone?

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr Peter O'Neill – Point of Order! Mr Acting Speaker, the Member has gone off a bit so I would like to clarify what I said. There was nothing stated as sitting duck or shooting duck, I simply said that this project is not moving fast and Total had not given full commitment when they had their investor briefing at their office. That is why I made that statement but please advise the Governor for Gulf to communicate it well.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Member for Ialibu-Pangia, thank you for your clarification but the question has been already asked by the Governor for Gulf so I will ask the Prime Minister to clarify the issue and the project.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Firstly, I would like to thank all the members for paying respect to our brother whose body has been laid in the House and has left. We are having his funeral service right after this so I would like to keep my response short. But, I would sincerely appreciate the respect we have given on both sides of the House to our late brother Jimmy Uguro.

Let me assure this Parliament and our country that Papua LNG is not a sitting duck if it is not stopped rather the cost element has been blown out as a result of where we are in 2023 and 2024. The world is not what it was in 2018 when this project was brought together and I would like to commend the previous administration because after eight years of being in office, at the sunset of that government, they delivered the Papua LNG.

Papua LNG stands to return to us in its totality and it is improved from PNG LNG which returns to the economy at 49 per cent and Papua LNG returns to the economy at 51 per cent. If I could relate to a project that my government is moving on P'nyang LNG and possibly Wilderbeast is sitting at 62 per cent in terms of take for our country.

So, if you look at the increase of 51 per cent, it is an increase from PNG LNG which was the foundational project. We commend the previous government for ensuring that Papua LNG was conceived and the agreement was signed under our watch, we can have a review.

The review was not to stop the project but we want to find better local content so that we can increase, for instance in the shipping business or other business that PNG must participate in that construction phase.

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The construction of this project at that time when the project agreement was signed, was a K12 billion project. Today the cost has blown out to almost an additional 30-40 per cent.

Total has assured us, as the lead project partner in Papua LNG that they have not abandoned the project rather, the project is on the table and it will be developed. Today as we speak, the upstream construction bid comes in and is supervised by Total, and the downstream is supervised by ExxonMobil.

ExxonMobil's bids for downstream are being open as we speak and the bids for the upstream are also being opened. What they have received as project manager or the lead project company is that the cost has been blown up a little bit.

Lest we forget in the cost blowout, Kumul Petroleum also on behalf of our country contributes the to cost of the project. That is why it is in the interest of all partners of Papua

LNG to be cost-conscious. At this time, globally speaking with the Ukraine-Russia war that is taking place and the backdrop of Covid19 the world is a different place altogether.

Contractors who are also bidding it is a tight space in terms of bids to participate in the construction of Papua LNG. Contractors may realize that the advantage they have is they also bid at a higher level. So total is pulling back to looking at the bid again to see whether there could be some cost savings. That alone has caused a little bit of delay but they are working very hard to ensure the project is not stopped.

With that, I want to assure this House that the project is not stopped. There is a delay of a couple of months but once the entire cost is put on the table and the entire project partners including our own Kumul Petroleum Holdings agree then the project will go ahead. At the Floor level, it is a US\$12 billion project. I want to again give assurance to everyone that this project is not stopped.

For our national government and national interest, we are sequencing Papua LNG with P'nyang LNG. Governor Haiveta just returned yesterday from the field with the Minister for Petroleum. They've visited a possibly exciting prospect called Wilder Beast; a little bit northwest of Kerema. So exciting time coming ahead for us and I gave assurance to the Governor that Papua LNG has not stopped. Contrary to us in this little bit of delay, we are working with the project partner for greater up in local content. Especially in the aspect of getting more Papuans to be engaged in the construction aspects of this project.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

75 Per cent upfront payment

Mr DON POLYE (Kandep – Minister for Higher Education Research Science & Technology and Sport) – I seek leave of Parliament to respond to previous questions.

Leave granted.

The first question asked by the Governor of Manus was about the subject of tuition fees paid by the Universities and other HEIs. Also, I could ensure there was a delay to give time to the parents to make some payment rather than the imposition by some of the tertiary institutions. The period given is also too short for other sponsors such as the Members of

Parliament or other kin who wish to sponsor the students. Those are the major questions he asked me.

Mr Acting Speaker, I'd like to say that I have a detailed response with facts to this question and I will seek the leave of the Chair later to incorporate it into the Hansard so that Members of Parliament can access it.

In general, the institutions of governance have autonomy. And I'm one kin believer who believes in giving independence to institutions of governance such as the universities, to let them run.

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Let them have a brain, they have their Council or Committee that runs them and they must work independently of influence. So, what I've done is I've given that independence or autonomy and they are independent to operate in their space as learning academic institutions and I'm happy Mr Acting Speaker, that has taken place. Therefore, now the setting of the University or College or TVET tuition structure is something they determine subject to the courses that they offer, and what I do as the minister responsible is to just make sure it's done fairly by administering to the Higher Education Act through the Secretary and then the Secretary works with the governing councils.

In some Universities we call them Governing Councils and in others, the Board that run them. So, that's how we are operating in terms of addressing those issues. So, what I would like to say here is that the University fees that are charged are justified in terms of the cost they charge students but I'd also like to emphasise that 70 per cent must be paid upfront. That is the general policy implemented by all the HAIs. Why that is so is because, in the past, some students delayed payments. After all, Members of Parliament have asked and therefore, a simple arrangement with those institutions has the fees paid at a later time or some support never went through and they are full of liabilities.

So, the Universities need to survive and must do their job to meet costs like academic resources that are needed, faculty salaries, infrastructure and facilities costs or to meet student support services, technology, and information systems that they must create and also support research and development or meet other administrative expenses. So, students are required to pay 70 per cent upfront. I would like to give affirmation to this honourable House and the people of this country, to the universities, their course structure justified is consistent with the course they established. The students are told in advance that they are to pay 70 per cent upfront and they must pay those fees.

Mr Acting Speaker, you must also appreciate that it costs about K40,000 to K45,000 per student to educate in a university in one year but you'll find that thanks to the government, some of those costs are met through TESAS, etc, and also the universities work within themselves raises funding that assists in meeting some of those costs so those costs come down to, at one of the universities is charging out of K24,000 that's the maximum. The others I know are below that. The one that is charging a K24,000 maximum is a church-run university. The government-run is below K15,000 and so forth but with the help of TESAS it can come down as low as K1,000 or K3,000 and if you put in help together to support the student loan scheme it will bring the cost down more.

The focus now is we have administered through the system to the universities to delay any payment so that by mid-this year in June, any sponsor who would like to support the students can support those students. I think that is one of the focuses of the question and I can give that to the Governor of Madang and also to the parents and students that the universities will be flexible with you so that you can pay your outstanding fees by June this year. So that brings us to the end of that question because are rushing with time.

The second lot of questions that I'd like to answer is in regards to questions asked by Saki Soloma, Member for Okapa, I've got it also in detail. I'll give it to him, to the leader but I'll also seek leave of Parliament to include it in the Hansard so the members can read it. I don't think I should read it because I can see we are pressed for time but these are very important details I've put in. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

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Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I must inform this Parliament regarding the Notice of Motion of No Confidence in the Prime Minister, Honourable James Marape, Member for Tari-Pori Open, that was delivered to me on the 14th of February 2024, the Private Business Committee deliberate on the Notice of Motion of No Confidence yesterday, 21 February 2024, at 12.30 p.m. at the Speaker's lounge. The committee is aware of this very important Constitutional Motion and the process for it. We also note that this Notice of No Confidence is a matter of national importance. On this occasion, the committee is of the view that this Notion of Motion of No Confidence will not be placed on the Notice Paper. The mover of the Notion of Motion of No Confidence will be informed of the reason in due course.

Mr Keith Iduhu – Point of Order! The relevant Notice of Motion is the one dated the 20th of February 2024 and not the 14th of February 2024, which was withdrawn. That is a

requirement under *Standing Order 136* that any motion before placed on the Notice Paper can be withdrawn.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Member, I will take note of your point of order and check on the list that I have made and a reply will be given to you as I have stated in the paper.

Mr RAINBO PAITA – Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to thank Members of this House on both sides and I apologise that I have received notice from the House Committee that a few of our headsets are not working. And through you, I thank Parliament for some of the funding that was sent in last year, work will commence in installing new headsets and other equipment not functioning well. The Minister for Inter-Government and a few of our members at the back like Member for Wapenamanda mentioned that headsets do not work. The House Committee has done some work and through the Clerk that equipment will be fixed in the coming months.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

That Parliament at its rising adjourn to Tuesday 28 May 2024 at 2 p.m.

Mr Kerenga Kua – Point of Order! My point of order is it's quite concerning that the matter of great national importance the Vote of No Confidence that we have filed is not going to see the day of light in this Chamber here.

We need clarity on the ruling of the Private Business Committee, that reason needs to be given to us because we potentially have free courses in other avenues. But we can't go to those other avenues until we get the rulings so we need you.

Mr Acting Speaker give us the reason why (1) the new notice that has been filed has not reached your attention and you are now making a ruling on the previous notice but the ruling on 20th of February 2024, which you have personally signed as received, you not addressing it now

(2) The Committee is not stating its reasons why it cannot be dealt with now. Thursday today is meant for Private Members matters and it takes precedence in the *Standing Orders* so you need to deal with it conclusively, precisely, and with clarity.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl, I take note of your Point of Order. I think I have made a statement very clear on reading the statement that on this occasion, the Committee is of the view that the Notice of Motion of No Confidence will not be placed on the Notice Paper. The mover of the Notice of the Motion of No Confidence will be informed of the reason in due course.

I have made it clear that you will be informed of the reason why that has been made.

Mr Belden Namah – Point of Order! The Chair must inform the Parliament as to the reasons why the Notice cannot be placed on the Notice Paper. Regarding the Motion that you are dealing with, Mr Acting Speaker, you already informed the Opposition Leader of the defects. We did a new Notice of Motion dated 20th February 2024, which you received, and the Clerk. You need to clarify to the Parliament and the people of this country because it's a matter of national importance.

Mr Acting Speaker, what is the reason –

(Members interjecting)

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Member for Vanimo-Green, I think I have made myself very clear that the Motion will be reported to you in due course the mover of this motion. Therefore, I will not entertain anymore Point of Order on this.

Mr Douglas Tomuriesa – Point of Order!

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Opposition Leader, I've already made the ruling.

(Opposition Members interjecting)

Mr Douglas Tomuriesa – Point of Order! We gave you an amendment, you haven't addressed the fresh Motion -

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Opposition Leader, I have made my statement clear that you as the mover of this Motion, will be given more information in due course on the Committee have decided. So, I've already decided on that and I will not entertain any more Point of Order.

(Opposition Members interjecting)

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.35 p.m.