

**FIRST DAY**

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**Tuesday 6 June 2023**

**DRAFT HANSARD**

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## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

### CORRECTIONS TO DAILY HANSARD

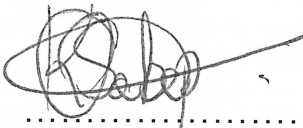
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**KENNETH SEBEPMIN**

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## FIRST DAY

**Tuesday 6 June 2023**

The Parliament met at 2 p.m, according to the Terms and Resolution of March 24 2023.

The Acting Speaker (**Mr Koni Iguan**) took the Chair.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Acting Speaker again took the Chair at 2.30 p.m, and invited the Member for Hiri-Koiari, **Honourable Keith Iduhu**, to say Prayers.

‘Helaga bada Diravana ai tamamai. Oi be tanobada bona guba o karaia diravana ai tamamai. Una dainai, emai taunimanima, emai tanobada iboumai ai bai a gwau e gogo ina adorai bona emai mauri iboudiai lalodiai. Anoi mu dirava lalokau, emai Praim Minista, emai Oposisin lida, Gavana idoidiai bona eduhanai Minista dia iboudia bona emai Palament Membas iboudiai ame helai hegogo, emai noinoi gini gunana na emai taunimanima bona emai tanobada inarina bona ireguna dainai emai lalo hekwarai ba ha kala heni. Emai lalohadai idoidiai imamu latanai a hehatokaumu ba durumai bona ba kaha mai. Inana emai noinoi Natumu Iesu Keriso so bogaiahisi satauro ai emase ai dainai ai, ia ladana siahuna bagunai. Amen.’

### **COURT PETITION AND DECLARATION — STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SPEAKER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I present the copy of the Orders of the National Court which sat as a Court of Disputed Returns (No.EP4/2023) dated 31 March 2023, in the matter between Dr Allan Marat and Mr Graham Piniau Rumet and the Electoral Commission in which the Court ordered that;

(1) Pursuant to *Section 212(1)* of the *Organic Law on a National and Local-Level Government Election*, the whole of the petition is upheld,

(2) Pursuant to *Section 212(1)(d)* of the *Organic Law* the Court declared that the first respondent Mr Graham Piniau Rumet was not duly elected as Member for Rabaul Open in the 2022 General Election,

(3) Pursuant to *Section 212(1)(g)* of the *Organic Law*, the Court declares that the petitioner, Dr Allan Marat is the duly elected Member for Rabaul Open in the 2022 General Election.

The new Member for Rabaul Open, Dr Allan Marat was sworn-in at the National Parliament's State Function Room on Tuesday, 23 May 2023 where he made his declaration of loyalty and declaration of office before me.

I welcome the new member.

**LEADERSHIP TRIBUNAL DECISION – DISMISSAL OF  
HONORABLE BRYAN KRAMER (MEMBER FOR MADANG OPEN) –  
STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SPEAKER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I wish to inform the Parliament that on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of May 2023, His Excellency the Governor-General, under *Section 28(3)* of the *Constitution* and *Section 2* of the *Leadership Code (Alternative Penalties) Act* (Chapter 1A) and in accordance with the recommendation dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2023 of the Tribunal constituted under the provision of *Section 27(7)(e)* of the *Organic Law on the Duties and Responsibilities of Leadership* and all other powers hereby dismiss from the Office of the Member for Madang Open Electorate, Honourable Bryan Kramer (a person to whom the *Organic Law on the Duties and Responsibilities of Leadership* applies) who has been found guilty by that Tribunal of misconduct in office.

02/01

**DEATHS OF FORMER MEMBERS –MESSRS JOHN KEKENO AND IAIRO  
LASARO – STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SPEAKER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – The Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament of the death of the following former members;

(a) Mr John Kekenos on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023, a former Member for Koroba-Lake Kapiago Open Electorate. He was first elected in the 7<sup>th</sup> National Parliament in a by-election on 21 July 2006, prior to the 2007 National General Election and was re-elected to the same seat in the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament from 2007 to 2012.

During those terms, he served as a Member of Parliamentary Referral Committee on Lands and Environment from 2007 to 2012.

(b) Mr Iairo Lasaro on the 13 May 2023, a former Member for Alotau Open Electorate. He was first elected in the Fourth National Parliament from 1987 to 1992, re-elected to the 5<sup>th</sup> National Parliament from 1992 to 1997 and the 6<sup>th</sup> National Parliament from 1997 to 2002.

During those terms he served as a Member of Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts, Constitutional Law and Act, and Emergency between 1987 and 1988. And Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Plans and Estimates from 1989 to 1990.

He was appointed shadow Minister for Home Affairs and Youth, and shadow Minister for Communication from 1991 to July 1992; Minister for Fishery and Marine Resource after the formation of Government led by Mr Pias Wingti as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1994; shadow Minister for Provincial Affairs from 1995 to 1997, and Minister for Public Service from July to September 1997, after the formation of Skate's Government.

He was appointed Minister for Finance from September to December 1997, then Minister for Treasury and Corporate Affairs from December 1997 to July 1999; Deputy Prime Minister in the Skate's government from October 1998 to July 1999, and was elected as Speaker of the National Parliament in 13<sup>th</sup> July 1999 and resigned as Speaker after one day in office on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1999.

He was appointed Vice Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on State Affairs in September 1999 following the installation of the Morauta Government till April 2002. The Minister for Public Service, Minister for Provincial and Local-Level Government Affairs

from July 2002 to 19 October 2001, and Chairman of Parliamentary Referral Committee on Public Service and Public Sector Reform in December 2001.

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

*All Honourable Members observed a minute of silence in respect of the late gentlemen.*

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – I thank the Parliament.

**03/01**

**CERTIFICATION OF ACTS –  
STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SPEAKER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I have to inform Parliament that I have in accordance with *Section 110 of the Constitution*, certified *five (5) Acts* made by the National Parliament. They are as follows;

- 1. Association Incorporation Act 2023;*
- 2. Investment Promotion (Amendment) Act 2023;*
- 3. National Trade Act 2023;*
- 4. Pacific Institute Leadership and Governance (Amendment) Act 2023; and*
- 5. Special Economic Zones Authority (Amendment) Act 2023*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS IN THE PUBLIC GALLERY –  
STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SPEAKER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I wish to acknowledge the presence of those in the Public Gallery;

(a) Honourable Simon Pentanu, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Autonomous Bougainville Government,

(b) The staff and students from Saint Charles Lwanga Secondary School in the National Capital District.

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

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Small Holder Mining Leases**

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker for recognizing the people of Wau-Waria.

Mr Acting Speaker, I take this time to wish you a Happy Birthday as today is your birthday.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Thank you, very much.

**Mr MARSH NARAWEC** – Mr Acting Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Mining. Before I ask my question, I would also like to take this time to welcome back the people of Tari-Pori, Lae, Markham, and the whole of Papua New Guinea who are well and present in this House.

Mr Acting Speaker, I say people because we are the representatives of our people here.

Mr Acting Speaker, before I ask my question, I would like to give an insight to this question.

In Wau-Bulolo, gold was discovered in the 1920s, which is over 100 years ago, but from that time to the present, no one considered building a gold mine.

In very recent times some people of Wau-Waria, have tapped into small-scale mining in Wau and Bulolo along the river.

Last year, in the last Session of Parliament, I expressed myself on exploration licenses so that our people in the rural areas can do alluvial activities which prevent them from obtaining a mining lease. They will need to have an agreement with an exploration license holder and many times the exploration license holder does not listen to what they say or does not permit them to do certain things.

I would like to thank the Minister for taking note of my grievance and taking action by stopping one particular exploration license holder, EL2544.

But, unfortunately, MRA has written a letter to the small leaseholders telling them that they will remove their leases. These small-scale mining lease holders are employing the local people who are contributing to the economy of this country.

**04/01**

Foreigners have been stealing our gold and selling it and now our own people want to come in and steal gold from our own people and sell it.

My questions are as follows;

(1) Is the Mining Minister aware of this letter by MRA to the small lease holders of Wau-Waria and Bulolo District that are being terminated because a particular Exploration License Holder is taking the exploration license over that area?

(2) If you are aware Mr Minister, what are you going to do about it? You have passed the law already in your Mining Exploration Council to stop that exploration license, but yet MRA went ahead and gave the exploration license and terminated those small mining leases.

(3) Mr Minister, it seems the law of this country is not allowing our small people to apply for mining lease. Exploration is okay. But the process to get the mining lease for alluvial purpose is a bit suppressive. Is the minister going to do something about that and allow the small people to apply for mining lease for alluvial purpose?

**Sir ANO PALA** – Mr Acting Speaker, let me firstly thank the Member for Wau-Waria for giving me notice of his questions. He sent his questions a while ago so I was able to do a bit of thinking. Thank you very much for giving me notice so I would be able to give you good information.

Mr Acting Speaker, this EL254; this history of this license is very well documented in the system. This extension license was refused by the former Minister in the last Government. The Minister later reinstated this license, after he realized that there was a court order preventing him from making the decision. As a result of the Minister's decision that wrongly refused to extend the license, that ground which is the subject of that EL became available and as a result of the ground becoming available, everybody applied for it. That's where it became confusing. But the result of the Court Order was to prevent the Minister from cancelling the license. The grounds for the rejection, are no longer valid which means that

ground is not available to be applied for. So that extension of the license that was refused by the Minister is invalid so the ground still stands, and the matter is in Court. And because the matter is in Court, and by virtue of rules of this Parliament, the matter becomes subjudice, that is, I cannot go into the details or the substance of the Court decision. All I can say is that the ground is no longer available so nobody can apply for it.

In relation to the second question, Mr Acting Speaker, on your customary land you are entitled to go into alluvial mining. But sometimes while you have the right to go into alluvial mining, somebody had gone before you and applied an (EL) exploration license. So you may be doing alluvial mining on your land and somebody comes along and says ‘you are mining on an area which I have an exploration license.

**05/01**

We have tried to clear up this confusion but when you have your customary land, you cannot be stopped because you have the right to go into mining.

All you have to do is inform MRA of the area that you are entitled to mine on. But if you are mining on an area that is outside of your customary land but within the area of the EL, it is important that you informed the EL holder before you can go in with more sophisticated equipment. If you are just using a simple system, you don’t have to get permission but if you are going in with a complicated machine for mining, you need to get approval from the company that holds the EL.

Mr Acting Speaker, I realized the member’s concern, because somebody has a mining exploration licence so you have to go to him all the time if you want to go into alluvial mining. But we have thought of a way to go around that problem. That is, we can, by way of determination from MRA. We will issue a direction by way of a condition on the licence that you can mine on your land without getting approval from the EL holder. That is the specific problem here that you are referring to and I think we have a solution.

If you are having that problem, just contact us and we will issue a direction as a condition of that licence, that the customary landowners can go in and mine without having to get your permission all the time. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

### **Defence Cooperation Agreement and the Ship-rider Agreement**

**Mr GARRY JUFFA** – My questions are directed to the Prime Minister and they are in relation to the recently signed Defence Cooperation Agreement and the Ship-rider Agreement

with the USA. I have two questions; one is in relation to that and the other is in relation to the issue of World War II ordinance. As the Prime Minister is the Acting Foreign Affairs Minister, I felt that it is appropriate to direct these questions to him.

Mr Prime Minister, in light of the recent Defence Cooperation Agreement and the Ship-rider Agreement signed with the United States, there has been a growing concern among our constituents and critics that these agreements may not align with the best interest of Papua New Guinea. Could you please elaborate on the implications of these agreements for our nation, specifically addressing how they will impact our sovereignty, our economic stability and the security of our citizens? Furthermore, could you also explain the measures taken to ensure that these agreements serve the long-term strategic interest of Papua New Guinea?

Mr Prime Minister, some of us support these agreements. I for one am very hopeful that these agreements will address growing transnational crimes in this country and how we will combat that. Perhaps the Prime Minister can elaborate on this.

My second question is in relation to unexploded ordinance from the World War II era. It has been nearly eight decades since the end of World War II, yet the remnants of that conflict continue to cause pain and suffering in many of our communities across our nation in our various provinces.

My province in particular, suffers from this situation. Every so often, citizens in my province while going about their daily activities stumble upon these ordinance, they explode and they get harmed, hurt, injured and killed. Sometimes these ordinances are used by criminals. In fact, last night in Popondetta town, a World War II bomb was set off by certain criminals who have an on-going feud with a group of people in their vicinity.

Mr Prime Minister, the unexploded ordinance from that era poses significant and on-going threats. The nations involved in this conflict, especially Japan, Australia and the United States should be responsible in assisting us in removing these ordinances so that our people can move about, do their business without threat or harm.

**06/01**

Can the Prime Minister explain or give us some assurance that perhaps with this agreement or perhaps in his position as the acting Foreign Affairs minister, he can compel these nations, urge them to assist us so that we may remove this ordinance, from a time, from a war that was not of our doing, but from which we continue to suffer. Thank you very much, Acting Speaker.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Prime Minister before you answer the question, we have a point of order from the Opposition leader.

**Mr Joseph Lelang** – Point of Order! Mr Acting Speaker, I think there are two aspects top that question and I think the question relating to the treaty should be held back because none of us here have access to that treaty and I think its fair that when the Government introduces this on the floor, then we can be able to debate it properly. Right now, he will answer this question without us having access to the document and what's in it so we can't assess better for ourselves. Thank you, Acting Speaker.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Opposition leader, I made a ruling that the matter hasn't been on Notice Paper for Parliament therefore, the honourable Governor's question, I will ask the Prime Minister to go ahead and answer the question as it is.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you Acting Speaker, I would like to take this time to acknowledge and say hello to all the good members of this parliament, ministers, governors', opposition leader. Thank you for coming back to mid-year session. I acknowledge our students from the Charles Lwanga Secondary School, thank you for coming. Of course, as I make respond to this question, let me acknowledge all our people tuning in to this session of Parliament.

Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to thank Governor Juffa for his important questions. Let me from the outset assure this Parliament that in this session of Parliament, we will table the Defence Cooperation Agreement that was signed between Papua New Guinea and the United States of America. It will be a public document. On our side it will be transparent, on USA's side, in every matter they sign with all nations it is also posted up for everyone to have a note on this agreement. So, it will be tabulated in this parliament session and I want to just in a summary noting that Parliament will have an opportunity to be speaking on this DCA. I think the question also alluded to the Ship-Rider Agreement.

Firstly, from the outset let me inform Parliament there is no breach of our country's *Constitution* or all our country's law in totality.

The Defence Cooperation Agreement is elevated from what we already have as far as our relationship with the Australian Defence Force, French Defence Force, New Zealand Defence Force, Indonesia Defence Force and USA.

In 1989, there was an agreement called Status of Force Agreement, that governed how all these different Defence forces and their agents relate to Papua New Guinea Defence Force and our agents. That Agreement emanates or was promulgated through the provisions of the visiting Defence Forces Act of 1975, and the power from that Act was sourced from 206 of our nation's *Constitution*.

Our *Constitution* and the drafters of our *Constitution* or fathers of our country envisaged, like all other nation's do, every nation has foreign relations, government to government relations and military to military relations with other nations and anticipating too that Papua New Guinea as a country will be having relationships with other Defence Forces, the visiting Defence Forces Act of 1975 gives pathway or gives us the basis, legal basis to structure agreements with different Defence Forces that we will partner and we will work with. Historically, all nations that enjoy bilateral relationships with us have different scope of relationships in as far as Defence Force relation is concerned.

I give you an indication that with Australian Defence Force, we have always operated not only under the status of Force Agreement of 1989, but it was elevated to a Defense Cooperation Agreement, similar to the one we now elevating with the USA Defense Force.

**07/01**

With the Australia our legal team from both sides as well as our Foreign Affairs and Defense teams are looking to elevate to a Defense Security Treaty. And the work is in progress by us whose exchanges have been made back and forth. This exchange will allow us to ensure that we are not breaching any of our country's law which we are consistent with as far as entering into similar agreements is concerned. And with the Defense Cooperation signed with the USA, I want to inform this House, clearly and from upfront, that due processes of any similar agreements to be signed were deployed.

I want to give confidence to our country that Cabinet doesn't sit or deliberate on papers that doesn't follow due processes. Because without the due processes followed anything presented will not stand the test of time if it is contested.

For instances, in *Section 18* Reference by any citizen or any constitutional office like Ombudsman Commission, if it goes before Court, then Court will always rule in favor of the laws of the country.

So, knowing this very well our State Solicitors as custodians of the due processes always advise the Executive Arm that is funneling in proposals and agreements for Cabinet and Parliament consideration must follow all legal processes and deployed for clearance purposes.

I just want to encourage Papua New Guineans who are listening, not to buy into an off the cuff statement by one individual and suddenly you are made to believe that social media is the authority. We have set processes in our country and any Executive Government decisions goes through the set processes.

Therefore, Prime Minister, Cabinet or Ministers are bounded by decorum and protocol of these processes. We cannot for instances, in every stage, when a concept is mounted and process is deployed until finally the policy is formulated or agreement is brought together, Cabinet doesn't dictate the protocol of the process. We don't go out and dictate to everyone that this is happening. If we do this, no decision will be taken for a country.

I want to assure our country that due processes of law govern how governments enter into these sorts of agreements. And the same law allows for *Section 18 Constitutional References*. If anyone citizen out there feels that it is not in order then you don't have to burn cars or cause public looting. A *Section 18 Constitutional Reference* is the pathway which the Opposition Leader has the ability to file a *Section 18 Constitutional Reference*. Any citizen who is qualified under *Section 18* can file an appeal and contest it knowing that those check and balance are in place as a democratic country.

We enter into these sorts of agreements by following all the due processes prescribed by law and doesn't breach any constitution. This is similar to what we have with Australia and Indonesia, but this time it gives us direct relationship with Pentagon and Murray Barracks and Waigani and Washington DC, not through conglomerate or an associate of partners in the region sharing support to PNG. But we are now having direct line of site with support from the United State of America.

Let me also assure everyone that it doesn't compromise our own relationship with Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, China, India, South Korea, UK and France, these

major partners we have bilateral relationship with including Solomon Islands, Fiji and other Pacific Nation countries closure to home.

This is a specific PNG-USA Defense Cooperation Agreement. There is no provision in that agreement that binds us from not relating to anyone economically or in Defense Force side of relationship.

I want to give that full assurance that this was done in the best interest of our country. For instances, an associate signing that took place was a Ship Rider Agreement and now this gives the opportune time and when it is table on this Floor, you can have a look at it.

**08/01**

This gives the PNG Navy the ability to co-patrol. The US navy has a provision for PNG Navy to also be on the boat and captain the boat and be part of the ship that is in our country. For the first time, this gives us an oversight in terms of our water protection like never before.

Today, we don't have the ability to have our full knowledge on real time on life data access on what is happening in our waters or in our land. We know few instances where unmanned pilots have come in through plane or a lot of time there is complain that there is fishing taking place in our high seas and there is transportation of unmanned goods and people taking place that we are not familiar with or unaccounted for.

The Ship-rider Agreement now gives us an access and partner with US Coast Guard for our Navy to have accessibility and visibility in what is happening in our waters. In time this will eliminate illegal fishing in our waters and hopefully eliminate illegal transportations including possible transportation of logs or unaccounted for logging that is being shipped in many parts of our country.

So, Mr Acting Speaker, we mean well in this agreement. It gives us an ability to have access to the biggest military on the face of this planet earth for our local interest and not for others strategic geopolitical interests. Papua New Guinean's interest lies deep in this agreement that we have signed.

For 48 years our boarders have remained unmanned, unpoliced and unguarded. It is our responsibility to step up in partnership and to build capacity of our Defence Force. It is an agreement for only 15 years. When you look at the very last part of this agreement when it is tabled on the Floor of Parliament, you will see a provision. We will run this for 15 years and after 15 years, any party on either side has a right to give one year notice for termination of

this agreement. Besides, certain provisions of this agreement, any assets built in Papua New Guinea will remain the property of Papua New Guinea as we come out of the 15 years' period.

So, I just want to assure this Parliament that in this, present circumstances that we are in, seen the need for our own domestic security to step up and to protect also our own sovereign borders. We look at USA as defence force compatible to our mode of conversation, compatible to our spiritual wellbeing, compatible to our system of government, and compatible in our military to military exchanges, and the way we'd like to step up our military in that line of sight to build capacity in our Defence Force and Navy.

This was signed and I will be honoured and privileged through the Defence Minister to table a copy of this Defence Cooperation Agreement on the Floor of Parliament for Parliament's consideration and deliberations.

I hope in that moment I will also provide further assistance to satisfy any or some more questions that you may all have as you go through the Defence Cooperation Agreement. It is done in the best intent to help our Defence Force and needless to repeat but when it comes and tabling here, all of you leaders will have access to this.

I gave assurance to the students at the University of Technology and UPNG. They were having examinations last week so we could not visit them but our State Solicitor, our Foreign Affairs Secretary and Defence Secretary will visit out two institutions and speak to them on the agreement and they will be informed that it is no strange agreement. It is similar to what we have with Australia and New Zealand but for the first time it gives us straight line of access to Washington like never before.

To answer the question on World War II remains, I thank the governor for raising this important question on those issues. I hear that many bombs have gone off. The other time the governor for East New Britain sent me a photo of many World War II bombs were been excavated from public sites in the villages in the Gazelle Peninsula, Kokopo and Rabaul area.

By the way, let me acknowledge the honourable Dr Allan Marat being present here. Although, you unseated a Pangu member, but it is a process of Court. This is a democratic country and everyone is entitled to go to the Court.

09/01

We welcome you back to the Floor of Parliament. But having said this, there are many World War II remnants in all parts of our country, taking this question again, I will inform both; the government of Japan and USA.

The USA this year also entails some of these things. There will be key strategic side they will be working on including picking up on the legacy issues of World War II and coming back. So, those issues will be worked upon. We want no unsafe area in our country in respect to the World War II remnants. So, thank you for asking this question, I will inform the two embassies here and I will get back to you Governor and to the Parliament, since this is a Parliament question. Thank you, very much.

### **Contractors Integrity on Construction of Runways**

**Dr ALLAN MARAT** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My questions without notice is directed to the Minister for Civil Aviation.

Mr Acting Speaker, the questions concerned the integrity of performance of contracts for the construction of aircraft runways throughout the country. These questions are being asked with a view to especially, Tokua Airport in the East New Britain Province.

Many comments have been made following the down-grading of flights especially to Rabaul because of the quality of the runway of Tokua. My questions concern safety; a lot of comments have been expressed by the travelling public on the down grading of their flights and especially on the risk of aircraft crashing because the runway was shortened.

My main question is, does the Minister have any intention to review, especially the qualities of runways throughout the country? When you compare runways throughout this country with runways in other developed countries, their runways are built of better-quality materials than ours. So, my question is whether the Minister responsible is going to undertake a review especially of performances, if the specification for the construction of runways are being met by the contractors.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker and I would like to thank also the Member for Rabaul and at this juncture to congratulate him and welcome him to the Parliament on behalf of my people of Namatanai, New Ireland Province.

In relation to the Honourable Member's question, yes, there was an incident that happened at the Tokua runway in relation to pavement failure. The incident took place around 21<sup>st</sup> of May and my office was reported on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May. Just by way of background the Japanese Government through JICA built the Tokua airport and runway after the volcanic eruption back in September 1994 and construction was completed back in 1998.

Since then, there's been some minor attention given to the runway but the deterioration of the runway has occurred because of the constant heavy aircraft landing and taking off at that particular airstrip. In relation to going forward, National Airport Corporation who is responsible for Tokua Airport and airports alike have issued what we call a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen), that a certain section of the runway cannot be used and the exact measurement of that particular section is 161 metres deteriorate and it encompasses 600 metres from what they call the 28-approach, meaning the approach towards the Buka end of the runway. So that has shortened the runway length to about 1000 meters.

**10/01**

We have notified the industry and the public and I would also want to use this opportunity as well to notify the public to reiterate, that due to the conditions of the runway, we have to unfortunately downgrade the aircraft. The only aircraft now that can use the runway and its current length avoiding the peeling of the pavement will be a Dash-8 for now. No more Folkker-100 and Q400 aircraft or ATRs for that matter. This will be ongoing for the next two weeks as we are trying to look into the matter to resolve the issue.

Our action plan from the NAC perspective, is that we are going to airlift pre-mixed tar that will be used to quickly repair that particular 161 meters of the runway which will take about a couple of weeks. The NOTAM has been issued so no heavier plane other than a Dash-8 should land on that runway. However, it will take about two weeks to remedy the issue.

NAC is on top of it and they are attending to the matter. We are trying to do it as quickly as we can to restore normalcy back to the runway.

In terms of long term, Tokua Airport and I admit, most of us leaders have traveled in and out, and that airport has deteriorated a lot. It is the plan focus of NAC to try and improve the airport and the runway.

So, in relation to answering that question, there are current discussions happening with the Japanese Government, to see whether they are happy to take on that responsibility to

come back and upgrade the airport terminal and runway. That discussion is on foot right now so I cannot elaborate too much until the agreement is actually signed.

There is also discussion about looking at trying to incorporate the upgrade of Tokua Airport both terminal and runway under an Asian Development Bank Arrangement.

As we are all aware that Cadetship II has been signed already but we are trying to include some more other important airports that have been left out and introduce the discussion to negotiate, to fit them in so that is where we are at.

Our priority is Tokua Airport and all the other major airports in the country and we will do our best to get that airport running sooner rather than later.

Thank you, honorable Member, for your question.

### **Supplementary Question**

**Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA** – Whilst, it is good to hear the Minister say that there has been something been done at Tokua, I would like to ask the good Minister for Civil Aviation if he would agree with me, that currently there is a need within your organization and CASA in terms of inspectors. There is a lack of inspectors within the country especially within CASA and your organization and I say this because I am not here to guess.

**11/01**

I've been involved in a meeting and I won't get into that, because the report will come to this Parliament. But I'm reliably informed that CASA lacks inspectors, and if it is true, will you confirm that? The reason being, Mr Acting Speaker, the failure of that airport was visible, why didn't the inspectors do their job to identify it before it happened? Because we have now put the planes and the passengers lives at risk. Are we going to continue to allow that to happen to other airports as well? We all know that Madang Airport runway is short, yet we still allow F100s and F70s to land. Sorry Minister but we cannot continue to deny that fact. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Thank you Honourable Opposition leader, I was just about to rule out your supplementary because it was a bit out of the question the Honourable member for Rabaul has stated that you have already raised the question so I'll allow the Minister to make your answer short

**Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT** – Thank you Acting Speaker and thank you the honourable member for his supplementary question.

In relation to lack of inspectors with CASA PNG, I am not aware of the lack of inspectors but having said that, may I add this is why we're a member to the International Civil Aviation Organization because any shortfalls that we experience within country, we can draw on that expertise to support us. So, yes on one hand we could be lacking which I've yet to get a report and confirm that statement or comment.

Secondly, I would like to provide reassurance that we do have access to outsource the engineering component or inspectors if we need them to come in. That's in relation to CASA PNG.

In relation to inspecting airports, we are doing our best within the means we have and the Budget allocation that we have. Budget constraints is also one of the challenges that we are experiencing at CASA PNG right now and that also can limit us in terms of what sort of exercise inspection that we can carry out. Right now, our immediate focus as well is to make sure that our national carrier is meeting the necessary requirements and having planes in the air to carry all of us to and from our homes. That requires a lot of attention and we've been landing the necessary advice to Air Niugini to try and focus on certain areas that we CASA PNG have identified that need immediate attention to attend to.

I believe CASA PNG is in a position to accommodate to facilitate if there is any shortfall, I will gather a report and will be happy to advise Parliament on that specific question, whether we have enough inspectors or not.

Let me reassure everybody and Parliament that if we do need inspectors as a member to the International Civil Aviation Organization we do have access to expertise to lend support in areas that we may not have any expertise on. So just clearing that side.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Member sorry I did not add you on the supplementary. I had already asked the Governor for Morobe to speak. So, I'll ask if you can reserve your supplementary question and ask it tomorrow in the Parliament Session as a new question.

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** – Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, I think I have heard other members addressing the chair as Deputy Speaker. I'd like to inform all to address me as Acting Speaker, for the *Hansard* purpose. So, address the Chair as the Acting Speaker. Go ahead!

**Derogatory public statements by Honourable Justin Tkatchenko**

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** – Mr Acting Speaker, I withdraw my statement in addressing you as Deputy Speaker for the *Hansard* purposes.

Mr Acting Speaker, my question without notice is directed to the Prime Minister of this country. Before I issue the question, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the honourable member elect through the court of disputed return decision, the honourable Member for Rabaul, Dr Allan Marat, I congratulate you my teacher of criminology at the University of Papua New Guinea, and you are well versed with the laws and the Parliament needs you.

Secondly, I would like to pass my deepest condolences on behalf of the people of Morobe to the former Members who have passed away where our Heavenly father has called them. Late Mr John Kekenso and Late Mr Iairo Lasaro. They were very active members of Parliament when I was also a member of Parliament in that time and they contributed immensely to anything that went on in Parliament and in their electorates. And I pass my condolences to them.

Mr Acting Speaker, my questions will be directed to the Prime Minister. My questions are in relation to the former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Member for Moresby South.

Before I ask the question, I want to make it very clear to the Floor that he is my very good brother, and I highly respect him. I highly respect him because since he entered this country, he has done something very good in this country particularly in the promotion of nature. He always makes sure that the flowers are well grown and he taught us to make sure that we grow good flowers and keep our city clean. So, I thank him. He established the Nature Park up there. He has done a good job and as a Minister and Member of Parliament he also did a good job. But something happened, with the greatest respect and I ask him to take no offence in what I'm going to say.

**12/01**

The social media has allegedly put out a statement that the former Minister stating and branding the people of this country as animals and primitives. If that was true or not true or

half-baked truth or quarter truth, we all don't know but I gather there must be some truth in that.

Mr Acting Speaker, that remark in my humble view is highly derogatory! It is also highly offensive to the minds and the hearts of the people of this country.

Mr Prime Minister, I understand you have condoned him and invited the citizens of this country to condone him. That is your view I say with the greatest respect, but this matter is a very serious matter.

We the people of this country have graciously given our brother, who is from another country, to acquire citizenship in our country and also made sure he was voted into this Parliament which is the highest honour bestowed on him as a leader of our country.

That statement is not highly acceptable.

Let me direct my questions to the Prime Minister;

(1) What actions are you going to take on those highly derogatory remarks?

(2) What is the Prime Minister going to tell this country where the buck stops?

(3) Is the Prime Minister going to direct the Honourable Member for Moresby South to make a Statement on this Floor of this Parliament?

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Governor, we have an abrupt blackout and I ask you to resume your seat and I will ask the Clerk to check on the power and you can continue your question.

Honourable Governor, the power has come back on so please continue with your question.

**Mr LUTHER WENGE** – My last question. Is the Prime Minister going to direct the Minister to tell this nation why he made those highly derogative and highly offensive statement to the citizens of this country?

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Unfortunately our question time has lapsed and honourable Members you can reserve the right to ask your questions as new questions tomorrow.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Mr Acting Speaker, I take this time to thank the good Governor for Morobe for his highly sensitive question in regard to Honourable Justin Tkatchenko.

**13/01**

Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to assure Parliament that the leader of Moresby-South said to ask leave of Parliament tomorrow to make a personal explanation.

Today in government caucus he gave his apologies to the Members of Parliament. He spoke to everyone in the Government caucus and he explained that the words he used were not intended for the whole country but were aimed at those who tarnished his daughter on social media, *Facebook*.

The attack on his daughter caused him to make this statement in reference to those who were attacking his daughter so he made an address to us in government caucus today that if he has offended anyone us, that he'd apologize. He also said that tomorrow he will seek leave of parliament and give his explanation to the country that he did not refer to the whole country with his statement. Tomorrow he will make his statement clear and explain himself.

Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to ask the Governor for Morobe to wait and reserve the right for Mr Tkatchenko to give his explanation tomorrow. As far as the advice I received, the relevant constitution office to deal with any integrity matter of a leader is in place and this office has the right to do their job if they feel that a leader has broken public trust or a law of the country.

Mr Acting Speaker, tomorrow he will address Parliament however today he apologised to all the members of parliament in the Government caucus. He clarified that his statement was aimed towards those who tarnished his daughter on social media.

So tomorrow, the Parliament has given leave to him to make his explanation before we can go to other businesses so we can gain have some clarity on his statement. So, he can speak for himself. I would also like to take this question time to also indicate to the country that we must appreciate that we are a nation of so much diversity. A lot of us have a diverse background, some from Asian countries, some from Western countries and we are the most diverse nation on the planet earth. Plenty of Papua New Guineans spoil us Tari's as pigs, kanakas and mentally unstable too. So, some of us are big enough to take this sort of branding. Some even say Tari lack empathy. These are the kind of insults or statement that

we make in our society. So, we must talk with peace too sometimes. Everyone has a contribution; some people are in a bad space while others are in a good space.

The moment the question was put to him was one of his weakest moments where they said how you think of your daughter and the way they talked about her and as a parent or as a father, he made that response.

Tomorrow when he talks then we will clear it. For the record I would like to say the leader was kind enough that he vacated the Foreign Affairs portfolio he was holding. He said he will step aside.

Mr Acting Speaker, I went to South Korea, I also had to take on the work of the Foreign Affairs as well. Work for minister is delegated by the Prime Minister so I am not the acting Foreign Affairs minister, I am the Foreign Affairs minister by fact that I am the Prime Minister. This job came back to me and now I'm doing the work for Foreign Affairs because of the sensitivity of the majority felt that it encroached and bordered into affecting our image as a country. He said during the meeting with US secretary or meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, the other Pacific Island countries and yourself. The country feels that I made a mistake in my statement so you can take over this portfolio and work, I will step aside.

**14/01**

Therefore, I want to place on record that he is a leader who put the interest of the country first before him and he stepped aside. I took over the full role as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and chaired the meeting with USA, India and the other Pacific Island countries for the duration of the meeting.

My recent trip to Korea, by the way Korea has 25 000 US soldiers attached there and they live and work in Korea. Those of us who talked a lot about DCA, under the treaty agreement between Korea and USA, 25 000 USA soldiers are attached there and they travel back and forth between Korea and USA. Just general information if some of you are still scared of the agreement. The South Koreans are not scared of American soldiers working with them and in fact they are the tenth biggest economy in the world, mind you. So again speak with context and offer solution to the country. Don't be against it as if you have solution for the country, for those who are commenting out there.

But I want to assure you all that the honourable member will make a statement tomorrow on the Floor of Parliament, he did step aside as the Minister for Foreign Affairs,

therefore today he has vacated the front bench. And you know what more do we want from a leader who is also working consistent with the cultural sensitivity knowing that an off the cuff remark has caused stress to our country and to himself.

So, he will make his statement tomorrow and I have resumed full responsibility as Minister for Foreign Affairs and he is a Minister without portfolio. The constitutional office that deals with leadership integrity are not deaf and dumb but have seen this issue. I think he has been summoned to the Ombudsman Commission and this matters in progress. And I just want the society to step up and not go down the gutter way of thinking. We have to think before we make comments of such whatever is in your heart comes out from your mouth. Our nation must rise up as people of tolerance even to abuse to yourself and must not go down too low because the whole world is watching.

Our character must be amplified as a nation that tolerates different opinion on a table in a nation of democracy. If you have the right to accuse his daughter, as a parent he made this statement in response for those who abused his daughter. The leader has indicated that he will, if the Parliament so gives him an opportunity, make a statement of apology to his remarks which were captured in the media. Thank you so much and I hope this explains but he remains a Minister without portfolio.

The Ministry was allocated to the Social Democratic Party, a major party that partners with the Pangu led-Government. They have five members in the context of many parties we have in the collision arrangement. He officially stepped aside from the Cabinet role and we are now going through the processes and if the constitutional office holders like the Ombudsman Commission finds that he is in breach of leadership laws in our country then further scrutiny will be followed.

But at the moment he is in Parliament because he is an elected Member. And let's give respect where its due whilst awaiting his response to the country as he addresses us tomorrow, thank you.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, our question time has lapsed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA – REPORT OF AUDITOR  
GENERAL RELATING TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND  
AGENCIES – PART 1, 2016 & 2017 – PAPER –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I present the reports of the Auditor-General of Papua New Guinea relating to the Public Accounts of Papua New Guinea, Part I for the years 2016 and 2017.

Motion (by **Mr Richard Masare**) agreed to –

That the Parliament to take note of the papers and that the reports be referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

**15/01**

**AUDITOR GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA - PERORT ON NATIONAL  
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, PART II, 2017 – PAPER –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, pursuant to statute, I present the report of the Auditor-General relating to National Government Department and Agencies on the control of and on transaction with or concerning the public monies and property of Papua New Guinea, Part II for the year 2017.

Motion (by **Mr Richard Masere**) agreed to –

That the Parliament take note of the paper and that the report be referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

**AUDITOR GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA –  
PERORT ON FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF ENGA CHILDREN’S FUND  
TRUSTEE LIMITED – PAPER – MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, pursuant to statute, I present the report of the Auditor-General relating to Financial Statement of Enga Children’s Fund Trustee Limited for the year ended 31 December 2016.

Motion (by **Mr Richard Masere**) agreed to –

That the Parliament take note of the paper and that the report be referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

**AUDITOR GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA –  
PERORT ON ACCOUNTS OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCIAL  
HEALTH AUTHORITY – 2017 – PAPER –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, pursuant to statute, I present the report of the Auditor-General relating to the accounts of the Southern Highlands Provincial Health Authority for the year ended 31 December 2017.

Motion (by **Mr Richard Masere**) agreed to -

That the Parliament take note of the paper and that the report be referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

**MOTION BY LEAVE**

**Mr JELTA WONG** (Gazelle – Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resource) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE – HONOURABLE JOB POMAT, HONOURABLE FRANCIS  
MANEKE & HONOURABLE ROBERT ATIYafa**

Motion (by **Mr Jelta Wong**) agreed to –

That Messrs Job Pomat, Francis Maneke, Robert Atiyafa and Maso Karipe  
be granted leave of absence for the duration of this meeting due to ill health.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion (by **Mr Jelta Wong**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 3:30 p.m.