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Media Release

MINISTER MIRISIM SLAMS UNFOUNDED ALLEGATION OF CPNG AS A MONEY LAUNDERING SCAM

Department of Works & Highways Minister Hon. Solan Mirisim refuted claims by Mr. O'Neill in a *Post Courier* article page 3 dated 18th January 2024 as a desperate move to play cheap politics with a mandated government policy of the decades that is transforming the road infrastructure sector in PNG at unprecedented levels.

Connect PNG is not a scam, it is not a money laundering machines as alluded to by Mr O'Neill propaganda machine but rather a result oriented and workable government policy that is touching the lives of our people in remote parts of this country.

Connect PNG is all about connecting people to markets, connecting government services to people, connecting students to school, connecting patients to hospitals, connect people to people and business to business. It is a whole of government approach and critics must not look at Connect PNG from just one perspective.

The Minister slammed the wild allegation made by the former Prime Minister and Member for Yalibu-Pangia Peter O'Neill as a desperate attempt to discredit the Marape-Rosso Government Flagship Connect PNG Program.

Mr. Mirisim said that Connect PNG program has for the first time connected the landlock people in the remotest parts of PNG and for the first time they are seeing PMV buses in Menyamya and Vehicles in Teleformin District.

Connect PNG is real and its working for our people that have been forgotten by successive governments of the past most notably the PNC led government of Peter O'Neill who has been allocating massive amounts of contracts to dubious companies and investing only on one or two hotspots like Port Moresby and Lae.

Under the Marape-Rosso Pangu Led Coalition Government we have put money where the mouth is. The Connect PNG program is an Act of Parliament and by Law it supposed to receive 5.6 percent of the annual budget submission.

It's very shameful and childish of a former prime minister to criticize the Connect PNG program when its only fair to commend the Government of Marape – Rosso for connecting almost 1 million people that are not connected by roads for that last 48 years of becoming independent.

The Connect PNG program is a whole of government approach and for Mr. O'Neill took a cheap political shot at the massive flagship infrastructure policy undertaking by a responsible people's government through DoWH who is responsible to manage and pay a total of 300 contractors that are employing almost 30,000 people putting food on their tables is a huge task and very serious government business.

Connect PNG was not born yesterday or the day before, its was birthed in 2019 and launched by the then Marape-Basil Government in 2020 during the mist of the Covid Pandemic. It is a 20 years program by the Government of Marape – Rosso but DoWH is the institution that is implementing that policy and will continue to discharge its mandate and responsibility into the future.

For Mr. O'Neill to blatantly attack a mandated and workable government policy labelling it as a money laundering scam is an insult of the highest order and laughable insinuation to an institution of state employing qualified and highly trained civil engineers who have a track record of delivering high impact projects in and around the country with total dedication and commitment.

Time and again politicians like Mr. O'Neill see fit to discredit the engineering professions by politicking and sensationalizing workable policy rather than providing alternative solutions and policy options using their propaganda machines to distort facts from the lies and mislead the unsuspecting gullible public without checking the facts and verifying information first.

Mr. O'Neill media propaganda against Connect PNG program is irresponsible for a former prime minister who is hell burnt to distort facts from lies and confuse the unsuspecting citizens by preying on their ignorance and capitalizing on their weakness to stir up more rioting, arson, and looting which occurred last Wednesday.

The Minister appeal to the public to exercise restrain and avoid taking sides because the government of Marape – Rosso is a responsible government and Connect PNG is not a scam as alleged by Mr. O'Neill. One can travel the length and breath of this country and witness the transformation that this policy is

impacting on the livelihoods of ordinary Papua New Guineas in remotest part of the country like never before.

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