



**MINISTRY OF WORKS & HIGHWAY**  
**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**



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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

***'CONNECT PNG PROGRAMME FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION  
PROGRESS UPDATE'***

***BY***

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MINISTER FOR WORKS AND HIGHWAYS**

***'SLOWLY BUT SURELY UNLOCKING  
PNG'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL  
THROUGH ROAD CONNECTIVITY'***

**14 FEBRUARY 2024**

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S FLAGSHIP **CONNECT PNG ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**, AS REQUIRED BY THE **CONNECT PNG (IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS) ACT 2021**.

THIS STATEMENT ALSO SERVES AS A RESPONSE TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE GOVERNOR FOR SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, HON. WILLIAM POWI, AND MANY OTHER LEADERS INCLUDING HON PETER O'NEILL WHO HAVE VOICED ISSUES AND CONCERNS THAT NOW HAVE REGRETTABLY BECOME A SOURCE OF MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS CIRCULATING IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO NOT ONLY TO CORRECT THE RECORD, BUT ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS. THIS GOVERNMENT WILL ALWAYS BE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO PNG.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

FIRSTLY, LET US ALL BE REMINDED THAT OUR FOUNDING FATHERS FOUGHT FOR OUR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND THAT THEY WORKED TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE THAT THE 800-PLUS ETHNIC GROUPS WERE CONNECTED WITH BETTER ROAD ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE DAYS, UNITING PNG AS ONE COUNTRY.

IN THIS REGARD, THE VALUE OF ROAD TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE TO PNG'S ECONOMY IS IMMENSE AND CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. ROADS CONTINUE TO SERVE AS THE BACKBONE OF EVERYDAY LIFE, UNDERPINNING 86 PERCENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

SINCE THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE YEARS, THE COUNTRY'S ROAD NETWORK HAS BEEN THE ARTERIES OF PNG, LINKING FARMERS TO MARKETS, BUSINESSES TO CUSTOMERS, AND ENABLING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS BASIC SERVICES.

YET DESPITE THE CRITICAL ROLE OF ROAD NETWORK, REGRETTABLY DUE TO MANY YEARS OF UNDERFUNDING AND MISMANAGEMENT, 85% OF THE COUNTRY'S ROAD NETWORK HAS DECLINED TO ALMOST IRREPARABLE STAGES.

**WE ARE DETERMINED TO CORRECT THIS!**

AS OF 2012, ROAD EVALUATION STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT UNDER ITS TSSP PROGRAM ESTIMATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD REQUIRE K45 BILLION IN REPLACEMENT COST TO CLEAR THE DEFERRED MAINTENANCE BACKLOG ACCUMULATED OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS OF UNDERFUNDING AND POOR MANAGEMENT.

THIS HAS MADE OUR COUNTRY'S ROAD NETWORK UNFIT TO SUPPORT ANY SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AND ASPIRATIONS OF SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING OURS TODAY.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

IT WAS UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WHEN OUR GOVERNMENT FIRST TOOK OFFICE IN 2019, WE DEVELOPED THE **20-YEAR CONNECT PNG PROGRAM** TO IMMEDIATELY DEAL WITH THE THREATS OF THE GROWING DEFERRED MAINTENANCE BACKLOG AND AT THE SAME TIME MEET THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE DEMANDS BY EMBARKING ON **A LONG-TERM VISION TO CONNECT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, WITH 100% ROAD CONNECTIVITY, BY 2040.**

TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 20-YEAR PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY SUFFICIENT FUNDING GUARANTEES, THE PROGRAM TARGETS AND THE FUNDING ANNUAL ALLOCATION OF 5.6% OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET ARE LEGISLATED BY AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT. WE ARE NOT RUNNING THE CONNECT

PNG ON AN AD-HOC BASIS AS MANY ASSUME BUT WE ARE DOING SO IN FULL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM LIMITS PROVIDED BY THE ACT OF PARLIAMENT.

**WE, AS THE GOVERNMENT, ARE 100% FOCUSED** ON INCREASING ROAD ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY BY UPGRADING, EXPANDING, DEVELOPING, AND MAINTAINING THE EXISTING 16,000 KM OF ROADS AS WELL AS CONSTRUCTING THE MAJOR MISSING LINK ROADS OF 1,800 KM.

ONLY IN THIS WAY WILL WE, AS A NATION, **CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED, REACH THE UNREACHED, AND UNLOCK ECONOMIC POTENTIAL IN THE LANDLOCKED REGIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE VISION 2050. WE OWE THIS TO THE PEOPLE OF PNG!**

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

LET ME STATE VERY CLEARLY THAT THE 20-YEAR CONNECT PNG PROGRAM IS IMPLEMENTED IN **A PLANNED AND SYSTEMATIC 3-PHASE APPROACH. PHASE 1** COVERS THE CURRENT MEDIUM TERM (2020-2027) WITH A TOTAL INVESTMENT PLAN OF K7.982 BILLION, WHICH EQUALS THE WORLD STANDARD PRACTICE OF SPENDING 4% OF GDP ON ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE.

IN LINE WITH THE LEGISLATED 5.6% BUDGETARY COMMITMENT, WHICH EQUATES TO A MINIMUM OF K1.2 BILLION PER YEAR, KEY PRIORITY PROGRAM TARGETS COVER ALMOST 8,000 KM OF STRATEGIC NATIONAL HIGHWAYS, MISSING LINK ROADS, PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ROADS, AND RURAL AND NATIONAL BRIDGES.

THESE COMBINE EFFECT OF DELIVERING THESE PROGRAM TARGETS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL OUTCOMES OF CREATING EMPLOYMENT, BUILDING LOCAL CONTRACTORS' CAPACITY, INCREASING RURAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTIVITY, AND ULTIMATELY SUPPORTING THE ECONOMIC GROWTH ASPIRATIONS TO MAKE PNG BECOME A MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY BY 2030.

**THESE PRIORITY PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

- 1. IMPROVING AND UPGRADING OF THE 4220 KM OF 16 PRIORITY NATIONAL HIGHWAYS TO A 2-LANE STANDARD HIGHWAY, INCLUDING HIRITANO, MAGI, SEPIK, NEW BRITAIN, RAMU MADANG.**
- 2. EXPANSION OF 1900 KM OF NEW MISSING LINK ROADS TO CONNECT 17% (1.7 MILLION PEOPLE) OF THE 10 MILLION POPULATION NOT YET CONNECTED BY ROAD AND PROVIDING ROAD LINK TO LANDLOCKED REGIONS.**
- 3. IMPROVING RURAL ROADS TO THE DOWH RURAL ROAD STANDARD TO INCREASE RURAL ACCESSIBILITY BY AT LEAST 60% FOR 85% OF THE RURAL POPULATION.**
- 4. DELIVERING 4000 METERS OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL BRIDGE INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS ALL DISTRICTS, PROVINCES, AND REGIONS TO ENSURE ROAD ACCESSIBILITY REGARDLESS OF THE WEATHER.**

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

DESPITE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE **CONNECT PNG FUNDING ACT 2021** TO ALLOCATE ANNUALLY 5.6% PER YEAR, COMPARING THE PROJECTED TOTAL BUDGET ESTIMATE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HIGHWAYS AGAINST THE ACTUAL FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE 2020-2023 FUNDING PERIOD, THE ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGET BID **WAS K6.402 BILLION BUT THE ACTUAL TOTAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION WAS ONLY K4.53 BILLION, GIVING AN OVERALL SHORTFALL OF K2.4 BILLION.**

ON THE CONTRARY! THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAM IS IMPLEMENTED WITHIN THE LEGISLATED ANNUAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS CEILINGS SET BY PARLIAMENT, INCLUDING OUR CONTRACT COMMITMENTS.

WHEN THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN UNDERFUNDED OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, WITH A CUMULATIVE TOTAL OF K2.4 BILLION, THE ACCUSATION BY SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF SPENDING BASELESS FIGURES OF K50 BILLION IN THE SAME 4 YEARS PERIOD IS COMPLETELY FALSE AND WILL ONLY SERVE TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

LET ME GIVE THE TRUE FIGURES AND NUMBERS ON THE PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS OF THE PHASE 1 MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAM TARGETS AGAINST THE SELF-FABRICATED FAKE FIGURES FLOATING AROUND IN THE PUBLIC MEDIA BY THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER PETER O'NEILL.

**OUR PROGRESS ON 16 PRIORITY ECONOMIC HIGHWAYS:** TO DATE, APPROXIMATELY 3,500 KILOMETRES, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 21% OF THE TOTAL 16,200 KILOMETRES OF STRATEGIC HIGHWAYS, HAVE BEEN UPGRADED TO A 'GOOD' CONDITION.

**THIS ACHIEVEMENT REPRESENTS OVER 83% OF THE PHASE 1 TARGET OF 4,200 KILOMETRES.** THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS HAS SPENT A TOTAL OF K2.2 BILLION ON THE MAIN HIGHWAYS, ALMOST 50% OF THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE AT K1 BILLION ON THE 60% SHARE OF PROJECTS FUNDED BY LOANS AND DONOR GRANTS, INCLUDING THE ADB FUNDED 10 YEARS HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

DESPITE MANY CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS, THE CORE ROAD UPGRADING AND IMPROVING WORKS ARE ON SCHEDULE. BY FAR, THIS IS THE BIGGEST

INVESTMENT PROGRAM ON OUR CRITICAL HIGHWAYS BY ANY GOVERNMENT IN THE HISTORY OF PNG.

AT THE CURRENT RATE OF PROGRESS, BY 2027, MORE THAN 80% OF THE 4200 KM OF KEY ECONOMIC BACKBONE HIGHWAYS OF OUR COUNTRY, INCLUDING HIRITANO, MAGI, HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY, RAMU MADANG, SEPIK COASTAL, EAST WEST NEW BRITAIN, ENGA, BULOMINSKY HIGHWAYS, WILL BE BROUGHT TO 2LANE HIGHWAY STANDARD CONDITIONS.

I WOULD INVITE THOSE HONOURABLE MEMBERS WHO CONTINUE TO CALL THE CONNECT PNG A SCAM PROGRAM TO PERSONALLY GO AND DRIVE AROUND ON THE MAIN HIGHWAYS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND SEE FOR YOURSELF THAT THE OVERALL CONDITION OF THESE HIGHWAYS HAVE IMPROVED TO 60% GOOD CONDITION, FROM WHAT AS ONLY A 12% IN 2016.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

**OUR ACHIEVEMENTS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF MISSING LINK ROADS**

**PROGRESS TO DATE:** OF THE 1,800 KM OF MISSING LINK ROADS TO BE CONSTRUCTED UNDER THE PROGRAM, MORE THAN 350 KM (55%) OF THE PHASE 1 TARGET OF 633 KM OF NEW ROADS HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED AND OPENED TO STANDARD CLASS 3 ROADS. THESE ROADS INCLUDE:

- ERAVE-SEMBERIGI SECTION ON THE GULF-SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY.
- 100 KM OF VANIMO-AITAPE SECTION OF THE SEPIK COASTAL HIGHWAY.
- THE TRANS-ISLAND HIGHWAY AND THE MAGI HIGHWAY.
- FINSCHHAFEN-LAE ROAD.
- WABAG-MARAMUNI ROAD.
- TABUBIL-TELEFOMIN ROAD.
- GUMINE-KARAMUI ROAD.

**CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED IS THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAM.** TODAY, IN LINE WITH THE LONG-TERM VISION TO

CONNECT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY BY ROAD, WE HAVE CONNECTED THE GULF OF PAPUA TO HIGHLANDS TO THE NORTHERN REGIONS. **YOU CAN NOW DRIVE FROM KIKORI TO MENDI, HAGEN INTO MOROBE AND TO MADANG ON AN UNINTERRUPTED CONTINUOUS HIGHWAY SYSTEM, UNLIKE BEFORE.** SIMILARLY YOU CAN NOW DRIVE FROM KUIंगा TO TAMBUBIL TO TELEFORMIN THROUGH THE HIDDENBACK WALLS. THIS IS NOT FAKE BUT THE REAL STORY OF CONNECT PNG THAT IS DRIVING CHANGE FOR BETTER PNG.

BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, WE WILL BE OPENING THE FAMOUS TRANS-NATIONAL CORRIDOR THAT WILL TRULY CONNECT PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND TO FULFIL THE DREAM OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS TO PHYSICALLY CONNECT AND UNITE PAPUA NEW GUINEA BY ROAD ON THE MAIN LAND.

THIS CORRIDOR HAS A TOTAL LENGTH OF 356 KM, COMPRISING THE WAU HIGHWAY SECTION UP TO BULOLO, AND THE TRANS-ISLAND HIGHWAY SECTION, WHICH COMPRISES THE CURRENT ASEKI ROAD, FROM BULOLO TO THE OIWA, IN ASEKI, AND THE APPROXIMATELY 159.8 KM MISSING LINK SECTION, BETWEEN OIWA IN MOROBE PROVINCE AND EPO IN GULF PROVINCE.

PROGRESS UP TO AUGUST 2023, ON THE TRANS-ISLAND HIGHWAY MISSING LINK SECTION, IS 41% (66 KM). THE REMAINING 93.8 KM WILL BE COMPLETED BEFORE SEPTEMBER 2025.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

LET ME REMIND THOSE AWAITING MIRACLE TO HAPPENED THAT TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING OF VALUE, THERE HAS TO BE A SACRIFICE. MANY HAVE BEEN QUESTIONING THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS MADE ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF MISSING LINKS, TO REACH THE UNREACHED AND CONNECT THE UNCONNECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HOWEVER, SHARING THE TEARS OF JOY OF MY PEOPLE IN THE REMOTE TELEFOMIN DISTRICT, THE RURAL PEOPLE UPON MOUNTAIN TOPS OF KAIN TIBA



AND THE PEOPLE OF MARAMUNI IN THE MIDDLE OF ENGA/SEPIK , TO SEE A ROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME CONNECTING THEM TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD, I ASKED MYSELF:

“WHAT WOULD BE THE MONETARY VALUE OF GIVING A LIFETIME ROAD ACCESS FOR **MANY GENERATIONS** TO COME?” THIS OPERATES OUTSIDE OF THE CURRENT STANDARD ECONOMIC APPRAISALS PEOPLE USE TO PRIORITIZE PROJECT VIABILITY.

YES, WE DO ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY STUDIES AND THEY GUIDE US, BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO TAKE RISKS TO ENSURE GREATER PROSPERITY NOT ONLY NOW BUT FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA REMAINS THE UNTAPPED GROWTH ENGINE OF OUR COUNTRY, WHERE OUR RURAL POPULATION ARE CUSTODIANS OF OUR LAND, ENVIRONMENT AND OUR ECOSYSTEM.

IN THIS REGARD, CONNECT PNG PROVIDES ROAD SERVICES THAT FIT INTO THE LARGER GOALS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRIORITIES FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GROWTH. THIS IS WHERE WE ALL COME FROM AND IT IS A NOBLE ASPIRATION THAT MUST BE SUPPORTED BY ALL.

THESE ARE INDISPUTABLE RECORD-BREAKING ACHIEVEMENTS THAT CANNOT BE UNDERRATED BY PEOPLE LIVING IN THE RELATIVE LUXURY OF BIG CITIES AND TOWNS. AS SUCH, THE GOVERNMENT IS PROUD THAT IT HAS SPENT MORE THAN K400 MILLION ON THE CONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION OF MISSING LINK ROADS THROUGHOUT PNG OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, INCLUDING K200 MILLION FROM TAX CREDIT SCHEME FUNDED PROJECTS. THE RETURNS ON THIS WILL HAVE A GENERATIONAL EFFECTS IN THE FUTURE.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

**PROGRESS ON PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ECONOMIC ROADS:**  
PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ROADS MAKE UP 21,000 KM OF THE 30,000 KM OF PNG'S ROAD NETWORK, SERVING 85% OF OUR RURAL ROAD NETWORK.

ALL PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ROADS BEING LEGALLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES UNDER THE **ROAD (MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING) ACT 2020**. THIS MEANS FOR NOW THE MANAGEMENT OF THE REST OF THE 12,000 KM OF SUBNATIONAL ROADS IS WITH THE PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES.

OUR RECORDS SHOW THAT BOTH THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HIGHWAY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL PLANNING AND MONITORING HAVE BEEN CONTINUOUSLY FUNDING ROAD PROJECTS WORTH MORE THAN K2.7 BILLION OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS SINCE THE 2019 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET.

THIS TRANSLATES TO AN ENORMOUS 60% OF THE TOTAL CONNECT PNG CAPITAL EXPENDITURE GOING TO RURAL ROADS. DISTRICTS LIKE SINASINA YONGOMUGL IN CHIMBU PROVINCE AND PANGIA IALIBU IN THE SHP PROVINCE ON THE OPPOSITION SIDE ARE BENEFITING FROM THIS FUNDING THAT IS GIVEN DIRECTLY FROM THE NATIONAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

LET US NOTE THAT MORE OF THE FUNDING IS GOING TO THE RURAL ROADS AND UNDER MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS AS COMPARED TO PAST YEARS. THEREFORE, I ASK ALL OF US TO MAKE USE OF THESE FUNDS TO IMPROVE CRITICAL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURES TO IMPROVE AND INCREASE ROAD CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR OUR PEOPLE TO ACCESS SERVICES AND MARKETS AND IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOODS.

ON THE SAME VEIN, THE HON GOVERNOR POWI WAS TALKING ABOUT SOME LOCALS TRYING TO BURN DOWN BRIDGES IN THE PANGIA IALIBU HIGHWAY BY

HIS SUPPORTERS BECAUSE CONNECT PNG WAS FUNDING A PROVINCIAL ROAD IN THE PROVINCE WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE.

I WISH TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THIS IS A ROAD PROJECT ON A MAJOR PROVINCIAL TRUNK ROAD UNDER THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAM. IT WILL EVENTUALLY BE UPGRADED TO NATIONAL HIGHWAY STANDARD TO LINK KARAMUI IN THE CHIMBU PROVINCE.

WHY WOULD PEOPLE DAMAGE THE VERY THING THAT WILL BENEFIT THEIR LOCAL AREA? INSTEAD, I WOULD INVITE THEM TO WORK WITH US FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

HOWEVER, MANY OF THE ROAD PROJECTS ARE FINANCED DIRECTLY AT THE PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS, MAKING IT CHALLENGING TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE AND RELIABLE ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE DUE TO DATA AND INFORMATION LIMITATIONS.

BASED ON REPORTS FROM THE PROVINCES, IT CAN BE NOTED THAT MORE THAN 40% (APPROXIMATELY 1,200 KILOMETRES) OF THE PHASE 1 TARGET OF 3,000 KILOMETRES HAS BEEN UPGRADED TO A 'GOOD' CONDITION.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER**

**PROGRESS IN THE NATIONAL BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT AND UPGRADE PROGRAM:** SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADE OF BRIDGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. NOTABLY, 300 METERS OF COMPOSITE 2-LANE STEEL STRUCTURE BRIDGES HAVE BEEN BUILT ON THE MAIN HIGHWAYS, INCLUDING 3 BRIDGES ON THE SEPIK HIGHWAY AND 6 BRIDGES ON THE RAMU-MADANG HIGHWAY, FUNDED THROUGH THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK LOAN.

ADDITIONALLY, 12 BRIDGES HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED ON THE NEW BRITAIN HIGHWAY WITH SUPPORT FROM THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB), AND 2 BRIDGES ON THE NEW BRITAIN HIGHWAY HAVE BEEN COMPLETED THROUGH JAPANESE GRANT FUNDING.

FURTHERMORE, MORE THAN 2,000 METERS OF RURAL BRIDGES HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED AND BUILT ON PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT ROADS THROUGHOUT PAPUA NEW GUINEA. THESE IMPROVEMENTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A 30% INCREASE IN RURAL ACCESS, BENEFITING 85% OF THE RURAL POPULATION.

UNDER THE RURAL BRIDGING PROGRAM, EVERY DISTRICT BY NOW SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED A BRIDGE AND BUILT ON YOUR DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL ROADS TO BRIDGE THE RURAL POPULATIONS.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

I WANT TO STRESS THAT PROJECTS FUNDED AND IMPLEMENTED UNDER CONNECT PNG ARE EQUITABILITY DISTRIBUTED ACROSS 14 MAJOR REGIONAL ROAD CORRIDORS TO ENSURE THAT ALL OF PNG BENEFITS AND NO REGION, PROVINCE OR DISTRICT PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS BE LEFT BEHIND.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

IT IS INTEREST OF REGIONAL BALANCE THAT I SUBSTANTIATE WITH SOME CONTRACT VALUES ON SOME OF THE MAJOR PROJECTS IN EACH OF THE REGIONS AS FOLLOWS:

**TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS TO SHOW REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION**

<b>REGION</b>	<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>PROJECT COST</b>
MOMASE	9 MILE (LAE) -(BULOLO)	K65 MILLION
	RAMU-MADANG HIGHWAY	K140 MILLION
	HAREICH BRIDGE-AITAPE	K145 MILLION
	Bridges (x6) on Ramu Highway	K88 MILLION
	.Bridges (x3) on Sepik Highway	K32 MILLION
	BULOLO-ASEKI	K20 MILLION
	VANIMO-WUTUNG BORDER	K10 MILLION
	FINSCHAFFEN HIGHWAY	K287 MILLION

<b>REGION</b>	<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>PROJECT COST</b>
	HAWAIIAN BRIDGE	K21 MILLION
	LAE CITY ROAD	K100 MULLION
	4 LANE HIGHWAY LAE TO NADZAB	K400 MILLION
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>K1,308 MILLION</b>
HIGHLANDS	HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY (ADB FUNDING)	K740 MILLION
	HALIMBU-IDAUWI	K52 MILLION
	NIPA-AMBUA GAP	K274 MILLION
	MENDI-NIPA	K221 MILLION
	RINDITA-KWARE	K94 MILLION
	MT. HAGEN CITY ROADS	K268 MILLION
	HIRI-LAI ROAD	K66 MILLION
	ERAVE-SAMBERIGI (GULF-SH HIGHWAY)	K99 MILLION
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>K1,814 MILLION</b>
SOUTHERN	CENTRAL-MILNE BAY MISSING LINK ROAD	K14 MILLION
	BAUTAMA-IMILA BRIDGE	K73 MILLION
	IMILA BRIDGE-MOREGUINA	K164 MILLION
	GOILANI BRIDGE-GADAI SU (MAGI HIGHWAY)	K38 MILLION
	ORO BAY-KOKODA	K51 MILLION
	KIUNGA-AIMBAK	K10 MILLION
	BROWN RIVER TO BEREINA	K81 MILLION
EPO TO KEREMA	K47 MILLION	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>K478 MILLION</b>
NGI	BOLUMINSKY HIGHWAY	K50 MILLION
	BAMUS BRIDGE-NOVAU PRIMARY SCHOOL -NEW BRITAIN HIGHWAY	K138 MILLION
	VUNAPALADING (KASASKA)-ALAKASAM (BAINING) ENB	K110 MILLION
	KOKOPO-TOKUA 4-LANE	K221 MILLION
	MANUS HIGHWAY	K100 MILLION
	BOUGAINVILLE PROJECTS	K439 MILLION
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>K1,058 MILLION</b>

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

FOR THE FIRST TIME, THIS GOVERNMENT IS ALLOCATING FUNDS EQUALLY TO ALL FOUR REGIONS UNDER THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAMME. THIS IS VERY MUCH CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION FOR EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AND LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

THE PROJECTS ARE SUBJECTED TO PROPER BENEFIT AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, THEN SELECTED, DESIGNED, AND COSTED, PROCURED THROUGH THE **NATIONAL PROCUREMENT ACT** PROCESS, AND MANAGED WITH PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT.

I CAN ASSURE THE HOUSE THAT THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS IN THE WAY PROJECTS ARE PROCURED AND CONTRACTS AWARDED. WE ARE NOT LIKE THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT BULLDOZING CONTRACTS ON AN AD HOC BASIS TO FOREIGN CONTRACTORS, WITHOUT ANY DUE DILIGENCE, CLEAR ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY AND PROJECTED RATE OF RETURN ON THOSE PROJECTS.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAM IS PROVIDING MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL CONTENT AND PARTICIPATION BY LOCAL ROAD CONTRACTORS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS, CONSISTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S SME POLICY AND THE PROVISIONS IN THE **NATIONAL PROCUREMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT 2021** THAT RESERVES LOCAL PARTICIPATION FOR ALL PROJECTS COSTING UP TO K50 MILLION.

IN FACT, THE OPPOSITION SHOULD BE VERY HAPPY THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS IMPLEMENTING THE SME POLICY THEY DEVELOPED BUT NEVER IMPLEMENTED. IN LINE WITH THE SME POLICY, WE INTEND TO REACH 50% LOCAL CONTRACTOR PARTICIPATION ON MAJOR ENGINEERING, PROCUREMENT, AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS BY 2030.

DON'T FORGET THAT THE LAST GOVERNMENT WAS KNOWN FOR ISSUING MAJOR CONTRACTS ON RECORD FOR INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRACTS EQUIVALENT TO MORE THAN K2 BILLION THAT REMAIN UNAUDITED TO THIS DAY.

YET THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER IS SEEN FIT TO ACCUSE WITHOUT FACTS THE LOCAL CONTRACTORS OF FALSE PAYMENTS AND MASSIVE K3.5 BILLION

FIGURE CONTRACTS ISSUED THROUGH NEPOTISM AND BIAS TO ONE LOCAL CONTRACTOR.

LET ME REFUTE IN THE STRONGEST TERMS POSSIBLE THAT THE AWARDING OF CONTRACTS AND MAKING CONTRACT PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS IS NOT DONE ON A SELECTIVE BASIS AS ALLEGED. THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE FALSE AND HAVE NO SUBSTANCE.

I ALSO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT NEITHER ME NOR PRIME MINISTER MARAPE HAS ANY SHAREHOLDING OR 100% OWNED CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES UNDER OUR NAMES. IN FACT THE NAMED COMPANIES WERE SMALL LOCAL CONTRACTORS THAT A PART OF 300 CONTRACTORS COMPRISING BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES.

IN FACT THESE LOCAL CONTRACTORS HAVE EXISTED DURING THE TIME OF PETER O'NEILL GOVERNMENT AND CONTINUING TO PARTICIPATE IN MAJOR CONTRACT WORKS IN OUR GOVERNMENT TODAY. THEY ARE NOT OVERNIGHT CONTRACTORS AS CLAIMED.

JUST LIKE THE BIG FOREIGN CONTRACTORS, LOCAL CONTRACTORS GO THROUGH THE SAME BIDDING AND TENDERING PROCESS AND WIN PROJECTS THROUGH THE COMPETITIVE AND LAWFUL PROCESS ON THEIR MERITS.

INDEED, WE ARE USING CONNECT PNG AS A VEHICLE TO UPGRADE AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF MORE THAN 100 LOCAL CONTRACTORS, INCLUDING THE FOUR CONTRACTORS DISCUSSED ON SOCIAL MEDIA. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY THAT WE WILL BUILD A TRULY SELF-SUSTAINING ROAD CONTRACTOR INDUSTRY IN PNG.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS ARE PAID ON A MONTHLY BASIS DEPENDING ON VERIFIED AND APPROVED INVOICES AND AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. UNLIKE IN THE PAST, CONNECT PNG PROGRAM CONTRACTUAL PAYMENTS ARE STRICTLY GOVERNED BY THE LEGISLATED PAYMENT PROCESS.

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR PREFERENTIAL OR BIAS IN PAYMENT FOR CONTRACTORS AS HAS BEEN ALLEGED BY SOCIAL MEDIA PUNDITS. THE VETTING AND VERIFICATION OF INVOICES FOR PAYMENTS FROM CONTRACTORS GO THROUGH A STRINGENT PROCESS STARTING FROM THE FIELD RIGHT UP TO THE HEAD OFFICE TO ENSURE THAT EVERYTHING IS ABOVE BOARD.

YES, OF COURSE MISTAKES WILL OCCASIONALLY BE MADE BUT WHEN THEY ARE WE WILL ADDRESS THESE AND WE WELCOME ANYONE WHO POINTS THEM OUT SO THEY CAN BE CORRECTED.

HOWEVER, TO MINIMIZE THIS RISK, WE HAVE CONTRACTED INDEPENDENT PROJECT MANAGERS FOR ALL MAJOR CONTRACTS. THEY INDEPENDENTLY ASSESS AND ENDORSE INVOICES FOR ALL PAYMENTS BY ROAD CONTRACTORS.

THE INVOICES ARE THEN SCRUTINIZED BY OUR OWN OFFICERS AT THE HEADQUARTERS TO ENSURE THAT SUCH INVOICES ARE FOR WORK OUTPUTS DELIVERED FOR THE INVOICED PERIOD AND THAT THEY ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE PROJECT CONTRACTS.

THESE PROCESSES ARE SET BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND I WELCOME ANY GENUINE EXTERNAL SCRUTINY OF THESE PROCESSES.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**



THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAMME IN 2023 OPERATED WITHIN THE APPROPRIATED BUDGET LIMITS OF K450 MILLION, WHICH IS K750 MILLION SHORT OF MEETING THE LEGISLATED 5.6% ANNUAL ALLOCATION CEILING.

THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER’S CLAIM OF BLOWN-OUT PAYMENTS IN THE LAST 8 MONTHS COMPLETELY EXCEEDS THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION SO HOW IS THIS EVEN POSSIBLE? HOW CAN WE PAY MORE THAN WE HAVE? IT IS A FINANCIAL IMPOSSIBILITY.

TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS, I HAVE PROVIDED A RECORD OF THE REAL PAYMENTS MADE TO THE CONTRACTORS NAMED ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PROGRESSIVE BILLS AGAINST THEIR CONTRACTED AMOUNTS OVER THE SAME 8 MONTHS PERIOD CLAIMED BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR IALIBU PANGIA, HON. PETER O’NEILL.

THE HONOURABLE MEMBER, LIKE ALL MEMBERS, IS WELCOME TO COMMENT ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, HOWEVER, SUCH COMMENTS SHOULD BE BASED ON REAL FACTS AND FIGURES, NOT IDLE SPECULATION OR FALSE ALLEGATIONS THAT HAVE NO MERITS AS HIGHLIGHTED BELOW IN RED.

**TABLE 2: CORRECT IN CONTRACT DATA VS FABRICATED DATA.**

No.	Contractor Name	Contract Description	True Total Contract Value (Kina)	True Total Amount Paid within the Last 8 Months in 2023 (Kina)	Alleged/Fabricated Total Contract Value made by O’Neill (Kina)	Alleged or Fabricated Contract Payments by O’Neill (Kina)
1.	Albe Ltd	Nipa-Ambua, Yalu Br-Nadzab	14,100,604.76	8,953,633.42	50,967,219.63	29,400,667.56
2.	Amaku & Son’s	Bulolo, Aseki & Menyama road, Morobe Province	119,432,602.52	30,628,671.75	124,580,626.50	78,154,491.88
3.	CIVPAC	Rindita Junction to Kware Station & Mukiri-Erave Station in Kagua Erave District of SHP.	240,411,288.88	47,414,856.32	267,108,432.44	70,237,551.00

No.	Contractor Name	Contract Description	True Total Contract Value (Kina)	True Total Amount Paid within the Last 8 Months in 2023 (Kina)	Alleged/Fabricated Total Contract Value made by O'Neill (Kina)	Alleged or Fabricated Contract Payments by O'Neill (Kina)
4.	Construct Oceanic	Kiburu Junction (Mendi) to Nipa Secondary School in SHP.	221,851,364.25	27,279,423.08	1,700,000,000	402,123,301.33
5.	Ipwenze	NIPA Secondary School to Ambua, Hiri/Lai road in Hela &SHP, Tabubil to Telefomin Road	331,024,618.63	43,339,441.49	3,520,000,000	743,154,888.11
	<b>Total</b>		<b>926,820,479.04</b>	<b>157,616,026.06</b>	<b>20,962,656,278.57</b>	<b>1,323,070,899.88</b>

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

THE TOTAL ONGOING CONTRACT VALUE ON RECORD FOR THE 4 CONTRACTORS IS ONLY K764 MILLION SPREAD OVER A MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT DURATION AND NOT K3.897 BILLION AS CLAIMED BY PETER O'NEILL. CONTRARY TO SOME SPURIOUS ALLEGATIONS, THERE ARE NO ADVANCE PAYMENTS OR ANY INFLATED CONTRACT PAYMENTS TO SELECTED CONTRACTORS.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

ON THE SAME TOKEN, LET ME RESPOND TO THE MEMBER FOR HIRI KAIRIKU HON. KEITH INDUHU ON THE OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT OF CONNECT PNG FUNDING BY PNG ROAD FUND BOARD.

LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR THAT ROAD FUND IS ONLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING OFFLINE REVENUES GENERATED FROM ROAD USER RELATED FEES AND CHARGES FOR MAINTENANCE PURPOSES ONLY AND NOT THE DEVELOPMENT FUNDS.

THE OPERATION OF CONNECT PNG FUNDING ARRANGEMENT AND MANAGEMENT ACT 2021 TO ALLOCATE A MINIMUM LEGISLATED AMOUNT OF 5.6% OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET CAME INTO EFFECT ONLY IN 2023 LAST YEAR.

AS SUCH, ALL CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM BUDGET FUNDING FOR CONNECT PNG IN THE PREVIOUS YEARS WERE ALWAYS ALLOCATED UNDER THE PIP BUDGET

LINES UNDER DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HIGHWAYS AS THE IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY.

ALL PAYMENTS ARE MADE ACCORDING TO THE BBUDGET ITEMS AND CONTRACTS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE HAVE A PROPER PAYMENT REGISTER THAT DETAILS OUT ALL PAYMENTS MADE TO EVERY CONTRACTOR AND SERVICE PROVIDER UNDER CONNECT PNG INCLUDING SCHOOL FEES FOR STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS PAID UNDER CONNECT PNG PROJECT OVER HEADS.

I ALSO ADMIT THAT PAYMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HIGHWAYS FOR A MEDIVAC CHARTER FEES AS THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER STATED YESTERDAY, THE DEPARTMENT DID THIS LIFE SAVING ASSISTANCE IN A VERY CRITICAL SITUATION FOR IMMEDIATE LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT TO AUSTRALIA AS RECOMMENDED BY LOCAL MEDICAL EXPERTS DUE TO NON AVAILABILITY OF THE TREATMENT AND FACILITIES LOCALLY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF WORKS AND HIGHWAY IS IN COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES TO REIMBURSE THE FUNDS USED.

**MR ACTING SPEAKER,**

**HAVING SAID THIS, WE ARE NOT DISCOURAGED BUT MORE ENCOURAGED BY THE COMMENTS AND CRITICISMS RAISED TO DO MORE AND ENJOY THE SATISFACTION OF REACHING ALL OUR PEOPLE WITH BETTER ROAD CONNECTIVITY.**

HENCE, IN MOVING FORWARD TO KEEP ON PAR WITH THE MEDIUM-TERM PROGRAM, TARGETS FOR 2024-2027, AS THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAM IS A LONG-TERM 20-YEAR PROGRAM, THERE ARE MORE THAN K3 BILLION WORTH OF PROJECTS AT VARIOUS STAGES OF THE PROJECT CYCLE INCLUDING PROJECTS WORTH K1 BILLION AT THE TENDER STAGE AS FOLLOWS.

**TABLE 3: PROJECTS AT PROCUREMENT STAGE.**

<b>PROJECT NAME</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATE</b>
1. 4-LANE HIGHWAY FROM LALOKI TO EDEBU JUNCTION AS PART OF THE PORT CITY EXPANSION PLAN.	K400 MILLION
2. MAPRIK- LUMI-AITAPE MISSING LINK: SEPIK HIGHWAY – COSTAL HIGHWAY	K100 MILLION
3. KIMBE TO KANDRIAN -GASMATA ROAD	K200 MILLION
4. NEW BRITAIN SOUTH COAST ROAD: KOKOPO-POMIO-KANDRAIN	K200 MILLION
5. NEW BRITAIN HIGHWAY MISSING LINK SECTION: MILO BRIDGE-PANDI RIVER	K150 MILLION
6. KUNDIAWA-GUMINE-KARIMUI	K200 MILLION
7. LOSSUK JUNCTION-BO JUNCTION-MATAKAN: WEST COAST ROAD,	K100 MILLION
8. LUFA-OKAPA-KAINANTU ROAD	K100 MILLION
9. MAGI HIGHWAY MISSING LINK: MOREGUINA (CENTRAL) – GADAI SU (MILNE BAY).	K300 MILLION
10. ENGA SEPIK ECONOMIC CORRIDOR ROAD PROGRAM	K200 MILLION
11. RAI COAST HIGHWAY: RAMU HWY JUNCTION, ATO – KELENOA, TEWAI SIASSI DISTRICT TO FINSHAFEN.	K200 MILLION
12. RAI COAST HIGHWAY: RAMU HWY JUNCTION, ATO – KELENOA, TEWAI SIASSI DISTRICT TO FINSCHAFEN.	K200 MILLION
13. MADANG BAIYER CORRIDOR: MT. HAGEN – BAIYER RIVER – SIMBAI – MADANG UNDER INDIAN EXIM BANK.	K100 MILLION
14. VANIMO-BEWANI-GREEN RIVER HIGHWAY UPGRADE TO SEAL	K250 MILLION
15. KETARABO-KABIUFA 4-LANE HIGHWAY	K120 MILLION
16. COFFEE AND TEA PLANTATION ROADS IN WAGHI VALLEY	K48 MILLION
17. VANIMO-AITAPE ROAD UPGRADING TO SEAL	K200 MILLION
18. HOSKINS-KIMBE 4-LANE HIGHWAY-INDIAN EXIM BANK	K60 MILLION
19. MADANG 4-LANE ROAD	K70 MILLION
20. WEWAK 4-LANE ROAD UPGRADE	K100 MILLION

21. VANIMO TOWN ROADS UPGRADE TO SUPPORT BORDER TRADE	K100 MILLION
22. BAIYER-MADANG MISSING LINK	K200 MILLION
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>K3.598 BILLION</b>

WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE BALANCE OF TENDERS, IT IS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED THAT BY THE BEGINNING OF 2025, THERE SHOULD ALREADY BE A ROAD NETWORK THAT EXTENDS FROM MADANG-RAMU TO LAE TO BULOLO TO ASEKI TO KAIN TIBA TO KOTIDANGA TO EPO TO PORT MORESBY THEN TO ABAU THEN TO ALOTAU.

THEN DURING THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAMME, THE WUTUNG BORDER (SANDAUN PROVINCE) TO WEWAK AND THEN TO BOGIA (MADANG PROVINCE) SECTION WILL BE CONSTRUCTED SO THAT AN UNINTERRUPTED ROAD NETWORK COVERING THE ENTIRE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE MAINLAND IS CONNECTED.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

**FURTHERMORE, IN ORDER TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING RESPONSIBILITIES NECESSARY TO GET THE BEST VALUE FOR MONEY, WE WELCOME THE PRIME MINISTERS CALL YESTERDAY FOR EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT AUDITS TO VERIFY AND CONFIRM THE FIGURES THAT ARE PROVIDED TODAY.**

**MR ACTING SPEAKER,**

***ENSURING INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL AUDITS IS KEY TO ADDING OVERALL VALUE FOR MONEY ON THIS MASSIVE INVESTMENTS ON THE CONNECT PNG PROGRAM.***

INTERNALLY AT WORKS AND HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT, WE ARE ALREADY ENGAGING INDEPENDENT PROJECT AUDIT FIRMS FROM CANADA AND THE USA TO THOROUGHLY ASSESS CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE AND ENSURE THE PROJECTS MEET A NUMBER OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.

THESE AUDITS ENSURE THAT WORK OUTPUTS MEET TECHNICAL, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS NECESSARY FOR HIGH-QUALITY AND LONG-LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE OUTPUTS THAT GIVE VALUE FOR MONEY.

NOTABLY, AUDITS ON PROJECTS LIKE LAE CITY CEMENT ROADS AND HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UNDER THE ADB FUNDING HAVE BEEN THE FIRST LOT OF PROJECTS AUDITED AND HAVE IDENTIFIED DEFECTS AND POOR PERFORMANCE ISSUES, LEADING TO INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPROPRIATE REMEDIAL WORKS UNDER THE EXISTING CONTRACTS.

**MR ACTING SPEAKER,**

LET ME INFORM THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER WHO APPROVED THE HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY ADB PROGRAM LOAN THAT TECHNICAL AUDITORS HAVE IDENTIFIED 30% SCOPE SHORTFALL IN THE ORIGINAL SCOPE THAT MASSIVELY AFFECTED THE PROJECTED 12% RATE OF RETURN ON THE LOAN FUNDED ROAD INVESTMENT.

OUR GOVERNMENT HAD TO FUND ADDITIONAL K400MILLION TO MAKE UP FOR THE SCOPE SHORTFALLS BY FIXING UP LONGSTANDING PROBLEM SECTIONS OF DAULO PASS, CHIMBU SECTION, KASSAM PASS AND INTRODUCING STABILISATION TECHNOLOGY ON 40% OF THE 430KM SECTION OF THE HIGHWAY.

THIS ADDITIONAL COST HAS INCREASED THE OVERALL SERVICE LIFE OF THE ROAD AND IS EXPECTED TO GIVE HIGH RATE OF RETURN OVER THE LOAN REPAYMENT PERIOD.

**MR ACTING SPEAKER**

FURTHERMORE WE ARE **ADOPTING BEST PRACTICES AND HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN STANDARDS**: WE PRIORITIZE DESIGN READINESS AND DELIVERY OF CONNECT PNG ROAD PROJECTS TO HIGH-QUALITY STANDARDS, AIMING FOR LONGER OPERATIONAL LIFESPANS WITH MINIMAL MAINTENANCE COSTS. NOTABLY, OVER 400 KM OF HIGHWAYS HAVE ALREADY BEEN STABILIZED, INCLUDING SECTIONS OF THE HIGHLANDS HIGHWAY, RAMU-MADANG, LAE CITY ROADS, NEW BRITAIN HIGHWAY, MAGI HIGHWAY, ENGA HIGHWAY, AND GULF-SHP HIGHWAY.

THESE ROAD SECTIONS HAVE PROVEN TO LAST MORE THAN 5 YEARS WITHOUT DEVELOPING POTHoles, EXEMPLIFYING OUR COMMITMENT TO LONG-TERM INFRASTRUCTURE QUALITY.

**MR. ACTING SPEAKER,**

ROME WAS NOT BUILT OVER NIGHT. PROBLEMS OF MANY DECADES OF UNDER-FUNDING AND POOR MANAGEMENT CANNOT BE FIXED OVER-NIGHT. BUT BE REST ASSURED THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE ARE SLOWLY DOING THINGS RIGHT TO ENSURE CONNECT PNG CAN IMPROVE OUR ROAD NETWORK TO RIGHT STANDARDS THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON A SUSTAINABLE BASIS FOR OUR COUNTRY.

IT IS AN ABSOLUTE SHAME AND HYPOCRISY FOR SOME OF OUR LEADERS WHO VICIOUSLY DEMAND DEVELOPMENT BUT AT THE SAME TIME NEGATIVELY CRITICISE WHAT THE MARAPE-ROSSO GOVERNMENT IS DOING EXACTLY THAT: BRINGING DEVELOPMENT TO OUR PEOPLE.

THEY ARGUE FOR NOTHING BUT TO ENSURE THAT OUR PEOPLE CONTINUE TO BE TRAPPED IN MISERY AND POVERTY IN THE SAME WAY OUR ANCESTORS HAVE BEEN LIVING FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS IN THE LOCAL ENCLAVES.

THE MARAPE-ROSSO GOVERNMENT IS THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE IT WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF THE COUNTRY.

TRUST ME HON. MEMBERS WITH YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT IN THIS NOBLE COURSE OF 100% ROAD CONNECTION BY 2040.

TRULY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

LETS WORK TOGETHER FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY,  
PNG

**GOD BLESS.**

**HON. SOLAN MIRISIM, MP**

MINISTER FOR WORKS AND HIGHWAYS