



June 2012 edition

Watchdog warns of misuse of DSIP and DSG funds

The Ombudsman Commission, empowered under Section 27 (4) of the Constitution has issued a very stern warning by way of a Constitutional Direction to all the implementing agencies of District Support Improvement Program (DSIP) and District Support Grants (DSG) funds.



Ombudsman John Nero and Ombudsman Phoebe Sangetari

The Commission issued the Direction on 15 June 2012 as a result of information received giving raise to allegations of certain Members of Parliament using public funds to lure votes in the general elections.

Ombudsmen John Nero and Phoebe Sangetari explained; "It is our constitutional duty to ensure that all various development funds either paid under the DSIP or DSG or held under any publicly established Trust Account must be preserved from being misused, misapplied and misappropriated by those having access to them especially during this time of elections."

The Commission expects all the Leaders and their respective Joint Provincial Planning and Budget Priority or Joint

District Planning and Budget Priority Committees, all Heads of the strategic government departments, the Governor for the Central bank and the Heads of the various banking institutions to fully comply with this Constitutional Direction.

It further warned that failure to comply with the terms of the Constitutional Direction will land the respective offenders in deeper waters. The Members of the Commission stated that offenders can be either prosecuted under the Leadership Code or under Section 23 of the Constitution which allows for sanctions that would attract imprisonment for jail terms not exceeding 10 years or fines not exceeding K10, 000.

The Commission explained that the Direction should not for any moment taken as impeding any planned development initiatives but rather intends to ensure the Leaders and those concerned are complying with the relevant laws and guidelines. Furthermore, to ensure these funds are drawn for the projects intended.

VISION

Fair, just and effective leadership and good governance in Papua New Guinea.

MISSION

To promote and foster quality leadership and good governance and strengthen respect for Rule of Law in accordance with Section 218 of the Constitution.

The Ombudsman Commission is committed to (6) fundamental values in all dealings with government bodies, the private sector, members of the public and the leaders.

The values uphold are;

- ◇ Impartiality
- ◇ Integrity
- ◇ Independence
- ◇ Accountability
- ◇ Responsiveness
- ◇ Respect

[Ombudsman Commission Strategic Plan 2011– 2015]

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OC and implementing agencies form working group committee

Following the issuing of Direction under Section 27 (4) of the Constitution on 15 June 2012 to preserve all public funds held in various District Support Improvement Project (DSIP), District Support Grant (DSG) and Trust accounts over the election period, the Ombudsman Commission and its strategic agencies have formed a Working Group Committee (WGC) to implement the Direction.

The WGC comprising of the National Planning Department, Department of Finance, Rural Development & Implementation and the Commission as chairmanship, commenced discussions in the first meeting on Wednesday 20 June 2012.

Ombudsman John Nero Chairman of the WGC clarified that the Direction is not for any moment impeding any development but intends to use the funds appropriately. Ombudsman Nero said the Commission would facilitate the DSIP funding process to ensure DSIP funds are in order and guidelines are followed.

The Commission expects all Leaders and their respective Joint Provincial Planning and Budget Priority or Joint District Planning and Budget Priority Committees, all Heads of strategic government departments, the Governor of the Central bank and the Heads of the various banking institutions to fully comply with this Constitutional Direction. Non-compliance to the Direction may result in Criminal or Civil charge laid against them.

Department of Finance Secretary Steven Gibson said the Direction is clear and as a strategic agency they will execute it. Mr Gibson further stated that he will work together with the Commission to make sure the Direction is communicated to the Provincial and District Treasuries.

Present at the meeting were National Planning Representative Richiet Thanda, Finance Secretary Steven Gibson, Rural Development & Implementation Acting Secretary Paul Sai'i and Senior Management of the Commission. The WGC is determined to come up with ground rules and proper accessing and accounting of these funds.

editorial

*Welcome to June's edition of
Wasdok Newsletter*

Hello everyone

In this month's edition of Wasdok Newsletter, we bring you stories about the Commission's swearing in of two MOC acting appointments and many more.

We had the Commission issue a very stern warning to implementing agencies about the use of DSIP and DSG funds. Commission received complains that some Members of Parliament were misusing public funds in the election period.

You will also read about Lae Regional Office PEP to East Sepik Province. We had one of our Media Officers going with them on the trip.

Enjoy reading

Editor

DPA not happy with pre-election awareness arrangement in Wewak

“We are not happy with the team from the Ombudsman Commission’s head office who were here in March for the pre-election leadership awareness”, said Deputy Administrator for East Sepik province Mr Richard Kombo.

Mr. Kombo said they were not aware of the officers’ visit to the province. He said there are processes and procedures to inform the Provincial Administration of any form of visit. He added that there was a breach of protocol. “We have a regional office in Lae so why not come through them or through our liaison officer?” He said communicating through the regional office was easier and quicker. He said by-passing the regional office shows disrespect.

Ombudsman Commission’s Momase Regional Office Manager, Mr. Allan Barilae said the team from Lae office was on its normal Public Education Program awareness. Mr. Barilae said this was their second trip to East Sepik Province. “We are visiting the schools and talking to teachers and children about the importance of good governance and good leadership to prepare them as fu-

ture leaders besides telling them about the roles and functions of the Ombudsman Commission”.

Apart from the Public Education awareness, Mr. Kombo said OC’s visit was on the same week with election training for polling officials and winding down of the campaign period. He further stated that the visit was timely so that whatever the OC Team imparts through the school teachers and children, they would then assist with the information sharing with their communities when they take their second term holidays during the polling period and in some ways would go towards sensible voting.

According to Mr. Kombo, law and order in East Sepik during the election period was peaceful. He was of the view that supporters should not be closely attached to candidates and be emotionally affected. “Once this candidate gets into parliament he does not have all the free funds to give you”. “It will have to come out of his salary and when he does not have enough to give you then that is when he digs into public monies”, he added.

Students urged to vote a leader with good leadership qualities

“We are visiting school children and talking to them about good leadership and good governance as the way forward for PNG as they will be future leaders of our country”. These were the words of Ombudsman Commission’s Momase Regional Manager Mr. Allan Barilae during the Public Education Program awareness in Maprik Secondary School in East Sepik on 20 June 2012.

The Ombudsman Commission has taken another shift in its awareness program targeting young people because they will be the future leaders of this country.

Speaking to almost a thousand students and their teachers, Mr. Barilae said it was election time and we need to know how to identify and vote in a good leader who has integrity and is accountable for his/her actions. He added that this leader should be transparent, be fair and be able to deliver services down to the people once he/she gets elected into parliament.

Principal of the school, Mr. Raymond Bakami appreciated OC team’s visit to the school saying the timing was right as forty percent of the student population will be voting.

The Ombudsman Commission is coming out and talking to young people with the aim of developing them into good leaders so that they do not repeat the mistakes of today.



A student of Maprik High School asking a question

Mr. Barilae also took time to explain to the students the roles and functions of the Ombudsman Commission and how the office can assist them.

The students showed great interest and listened attentively to Mr. Barilae’s talk despite the hot sun. “You are our small ombudsman. We will depend on you to take this information out when you go home”.

Deputy Principal Mr. William Rajam said it was a privilege to have met the officers from the regional office which brings their communication relationship closer and easier. On behalf of his staff and students he commended the OC team for a valuable presentation.

Boram prisoners unhappy with the transfer notice

“We do not want to leave our province and families behind”, said worried prisoners at the Boram Prison in East Sepik province. This cry came about after the prisoners were told they were going to be moved to Beon Jail in Madang Province.



**Boram CS Commander,
Aaron Minau**

The notice came out in a press release by the Acting Correctional Service Commissioner Martin Balthazar and was aired on Karai (NBC) on Sunday 17 June 2012 that Boram prisoners will be transferred to Madang; however, this did not go down well with the prisoners.

Boram Jail Commander, Mr. Aaron Minau explained that the reasons for the transfer of prisoners was because of the extension of the Boram Airport runway, the K63 million project

construction of the new prison and the run-down facilities in the Boram prison cells. He added that the prison compound and staff houses were built in 1965 hence, the current status of the prison facilities is not fit for human beings to live in and the perimeter fence are all rusty causing prisoners to escape easily.

However, Commander Minau said before the transfer exercise, they should consider some of the issues and concerns from prisoners. There is also going to be a security risk if movement occurs.

Currently there are 60 CS officers coming on shifts to look after the 160 prisoners.

Both the female and male prisoners said they are happy with the way the officers are taking care of them except the remandees showed frustration over the long delays of their court cases. Several of them complained that they have been in prison awaiting their court cases for more than 5 years.



Top: Overlooking the Boram Correctional Institution compound. The Boram Correctional Institution was built 47 years ago and the facilities are run down.

Left: The redevelopment plan structure for Boram Correctional Institution in Wewak.



Acting Ombudsman Gabe Hekoi



Acting Chief Ombudsman Phoebe Sangetari

Ombudsman Phoebe Sangetari, one of the current serving three Ombudsmen and the second lady Ombudsman after Jean Kekedo has reached a milestone with her acting appointment as Chief Ombudsman of the Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea by the Ombudsman Appointing Committee

recently.

Ms Sangetari a Lawyer by profession is from the Oro Province. She now becomes the first female Ombudsman to have gone as far as being appointed the acting Chief Ombudsman in PNG history. Never in the past has a female being appointed to the post of Chief Ombudsman or acting Chief Ombudsman.

The acting appointment comes after the Chief Ombudsman Chronox Manek fell ill. The Chief Ombudsman has been away on sick leave since April of this year.

With the elevation of Ombudsman Sangetari, the former Secretary to the Commission Mr Gabe Hekoi an accountant and a long serving senior Officer in the Ombudsman Commission was appointed as an acting Ombudsman. Acting Ombudsman Hekoi is from Elevela village in the National Capital District.

Both Sangetari and Hekoi were sworn in at the Waigani National Court by Justice Hartshorn on Friday 22 June 2012.

Letter of the month

"When I went to the polls, I was thinking of voting a leader with good qualities and not someone who would buy my vote. The North West electorate had a lot of candidates which confused me. Regional candidates like Powes Parkop showed good leadership but I was also thinking of voting female candidates.

I was influenced by my family on whom to vote but it was at my own will I wanted to vote whoever I thought had qualities of good leadership.

I had joined the queue and was waiting for my turn to cast my vote. There were unfamiliar faces in the line to vote. Most of them were new faces that I do not see where we live. People were rushing to vote unlike previous elections where you would vote in an orderly manner.

When I finally reached the polling booth and I skimmed through the list to see my name, I was surprised that somebody has already voted using my name. Having to stand in line for some while and to find you are not going to vote is so frustrating.

The polling officials then told me to wait till everyone voted and I would go and use some other persons name to vote since they used mine. That was a corrupt deal so I told them I am not going to do that.

I suggest in future the Electoral Commission introduce ID cards to eligible voters to avoid such incidents."

Frustrated eligible voter...

Smarsh...

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