



WASDOK NIUS



EYE WITHIN



June / July 2013 edition

OC welcomes new Chief



Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua flanked by two young lasses dressed in Jiwaka traditional attire as he is treated to a welcome cake at the Highlands Regional Office in Mt Hagen, WHP. Chief Ombudsman Lua was at the Mt Hagen office as part of his first official visit to OC Regional Offices not long after he commenced duties.

It was all smiles for the officers of the Ombudsman Commission when they welcomed the new Chief Ombudsman on 4 July 2013

Rigo Lua former Chairman of Public Service Commission was officially welcomed to the office after being sworn in as the Chief Ombudsman a day before.

Chief Ombudsman Lua's maiden trip to the office included a briefing with his two colleague Ombudsmen and a staff meeting.

As the outgoing Acting Chief Ombudsman, Phoebe Sangetari briefed the new Chief Ombudsman of the struggles encountered during her acting capacity. One of which was no MOC meetings to progress matters before the Commission. Ombudsman Sangetari said despite the difficulties she kept assuring officers to do their best.

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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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Experiencing the rough roads of Menyamya District

By **Dunstan Uluchoe in Lae**

Menyamya is considered the last frontiers tucked away in the rugged terrains bordering Gulf and the Eastern Highlands Provinces on the South Western border of Morobe Province. It lies over the main mountain divide of PNG, with the Tauri River flowing South to the Gulf and the Watut River flowing North.

While on a Public Education outreach, we have seen for ourselves the very sorry state of the district infrastructures despite increased funding in the last five years. By now, all the 89 districts in the country should have received millions of Kina each in District Services Improvement Programs (DSIP) funds alone since 2008. District Services Grants (DSG), National

Agriculture Development Program (NADP) and Rehabilitation of Education Sector Infrastructure (RESI) funds are other major funding to districts. Adding the total of all these funds together would see a massive cash transfer to the districts like never before. But what is there to show for these massive amounts of direct cash flowing to the districts?

Menyamya District is one area where it has had its share of these development funds. Despite the millions of direct funds transfer, there is hardly any evidence of tangible development in the whole district. It is assumed bulk of these funds has been spent on the main road but our visit has proven otherwise. Menyamya is way behind in real physical infrastructure developments and this is directly attributed to lack of proper planning and ample government attention.

We made a comfortable drive out of Lae City to Watut on a Saturday at midday. The road was sealed and well maintained which made us think all was going to be good right through to Menyamya.

It took us only four hours to get to the border of Bulolo and Menyamya Districts. The ride from thereon is very dangerous and not suitable for inexperienced drivers on this section of the road. This is where drivers have to switch the gears to four wheels for the rest of the drive to Menyamya and upon return they must unlock the four wheels at this same spot.

As we drove on, we came to a one way passage which stretches over two kilometres and almost five metres deep creating a channel. We were stranded in there for about three hours manoeuvring our way out while other vehicles lined up on both ends of the road. After so many struggles, we were finally pulled out with a chain.

There was a sigh of relief but only for a short time then we faced another terrible experience. This time, the vehicle engine suddenly cut-off in the middle of another passageway. I tried igniting the engine but the ignition refused to start.

It was midnight by now and there was no way we could find help. It was raining heavily too and the place was freezing. We paid some boys to watch over the vehicle while we rented a nearby house to overnight.

In the morning, we were assisted by local mechanics that started the ignition through mechanical shortcut then we had to push, pull and dig mud, soil, sand and rocks to get the vehicle out but it was of little help only. Luckily a vehicle in front of us was generous enough to pull us out using a chain. We continued the rough drive until we arrived at the Menyamya District headquarters at around six o'clock in the evening.

We stayed in Menyamya for a week visiting schools and talking to the local people and public servants at the district about the roles and functions of the Ombudsman Commission and how the office can assist them in terms of receiving complaints.

The people expressed openly their frustrations on the lack of tangible developments despite hearing of millions of funds going direct to the district purse.

Their frustrations were directed at the Menyamya District Administration and their various elected representatives who have miserably failed to deliver any tangible and practical developments into the district over the last five to ten years.

All the government facilities are run-down including staff houses, no water & electricity supply, no banking & postal services, closed airstrips, closed health facilities, and worst the atrocious state of all the road networks district-wide.

Given the remoteness of most places, the costs involved and the lack of knowledge & accessibility to OC, our Public Education Program is becoming a real success. People want regular visits to districts and even direct to LLGs so that more people are informed and educated both on government services delivery systems and the process of lodging complaints.

While most of our past visits have been to the provincial and other districts of Morobe Province, this was the first to Menyamya District since independence though OC Regional Office has been here in the province for some decades.

editorial

*June / July edition of
WasDok Newsletter*

Hello readers!

We hope you have enjoyed reading the last edition of the WasDok Newsletter. In this edition, we feature the months of June & July together.

The highlight of this edition is the appointment of the new CO, Rigo Lua. You will read stories about his swearing in ceremony at the Government House and his commencement of duties.

In this edition are some officers' views on how they felt about the appointment of the Chief Ombudsman after the position was vacant for almost a year.

And to top it all up, a picture spread of CO's swearing-in and regional visit featuring Mt Hagen office.

Cheers!
Editor



Rigo Lua sworn-in as 6th Chief Ombudsman of PNG

After almost a year following the passing of the late Chief Ombudsman Chronox Manek, the announcement of the appointment of a new Chief Ombudsman was made on 20 June 2013.

Rigo Lua 53, of Kapari village in Central Province is the newly appointed Chief Ombudsman. Mr Lua was the former Chairman of the Public Service Commission.

Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua was sworn in as the 6th Chief Ombudsman of PNG by the Governor General of PNG Sir Michael Ogio at the Government House in Port Moresby on 2 July 2013.

In a media conference held after the swearing in ceremony, Chief Ombudsman Lua told reporters that he has a lot of confidence and brings a wealth of knowledge to deliver to the Ombudsman Commission.

Mr Lua a lawyer by profession said as the country is growing into prosperity, the Ombudsman Commission as the government watchdog needs to rise up to ensure that PNG's wealth is not misappropriated but used according to laws of the country.

Chief Ombudsman Lua said the Ombudsman Commission's integrity is very important and he would carry out his responsibilities without fear or favour.



CO Lua swearing the oath of office before the Governor General, Sir Michael Ogio.

When asked what his plans were as the new Chief Ombudsman, Mr Lua said he will make his views known after consultation with the two Ombudsmen and officers of the Commission. His plans of his first 100 days in office would also be announced there and then.

Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua also thanked the Ombudsman Appointments Committee (OAC) for having confidence in him to serve in this important office.

Ombudsman Phoebe Sangetari when welcoming the new Chief Ombudsman thanked the OAC for the faith, trust

and confidence they had in her as a woman to lead the Ombudsman Commission. "We were faced with a lot of difficulties but we have done our best to keep the office going," said the outgoing Acting Chief Ombudsman. She added that she is looking forward to working with the new Chief Ombudsman to progress things in the Commission.

Ombudsman John Nero echoed similar sentiments assuring the Chief Ombudsman that he will give him his support and ensure that the public interest is served. He said with the appointment of the Chief Ombudsman, the business of the Commission will now proceed as much as possible.

The swearing-in ceremony was witnessed by his family, friends and the officers of the Ombudsman Commission.

A man who leads is someone with a vision: Lua

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(Standing) Chief Ombudsman Lua addressing officers in his first staff meeting. Seated along side him are Ombudsman Nero and Ombudsman Sangetari.

She urged the officers for their support and commitment and to give their best to serve the country under a new leadership.

Ombudsman John Nero when giving his remarks said consultation has always been lacking in the Commission and some officers have taken advantage of the situation. Ombudsman Nero said the integrity of the Commission is paramount and he will ensure that there is professionalism in the manner the Commission business is carried out. He assured the Chief Ombudsman that "we will set our differences aside and serve the people of PNG."

Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua when addressing officers said he is here on a mission to get the Commission where it is supposed to go. "A man who leads is someone with a vision," Chief Ombudsman Lua said.

He went on to say he values officers highly and appealed for their support to achieve his vision.



OC Fellowship

Joshua 5: 13 – 15

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up & saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

"Neither" He replied. "But as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come".

Then Joshua fell face down to the ground in Reverence, and asked Him. "What message does my Lord have for His servant?"

The Commander of the Lord's Army replied, "TAKE OFF YOUR SANDLES, FOR THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY". And Joshua did so.

Message:

Because the Lord has taken His position as the Captain of the army of God, the battle is the Lord's & Victory is Ours . Because He has come and taken His position and we are in His very presence, the place where He is, is made Holy & and you & I are standing or sitting whether in the office or in our homes, we are on Holy ground. All He is asking is for us to surrender & acknowledge our dependence and our need of him (Removing of the sandal = Act of Surrender)

By Miriam Wawe

Stakeholders invited for budget and planning workshop

The Ombudsman Commission for the first time invited its stakeholders to provide an insight in the planning and budgeting aspects of a government agency.

Bruce Avei – Senior Budget Officer from Department of National Planning & Monitoring (DNPM) and Rhoddie Paut-Nawara – Senior Policy & Planning Officer, Treasury Department did presentations during the Budget and Planning workshop held at Grand Papua on 8-9 July 2013.

"Government Budget is a yearly financial plan that accounts for revenue collection and government expenditure in past years and projects revenue and government spending for the coming financial year. The purpose of budgeting is to ensure that funds are spent on programs that produce the best output and benefits the majority" explained Mr Avei.

He said Budget is a financial plan of government for a definite period. It accounts for money collected and spent in the past year, and sets out plans for spending and collection for the next year. Mr Avei said there are many things that public money can be spent on. However, as we do not have enough money to do all these things so we have to prioritize. Prioritizing involves making difficult choices in choosing certain projects to fund over others. The projects selected for funding should produce the best outcome for PNG.

Agencies seeking additional funding for new programs must provide a detailed justification outlining the additional expenditure, how it will be funded and explain how it relates to the Government's spending priorities.

They may not get everything they ask for, even if it is under their ceiling. The budget process is about Government prioritizing allocation of finite and scarce resources – it is not a process of agreeing to fund agency requests.

One of the areas that raised concerns to the Ombudsman Commission was the shift from one-line budgeting process to Itemized. Ombudsman John Nero, who is an accountant by profession and Ombudsman responsible for accounting aspects of the Commission, raised concerns that the change would make it difficult to move funds around especially for unplanned activities. Ombudsman Nero said the Commission is a self-accounting organization and its business is dictated by external forces hence there is no flexibility in the itemized budgeting process. He asked that the Department of Treasury have a proper briefing with the Commission regarding the change in the budgeting process.

Budget is supposed to be tight to the annual plan of an organisation hence officers were told to follow the SMART (*Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Tangible/Timeliness*) principle when planning their activities for next year.

The workshop to put together the 2014 Budget estimates and the Ombudsplan, was facilitated by the Policy & Planning Unit (PPU) of the Commission, thanks to Acting PPU Manager-Nancy Warika and others who assisted.



Right: Genly Malawae, Logistics Manager with the help of Augustine Grimbai present 2013 planned activities and budget estimates for Support Services Division during the workshop.



VOICE BOX

After almost 12 months the position of the Chief Ombudsman (CO) was vacant, the OAC made an announcement of the appointment of Rigo Lua as new CO. The announcement brought relief to the officers as well as the rest of Papua New Guinea. *WasDok Newsletter* asked how officers felt about the long awaited appointment and here is what some of them had to say...



Dorothy Tamu
NGI Office - Kokopo

"It has been quite a long wait to have a new Chief Ombudsman appointed after the passing of the late Chief Ombudsman Chronox Manek. We have gone through a difficult time as an organisation and it is a relief to officers here in the New Guinea Islands Regional Office in Kokopo. Knowing that we now have a full Commission, we will see progress with our backlog work and have staff issues addressed to bring back staff moral."



Dustan Uluchoe
Momase Office - Lae

"Staff moral has been very low over the past few months, hence, this is very good news for the Commission and I believe all the officers will share similar sentiments with me. The Commission can now move forward and see progress. Given that we now have a full Commission, complaints being referred to the Head Office can now be endorsed by MoC and some of them can become investigation cases. In terms of recruitment, the Momase Regional Office is down with staff; hence, we are looking forward to a speedy recruitment process."



"I am at ease and looking forward to working under the leadership of the new Chief Ombudsman. We now have the full MoC and we are content that finally decisions can be made at that level and work can progress."

Cecilia Masuin
Head Office - Port Moresby



Lorraine Manuai
Head Office - Port Moresby

"I kind of have mixed feelings right now simply because you never know what tomorrow may bring. Otherwise, I have faith and quite believe the appointment has brought about stability in the organisation. With the appointment of the new Chief Ombudsman, I am happy that there is now a full MOC (Members of Commission)."



Alphonse Kent
Highlands Office - Mt. Hagen

"I have confidence in the new Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua to make decisions for this organisation to move forward without fear or favour. It is good to have a leader with a vision and I believe that there will be big changes in the days and years to come under his leadership. He has a character I admire and I feel assured that with the vast experience he has in the public sector, he will put this organisation in order. I speak from my heart after listening to him talk to us here at the Mt. Hagen Office whilst on his regional visit."



Anthonia Joy Kema
Head Office - Port Moresby

"The new Chief Ombudsman's appointment is relieving and hopefully a lot of the Commission's goals and objectives will be fully achieved. Therefore I look forward to my contribution in helping the Commission realise these under the new leadership of Mr Rigo Lua."



Picture Snippets...



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