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VISION

By 2019; Ombudsman Commission is seen as a vibrant, premier institution in pursuit of providing good governance and leadership in Papua New Guinea.

MISSION

Strengthen Ombudsman Commission's institutional capacity to undertake 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 (8) 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
- ◇ Transparency
- ◇ Unity

Ombudsman Nero dies

The Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea has again lost another young and vibrant leader. Late Ombudsman John Nero's sudden passing on 11 January 2014 had caused shock to his fellow Members of the Commission and officers. He died at his home village in Kasena, Daulo District, Eastern Highlands Province whilst on leave.

Late Ombudsman Nero joined the Commission as a senior investigator in 1991 after working as a Finance Inspector with the Finance & Planning Department for four and a half years. He was later promoted to Deputy Director Leadership in 2002 until his Appointment as Ombudsman in 2005. Late Nero was serving his second term in office as Ombudsman until his death.

Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua described Late John Nero as a man of vision, a team player, was tough, frank, no



Late Ombudsman John Nero

non-sense, meticulous and patriotic. He was that kind of person who stood by his views and opinions simply because those were the principles he believed in. These factors make this man of Kasena village an outstanding public servant and leader as an Ombudsman.

"We have truly lost another young and vibrant leader who still had much to offer in his profession and leadership skills," said Chief Ombudsman Lua. He recalls vividly their last phone conversation on Thursday 10 January 2014

without knowing this was going to be their last moments of talk. "I called him on my mobile (phone) to talk to him on certain sensitive matters but in particular to consult him on our way forward comes year 2014".

In the course of their chat Chief Ombudsman Lua was assured by Late Ombudsman Nero that he will resume duties as a fresh and changed man so they can work together to move the Commission forward. Chief Ombudsman Lua added that he has lost a valuable member of his team just as the Commission and the country has lost another prominent, intelligent officer of the state.

The Officers of the Ombudsman Commission know the Late Ombudsman Nero as a straight shooter and a firm decision maker. His style of leadership will be missed by his work colleagues.

Students use moonlight to study

The education of students attending Holy Cross High School on Nissan Island in North Bougainville is greatly affected as a result of poor management by the school and more or less a consequence of the government's negligence to service delivery.

Students have been using the moon light to study at nights because of lack of power supply. This has affected student academic results for almost four months. The school also has very limited resources available for student learning. Four officers from the Ombudsman Commission visited this high school whilst on a public education awareness on the island.

It is sad to see that the dormitories and classrooms do not have lights at night and so students turn to sit on the lawn or along the footpaths to study or complete their homework. This is one of the contributing factors to students' poor academic results. "The school really needs a good principal if we want to see change", said one of the students. He added that apart from the electricity problem, the school library does not have enough resources available for students to do research or extra reading. Also, the science laboratory does not have equipment to carry out experiments and so there are no practical tests too.

In addition, the student stressed that the board of management should seriously look into the students welfare as well. Another student said there is no school clinic and so they go to the health centre but when there is no medicine students are forced to treat themselves. "When we have sores or cuts, we use bush vines as plasters". Often when students are sick or need pocket money from their parents, communication again is unreliable. It really depends on the digicel and citifone networks. There is no way parents can send money to their children except through people travelling to Nissan from Buka.

Sometimes the school runs out of food supply and when this happens, students feed on wild fruits, coconuts and raw pawpaw. The situation forces them to steal. In addition, a female student mentioned that sexual relationships also exist in the school between the male teachers and female students.



Students of Holy Cross High School on Nissan Island listening attentively to officers of the Commission do awareness on OC's roles and functions.

This is so that these students can sustain a living during difficult times.

In the beginning of each academic year, a total of 430 students are enrolled, however, the number continues to decrease every time students go on holidays mainly because of transportation difficulties, strong winds and the high cost of boat fare. One of the students interviewed is from Wakunai on mainland Bougainville. He pays K30.00 to travel from Wakunai to Kokopau then K2.00 to cross over to Buka town and K100.00 student fare to Nissan Island. He stressed that the school must see the need of purchasing a dinghy or providing boat service for the students. "Transportation really affects us. Sometimes we do not go for holidays or our parents do not come to visit us", says a student from Wakunai.

editorial

Hello WasDok Nius readers,

Welcome to this year's first publication of the WasDok Nius. We have a 'new look' for the newsletter and our publications will now be released bi-monthly.

We have also included a column on page 4 'OC Services' in which we will be educating you on the different services OC provides. We have begun giving you an overview of the Ombudsman and how it came into what it is today.

The Ombudsman Commission as an organisation started the year off with yet another loss in the sudden passing of Ombudsman John Nero.

Even though the year began on a slow note, it has come with new challenges especially the Members of the Commission being one member less.

Nevertheless, the Commission commenced the year with a Dedication Service to commit its work and plans to God.

The Chief Ombudsman challenged officers to work and plan smarter with a coordinated effort to achieve the goals outlined in the activity plan for the year.

Cheers!

Publication Team



Goroka receives the body of Late Ombudsman Nero

In a welcome ceremony fitting for a leader, the people of Eastern Highlands Province (EHP) lined up the airport awaiting the arrival of the body of Late Ombudsman John Nero from Port Moresby on 24 January 2014.

Present at the airport to receive the body of late Ombudsman Nero were the Eastern Highlands Provincial Governor Honourable Julie Soso, Member for Henganofi Honourable Robert Atiyafa, Acting Provincial Administrator Bill Kavanamur, Daulo District Administrator John Morgia, relatives and the people of EHP.

The body of late Ombudsman Nero was accompanied by an OC delegation lead by Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua, Member for Daulo Honourable Ron Ganarafo and Nero's immediate family. It was a moving moment to see friends, families and relatives weep openly as the Air Niugini officials were unloading the casket from the Q400 plane. A team of Correctional Service and Police officers were on site to take the casket from the plane and proceeded towards the waiting vehicle.

The airport area was filled with mourners from all over the Province to show respect and some just to have a glimpse of their son's casket.

Late Ombudsman Nero's casket was ushered out of the airport with a police escort followed by a fleet of more than ten vehi-

cles. There was a vehicle convoy around Goroka town before the casket was brought to the National Park for the Funeral Service. There was another big crowd gathered there for the Service. The Funeral Service was led by the Evangelical Brotherhood Church of Goroka.

Governor Soso described Ombudsman Nero's death as a great loss to the Province and she hopes that someone from Nero's family or from other parts of Eastern Highlands follow in the footsteps of Ombudsman Nero and rise up to the position he held in the Public Service. Member for Daulo Honourable Ganarafo also echoed similar sentiments saying that Ombudsman Nero was a very intellectual man and well respected for the position he occupied in the highly regarded office of the Ombudsman.

Chief Ombudsman Lua in his speech shared his sympathy with the family, relatives and people of EHP stating that he has not only



The widows Tabia and Martha and their children pay their last respect at the funeral service of their late husband and father Ombudsman John Nero at the Rev. Sioni Kami Memorial Church in Port Moresby.

lost a colleague but someone he regarded as a brother. In his short time as the Chief Ombudsman he has come to know Ombudsman Nero as a straight shooter and someone who stood by his words. "Ombudsman Nero is not only a loss to the people of EHP but a great loss to the Ombudsman Commission and Papua New Guinea as a whole."

The Commission officially handed over the body of late Nero to the Provincial Government before it was escorted to his family residence in Goroka town.

The Ombudsman Commission farewelled four of its retrenched officers on Friday 21 February 2014. The officers from left; Madeline Dira, Vahoita Raka, Stephen Yapulabe and Koma Pereilu. Together they have dedicated over 60 years of service to the Commission. The outgoing officers thanked the Commission for giving them the opportunity to work in the organisation. They have expressed satisfaction during their service in the Commission and will always be proud to be known as former employees of this great institution. Despite being happy to leave, they were frustrated over the high tax deductions from their final entitlements. Madeline Dira said the government was unjust to cut almost 50 per cent of her final entitlements as tax. The others shared similar sentiments.



OC Services

This column gives you an overview of the Ombudsman Commission and how it came into what it is today.

The Ombudsman institution originated from Sweden in 1713 and following military defeat by Russia, the King of Sweden skipped the country and sought refuge in Turkey. While in exile, the King appointed his representative back home to supervise the conduct of the administration and the judiciary during his absence. That representative was named the Ombudsman.

In 1809, the King was overthrown and a new Constitution was adopted. The Constitution gave the power to appoint the Ombudsman to Parliament and Parliament was to exercise the oversight authority over the use of executive power through the Ombudsman. Despite this changeover, the functions of the Ombudsman remained intact. However, over the years the institution underwent a metamorphosis. According to Reif, the Ombudsman institution evolved over time and changed from being a purely legislative monitor to a public complaints-driven process.

Not only did the institution undergo a noticeable metamorphosis but it also gained popularity. It spread from Sweden into other Scandinavian countries and Europe and from Europe into other continents. It is now well known around the world including the Pacific.

Today, the institution is to be found in many parts of the world boasting democratic and constitutional governance. It has assumed different variants in different countries with regards to title, extent of jurisdiction and constitutional positions within the State.

The Ombudsman institution today, regardless of variational referred to above, charged with the common oversight functions in the areas of the protection, promotion and enforcement of fundamental human rights and freedoms, good governance and the rule of law.

Continue in next edition

Attorney-General Kua pays tribute to Late Ombudsman Nero

Minister for Justice & Attorney General and Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl Honourable Kerenga Kua on behalf of the Government described Ombudsman Nero as a very independent thinker and actor based on the principles he believed in. "He was prepared to strike out on his own if he passionately believed he was right and the team was wrong simply for the purposes of maintaining his principles", said Honourable Kua.

Mr Kua stressed that the Late Ombudsman John Nero's life and passing should be a lesson to all those young people in Eastern Highlands Province, Asaro and Goroka that if they can produce a man of this calibre, he is sure there is heaps of young talents out there who could replicate and emulate the life, successes and achievements of John Nero,

The Late Ombudsman is survived by his two wives Tabea Trudi and Martha together with ten children. His body was laid to rest at Gireku village, Kasena, Asaro District in Eastern Highlands Province.

John was an ombudsman and served with the Ombudsman Commission which in itself we all know it is a very important public office in this country. It maintains a close watch on the performance of leadership both in the bureaucracy and in parliament. It ensures leaders check and account for their conduct to the people they have to serve.

Mr Kua added that because of that not many of us get to know the Members of the Commission and their officers. He explained that this is because the office requires them to remain apart from leaders over whom their jurisdiction touches so that in the eyes of the public, they maintain the perception of independence as well as not to compromise their duty to maintain watch over the leaders on behalf of the people.

"Before becoming a politician, I used to work as a lawyer in private practice. In line with my duty, I used to challenge some of the decisions that the Ombudsman Commission make of which John was part and partial; the decisions that affect some of our leadership both past and present in this country. It was during such court proceedings that the Ombudsman Commission was required to produce some of their notepads in court in order to support their own case. He recalled saying it was those reaffirmations that revealed to him who John was.

"When I read the internal memo, minutes, letters and correspondence generated from inside, I began to get a measure of who this man was and this was a real opportunity for me". He was not hesitant to cut out. If he had a disagreement with the team, he was prepared to strikeout on his own if he passionately believed he was right. He was an independent thinker and actor based on the principles he believed in.

Mr Kua stood in to speak on behalf of the Government to farewell the Late Ombudsman Nero.

Nissan Islanders neglected by Government

It was the Commission's first ever visit to this part of North Bougainville so we took time to also listen and gather complaints on issues that are affecting the people.

The general public do not really know about how the Ombudsman Commission can assist them in terms of lodging complaints. It was also important for them to know about the leadership code so that they become whistle blowers for their leaders.

Understanding the government system and how it operates is an important building block to service delivery. A lot of people who raised issues during a recent visit to Nissan Island in North Bougainville show that they do not really know the government system and processes and the different funding that are available.

A team of four officers led by Acting Regional Manager for New Guinea Islands Anthony Champanien was on Nissan Island for a week carrying out a public education program on the Ombudsman Commission's roles and functions, complaint handling, leadership code, human rights and police oversight. During our visit, I noticed that there was very little government presence here. There are no tangible development especially roads, hospital, schools, air strip and so forth. These clearly showed that mandated leaders and respective members of parliament are not assisting to deliver these services.

On the other hand, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARoB) Government does not clearly spell out the different administrative roles for its employees at district level, therefore, having duplicates. I gathered from some retired public servants that capacity building is a big problem in Nissan. Many of the skilled workers have moved out after the crisis leaving behind unqualified people filling in positions. Others like the District Manager, George Tarala have moved to live and oper-

ate from Buka town for almost a year and yet he still gets paid. This indicates that those at the provincial headquarters do not monitor the operation of the districts well. Locals have aired that the current political structure for ARoB does not suit them at the village level and should change.

One afternoon, I took time to visit a businessman named Charry Napto. Charry is from Wapenamanda in Enga Province and married to a local woman. He went to Nissan as a young trainee patrol officer in 1986 and worked his way up to be district administrator for Nissan in 1987 and then in 1994-97. "Before the crisis in 1989 Bougainville was one of the best provinces. There was nothing such as misuse or misappropriation of funds", Charry said. He added that with the kind of service delivery mechanisms in place at that time, the people were able to see development in terms of improved basic services such as schools, hospitals, airstrip, roads and so forth. There was even funding allocated every quarter for maintenance.

Many officers occupying positions at the district office have been hand-picked and given these jobs after the crisis. This is the result of incompetence or non-performance because they have not been trained. The crisis affected the whole province especially in terms of capacity building resulting in Nissan Island being drastically run-down after the crisis.

Apart from the other basic services, the locals and public servants are currently in dire need for transport services. Since the closure of the airstrip and boat services by the government, Charry saw this as a business opportunity and established a boat service from the island to Buka. Return fare per passenger is three hundred kina whilst chartering the boat would cost two thousand five hundred kina.



Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua when officiating in the hand-over take-over of Late Chief Ombudsman Chronox Manek's final entitlements called on the Public Curator's office to make awareness for officers to make a written Will to avoid dependents fighting over entitlements. The Public Curator thanked the Ombudsman Commission for having all payments ready and released the Commission of any liability on anything to do with Late Manek.

Seen in the picture is Chief Ombudsman Lua handing over Late Manek's final entitlements to Deputy Public Curator Mr Mosoro.

OC DEDICATION SERVICE

The Ombudsman Commission of Papua New Guinea began the year with a Dedication Service to commit the work and plans of the Commission to God. Chief Ombudsman Rigo Lua in his welcome message told the officers present that in order to work smart and advance using the limited resources, it has to come through God. “Ask Him for strength and knowledge and you can advance”.

“We are going to work smarter with a coordinated effort to achieve the goals we have outlined in our Ombudsplan”, Chief Ombudsman Lua added. He stressed that supervisors must coordinate well and work in consultation with their officers.

He said a coordinated effort will require the cooperation and team work of everyone. The Commission is looking at having a successful year 2014.

The Service was lead by Pastor Avis Lua of Agape Full Gospel Ministry.



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