

2008 CIMC National Development Forum

Opening address by Deputy Prime Minister Honourable Dr Puka Temus

Papua New Guinea has established a very effective process through CIMC (Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council) for establishing dialogues to collectively address issues which affect the nation; and that the resolution of the regional workshops are then brought to the NEC (National Executive Council) process. Many positive results have come out from the CIMC process. The government deeply values the outcome and the recommendations that come out of the CIMC projects.

Due to the current positive economic situation our country is facing right now, the National Government through the National Planning committee is discussing the need for a long term development strategy. We need to focus on a long term development path. By November 2009, we believe that the final investment decision will be made on the LLG (Local Level Government) project. That will then lock in a very positive economic outcome for the country and therefore the nation will need to look at a long term development strategy plan; a 30 - 40 years development plan for the nation.

On Monday, we called in the Provincial administrators, the Departmental heads and the heads of statutory organisations to help the government establish a frame work for developing a long term development strategy. Under that frame work, we will be looking at the hindsight experience over the last 33 years. We will be looking at the type of policies the nation adopted, the strategies we had implemented, the type of budget supports given to these priorities, the experiences over the past 33 years etc.

We have basically undertaken an audit since independence. With that audit and that hindsight experience, we are now looking at a long term development strategy on how we can better improve ourselves. For example; taking the cue from the last government when we developed the national fiscal responsibility legislation which was passed on the floor in the last term, the government this year is now pushing for a National Planning Legislation to establish a national planning system in the country. These are the challenges and the directions in which the government is going through.

We also want to input the outcome of the CIMC process, therefore this development forum is very critical because the NEC (National Executive Council) has made a decision to call all the governors and ministers of states in early September, to come together for a development summit. That summit will be chaired by the Prime Minister.

The outcomes that we are going through now and the outcomes of the processes that we have engaged through the National Planning Committee process will be tabled before the National Development Summit in four weeks time. The heads and governors will come together to discuss and accept the long term development framework. By November 2009 the government will then launch the 2010 - 2040 long term development strategy.

We nominated to launch this long term DSP (Development Strategy Plan) in November 2009 so that when the final decision is made on the LLG project, we will be given the assurance to have the resources needed to at least implement the DSP.

We will welcome any positive contributions of individuals and organisations and bring in the private sector at the same time. The National Planning Committee will be the steering committee for this long term development direction. The cabinet will establish a national long term development strategy planning task force. This task force won't be made up of bureaucrats, but prominent sons and daughters of PNG, private sectors, key NGOs (Non-Government Organisations), academics and research institutions.

This initiative will bring a lot of participations. As the chairman of the National Planning Committee, I will ensure that there is a high degree of national engagement and involvement so that by 2009 when the final product is launched, there is ownership of this long term development strategy.

I want to share with you three themes that should form the basis of the next three years projects under this CIMC process. When we went through the themes of transparency budget of accountability and how communities could be allowed to participate, these three themes were selected with the view that we would want a high degree of accountability and transparency so far as public finances and delivery of public goods and service are concerned. The people of Papua New Guinea and the government of today recognize the need for the nation to establish institutions and processes, so that there is a high degree of transparency and accountability.

Being a departmental head for six years before entering politics, and being a politician for four years, I believe that we have not allowed our rural masses to be strongly linked to the processes that we manage in Waigani, to the processes that we managed at the provincial head quarters.

The 80 % of our rural masses that are out there struggling every day to improve their lives on their own effort have been somewhat dislocated and displaced. We have over the years disempowered them. The nation is now looking for answers as to how we can empower them so that they can fully participate in nation building; that's the bottom line; I would want the CIMC for the next two years to look at how we can connect the rural masses out there in this process. I want to share three themes which I passionately believe could do that. These three themes are put under the heading of Rural Democratisation.

Theme 1: Rural Democratisation

We should first of all, seriously look at how we could effectively undertake social mobilization in the nation. I acknowledge our development partners, particularly from the UN because this is a theme which is very close to them.

I believe the nation and the CIMC process should look at social mobilization and the process we need to engage in, in order to allow the 87% of the rural masses to effectively

participate; and to lead them in closer to the district centers, lead them in closer to the provincial centers, and more importantly lead them in to Waigani so that there is that link all the way through from the village or ward level right through to Waigani.

I passionately believe that social mobilisation is a model for holistic development. This is the approach that will do two things, it will allow people to participate effectively and at the same time promote self-reliance. In the process people will identify their own resources and their own skills. There is too much reliance on the government, there is too much reliance on the bureaucracy and on the politician. We have to establish a process to effectively mobilize our masses. Therefore bringing in social mobilization will improve the concept of self-reliance in the country and thus move us away from the handout mentality we have created over the years.

Theme 2: What does that require?

This requires us to establish processes to undertake a social audit or a management tool where we can identify the needs of the rural masses and create planning programs to meet their needs at the ward level. That would include how monitoring systems would be undertaken to allow those rural masses to monitor their performances. An institutional process should be developed to allow the rural masses to participate and that process should be called the Rural Democratisation Process.

Theme 3: Social Contract

Social Contract where the state plays the lead role in providing the right policies and the right legislative frame work by allowing the rural masses particularly the wing man and the poor to participate at their front line. That I call a social audit that will then make the government establish a policy stance where people will now become actors; not politicians manipulating the decisions made by the rural people. Decisions in the rural areas must be determined by the rural masses because they know their needs and where their priorities are. No body, regardless of whether they are politicians, bureaucrats, private sector, money lenders or police, should manipulate our rural people. If the nation undertook this process we will allow our people to participate.

How do we make rural democratisation work? How do we empower people? Most of us talk about empowerment yet we haven't established a process where our people can be empowered. There are three platforms that we should take on; Capital, Knowledge and Organisation. We have talked for a long time about making our people accessible to credit facilities throughout the country. We are looking at re-organising the direction of our financial sector particularly the National Development Bank, so that it refocuses on making more credits available to our rural masses so that more capital credit is accessible to our rural masses.

We must have a strong knowledge based society at all levels. Therefore we must look at developing strong policies to make our people more knowledgeable. We have to create a national education system that will bridge in many learning pathways to allow our

children not to miss out, but to have another opportunity in education. We are now promoting vocational and technical institutions. We are looking at having a system where there are no drop-outs in our education system. We are looking at a policy under the long term development strategy whereby resources are now becoming available, and that PNG will entertain a policy that will enable us to attain the highest affordable standard of education in this country.

Organisation

I believe that as a nation, we have to start organizing our people including our farmers, youths and landowners. The churches play an important role in organising activities yet we are not learning from them. The churches have women networks and youth networks out there, yet their contribution is not being acknowledged. We have to look at this course of action and learn from them. For example, a National Farming Federation Policies should be put in place whereby farmers are involved in decision making at the agricultural level. I am now pushing for a national land reform program so that in the September sitting of Parliament, we will be amending the incorporated Land Act as well as the National Land Registration Act so that we'll use ILGs as economic healness for development and when communities out there want to voluntarily register their land, we have an institutional process to effectively manage that process. So these are some of the directions that we are moving in.

I thought I'd move away from the main theme just to give you an overall view because I believe that this is the right forum to bring these issues in. I look forward to a time when CIMC will hopefully pick up such ideas in the next year. We now have the best opportunity in the country to raise our hands and participate. I just want to re-echo the stance of the National Government. By the end of this year the economic growth rate will be 7.6% high. Over the next 6 months after approving all the management guidelines under the NADP as well as the District Service Improvement Program Funding, the Minister for Planning as well as the Treasurer has already received funds. Its account has K4 million. As the enormous amount of money will be flowing through out the country particularly in the rural masses, and delivery and accessibility of goods and services can be improved and maintained. So rather than complaining and worrying which will in turn, hinder our people from excelling, we are to make sure that accountability structures are in place.

At the moment one of the themes that the select parliamentary ombudsman committee has been undergoing is the re-look at the organic law on the Ombudsman; and strengthening our ombudsman commission is one of the strong recommendations that is been discussed. The leadership and the complainant are two sides of the Ombudsman Commission. Much attention has been put on the leadership aspect of the Ombudsman Commission and less on the complainant. If we establish a permanent parliamentary committee on the ombudsmen as strong as the public accounts committee, it will focus strongly on the latter, the complainant side. In doing this, there will be quick response in addressing and rectifying problems which will in turn make accountability of the delivery of goods and services transparent.

The core responsibility of the ombudsman is to protect the people. Thus this is partly the reason for institutionalising accountability structures. The community will only watch unless we empower them and give them an opportunity to make decisions, in partnership with the top levels of the society, for the betterment of their areas.