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**PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Respect Constitutional Role of Provincial Election Managers for Elections Integrity**

**Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2022, Port Moresby** – On the eve of the 2022 National Elections and in light of reports of administrative delays, the impartiality and integrity required by PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) officials in the provinces to uphold the constitutional guarantee of free, fair and safe elections has never been more crucial. This was the message shared with provincial election managers at a one-day workshop in Port Moresby hosted by Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) in partnership with the PNGEC. With only two months before the start of the elections, and delays on key electoral processes, TIPNG is working with partners to bolster mechanisms of electoral conduct including the integrity of decision making by constitutional office holders.

“When the Constitution speaks of Rights and Responsibilities we all must take note, these are not mere words, the Constitution makes and invokes guarantee. It is easier to understand when we say that the Constitution is a contract between the State and her People. The Constitution of Papua New Guinea promises and contracts to its people, to deliver free and fair elections. It promises one vote per person it implies that each citizen must cast their votes in confidence and not to be forced or placed under duress,” said Mr. Richard Kassman, TIPNG Director, in his address to workshop participants.

“The Office of the Electoral Commissioner is a constitutional office and it cannot be and should not be directed by other departmental heads. The Electoral Commissioner delegates that responsibility to Provincial Election Managers as constitutional officers. In the conduct of the National Elections, PNGEC Provincial Managers can work with the Provincial Administrators and Provincial Police Commanders to deliver the elections, but they do not take direction from those offices. PNGEC Provincial Election Managers make the decisions when it comes to elections,” said Mr. Kassman.

The workshop was attended by Electoral Managers from Morobe, East New Britain, New Ireland, Milne Bay, Central, NCD, Eastern Highlands and Jiwaka. The workshop was opened by Mr. Simon Sinai, PNG Electoral Commissioner, and had presentations by Janet Haue, National Capital District Commission and Mr. Gideon Ikumu, NCD Metropolitan Superintendent who spoke on Provincial Elections Steering Committees and the role of Elections Security Personnel respectively.

The workshop under TIPNG’s Building Elections Integrity through Partnership (BEIP) Project was to ensure greater accountability during elections and enforcement of election laws and processes. The sessions included activities on ethical dilemmas and electoral corruption risk assessment. Through the BEIP project, TIPNG is working with partners like the PNGEC to strengthen elections integrity.

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### ***What is TIPNG?***

TIPNG is a member of Transparency International a global anti-corruption movement committed to fighting corruption. TIPNG is an independent organization in PNG known as a Chapter of the international movement. The PNG chapter advocates against corruption and promotes transparency, good governance, honesty and accountability both in private and public sector dealings. TIPNG tries to assist strengthen the integrity systems of our country such as the police, the parliament, the public services and the judiciary.