

# OUTCOME STATEMENT

From the Youth Roundtable Dialogue  
Hosted in commemoration of International Anti-Corruption Day  
held on 9th December 2024

## ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS



Participants of the TIPNG International Anti-Corruption Roundtable Dialogue.

### Overview

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was adopted in 2003 as the world's first and only legally binding anti-corruption instrument. To raise awareness about corruption and the role of the UNCAC in combating and preventing it, December 9th was designated as International Anti-Corruption Day.

International Anti-Corruption Day is an annual event observed to raise awareness about corruption and its negative impact on society and to promote greater transparency, accountability, and good governance. This day is a call to action for individuals, organizations, and governments worldwide to unite against corruption and work towards a brighter future.

Since then, member states of the UN have been recognizing the day and generating awareness about corruption targeting governments, citizens, industry and the media.

Context in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea demonstrated its commitment to combating corruption by ratifying the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2007, becoming the first Pacific Island nation to do so. Since then, the country through past and present governments, has taken significant steps to implement the UNCAC, including the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the enactment of the Whistleblower Protection Act amongst others. However, challenges persist, such as limited resources and capacity, and ongoing efforts are needed to strengthen anti-corruption measures, promote good governance and enforce laws.

### Roundtable Dialogue

To mark International Anti-Corruption Day, Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Transparency and Accountability in PNG Project, convened a roundtable dialogue to amplify the youth voice in addressing issues that are affecting the integrity of the National General Elections in Papua New Guinea. The event also allowed the Electoral Commission of PNG (PNGEC) to provide an update on how they will engage with young people in the lead up to the 2027 National General Elections, as well as the National Youth Development Authority's (NYDA) support to this process.

With funding support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the Transparency & Accountability Project funded by the European Union, the roundtable dialogue was convened on Monday 9th December 2024, at the Catholic Bishop's Conference Port Moresby, with the following representation:

- ArtActivism
- Commonwealth Students Association
- Equal Playing Field
- Motu Koita Assembly
- PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons - Youth
- Young Port Moresby Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Young Professional Women's Network
- Youth Resource Week
- Youth Advocate

- StreetSmart Initiative

The concerns expressed by the young people during the dialogue highlighted the need for youth empowerment, systemic reforms, voter education, and collaborative efforts to improve electoral integrity in PNG.

Recommendations from the youth for the Electoral Commission of PNG to consider

#### 1. Strengthen Voter Education

The PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) can enhance electoral engagement and trust by focusing on voter education and youth participation. Implementing widespread voter education programs targeting youth and marginalized groups is critical. This can include mock elections and interactive sessions in schools and communities to increase awareness of the voting process.

#### 2. Empower Youth Participation

Youth Advisory Councils should be established to involve young people in electoral planning and decision-making, while youth voter festivals and workshops can further encourage civic engagement.

#### 3. Improve Accessibility

Simplifying voter registration processes and addressing geographic and physical challenges are essential to ensuring equitable access for all voters, including those with disabilities.

#### 4. Leverage Technology

Leveraging technology can also improve efficiency and transparency in the electoral process. Expanding digital initiatives like the Photo Electoral Roll and using online platforms to educate voters and combat misinformation are important steps forward.

#### 5. Collaborate with Stakeholders

Working with youth organizations, NGOs, and cultural groups can make civic education efforts more relatable and accessible by using their established networks and community trust. Practical partnerships with community leaders can further support this by tailoring programs to local contexts and directly addressing issues like vote-buying and misinformation, fostering ethical voting practices in ways that resonate with the community.

#### 6. Ensure greater integrity oversight

Enhancing election integrity requires practical steps such as improving transparency, closely monitoring candidates' actions, and taking active measures to reduce intimidation and vote-buying. These efforts will help rebuild trust in the electoral system. While challenges remain, incremental progress through these actions can lead to a more inclusive and participatory process, fostering greater confidence among voters and stakeholders in the PNGEC's commitment to fair elections.

#### Electoral Commission of PNG

The Deputy Commissioner of the PNG Electoral Commission, Mr John Kalamoroh emphasized the need for public education on the roles of the PNGEC and the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs (DPLGA), highlighting a lack of awareness about their distinct responsibilities. He added

that while the PNGEC conducts election awareness and voter education, it is everyone's civic responsibility to register to vote and added that youth participation is legally supported, and that young people must take responsibility to vote.

Civic Education is important for all citizens before 2027 National General Election and all youths engaged to work closely with the Electoral Commission to commence this program in 2025 leading up to 2027 National General Elections.

#### National Youth Development Authority

Principal Advisor for International Relations at the National Youth Development Authority, Mr David Lawrence, acknowledged the recommendations discussed during the panel. He emphasized that voter education, youth participation, and the establishment of a Youth Advisory Council are valuable and relevant proposals.

The following commitments were made by NYDA during the roundtable discussion:

1. Continue establishing the remaining Youth Development Councils in ensuring that youth have an independent voice in decision making processes and are involved in planning, designing, implementing and monitoring programs and policies for youth development from LLG to Provincial levels.
2. Collaborate with TIPNG in establishing 22 Chapters of YACA as per the National Youth Policy 2020-2030, Goal 2 under Community and Environment, Strategy 2.9.
3. Work with Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission in encouraging Youth Wings to be established by Political parties.
4. Continue to facilitate the inclusion of Youth in Election Observations and consultations with partners and stakeholders involved in these arrangements.
5. Collaborate with Youth Organisations through the existing Youth Coalition to support Civic Education Programs.
6. Complete the process of reviewing the NYDA Act 2014 and make provisions to strengthen youth mobilization and civic engagement.
7. Encourage Youth to participate and access processes involved in Public Inquiries, calling for accountability and transparency.
8. Track the recommendations made by various International Election Observer Groups on the Youth component through the International Relations Section to call for improvements in the 2027 National General Elections.
9. Continue to disseminate information on Governance, Policy and Legislative processes for youth through public forums and media.
10. Instil Youth Safeguarding measures in the upcoming National General Elections in 2027.

#### Next steps

1. Produce full Outcome Document on detailed discussions;
2. Set up Technical Working Group that will work with PNGEC and NYDA to implement and track commitments;
3. Report back in a year's time on progress.