

# OUTCOME STATEMENT

## Forum on Women Candidates' Participation in the 2022 PNG National General Election

29 September 2022

The 2022 National General Election (NGE) has been widely described as one of the most disorganised and problematic elections in Papua New Guinea's history. An Interim Statement by the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group issued on 25 July 2022 raised a number of critical concerns with election processes, including violence and intimidation, bribery, insufficient funding of the PNG Election Commission which undermined the timely and safe conduct of the election and the potential disenfranchisement of high numbers of eligible voters due to voter roll issues.<sup>1</sup> A paper produced by Transparency International PNG in the aftermath of the election stated that "*The 2022 National General Election has continued the trend of deterioration in the quality of elections in PNG. This was evident across the preparation, conduct, and the delivery of the election.*"<sup>2</sup>

Despite the many challenges faced before, during and after the election, PNG made progress on gender equality during the 2022 NGE, by electing two women to the National Parliament, namely Hon Rufina Peter, who is Governor of Central Province, and Hon Kessy Sawang, the Member for Rai-Coast Open. We commend these two brave women for their achievement, against all odds.

Unfortunately, many other women were unable to break through during the elections, despite their best efforts. Reports indicate that 159 women contested the NGE in 2022, 64 of whom were endorsed by 14 political parties. This number is lower than in 2017, but it was encouraging that a number of women ranked in the top 10 of their electorate. Nonetheless, many women candidates raised concerns that irregularities during the ballot counting process affected their chances of winning. Women have indicated they faced intimidation and threats, and there were reports of serious violence in a number of electorates. During the counting process, there were widespread reports of irregularities, with allegations that PNGEC officials and/or candidates and their supporters were undermining fair vote counting, including stories of ballot stealing and burning. It was very clear that women were not competing on an equal playing field. At the time of writing this statement, there are now more than 100 election petitions filed with the courts, a number on behalf of women candidates who believe that corruption and mismanagement impacted their chances to win.

The barriers faced by women who contest elections in PNG are of deep concern and do not reflect the constitutional and legal commitments PNG has made to its people – and its women and girls. The PNG Constitution enshrines the right to "*equal participation by women in all political, economic, social and religious activities*" in Directive Principle 2(5). Vision 2050 identifies gender in one of its seven pillars. Milestone 19.4 explicitly commits the Government to ensuring "*the political system in PNG is actively promoting stability, gender equality, democracy, transparency, accountability and economic development in Papua New Guinea's national interest.*" PNG ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination on Women* in 1995 and endorsed the *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration* in 2012, both of which called for the adoption of measures, including temporary special measures, to accelerate women's leadership in decision-making. PNG also endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals, which require under Target 5.5 that PNG "*ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making.*"

As the new Government and the 11th Parliament of PNG begin their work, it is essential that they use their mandates and resources to more effectively ensure that the women of PNG can equally and

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<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat (2022) "Interim Statement by the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group to PNG on 25 July 2022" <https://thecommonwealth.org/news/commonwealth-observers-advise-urgent-review-many-voters-left-out-papua-new>

<sup>2</sup> TIPNG (2022) "Summary Paper on the 2022 National General Election", <https://transparencypng.org.pg/tipngs-summary-paper-on-the-2022-national-general-election/>.

meaningfully drive the development of the nation, including by participating in the highest levels of decision-making – in Cabinet and in the National Parliament. The period after one election is finished is actually the start of the period for the next election. An electoral cycle approach should be adopted in PNG, such that the Government should now immediately start preparing for the 2027 NGE.

To assist the Government and other stakeholders to address the many challenges evidenced during the 2022 NGE, this Forum brought together women candidates from across the country to reflect on their experiences and offer recommendations to PNG's leaders and partners for urgent action. Thirty-one women candidates were convened by the IPPCC and UNDP. Women came from across the country, from all four of PNG's regions. The IPPCC is committed to taking the recommendations provided by the women in this Outcomes Statement and presenting it to the Government. The IPPCC will use its role in the Government's Election Reform Group to advocate for implementation of this Outcomes Statement.

There are five years until PNG will hold another National General Election in 2027. During that time, the National Government and a range of other key stakeholders must take action to concretely address the deficit in women's participation in politics and public life. The following recommendations should be considered:

#### **A. Women as leaders and potential candidates**

- Women themselves need to take the lead in holding the Government, key government bodies and officials, and development partners to account for implementing this Outcome Statement and the recommendations included.
  - Consideration should be given to using the National Council of Women and its structures to oversight implementation of the Outcomes Statement
  - At the same time, women activists call on development partners to provide funding and administrative support to support committed women to revive the Women in Politics Group which used to be a effective platform for bringing women together to strengthen women's political participation.
  - Quarterly forums should be organised, with support from development partners, to bring together women leaders to continue to oversee and drive implementation of the recommendations in this Outcome Statement;
- Four regional forums should immediately be organised to bring together women candidates who ran in the 2022 NGE to discuss the specific challenges faced in each region and to develop more specific responses that can be implemented by Provincial Governments as well as the National Government;
- Prospective women candidates are encouraged to start working now on developing their messages, networks and social/traditional media presence so that they are ready when the 2027 election occurs.
- Current women MPs, current male MPs and former female candidates who have experience should be encouraged to volunteer their knowledge and skills to assist standing candidates, mentor young and new women candidates, including by supporting them with fundraising activities. National candidates should also proactively reach out to mentor and support candidates LLG and provincial assembly elections.
- Development partners should urgently provide funding for national women's leadership and capacity building training but it must start immediately as part of an electoral cycle approach which recognises that support cannot happen in 6 months before an election but must happen across the entire 5 years of the election cycle.
  - Development partners are encouraged to prioritise investment in women candidates who have demonstrated the ability to do well in previous elections, while balancing support for new aspiring women leaders;

- Approaches to supporting women should include support for campaigning and policy training, mentoring and connecting women to political parties, but it should also explore engaging aspiring women leaders to return to their home communities to drive development activities which can raise their profile and showcase their leadership;

## **B. 2022 National General Election irregularities**

- It is understood that the National Parliament recently established a Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2022 General Elections. This Committee should urgently commence its inquiry and produce a report before the end of 2022 to allow remedial actions to commence.
  - The Committee must organise a specific set of public hearings for women candidates to share their experience of the elections with the Committee;
  - The Committee must examine allegations made in international and domestic election observer reports, the media and election petitions, including corrupt electoral practices, fraud in relation to ballot papers, ballot boxes, voting processes, counting processes and declarations and other manipulations of electoral process (e.g placement of polling booths).
  - The Committee Report must produce concrete recommendations for action, including recommendations for improving support to women candidates and women voters to enable them to participate fairly, freely and safely.
- Complementary to the work of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2022 NGE, the Government should order an immediate process audit of the election, to find out what went wrong and to recommend actions to be taken to redress weaknesses identified.
- Based on what is already known about the irregularities during the election outcomes but also in response to the Special Parliamentary Committee's findings and the Government's process audit, the Government should at a minimum and as an immediate priority:
  - Revise the Organic Law on National and Local Level Government and any other relevant laws and rules to update their provisions to ensure that PNG's legal frameworks reflect good practice electoral administration policies;
  - Take criminal, civil and/or other disciplinary action against PNGEC officials, RPNGC officials, other officials and other people who were alleged to have committed electoral or other offences or who have breached the public service code of conduct;
  - Undertake a proper national census, which can then be used as a basis for supporting electoral reforms, including efforts to update the electoral roll.
  - Commission a study into how biometric or electronic (i) registration (ii) voting and/or (iii) counting can be implemented in PNG and take action accordingly. These weaknesses in the system have directly contributed to corrupt electoral practices and must be addressed. Any design and rollout of new biometric or electronic approaches should take account of lessons learned from previous pilots in PNG;
- At the time of writing, there are more than 100 election petitions lodged in relation to 84 electorates. It is important that if the Court of Disputed Returns finds that election irregularities or offences occurred, that proper sanctions are imposed on relevant candidates.
  - Any candidate found to have committed misconduct should be (i) barred from contesting the related by-election; (ii) barred from nominating for the next two elections and (iii) barred from holding any public office, including all levels of the public service;
  - Any political party which endorsed a candidate which committed misconduct or any independent candidate should be fined between K 10,000 and K100,000;

## **C. Law reform**

- The National Parliament should revive and progress efforts to enact temporary special measures for women, in particular by reserving a certain number of additional seats in Parliament for women (ideally, by reviving the 22 provincial seats legislation tabled in 2010/11).

- The National Parliament could learn from the positive experience of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, which has very successful enshrined reserved seats to promote women. Although they have only three reserved seats in their Constitution, the role modelling by those women has led to three more women being elected to Open Seats over time.
- The National Parliament should immediately enact proposed amendments to the *Organic Law on Political Parties and Candidates*. In so doing, they should:
  - Amend the OLIPPAC Amendment Bill developed for the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament to (i) increase the proposed minimum political party quota from 10% to 30%; (ii) increase the fine for not endorsing enough women from K5,000 to K50,000; and (iii) change the threshold for providing a refund to parties who nominate women candidates. Currently, funding is provided only if a woman gets 10% of the primary vote but this is impractical with so many candidates running as primary votes are increasingly low. Refunds should be provided to parties for all women candidates who reach the Top 5 of the final electoral count.
  - Require political parties who endorse women candidates to provide them with a minimum amount of financial support and provide the IPPCC with powers to sanction political parties who do not meet such minimum requirements.
  - Give the IPPCC sufficient powers and resources to compel political parties to comply with the law, for example, by implementing party constitutions that require establishment of a women's wing and by deregistering political parties that do not meet the minimum requirements to operate as a political party;
- The National Parliament should review existing electoral-related legislation to:
  - Establish a PNG Election Commission led by 3-5 Commissioners, rather than having just one Commissioner who has the responsibility for running the election and has an increasingly broad discretion to make unilateral decisions regarding election results.
  - Explicitly remove the power of the PNG Election Commissioner to declare "special circumstances" and use that as a basis for unilaterally declaring election results;
  - Introduce very clear deadlines for (i) the minimum qualification for Returning Officers (ROs) and Assistant ROs, and the Presiding Officers (POs) and Assistant POs, including that they must have a degree and have no previous criminal records or corruption allegations; (ii) a deadline for when ROs, AROs, POs and APOs should be selected and their names published – ideally at least 6 months in advance and published in the newspapers;
  - Require LLG elections to be held at least 1 year before the National General Election, in order to provide an practical opportunity to vet the electoral roll;
  - Prohibit non-citizens and dual citizens from contesting elections, and require a minimum number of years of citizenship to contest;
  - Increase the amount of the nomination fee from PGK 1,000 to PGK 10,000 and to introduce a minimum education or equivalent work experience requirement to ensure that only serious, highly capable candidates contest the elections. This would also work to reduce the increasing tendency for "fake candidates" to be nominated to split the vote of others;
  - Extend the time allowed for people in the Highlands Provinces to vote to two days, as in some provinces there was insufficient time for people to exercise their right to vote;
- The National Parliament should consider introducing a constitutional amendment to introduce term limits for Members of Parliament with a maximum of two or three 5-year terms or retiring after the age of 70 years old;
- The National Parliament should enact stronger campaign finance laws which limit the amount that candidates can spend on their elections and require public disclosure of the amounts that are spend on campaigning;

#### **D. Voter education**

- The Government should urgently address the challenge of voter education to ensure that every Papua New Guinean understand how democratic elections work and what their role is, including

how the LPV system works, but also more broadly what “good leadership” means in the context of inclusive, accountable development. Such education activities should include:

- The design and roll out a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to voter and civic education in order to educate PNG’s citizens, Voter education must include specific information about the LPV system, how it works but also how it can be manipulated. Voter education should be prioritised for rural areas which often have least understanding. Government can use LLGs and ward officials to support education activities.
- Voter education should also include specific information on the value of women’s leadership, contextualised for PNG’s context;
- Integration of specific approaches that will help illiterate and less educated citizens to understand and properly engage in national and local election processes, and in their democracy more generally;
- Insights from the community education activities undertaken in 2022 in some electorates of PNG by the programme implemented by the Australian National University, led by Dame Carol Kidu, which aimed to educate voters on good leadership and good voting choices;
- The Government and development partners should specifically invest in supporting civil society organisations and the media, including women’s organisations, to undertake civic education and voter education. These groups have strong, trusted connections with their communities and can be valuable partners in strengthening people’s understanding of voting, democracy and the value of good leadership in the PNG context.

#### **E. National Government**

- The Government must urgently review and reconstitute the management and staff of the PNGEC to ensure that the Commission can properly discharge its mandate as an independent, competent body responsible for delivering fair, credible elections. As required:
  - Key staff must be sacked and replaced to demonstrate that there will be accountability for the poor election management experiences by PNG citizens in 2022;
  - Where judgements in election petitions or other evidence demonstrates that staff have failed in their duties and/or have broken the law, they must be disciplined by the public service and face criminal sanctions if possible.
- The Government should immediately allocate and ring-fence a minimum amount of funding for the PNGEC and other election-related bodies for the entire five years of the electoral cycle, to ensure that they are properly funded to implement the necessary reforms require to ensure that the chaos of the 2022 NGE is never repeated;
- The Government should strengthen election accountability mechanisms, including:
  - The Inter-Departmental Election Committee, which must be convened well in advance of the election and meet regularly in order to properly prepare and oversee election processes;
  - Provincial Election Steering Committees (PESC). Their Terms of Reference should be formalised and published to enable better oversight of their work and engagement by CSOs. A standardised PESC process and coordinating mechanism is needed to manage and oversee the 22 PESCs.
- The Government should work with the IPPCC, PNGEC and other key stakeholders to strengthen the existing Code of Conduct for elections to ensure it addresses bad conduct. Any Code of Conduct should include specific provisions prohibiting parties, candidates and supporters from attacking or denigrating other candidates and their supporters, a problem that has increased over the years and is of particular concern to women candidates. Consideration should be given to legislating the Code of Conduct, with sanctions included for breach of the Code;
- The Government should abolish PSIP and DSIP funds because they are distorting election outcomes by enabling incumbent MPs to use government funds to deliver services directly to constituents, rather than requiring independent government departments to do so. It also forces MPs to operate as project managers rather than focusing on their parliamentary duties.

- If PSIP and DSIP are continued, the Ombudsmen Office must use their powers to implement oversight by their Office of all proposed expenditures at least 6-12 months before the NGE;
- The Government should provide specific funding to the IPPCC to continue their excellent work over the last 5 years which aimed to proactively connect women with political parties in order to encourage the endorsement of more women candidates by parties.
- The Government, IPPCC and PNGEC should work with interested stakeholders explore options for addressing the critical need for women candidates to access campaign financing. For example:
  - The IPPCC Central Fund can be used to collect and distribute money for women candidates with Kina 1 million provided every year by the Government to the IPPCC Central Fund as seed funding for women;
  - The IPPCC can work with mobile phone partners to organise a fund-raising campaign using “Mobile Money” to enable ordinary citizens to make donations to the IPPCC Central Fund to be used for women candidates;
- The Government should provide specific support to the PNGEC, the IPPCC and key government and non-government bodies to support women candidates to run in the next Local Level Government elections;

**F. Office for the Development of Women, Department for Community Development & Religion**

- The Government should immediately establish a separate Ministry for Women, which has its own Minister and a proper budget to address the many challenges women and girls face across the country, including in relation to women’s political participation.
  - If this is not possible, the Office for the Development of Women (ODW) should be moved to sit under the Department of the Prime Minister and NEC (DPMNEC), to ensure that work to address GEWE, including to promote women’s political participation, has proper status within Government.
  - In any case, the Minister for Women (who is currently the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion) should be officially identified within the NEC as the focal point for women’s issues and should provide a regular update to the NEC on progress progressing GEWE objectives across government departments;
- The Treasurer needs to commit adequate funding to the ODW and other sectors to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment across all Government departments, but in particular, to ensure that the ODW has the resources and staff to progress the SDG Gender Equality targets and implement the current GEWE commitments in the MTDS 2018-2022;
- If ODW remains within DFCDR, the Secretary for DFCDR should be given the official mandate for ensuring that this Outcomes Statement is implemented by the Government, including by organising a Government Working Group on Women’s Political Participation that will hold 6-monthly meetings to track progress;
- ODW should immediately commence the process of formulating a PNG Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) Policy, as the last policy expired in 2017.
  - The Policy must include provisions for enhancing women’s political participation.
  - The Policy should annex a 5-year program of capacity building for women candidates, developed in partnership with former women candidates, women’s NGOs and development partners. A well-rounded package of skills development should be delivered that builds women’s leadership, policy, public speaking and campaigning skills;

**G. National Parliament**

- The Prime Minister or the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Religion (who has the Office for the Development of Women under his mandate) should table this Outcomes Statement officially in the National Parliament and encourage it to be debated;

- The National Parliament should support the establishment of a PNG Women’s Caucus, which will include the 2 women from the National Parliament and the 5 women (currently) elected into the AROB House of Representatives.
- The National Parliament should establish a Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, as proposed by Hon Kessy Sawang.
  - The Committee could hold public hearings at least twice a year aimed at examining PNG’s progress in achieving its own GEWE goals.
  - The Committee could integrate the work of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Gender-Based Violence.
- The National Parliament Secretariat should roll out gender awareness training and capacity building for all Members of Parliament to strengthen their commitment to GEWE;

#### **H. PNG Election Commission**

- The PNGEC should organise a briefing for Members of Parliament to explain the critical challenges encountered during the 2022 National Elections, set out their action plan to address these challenges and justify the budget needed to ensure clean, fair and transparent elections;
- The PNGEC should immediately begin updating the common electoral roll, including by utilising provincial structures to ensure the roll is accurate.
  - An immediate audit of the common roll should be undertaken. The electoral roll should be formatted in Wards, by surname alphabetically. The roll should be updated every 6 months and should be advertised at least one year before each national election;
  - The PNGEC has decentralised responsibility for the roll to their Provincial Offices, but these offices should now utilise LLG structures more effectively to maintain the roll by resourcing Village Ward Recorders to be permanent Enrolment Officers.
  - Provincial Electoral Offices should be equipped to update and maintain electronic rolls and to print and publish the final electoral roll in provinces.
- The PNGEC should commission a review of the appointment process for Election Managers Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers and other critical electoral staff, to ensure that their recruitment and management process is merit-based and free of corruption.
  - Provincial Returning Officers (ROs) and Assistant ROs (AROs) must be permanent staff of the PNGEC so that they can be properly trained and held accountable for their actions at all times. Recruitment should be contracted to professional recruitment agencies who are neutral and at arms length from Government and political parties;
  - Preference should also be given to recruiting women into critical positions such as Election Managers, ROs and AROs;
  - Presiding Officers (POs) and other counting officials should be required to be learned, educated people of high integrity. They must be recruited independently, from Universities and Colleges around the country. Their names should be published at least 6 months before the election. They must be required to sign a code of conduct and to pledge to uphold all election laws, as there are too many stories of POs being selected through a corrupted process and/or bribed to misuse their position;
  - During vote counting, officials should be moved around so that they are not counting votes from their own district.
- The PNGEC should issue guidance to all its staff and to candidates and political parties regarding their rights and duties during voting and counting processes. For example:
  - It should be explicitly clarified that candidates have a right to know the serial numbers of all ballots per ballot box in order to be able to cross-check the integrity of the voting process;
  - It has been reported that ballot boxes were burnt before and/or during the counting process. There must now be clear guidelines as to what should happen if that ever occurs again and

what the implications are for all candidates in such cases. These guidelines may need to integrate findings from the court cases that have been lodged in relation to these issues;

- Consideration should be given to centralising the counting process for Provincial Seats, as it is impractical to expect Provincial Candidates to have scrutineers at all counting venues across the province;
- The PNGEC should review the location of polling places to ensure that there are sufficient polling booths for the population in each ward, which are placed in accessible, appropriate locations. The PNGEC must independently decide on the placement of polling booths and must not allow their placement to be manipulated to favour certain candidates.
- The PNGEC should issue guidance to all its staff and provide training to all candidates and political parties regarding what they can and cannot do before, during and after the campaign period.
- The PNGEC should give training to all scrutineers within the 3 months leading up to the election so that they are all clear on their role, know their rights, know how to ask the right questions during the counting process and know what course of actions to take;
- The PNGEC should work with the ODW, NCW, IPPCC and other partners to conduct regular training for women on electoral processes, including nominating for election, campaigning rules, the voting system and LPV, right down to the ward level.

#### ***I. Royal PNG Constabulary***

- The PNGEC should work with the Royal PNG Constabulary to develop and implement a specific Election Security Plan well in advance of the campaigning and voting periods, including specific activities to deal with gun control issues.
- The Royal PNG Constabulary Force must also exercise their existing powers during the campaigning and voting period to arrest offenders on the spot for election-related offences;

#### ***J. Ombudsman Commission***

- The Ombudsman Commission should be mandated to not only act as election observers but also to have their officers work to mediate and resolve electoral issues on the ground;

#### ***K. Political Parties***

- Political parties should:
  - Immediately start recruiting women as members of political parties, and conduct training and outreach activities to ensure they can meaningfully participate in the party;
  - Establish women's wings, with a women's representative always included as an ex officio member of the political party executive;
  - Include women as representatives on political parties' executive boards and selection committees;

#### ***L. Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission***

- The IPPCC should hold a "post-mortem" of how political parties operated during the 2022 National Elections and all subsequent elections, to learn lessons and identify areas requiring ongoing reform or capacity-development;
- The IPPCC should explore practical ways to support the women with logistics and campaign costs during campaigning, including for example, by raising funds through the Central Fund which could be used to support printing of posters and other such campaign materials;
- The IPPCC should develop an awareness-raising programme on the profiles of political parties to enable women to choose on the basis of more information;



### **M. Provincial Assemblies and Local Level Governments**

- Provincial Governments should develop 5-year GEWE plans, which should be integrated as part of the Provincial Development Plans. Provincial Governments should commit to allocating an annual budget to: (i) support implementation of their provincial GESI strategy (ii) address gender-based violence through their Provincial GBV Secretariat and (iii) support training of women on decision-making at the provincial and local levels, including women nominated to Provincial Assemblies and DDAs;
- Provincial Governments should work closely with their Provincial Council of Women to support their advocacy, training and capacity building;
- The Department for Provincial and Local Level Government should work with interested stakeholders to explore options for building the capacity of women in sub-national decision-making bodies, including provincial and local level governments, as well as District Development Authorities.

### **N. National and Provincial Councils of Women**

- We want to reactivate the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Provincial Women's Councils (PWCs) to move their work forward, including in relation to the promoting women's political participation. To that end, DFCDR should:
  - Immediately commission an independent assessment of the current state of the NCW and PCWs across the country to identify their existing capacities and needs and to make recommendations to addressing weaknesses and any legal shortcomings and then use the assessment to implement any reforms or activities necessary to bring the NCW and PCWs in line with the relevant legislation;
  - Consider legal and/or operational reforms which would establish regional support structures for the NCW and PCWs, including Regional Offices, to strengthen decentralisation;
  - Once any legal or other issues are addressed, organise an NCW Convention or Annual General Meeting to bring together the 22 Provincial Council Women Presidents (subject to their own elections being properly held) and 4 Regional Vice-Presidents to revisit the election for a new National President and new National Executive;
- Once the NCW is properly reconstituted, DFCDR and development partners should invest in the Council to strengthen its capacities to support women's political participation and leadership;
- The NCW and PCWs should be supported to identify potential women leaders to be mentored and supported through the next LLG elections and the 2027 National Election;

### **O. Research institutions**

- The National Research Institute has done important research on women's political participation. More funding should be provided by the Government and development partners to NRI and other local academic bodies to support home-grown research with local women to understand local challenges and identify local responses.
- As an urgent piece of research, NRI or another institution should immediately document the many stories of corruption experienced by women candidates across the country. They have indicated their willingness to share the details of their stories so that they can be recorded and then shared with the Government and PNGEC;
- Research papers produced about women's political participation and the value of women's leadership should be distributed to education institutions who can use them to educate young people and to communities across the country so that future generations are better informed.

### **P. The International Community**

- Development partners are encouraged to provide institutional and capacity building for key women's organisations, including the NCW, and for a national women's leadership program, but

they should do this in close partnership with national institutions, such as the IPPCC and DFCDR;

- Regional organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum and the Secretariat for the Pacific Community are encouraged to engage PNG government officials, women's NGOs and women candidates in their efforts to promote women's political participation;

**Q. *Traditional media and social media***

- There is a rising problem with people using social media to harass and denigrate candidates, with women candidates often feeling the brunt of it. The Government should enforce its cybercrime and cyber-bullying laws to ensure that during elections, social media is not improperly used to harass candidates or their supporters;
- The Government and development partners should proactively support training for the media on understanding issues related to gender and women's leadership;
- TV media should strengthen their capacity to do live broadcasting of ballot counting, including through livestreaming on social media, as was the case in 2012 and 2017;
- Media houses are encouraged to provide discounts for women candidates during elections and to offer space and time for coverage of women's leadership issues;
- The TV, newspaper and radio media should all develop specific media and education campaigns aimed at highlighting the value of women in leadership;