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PM SAYS GOVT IS SERIOUS ABOUT COMBATING CORRUPTION

FOR RELEASE – 19th August 2011

Just three weeks in office and the O'Neill-Namah Government has already started the ball rolling in its efforts to eradicate corrupt practises both in Government and the private sector.

Following an announcement last week of the setting up of an investigation team to probe allegations of misuse of public funds at the Department of National Planning, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill said this was just the beginning of more to come.

Mr O'Neill said the National Executive Council in a recent meeting endorsed a number of strategic actions that will be taken to pave the way forward in the battle against corruption.

The three pertinent steps being taken are the:

1. Endorsement of Papua New Guinea's National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2010-2030;
2. Establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC); and
3. Implementation of the United Nations' Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

"I am pleased to announce that Cabinet, in its wisdom, has approved the adoption of the Papua New Guinea Anti-Corruption Strategy 2010-2030 as an overarching national strategy for combating corruption and improving good governance in PNG," he said.

This strategy will be the blueprint to guide all efforts to address all anti-corruption efforts in the country.

"I would also like to inform the people of Papua New Guinea that your Government has agreed in principle to the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

“We have also endorsed the proposed draft constitutional amendments to authorize the making of an organic law that provides for the ICAC,” he said.

Mr O’Neill said the draft Organic Law has been endorsed and the First Legislative Counsel has been directed to draft the proposed laws accordingly.

The Department of Justice & Attorney General has also been instructed to conduct public consultation in relation to the proposed Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Prime Minister O’Neill said another major step this government has taken is to allow for a review of PNG’s efforts in implementing the United Nations’ Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

“As part of our international obligation as a signatory to the UNCAC, we would like to be seen to be transparent by allowing independent international bodies to look at our efforts to weed out corrupt practices, make their assessments and provide comments and recommendations on how we should move forward as a nation.

“We believe this is extremely important for the sake of good governance, accountability and transparency,” he added.

Approved for release

HON. PETER O’NEILL, CMG MP

Prime Minister