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GOVT TO INVEST IN SEPIK PLAIN

Caption: An aerial view of Limo Holdings Limited's oil palm nursery in Turubu, East Sepik.
Picture by **WANPIS AKO**

The agriculture prospect in the Sepik plains for the country's long-term economic growth and improving its inhabitants' living standard has attracted the government to invest, Treasurer Don Polye said last Friday.

"The projects in the area will get large slice of the 2014 Budget allocation for the agriculture sector in the country. The projects have reflected the government's focus to invest in agriculture.

"The area will become a hub for agri-businesses to sustain the economic growth, employment level and living standards for the people so I support the projects. They must be priority projects for next year in the budget," he said.

The treasurer was excited to get sights of many agri-businesses across the huge plain from a chartered chopper. The businesses include Limo Holdings Oil Palm Ltd and Bassei Oil Palm Development Ltd among others.

He reiterated that the government would not only invest in agriculture from revenues generated from the booming extractive industry but also in tourism and infrastructure programs.

The government, he said, is committed to financially supporting small-medium entrepreneurs, citing good initiatives taken by Commerce, Trade and Industry minister Richard Maru for that matter.

Thanking the treasurer for his visit to the area, Limo Holdings Ltd chairman Aron Milijiwi said their company had already planted more than 98 000 oil palm trees in the area, adding it would be extended to 128,000 hectares of land mass.

He said since its inception in 2010, the company had paid K20 million in taxes in the past to the government. It has more than 500 employees.

Brian Tapi, chairman for second phase Bassei Oil palm Development at Wasera-Gawi in East Sepik, shared similar sentiments.

Approved for release

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