



Papua New Guinea
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WOMEN INVOLVEMENT A WAY FORWARD: POLYE

The country cannot progress without the active involvement of women at all levels, Treasurer Don Pomb Polye said last Friday.

“The whole of society benefits from the gender equity!’ It is our starting point in addressing the future of our nation because it makes good economic sense and is crazy to talk, on one hand, about empowerment and engagement-on the other, to effectively exclude half of our population from playing a role,” Mr Polye said.

He has challenged women folk in the country to speak out their rights and to be the standard bearers, not just for gender equality- but across the board particularly against corruption.

Mr. Polye has set a record in the recent general election when his Triumph Heritage Party won two seats-Sohe MP Delilah Gore and Eastern Highlands Governor Julie Soso.

The Minister has committed K100, 000 towards Women in Business Foundation’s initiative to establish a Micro-Finance Bank for women in the country.

He said PNG needed the input and advice of women, adding the country was still at the very start of a long road along which the full potential of women folk would truly be unlocked from formal employment to small business through to entrepreneurship.

Interestingly, the Dell-Gender Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index (GEDI) published last week made the telling point that: - “access to higher education forms the foundation for high potential female entrepreneurship...”

The female folk of the nation, he said, are some 40 per cent less likely to be engaged in formal employment than men.

“To do that we must start from the bedrock of education because it is only through education that we can change the prejudice of the past and that we can offer our women the opportunity they deserve to participate in our society.

“But there is much more to be done. Step one is to ensure that we have a healthy system that protects our women. PNG’s maternal mortality rates are unbelievably bad- the highest in the Pacific,” he told a crowd at Holiday Inn in Port Moresby.

Treasurer said they must make it clear that sorcery is nothing more than an intolerable excuse for those who have no respect for women in the country, adding violence against women and girls was getting worse. The impacts are not just social but are impending women in the work place and in business.

“The challenge of keeping female employees safe is an intolerable costs to businesses in PNG. It is unheard of in other parts of the world but in PNG it is normal for employers to

provide overnight accommodation when women work late and to provide transport to and from work. In Government we accept that challenge.

Proper policing is essential to dealing with this problem. The proposed arrangement with the Queensland Government is a strong step in the rebuilding of the Royal Constabulary,” he said.

He said he was dismayed every time when someone claimed sorcery as the motivator for cold-blooded murder adding that person is seen as someone without a heart and morality because he has seven daughters.

“I love them all with my heart. Every time I hear a story of a man bashing a woman, I think of my girls. It eats always at my heart because it is so terribly wrong. I want my daughter to grow up in a society and with partners who respect them and who understand how wonderful they are,” he said.

The O’Neil Dion Government has already moved to address these key areas:-

- Education expenditure up by 41 percent
- Health expenditure increased by 61 percent
- The Sorcery Laws repealed

Approved for release

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