



Media Statement – Special Meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body

Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Hon. Peter O'Neill and President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, the Hon. Dr John Momis today reaffirmed their joint commitment to ensuring the full implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Meeting in Port Moresby as part of a special meeting of the Joint Supervisory Body (JSB), the two leaders discussed broad ranging issues associated with the upcoming referendum.

The two leaders noted the importance of ensuring that the referendum is free and fair, and conducted in full accordance with the Constitution and Peace Agreement. Both the Prime Minister and the President agreed that it was essential that people understand the choice to be put, and the process to be followed once the referendum has taken place.

The meeting was also attended by the Chairman of the Bougainville Referendum Commission, former Prime Minister of Ireland, the Hon. Bertie Ahern. Mr Ahern indicated his honour at being appointed as Chairman and committed to working with both governments to ensure that the referendum is conducted freely and fairly.

Leaders noted the work undertaken to date by officials to prepare for the referendum and endorsed a proposed budget of K34 million for the coming year. Prime Minister O'Neill undertook to ensure that the budget was incorporated into the 2019 national budget when it is handed down later this year.

It was agreed that the question to be put at the referendum would clearly outline the process to be followed after the referendum takes place and would be accompanied by a comprehensive awareness campaign (refer attachment).

Leaders agreed to meet again in the third week of January 2019 in Port Moresby at a full meeting of the JSB where further updates would be provided on referendum preparations and associated work to advance peace in Bougainville.

Hon. Peter O'Neill
Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

Hon. Dr John Momis
President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville

Agreed wording for the Referendum:

PREAMBLE

The outcome of the referendum on the future political status of Bougainville, will be discussed by both governments (the GoPNG and ABG), and will be presented to the national parliament for final decision making in accordance with the Bougainville Peace Agreement and the National Constitution.

QUESTION

Do you agree for Bougainville to have:

1. Greater Autonomy
2. Independence.

PROCESS

The Referendum Process is:

1. People vote
2. National Government and the ABG consult
3. National Parliament decides.