



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE TO THE BOUGAINVILLE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BY THE VICE PRESIDENT**

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**TUESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2017**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEETING STATEMENT BY HON RAYMOND MASONO MHR**

**Introduction**

Mr. Speaker,

Thankyou for the opportunity to present my first ministerial statement as Minister responsible for climate change, an issue that affects the very survival of some of the most vulnerable sections of our communities. This world phenomenon also known globally as Global Warming affects not only the lives of the Bougainville Atolls, but also other low-lying islands and the coastal regions of Bougainville

Mr. Speaker:

In 2015 as part of maiden speech to this House I raised the issue of alluded to then, the effects and impacts on the lives of the Atolls people. As I alluded to then, the effects of climate change are an everyday survival issue for my people. These are the unsuspecting communities who must live with the effects and impacts of this world phenomenon; the people who must sacrifice so others, in particular the citizens of the developed and industrialised world can continue to enjoy their high living standards and he people who must lay awake at night wondering what would happen should a kind tide or tsunami strike when they are fast asleep.

Mr. Speaker:

But the effects of climate change are no longer confined or unique to the Carteret Island or the rest of the Atolls, for that matter. The effects of climate change can also be seen in other low-lying islands of Bougainville and indeed in our coastal regions. But because other small low-lying islands are closer to the mainland, these effects are not so obvious; nevertheless, climate change is a region-wide problem in Bougainville. It is an issue that the Autonomous Bougainville Government has just begun to give prominence to in its development planning. This is the first time that climate change has been raised in this house as a development goals to what is happening in the world.

What is Climate Change?

Mr Speaker:

Climate Change (CC) refers to any significant changes in the measure of climate, lasting for an extended period of time. In other words, Climate Change includes major changes in temperatures, precipitation or wind patterns, rising sea levels, erosion of foreshores amongst other effects that occur over several decades or longer (<http://www.google.com.pg/Search?P=Carteret/climatechange>) (10/8/16).

Mr. Speaker:

On the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015, world leaders met in Paris, France to discuss this world phenomenon. The message of the Conference on Climate Change (COP21) was that the world in which we live is under threat. "The future itself is under threat," said President Hollande of France in his opening remarks (DWT News 1.00am BST 1/12/2015). The aim of COP 21 was to get World Leaders to agree on preventing a 2° degree rise in world temperature by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Climatologists predict that a 2° increase in world temperatures would affect marine life all over the world. It would be catastrophic for the people of the Carteret, the rest of the Atolls people and many others who rely on fish and other marine resource for their livelihoods. Straddling and migratory fish stocks like tuna would leave their traditional spawning grounds in the tropics for cooler parts of the ocean. This is how serious it is for the survival not only of those communities affected by climate change, but also for the whole world.

Mr Speaker:

But whilst world leaders can only predict the effects of not reaching agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the next 20 years, small island nations like Kiribati, Tuvalu and the small Atolls of Bougainville and Papua New Guinea such as Carteret Island and the rest of the Atolls communities are already experiencing the realities of the effects of climate change in rising sea levels, soil, erosion, sea surges, unpredictable weather patterns and inundation of food gardens,

Mr Speaker:

This was highlighted by the PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill in his speech to world leaders meeting in Paris, "... the effect of climate change is evident in Pang's Carteret Islands, islands in Manus and the outer Atolls in the coastal provinces experiencing the rise in the sea level." (The National, Tuesday 1/12/2015, Page 4). In the Atolls communities some of the effects are increasing food insecurity due to the inundation of food gardens and the declining number of sago and pandanus palms, which are important building materials for the islanders.

Mr Speaker:

At one time, the Carteret Islanders were described as the first Climate Change Refugees (<http://www.global-greenhouse.warming.com/Carterets-Atolls.html>). But the same can

now be said for the rest of the Atolls communities. Nevertheless, there has been very little (in anything) done to address the effects of a phenomenon in which the people are unsuspecting communities. This is despite the wide publicity regarding availability of funding under the different climate change related funding sources for communities affected by climate change. Although we are the least contributors to this phenomenon, we are paying the highest price for something, which we are not responsible for.

### **Climate Change a development issue**

Mr Speaker:

Developing and implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies is now a preoccupation of many small Pacific Island states because they too, like the atolls people in Bougainville, have to live with the effects of climate change on a daily basis. We too, in Bougainville must take climate change seriously; climate change is not only about resettlement of internally displaced persons. This is just one aspect of mitigating the effects of climate change. Climate Change adaptation and mitigation strategies must address the living conditions of communities affected by climate change in terms of;

- Access to safe drinking water
- Food insecurity
- Decent Shelter
- Security
- Access to health and education services
- Reliable and regular shipping services
- Adequate response system to disaster and emergencies
- Sustainable economic development
- Poverty alleviation

Mr Speaker:

As the representative of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change in this parliament I have continued to raise the issue to alert the current government to start taking climate change and the effects thereof seriously by including the issue in its development planning. If we are to access funds meant for people affected by climate change, we must include the issue in the government's social and economic development priorities.

### **ABG Framework on Climate Change**

Mr Speaker:

I am happy to inform this house that this government is now taking climate change, in particular its effects on our people very seriously. In August 2016, the Bougainville Executive Council (BEC) approved an ABG framework to deal with the effects of climate; from the bottom-up the framework consist of:

- The Atolls District Climate Change Integrated Implementation Palm 2016-2020
- The Bougainville Climate Change Advisory Committee chaired by the Secretary for Community Government & District Affairs ( a requirement of the PNG Building Resilience to Climate Change Project)
- The establishment of the Bougainville Office of Climate Change (BOCC)
- An appropriation of K100 000 to support the operation of the new Office in 2017

Mr Speaker:

One of the initial tasks of the BOCC would be to fast track the formal establishment of the Office, which would be parked under the Department of Community Government for the day to day management and operations. The other is to develop the Bougainville Climate Change Policy to enable Bougainville as an autonomous region to access funding direct from the various climate change related funding sources instead of having to go through the PNG Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA).

Mr Speaker:

In the meantime, AROB is one of the five provinces to which the Asian Development Bank – funded PNG Building Resilience to Climate Change Project is being rolled out. Joint ABG-CCDA teams have been to Buka and the Carteret on several occasions to discuss with the ABG the requirements to access funds under the very stringent ADB funding arrangements.

Mr Speaker:

Due to our proactivity, Bougainville is at least two steps ahead of the other four provinces; whilst they are still at situational analysis and community profiling stages, we are now ready to develop concrete project proposals to implement 11 of he 14 key strategies in the Bougainville Integrated Climate Change Implementation Plan 2016-20, which the joint ADB-CCDA team has approved.

Mr Speaker:

To this end I want to express the government's appreciation to the International Office for Migration (IOM) for their financial and technical assistance in completing situational

analysis and community profiling of the Carteret communities over the last two years. The IOM is planning to rollout the project to Mortlock and Fead Islands this year.

Mr Speaker:

The establishment of the Bougainville Office of Climate Change and the appropriation of funding in the 2017 ABG Budget demonstrates this government's commitment to addressing the effects of climate change in Bougainville. This is in line with the government's policy of inclusive development of all Bougainvilleans, irrespective of where they might be located in this nation of ours.

Mr Speaker:

In the next 12-18 months, the Office would be engaged in the following;

- Engagement of an Acting Director to head the Bougainville Climate change Office
- Formal establishment of the Office
- Development of project proposals to access funding under the PNG Building Resilience to Climate Change project.
- Development of the Bougainville Climate Change Policy
- Development of relevant climate change legislations.

Mr Speaker:

These are the activities that we want to focus on in the immediate, short, medium and longer term to consolidate the ABG's efforts to coordinate and manage implementation of programs aimed at addressing the effects of climate change in Bougainville.

### **Conclusion- A Warning to NGOs**

Mr Speaker:

In concluding I want to warn those non- government organisations (NGOs) both local and international, that have been duplicating each other's efforts in dealing with climate change in an uncoordinated manner outside of the ABG. With establishment of the Bougainville Office of Climate Change, you are now required to coordinate your programs with this office. We will not accept NGOs such as Care International, World Vision and others implementing programs or conducting workshops on climate change outside of the established ABG framework. We must know what you are doing with the funds obtained in the name of those affected by climate change from the different climate change related funding sources. Moreover, we do not want to see these funds spent on capacity building workshops by these NGOs; we have had more than enough workshops on the effects of climate change. In fact, the communities most affected by climate change are the experts because they are the face of climate change; it is an everyday survival issue for them. My advice to these NGOs is if you have funding for

climate change, do something tangible with the funds instead of spending it on capacity building workshops. Funds should be spent on improving food security, access to health, education and other government services, strengthening community seawalls, building decent shelter, installation of appropriate response system to disaster and emergency, sustainable economic development and poverty alleviation. These are some of the prioritised activities contained in the Bougainville Climate Change Integrated Implementation Plan 2016-20, which NGOs and other development partners must embrace.

Mr Speaker:

It is hoped that NGOs will from now on, align their programs with the ABG's strategies to address climate change so they work in collaboration and not in competition with each other, or the Autonomous Bougainville Government.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Hon Raymond Masono MHR**

**VICE PRESIDENT**