Autonomy & Decentralisation of Government in PNG
1. Basic Services delivery systems and capacity have deteriorated.

CLRC and DPLGA Final Report (2015); “Despite improved service Delivery being one of the objectives of the Organic Law, service delivery has deteriorated over more then 20 years. This is particularlry the case in rural areas where most people live”

The second National Goal and Directive Principle

• “for all citizens to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, the development of our country” (PNG National Constitution, s.2);

• “the creation of political structures that will enable effective, meaningful participation by our people in that life, and in view of the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of our people for those structures to provide for substantial decentralization of all forms of government activity” (ibid; s.2(2)).

• ‘ “for every citizen to have equal access to legal processes and all services, governmental and otherwise, that are required for the fulfilment of his or her real needs and aspirations” (ibid; s.2(4)).
Objectives of the Research Project

To facilitate an informed national conversation with dialogue and information sharing between academics, policy practitioners, political leaders and civil society on issues and challenges to autonomy and decentralised governance arrangements in PNG with a view to improving access to basic services for the whole community as envisioned in the National Constitution.
Objectives of the Research Project (cont)

Through this process, key policy decision makers will have increased knowledge on options for autonomy and decentralisation in PNG enabling them to consider specific legal and technical arrangements emanating from a National Forum for follow up actions through GoPNG departments and processes.
What Do we mean by:

1. **Decentralisation of Government.**
   Range of Decentralised Government
   (From Centralised/Deconcentration, Delegation, Autonomy, Federalism)

2. **Autonomy.**
   Range of Powers and Functions to a region (eg Province) in the areas of legislature, executive and Judiciary, - making these regions, Autonomous.
Why Decentralise: Decentralization can address a variety of problems.

• Decentralisation requires power to be shared. It thus automatically diffuses power and provides checks and balances on central power. It can be a corrective in a political system under which election winners take all;

• Tension and the potential for conflict within states with a diverse population. Decentralization enables minority groups to enjoy a degree of self-governance; gives them a sense of ownership of the state as a whole and thus a commitment to it;
Why Decentralise: Decentralization can address a variety of problems (cont.)

• The complexity of government. By conferring suitable functions on sub-national levels of government, decentralization spreads the burden of government and enables the centre to focus on the most critical challenges and priorities, including for example, foreign affairs and international relations in an increasingly globalised world.
Why Decentralise: Decentralization can address a variety of problems (cont.)

• Lack of responsiveness by the government to the needs and preferences of people throughout the entirety of the country. By empowering a level or levels of government closer to communities, decentralization puts government agencies in a position to respond to local needs. This characteristic is particularly important in states with a large population, a diverse population or a large geographical area;

• Stagnation in approaches to government and policy development. By creating alternative sources of governing authority, decentralization accepts diversity, enables policy competition and encourages policy experimentation, by enabling it to take place on a smaller scale;
Two Areas of Planned Activities

1. **Research and Analysis**

2. **Communication.**
Areas of Research and Analysis

Analysis of Current PNG Situation – Short Papers and Discussions at NRI fortnightly Seminars.
  a. Historical Perspective
  b. Current Issues.

Analytical and Discussion Papers for presentation at National Conference Planned for end of September 2021.
  • Papers to cover four main areas of Autonomy Issues Framework.
  • Final Conference Report to Government.
The Framework

• Political Representation and Institutions.
  Representation and Institutions. The Institutional design of autonomy constitutes its Framework and includes the representation of the regional population at the national level as well as rules of political representation within the autonomous region(s).

• Legislative and Executive Powers.
  Division of Legislative and Executive Powers and Responsibilities. Division of powers and functions between the central state and the autonomous region(s).
The Framework (cont)

• **Entrenchment and Inter-Governmental Relations.**
  • Constitutional Laws to Entrench Autonomy arrangements and Institutions for managing relations between the central state and the autonomous region(s).

• **Financial Regulations and Regional Economic Activities.**
  • Financial Transfers from the Central Government (National Payroll, Grants)
  • Taxation and sharing of revenues,
  • Regional economic activities such as trunk infrastructure, energy, environment, fisheries etc -
Communication of Research Information

• Communication Strategy to Guide Communication Activities.
  • Simplify complex concepts by research report formats and presentation styles.
  • Identify Different audiences and use variety of mediums and products
  • Database for researchers and other interested persons.
Communication (cont.)

• Two events. Fortnightly Seminars and National Conference
  • Mainstream Media Support.
    • Engagement with all print, radio and television
    • NBC to broadcast nationwide through national and provincial services.
  • Zoom Audience
    • Youtube (audio and video) from NRI Website.

• National Conference – Facilitate robust discussion by all of PNG.
• Conference Report for Consideration by Government.
Possible Timeline for Changes

1. Informed Discussion Leading to Conference Report. (2021)


3. At same time, establish implementation mechanisms, oversight authority, intergovernmental relations management. (2024-
Outcome

• Informed, robust discussions;
• leading to adoption of appropriate legislative and administrative governance framework
• that allows for accountable government system that is responsive to the needs of people
• and ensures effective delivery of essential basic services to the people of Papua New Guinea.
Thank you