



MEDIA RELEASE

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Prime Minister shows support for the role PNG NRI plays

Prime Minister Hon. James Marape made a courtesy visit to the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI) on Wednesday 21st August 2019.

His visit was to show support for the role that the PNG NRI, the National Economic Fiscal Commission and other like-minded institutions play in contributing to public policy design and implementation in PNG.

Mr Marape spoke highly of the importance of having evidence-based research and workable policies as well as the sharing of timely information, data and statistics for informed decision-making.

He assured PNG NRI of its rightful place in the government structure, describing it as a reservoir of information that the government can draw from.

He encouraged the Institute to continue to provide quality research to drive informed decision-making which in turn would lead to improved service delivery and better quality of life for all Papua New Guineans.

PNG NRI Director Dr. Osborne Sanida, highlighted that the research conducted by the Institute, aims to address the key issues and goals facing PNG, as envisioned in the PNG Vision 2050; Development Strategic Plan (DSP) 2010-2030; the Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs); and Marape-Steven Government's priorities, going forward.

Dr Sanida emphasized that the research work of the Institute is done under eight Research Programs: Building Safer Communities; Development Indicators; Economic Policy; Governance; Gender in PNG; Informal Economy; Property Sector Development; and Universal Basic Education, Research Programs.

As PNG's premier public policy think tank, PNG NRI, contributes to effective public policy design, analysis, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation through its three 'I' mantra of "Inquire, Inform and Influence".

To inquire is to research and analyse relevant public policy issues using relevant methods and tools. To inform is to disseminate the research results to key stakeholders, including Government. To influence is to try as much as possible to ensure that stakeholders use research information for informed decision-making for the betterment of the people.

The Prime Minister was informed of the research carried out by the eight research programs of PNG NRI. Four program leaders providing briefs on the Informal Economic Research Program, Building Safer Communities Program, Universal Basic Education Research Program and the Property Sector Development Program. They also spoke about the successes and challenges of what they do.

Dr. Sanida highlighted that as part of its five-year Corporate Plan, 2016-2020, the Institute has embarked on transforming the Institute into becoming the PNG Knowledge Hub (PNG KH).

The PNG KH is envisioned to be a facility where information and knowledge on development issues in PNG are created, shared and disseminated for informed decision-making. It will bring together like-minded academics, researchers, thinkers, policy analysts, bureaucrats, and private sector and government representatives to work together to create knowledge that addresses issues or problems facing PNG.

The focus of the PNG KH is to complement the work of the PNG NRI in the following areas:

- Create knowledge on development issues as well as specific problems on Key Development Constraints and to communicate the information to key stakeholders;
- Facilitate the integration of the knowledge generated into the mainstream policy intervention mechanisms of Government and other agencies involved in development work; and
- Create platforms for storing knowledge created by PNG NRI as well as other agents in readily accessible forms for a variety of users, especially PNG policy practitioners.

It will provide a physical space at the PNG NRI Campus which is strategically located next to the University of Papua New Guinea and Pacific Institute of Leadership and Governance (PILAG) Precinct. The Flagship infrastructure, approved by the PNG NRI Council, will be the Sir Henry Chow Building, of which the Institute is seeking funding, including a PIP submission made this year.

Dr Sanida highlighted that the Institute is funded by the annual Government appropriations and internal revenue (for operational costs); and donor funding (which largely funds the research work of the Institute). Going forward, government funding and internal revenue are required to fund the Institute's research work and the PNG APEC Study Centre (PNG ASC) so that reliance on donor funding can be reduced over time.

Dr. Sanida emphasised that the PNG NRI stands ready to work with the Marape/Davis Government to advance the key policies and plans for the benefit of the People of PNG. "This will be in the form of both working together and also providing constructive criticisms (as per the PNG NRI mandate), with the ultimate aim of making informed decisions for the betterment of our people, whom we collectively serve in our different capacities". he said.

In his closing remarks, Hon. James Marape, assured PNG NRI that, "your role will be maintained", adding that "we (the government) will not silence your words, sometimes if it is harsh, it is better listening to harsh decisions than praises that are faulty all the time".

In attendance were the PNG NRI Council Acting Chairman, Mr. Wilson Thompson, Chairman/CEO of National Economic and Fiscal Commission, Mr. Hohora Suve and his two Commissioners and staff, PNG NRI Council Members, senior government officers, and media and staff of PNG NRI.

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