



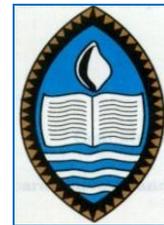
**Demanding More:**  
Citizens Share Their Views on Better Politics and Better Government

Findings from Focus Group Discussions with Citizens in Papua New Guinea  
October 2012

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National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and  
University of Papua New Guinea Political Science Strand





**THE UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

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## **NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights.

Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments, safeguarding elections, and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

With staff members and volunteer political practitioners from more than 100 nations, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. Partners receive broad exposure to best practices in international democratic development that can be adapted to the needs of their own countries. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.

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## **UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA POLITICAL SCIENCE STRAND**

The University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) was established as a corporate body under the University of Papua New Guinea Ordinance in 1965. Since then it has undergone several restructures to keep up with the changing times. The result was the creation of Papua New Guinea's leading center of higher learning that has over the years produced the men and women with knowledge needed to develop this post-colonial developing state. Many past and current leading Papua New Guineans and others from neighboring Pacific Island states and beyond are the products of this great learning institution. Introducing of new benchmarks to enhance the organizational structure and capacity of the institution, and the improving overall quality assurance processes to stimulate independent learning, and cultivating innovation in teaching and research are some core objectives enshrined in the University Act 1983.

The creation of the UPNG Political Science Strand within the school of Humanities and Social Sciences, like other strands within the University's four schools, i.e. Business Administration, Law, Medicine and Health Sciences, and Natural and Physical Sciences, was the result of an amendment to the UPNG Act (Chapter 169) in 2000. The focus of the amendment was to reorient the University's academic programs and administrative structures to suit the changing trends and patterns in higher learning systems worldwide.

The UPNG Political Science Strand's approach to study of politics is a blend of traditional and contemporary political analysis. The Strand offers papers in the five main fields: PNG, South Pacific, and South East Asian Politics (Regional Politics); Political Philosophy and Gender Politics; Comparative Politics; and International Relations. The Strand or Department as previously known has produced and continues to produce top government bureaucrats, private sector practitioners, and politicians.

## PREFACE

With the election approaching and turmoil over the right to leadership in Papua New Guinea, this study, based on 12 focus group discussions with 138 participants, was designed to provide some insight into the hopes and concerns of ordinary citizens and to provide political parties, civil society and others with an understanding of how public views can and should be incorporated into their work. In the study, Papua New Guineans demonstrate they have a clear understanding of politics in their country. While they endorse democracy and elections and accept the process as legitimate, the country's political system falls far short of their expectations and is failing to address their most basic needs. They lament especially the distance they feel between themselves and their government, but at the same time hold out hope that the emergence of good leaders can change the course of the country.

**Focus Group Results and Usage.** Focus groups are semi-structured group discussions guided by a moderator who follows a pre-set guideline. Unless otherwise noted, the conclusions presented here represent views commonly and repeatedly cited during the group discussions. Minority views exist and are communicated in this report only when they are significant or can highlight an illustrative alternate opinion. The interaction between participants in a focus group provides insight into how citizens think and feel and is a helpful means of understanding *why* those attitudes exist. Information gathered in this way reflects citizen values and needs and is critical in helping decision-makers test their assumptions and incorporate the will of the people into policy-making.

**A Snapshot of Public Opinion.** Any public opinion research, including focus group discussions, is only a snapshot of opinion at the moment the research is undertaken. Public opinion is dynamic and evolves as people experience and react to major events. Therefore, the conclusions of this report only represent opinions when the research was undertaken. In this study, four focus group discussions were conducted prior to the election and eight were conducted following the commencement of voting. The separation of time between the two sets of discussions with the intervening event of the beginning of the election means there are some slight differences in perceptions between the pre-election groups and the post-voting groups. These occur mainly in relation to issues of the election itself, such as assessments of fairness, electoral commission performance and voting obstacles.

**A Qualitative Research Tool.** Focus groups are a qualitative, not a quantitative, research instrument. Although focus groups are a method of understanding the meanings behind commonly held attitudes, the total number of participants in a focus group study is always relatively small. Attempts are made to ensure the groups represent a broad cross-section of society, but the participants in the study are not statistically representative of the larger population. Therefore, this report reflects the opinions of those citizens of Papua New Guinea who participated in this study. The focus group locations and participant demographic chart, as well as the methodology notes appearing at the end of this study, in Appendix A and B respectively, should be consulted to understand the subsets of participants interviewed for this study.

**Participant Perceptions vs. Political Realities.** The perceptions of participants in the focus group discussions do not necessarily reflect reality. People sometimes get facts wrong and often form their opinions based on inaccurate or semi-accurate readings of the world around them. Even if they do not represent reality, however, there is value in examining people's perceptions. Citizens make decisions based on what they believe. Without knowledge of these perceptions, policy-makers and other political actors will not be able to address them. Therefore, the goal of this research is to report the perceptions and opinions of participants, regardless of their factual accuracy, to political and civil society leaders as

well as the international community so they may better understand and respond to the concerns of the general populace.

**Geographic Limitations.** Group discussions were held in six different areas in Papua New Guinea, although it was not possible due to budget limitations to hold groups in all of the country's distinct geographic regions. In addition, the research design called for one of the group discussion locations to be the Southern Highlands. However, security concerns prevented travel to that area and instead discussions were held in Chimbu and Eastern Highlands provinces.

The elections in Papua New Guinea are now concluded but the basic political dynamics and issues participants raise in this study remain. It is UPNG and NDI's hope that key political actors will listen to the wisdom and voice of the ordinary citizens who have shared their opinions here. There is sure to be great reward for those who do as participants state again and again their great desire to support leaders and parties who responsibly guide the country and demonstrate sincerity in addressing their needs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The UPNG and NDI are grateful to the Papua New Guineans who shared their time and perspectives with our research teams. This study is a collaborative effort between the University and NDI. Mr. Teddy Winn played a lead role in the design of the study, supervised the field research and analyzed the data in cooperation with NDI. UPNG political science students from various ethnic backgrounds were trained to lead the individual group discussions and Michael Kabuni, a political science graduate student, also assisted with data analysis. The Institute expresses its appreciation to Traci D. Cook, senior advisor for Southern and East Africa, who trained moderators, developed the methodology and analyzed research data in cooperation with UPNG and to Telibert Laoc, country director for Papua New Guinea, who provided insight regarding the current political context and supported UPNG efforts.

UPNG and NDI are especially grateful to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) whose support made this research and report possible.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conclusions of this public opinion research study are drawn from 12 focus group discussions, four of which were conducted prior to the election from April 26-27, 2012, and eight of which were conducted after the commencement of voting from July 13-17, 2012. A total of 138 Papua New Guinea citizens participated in the research study. Consult Appendix A for further information on group locations and participant demographics. Each of the findings below is explored in more detail in the *Principal Findings* section of this report, where there also are quotations from participants that further illuminate their opinions on the key issues highlighted here.

### I. GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

- **Participants are unhappy with the performance of the government.**<sup>1</sup> Most feel the country is headed in the wrong direction. The government's reported failure to provide adequate services and the perception of widespread corruption are driving this opinion. In addition, there is a significant sense of disillusionment due to a lack of connection with government as explained by the comment of one participant, "We the people vote or give the mandate to the government, however in turn they don't help us back."<sup>2</sup> Confidence in the government's ability to improve its performance in the future is low. Participants say past experience has taught them to not expect much and that continued corruption will prevent any significant improvements. It is only the possibility of electing new and better leaders that provides them with any hope for a better government.
- **Members of Parliament (MPs) are the target for most of the criticism from participants.** Most say MPs are selfish, uncaring politicians who spend their time in Port Moresby and care most about enriching themselves. "To them being a member is just for the fame and name and supporting their family"<sup>3</sup> is how one participant describes the reputation of MPs. The high turnover in parliament is attributed directly to their poor performance.
- **Poor or non-existent service delivery is participants' top complaint.** Priority for development should be given to education, health and transport infrastructure say participants who cite a severe shortage in appropriate education and health facilities and personnel and say roads are desperately needed to open markets, facilitate policing and increase access to health and education facilities. The security situation is described as deteriorating due to unchecked youth and ineffective policing as well.
- **Rural areas are in great need of government attention.** Both urban and rural participants repeatedly urge the government to address what they describe as the acute needs of the rural population who face significant and in the case of health services, sometimes life-threatening deficits in service delivery.
- **Free education and free health are popular policies but skepticism and quality concerns remain.** There is significant appreciation for lifting of the financial burden for these basic services and praise for the education policy's ability to engage youth. However, some say the policies fail to deliver truly

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<sup>1</sup> The fieldwork for this study was completed prior to the formation of the most recent government.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation is from the younger women's group in Pokpok Island, ARB.

<sup>3</sup> Quotation is from the younger women's group in Madang Town, Madang.

free services and some question whether the policies will be permanent. Others note that free services mean little if the quality remains poor.

- **Perception of government corruption is high among participants, who list it as a primary reason services are failing.** Government financial corruption, including bribery and misappropriation, is most often cited, but some participants describe *wantok*<sup>4</sup> and neglectful government officials as corruption also. Money meant for services “disappears in the middle,”<sup>5</sup> say participants, and so they attribute service delivery failure to government corruption. Better laws and harsher penalties, including long prison sentences, are solutions they suggest to address corruption.

## II. POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

- **“Con politics” and poorly practiced democracy distort the political process in Papua New Guinea.** Participants say politics in the country is based on greed and lying. They believe corruption is rampant and increasing and no longer trust politicians who neglect their constituents and repeatedly fail to deliver on their promises. Democracy as a concept is supported but adherence to its principles is described as weak, leaving the country with a government system that fails to deliver benefits to the people.
- **Participants see elections as important and useful but believe they are unfairly conducted.** Elections are described as the primary mechanism by which citizens can express their opinion on leaders and their performance and so are strongly embraced. Especially in the groups conducted following the commencement of voting, however, participants say a poor quality common roll that left off many people and included ghost names and rampant vote buying means elections are unfair. The perception of unfair elections is exacerbated by what participants describe as a poor performance of an electoral commission that failed in its basic duty to have an accurate roll and that allowed some officials to alter the number of names on the roll for political benefit.
- **Security concerns and voter intimidation are the most commonly cited obstacles to voting.** Fears about open conflict between party supporters during the election are high in the groups conducted prior to the commencement of voting and such tensions and conflicts are reported to have hindered voting in some groups conducted following the election, particularly in the Highlands area. Voter intimidation incidents are most common in the Highlands area, although Port Moresby participants also talk about threats and coerced voting. Logistical issues, such as overcrowded or distant polling stations, cause difficulty for some voters as well.
- **Doubts about the secrecy of the vote and the integrity of vote counting persist among some participants.** Highlands area and Port Moresby participants are more likely to say their vote is not

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<sup>4</sup> The pidgin word ‘wantok’, which is the generic local term for ‘tribe’ or ‘clan’, derives from ‘one-talk’ indicating people who speak the same language. Members of wantoks have very strong social obligations towards each other. They are obliged to assist and support other members of the group and to share material goods. The positive aspects of this arrangement are that it provides a cultural and linguistic identity, and a support network in times of difficulty. On the other hand, obligations to one’s ‘wantok’ follow a person into public life. The instinct to ‘look after one’s own’ are not easily set aside and the result is a tendency towards patronage which many Papua New Guineans would not regard as improper. (<http://www.trupela.com/2005/05/08/what-is-a-wantok/>)

<sup>5</sup> Quotation is from the middle-aged men’s group in Buka Town, ARB.

secret either because poor polling station conditions allow others to see how they vote or because they are asked to openly pledge their support by clan leaders. Vote counting is viewed as properly conducted by some participants, regardless of location, but others say that corrupt officials can, and sometimes do, skew the count.

- **The Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system is endorsed by most as promoting greater freedom of choice.** Having multiple choices allows citizens to vote their true preference while at the same time supporting choices of others. It also requires candidates to work for the votes of a more diverse group of citizens, thus reducing conflict. However, there remains significant concern among some that LPV is confusing and that with the ability to claim support for multiple candidates, it encourages vote buying behavior.
- **Vote buying is widely condemned by participants.** It indicates a candidate is corrupt, produces poor leaders chosen not for their substance and results in leaders who feel no obligation to the electorate. Nevertheless, some participants indicate they understand why poor people participate in vote buying out of need and why others view accepting bribes as the only time they will benefit from their leaders.
- **Most contend they do not feel obligated to vote with their clan.** These participants say an individual's democratic right to vote based on their conscience is greater than the clan's right to promote what is good for the group. But the pull to vote with the clan remains strong among some, particularly, but not exclusively, participants in the Highlands area. Clan voting by these participants is driven by a belief that supporting the interests of the group will produce better results or by a fear that voting differently from the group would bring division and conflict.

### III. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

- **Support for women's participation in the political process is strong, though there is widespread acknowledgement that women face significant obstacles in doing so.** The opinion of most is that no limits should be placed on women's political participation and that they should serve in all levels of government. The practical reality, however, is that women face many barriers. Participants recount many instances where a woman's basic right to vote is denied through coercion or intimidation and say that contesting for elections is an even greater challenge for women who face adverse cultural attitudes, dismissive behavior by men, and little access to financial resources.
- **Most approve of a 22-seat set aside for women in parliament.** Participants, both male and female, see a number of benefits to reserving seats for women, including the possibility that women may prove to be superior leaders who can improve services and reduce corruption.

### IV. POLITICAL PARTIES

- **Political parties have a poor reputation among participants who say they do not positively contribute to Papua New Guinea politics and fund their activities in part through suspect sources.** Unfulfilled campaign promises and corruption, including vote buying and misuse of public funds, are the main criticisms aimed at parties. Participants also denounce the political parties for increasing the chances of conflict through their harsh interactions and say the proliferation of parties adds to voter confusion. They acknowledge some appropriate sources of campaign funding but believe

there is significant use of public funds meant for development and a reliance on business contributions that will be repaid with public money or with favors that are not in the interest of the people. International business contributions are especially disliked because they raise the specter that the country is being bought by foreigners.

- **Despite the concerns about political parties, participants are satisfied with the quality of candidates that contest elections and indicate they could become loyal to a competent, people-centered party.** Overall, the political parties are fielding good candidates that along with independents candidates give citizens quality choices in election. Fielding good candidates is one element that can engender greater political party loyalty but those candidates must then turn into good leaders who demonstrate their competence by addressing citizen's needs to win their lasting affiliation, participants say.
- **Following elections, parliamentary coalition formation by political parties is viewed positively, but the switching of party affiliation by individuals is intensely disliked.** Coalitions are described as useful tools that display unity, provide a mechanism for incorporating multiple parties and promote better decision-making, although some participants note they can also bring instability and involve corruption. Members of Parliament who switch parties are labeled power hungry and corrupt because it is assumed the member is selling himself to the highest bidder for either money or a government position or both. However, some participants would support the decision of an MP who switched parties solely because the original party was under performing.

## V. NATURAL RESOURCES AND LAND OWNERSHIP

- **Participants are highly critical of the country's natural resources management and say poor government policies and lack of oversight are the root of the problem.** They believe the extractives industry has caused great environmental destruction and wonder what that will mean for future generations and for those whose livelihoods are environmentally dependent. The bigger sin according to most, though, is that Papua New Guinea's people, and even the rightful landowners, have not benefited from the resources taken from their land. In addition, endemic conflict over land ownership is viewed, in part, as a by-product of resources mismanagement. Both resources and land ownership issues can be resolved, say participants, through stronger environmental laws, close oversight of extractives companies (including limiting their number), tough penalties on corrupt officials, and clear and people-oriented land policies.

## VI. DECENTRALIZATION AND AUTONOMOUS REGION OF BOUGAINVILLE (ARB) REFERENDUM

- **Greater government decentralization is desirable.** Participants argue that the national government is not close enough to the people to deliver effective governance and so want to see equal or more power, particularly in financial and administrative areas, placed with the provincial and local government levels.
- **There is no consensus among participants on the independence of the ARB.** Some participants want the country to remain united, while others believe ARB deserves its independence should the referendum produce that result.

## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The findings outlined below are based on 12 focus group discussions with 138 participants. The discussions were conducted in both rural and urban locations across six different areas of Papua New Guinea. Group discussions were conducted with men and women of various ethnicities, age groups, and education levels. Consult Appendix A for further information on locations and group composition.

### I. GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

#### 1. Most participants say that Papua New Guinea is headed in the wrong direction because of poor service delivery and government corruption.

Participants express dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Papua New Guinea and concern that the country is on the wrong track. The most common reasons cited for this assessment are poor service delivery and government corruption. Participants complain that services, especially education and health, are not reaching the public. Both urban and rural area participants say that the service delivery problem is most acute in the rural areas. The poor service record of the government is due in part because, participants say, to uncaring and selfish politicians who line their own pockets with government money, favor relatives, and neglect to deliver any tangible signs of development. The feeling of many is reflected in the comment of one participant who notes, “MPs run politics as their private business.”<sup>6</sup> The few participants who say that the country is going in the right direction point mainly to their belief that Peter O’Neill has brought positive policy changes, such as free education.

*[The country is headed in the] wrong direction. This is because most of the services that are due to us are not reaching us. Our health centres are closed for some time now. Schools are running down in most remote areas. Basically, most of what is supposed to be delivered to us people in the rural areas is not reaching us. (Middle-aged women, Kawa & Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*[The country is going in the] wrong direction. Leaders are not providing the services the people in the rural areas need...I am a women leader but when we approach the Ministers they say they have nothing to give to us therefore government is corrupt and is going in the wrong direction. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*I don’t think things are going in the right direction. This is because, we the people vote or give the mandate to the government however in turn they don’t help us back. They don’t help the people, the community in rural areas especially villages, they don’t sort problems or guide the people well. They only help themselves. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB<sup>7</sup>)*

*[The country is going in the] wrong direction. MPs get funds and use them for their own benefits, and we do not see any tangible development for years. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*I think the country is running good because of the free education. It is because of these that a lot of boys are leaving crime to go to school. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

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<sup>6</sup> Quotation is from a middle-aged men’s group in Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands.

<sup>7</sup> ARB is an abbreviation for the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

**2. Government receives its highest marks for the introduction of free education, though education remains at the top of participants' priority areas for improvement along with transport infrastructure and health. Based on past performance, many participants are skeptical of the government's ability to adequately address these areas.**

When asked to identify areas in which the government performed well, the most common participant response across all groups is the introduction of the free education policy. Some participants say they approve of such a policy and that it demonstrates the government is trying to do something. Others indicate they approve of the free education policy but are unsure whether the policy will be permanent or will be genuinely free. Less often but across multiple groups, participants praise the government's introduction of the free health policy and mention that the government's performance has improved because of the recent lowering of prices of some key commodities. Some participants, however, say they do not believe the government performs well in any area, and others say that though the government may do a few things well it does not make up for major deficiencies in other key areas, such as employment, security and infrastructure.

*Something the government is doing well is free education introduced this year. This decision satisfies every parent in Papua New Guinea, especially parents in the rural areas. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*The other thing government has done well is lowering of prices for goods...Another thing government does well also is that we receive medical treatments free of charge and also another good thing is the free education policy for our kids. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*The people are satisfied and happy with the free education policy of Peter O'Neill, but it has to be genuine. It must not be used as campaign strategy to get into parliament. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*The O'Neill-Namah government has addressed education and health issues but not bigger problems like infrastructure development. We do not know if they will maintain their performance if they remain in power. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*There is no change [in the performance of government]. We are living in the same standards since the time of our forefathers. The only services we have are those that were provided by the Australian government. Our members only bring benefits to their families and they do not serve everyone. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

Participants most commonly list education, transport infrastructure and health as the top three priority areas they would like for the government to address. Education is seen as lacking in a number of areas, including poor or too few facilities, teacher salaries and limited opportunities for higher education. Participants indicate health services suffer from both the lack of facilities and personnel and say roads are desperately needed to connect many parts of the country and to open up new markets. Other areas for priority government attention participants mention, but with less frequency, are access to clean water, electricity, security (law and order) and employment. Another theme that arises when participants speak of needed government interventions is their belief that government must focus its much of its effort and actions on the country's rural areas. The best way for the government to improve its performance ratings among citizens, according to participants, is to address the key service delivery

areas they identify. However, many say service delivery can only improve if the government becomes serious about tackling corruption, including nepotism, within its ranks. Improving the law and order situation in communities will be necessary before the government can be judged as having improved its performance as well, some believe.

*[The government must prioritize] basic things that people need. First, is health, second is education and third is Infrastructure, like roads and bridges. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD<sup>8</sup>)*

*I would tell the government to improve on education, hospitals and access to transport to take our garden produce to the market. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*The government must concentrate more on the rural and most remote areas of the country where there are no roads and proper health services...There must be proper roads, hospitals and schools in remote areas. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*In the rural areas we need government to improve in service delivery in all aspects from schools to informal sector...Government services are limited to the urban area, they need to extend these services to the rural areas. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*[To improve government performance], first I will improve the failures of the public service because this is where implementation takes place. Secondly I will invest more in developing the country in terms of basic services. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*First and importantly, I will do away with nepotism [to improve government performance]. Previous members have only looked at their own place, tribe or clan. Other people within the electorate have not benefited much from the government services...I would definitely do away with such unfair distribution of services [to improve government performance]. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Government should work to reduce bribery [to improve government performance]. Not only are police being bribed by the Chinese but even the government ministers and bureaucrats are being bribed. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*I would strengthen law and order [to improve government performance] because through law and order everything will run smoothly and without law and order corruption and the practice of stealing, raping will eventuate. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

Many participants find it hard to have any significant confidence that the government can improve upon its past performance. Their experience is that the leaders they elect do not address citizens' needs or put any effort into ensuring services reach the people. The corruption these participants report seeing perpetrated by their leaders only reinforces their view that government will not be able to improve their lives. Other participants, however, say their confidence in government to better its performance would rise if good leaders could be elected or, in the case of some Chimbu, Eastern Highlands and Port Moresby participants, if O'Neill were returned to the head of government.

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<sup>8</sup> NCD is an abbreviation for the National Capital District area of Papua New Guinea.

*No confidence [in the government to improve its performance]. Most of the people are giving up. They do not want to vote because the leaders we elect do not provide services as promised and so we do not trust the government. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*I do not think the government will improve any better. We have had problems of roads and electricity and many more after successive elections, so I do not think it will be any different after this election. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*During elections people vote and trust their members to bring proper service delivery. However, members have not been performing to the expectations of the people for some time. As such, many no longer have the confidence in the government and do not want to vote because they say that even if they vote they will not realize any benefits. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I do not have any confidence [in the government improving its performance] because the government is corrupt. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*Right now we do not have honest leaders. If we vote honest leaders, they [government] will improve performance. If the leaders are not honest, and if they do not adhere to the people's needs, the same problems will continue. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*The way I see it, I only have confidence in the government to improve its performance if we have the right leaders who can support the needs of the people. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*Peter O'Neill has done some good things. I have confidence that if he retains his seat the whole of Papua New Guinea will change for the better. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

**3. Participants express strong dissatisfaction with the performance of their Members of Parliament (MPs), saying they do nothing to improve service delivery and work only to enrich themselves. The high turnover in parliament is due primarily to MPs unfulfilled campaign promises, they say.**

There is almost unanimous agreement among participants that the performance of their representatives<sup>9</sup> in parliament is very poor. They view a primary responsibility of the MP to be ensuring adequate services for their constituents, and in this the MPs are failing, say participants. MPs' failure to deliver services to the people is attributed to several factors by the participants. They describe their parliamentary representatives as selfish politicians who only care for the prestige of the office or for providing for their families and *wantoks*. MPs are also seen as purposely neglectful or ignorant about their constituents' needs and hardships. A point that many participants mention with concern is that their MPs spend almost all of their time in Port Moresby with few, if any, visits to the areas they represent. This leads many to question how their representatives can understand and act on their problems if they never witness those problems for themselves. The reputation of MPs suffers most, though, from a perception among participants that their representatives are corrupt. The MPs are believed to be using their posts for their own enrichment. Some report that MPs divert money meant for area development projects for personal use, while others indicate that MPs accept and/or actively solicit bribes. Participants in only two of the twelve groups, one in Port Moresby and one in East Sepik Province, had any positive assessment of their representatives' performance.

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<sup>9</sup> Participants are referring to the MPs who represented them in Parliament prior to the most recent election.

*He [the MP] has not brought in any services that he promised. Therefore, he is not a good leader. We elect MPs based on their policies but once they are in parliament, they do not deliver services.* (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)

*The MP has been one-sided in service delivery. He only serves his own people.* (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)

*Our previous MPs have lived in Port Moresby almost all their terms and never came to see how people lived in rural areas. [They] don't live with us in the village to know our problems to address them. Most of the time, they stay in Port Moresby.* (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)

*To them being a member is just for the fame and name and supporting their family and having proper houses to sleep in. But actually today the people facing problems but they do not see this.* (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)

*Our MP only delivers funds and money back to his relatives to run private businesses. Hence, we do not benefit from any services.* (Older men, Kerowagi Rural, Chimbu)

*They [MPs] are just filling up their own pockets and not looking at the others but themselves...Politics is like their family business and not for the people. They will go and do their family business and, poor us, we will eat shit.* (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)

*In my opinion our MP has done many things within the last 8 months. He has given many handouts and projects.* (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)

The main reason most MPs only serve one term is because they fail to live up to their campaign promises, according to participants, especially in the area of service delivery. Participants say they have no choice but to remove underperforming MPs during election, with some declaring that even bribery would not convince them to re-elect someone who has not succeeded in improving community services. One participant put this view most succinctly by saying, "Voters are not insane."<sup>10</sup> Most participants believe that someone who is performing well will be returned to parliament regardless of the campaign run against him. However, a few disagree, saying that removing MPs has become a culture in Papua New Guinea and that a well-performing MP can be defeated if someone else sounds better or if someone buys votes.

*Seems like to be a member of parliament is a contract job done on the basis of hire and fire. We, the people, have hired the members of parliament for five year term. If they don't perform, we can fire them and get another one in, but if they perform, then they will remain for another five years.* (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)

*The main reason why they [MPs] don't last for more than five years is that they don't bring government services to us, the people who voted him. Therefore, we don't vote him but a different guy, in the hope that he brings us the government services we very much need.* (Older women, Eastern Highlands, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)

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<sup>10</sup> See the full quotation and attribution are below.

*They [MPs] are voted out because they lose the people's confidence in the last five years. Even though they bribe voters, voters are not insane. They cannot be fooled. If the MP does not deliver in the five years he or she is in the parliament, however much money they use during the elections will not buy the confidence of the people. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Sometimes they [well-performing MPs] lose because other candidates buy votes. Although they may have done their job in parliament well some other contesting candidates play a dirty game at elections and so they end up losing and the other wins. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

**4. Corruption is most closely associated with government officials and more specifically, Members of Parliament. Participants believe harsher penalties and better laws are needed to address the issue.**

When asked to name the first thing that comes to mind when the word corruption is mentioned, participants most commonly speak about various failings of government. Many of the examples given are related to financial corruption, including bribery, misappropriation/stealing of funds and favoritism for relatives or *wantoks*. When specific perpetrators are identified in these examples, it is primarily MPs who stand accused. There is a second description of corruption offered by some participants as well. This group says that corruption is also when MPs and other government officials neglect their people and fail to fulfill their promises. To address the government corruption problem, participants support increased and harsher penalties on corrupt officials, with a few recommending extreme penalties such as life imprisonment or death. Participants also want more government leadership on corruption and call for the introduction of new principles, procedures and laws to better monitor and regulate areas where corruption may exist. There are some who note that strengthening service delivery, and the institutions responsible for it, will reduce government corruption since better service delivery would mean money is being well-spent. Others say that opportunities for youth would help reduce local corruption due to idle, and sometimes drug-abusing, youth.

*When we hear of the word corruption, we automatically relate it to government. Government knows what to do but when they mismanage public resources. We see that government is corrupt. These two words are related. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Basically, our leaders are the main cause of corruption and like a wind, it blows and sweeps across and takes hold of every society. Corruption is in the government...The money that is budgeted and allocated for each district is misused through corruptible means. That's why we don't see any substantial benefits in our towns, provinces and districts. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Corruption is when MPs steal the people's money, which is money intended for service delivery. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*[Corruption is] wantok-ism. MPs favour their friends and relatives when distributing services. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*[Corruption is] when MPs do not stick to their policies, and they fail to fulfill their promises. They neglect the people, therefore this is corruption. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*The government has to introduce principles and laws against corruption so the people can abide by it. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Tougher penalties must be instilled. When ordinary citizens breach a law or commit a crime, they are sent to prison, unlike MPs who engage in white collar crime. Tougher penalties must also apply to MPs so they will be afraid and would not practice corruption. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Enact harsh laws to deal with the authorities who appoint their relatives to occupy public office. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*The government needs to strengthen institutions which are responsible for service delivery because the money does come but those responsible for executing it do not execute the projects. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Government must also help those young ones to live a prosperous life so that they don't get involved in corruptible activities. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

**5. Corruption is the key factor cited by participants for their disappointment with service delivery. Most participants say their confidence in government to improve service delivery is conditional upon the election of good leaders.**

Government financial corruption is directly linked by participants to their dissatisfaction with the state of service delivery in their areas. They describe money meant for development projects “disappears in the middle”<sup>11</sup> and say that money makes members [MPs] forget about the people. As noted above, MPs get most of the blame for the corruption, but in response to this question some participants describe provincial officials as culprits as well. Other common reasons that participant cite for service delivery failing to meet their expectations is the favoritism practiced by government officials and the failure of officials to consult with the people on key development needs and actions, especially when those officials have made false promises. Some also say that inaction or incompetence by provincial officials contributes to service delivery failure.

*It [service delivery failing to meet expectations] is because of corruption...MPs are only filling their own pockets because they want to be businessmen and gain fame. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*When you [the MP] get into parliament and see the money, you are led astray and forget about the people... The majority of the politicians are bad because they come only to trick us and get our votes. Whatever that is budgeted is diverted to private use behind our back and we are still crying for service. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*MPs are blindfolded by money...We elected the MPs because they said to provide services but they do not. They lie to us and bribe us to get the votes and then they neglect us. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

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<sup>11</sup> Quotation is from the middle-aged men's group in Buka Town, ARB.

*Services are not reaching us because of wantok system. Contracts are awarded to the MPs' relatives who are not qualified for the job, and they do a poor job and waste the money. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Government does give money to deliver the services we need but the provincial administration and the MP's staff are greedy. They misuse the money. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*Why [service delivery is not meeting our expectations is] because these members provide services for their own liking and they don't get the views of us the people, especially the people from far away electorates. The people only know that this is service being provided to them and sometimes this services that are provided to the village doesn't match the community. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

There are a wide range of views among participants about the amount of faith they have in the government to improve service delivery. Most, though, indicate their confidence will be high if good leaders – those who are not corrupt, do not practice nepotism and make an effort to consult citizens – are elected. Some of the participants with this opinion feel the chances of electing good leaders is high,<sup>12</sup> and some, particularly those in Chimbu and Eastern Highlands provinces, say their hope for good leaders is based on O'Neill returning to lead the government. Although they were fewer than those who express conditional confidence in government's ability to correct service delivery problems, a significant number of participants say they no longer believe government is capable of improving services. These participants point to the lack of any record of significant service delivery improvements in the past and say that, regardless of who is elected, corruption will still exist. Since corruption is a key reason for their disappointment with service delivery, they have no hope for improvement. They also do not see any reason to hope that new politicians would be any different from old politicians. As one participant notes, "We see the same attitudes and same things [from politicians]."<sup>13</sup>

*I think yes if good leaders are elected into parliament [government can improve service delivery]. When good leaders get elected they will provide good services. Good leaders meaning leaders that are not corrupt. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*Confidence in the government to improve service delivery] depends on who leads the government in the future. If good leaders are elected service delivery will be improved. If corrupt leaders are in power in the future there won't be much change. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*I believe that government will do better in terms of road infrastructure to link all our rural areas because the last government did many good things. If they form the next government they will surely do that. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*I do not have confidence that service delivery will be improved. There is no honest leader; also the leaders are ignorant of the rural people's needs. Improvements in service delivery depend on having honest leaders, and those who consider needs of the rural areas. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

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<sup>12</sup> This is in reference to how participants felt at the time of the fieldwork.

<sup>13</sup> Quotation is from the younger women's group in Madang Town, Madang.

**6. The free education and health policies are highly popular among participants, although they note the policy does not address the need to increase the quality of education and health and that fees associated with the two services mean they are not truly free.**

The vast majority of participants view the recently introduced free education and free health policies as positive government actions. They say the policies will be beneficial to those who currently cannot afford them and will reduce the financial burden for all, allowing for that money to be spent on other critical needs, such as food and clothing. The free education policy is also seen as a good solution to engage otherwise idle youth. Despite strong support for the free education and health policies, many participants say the policies must be broadened to include all costs, such as project fees, uniforms and “extras” that are charged in clinics, for the policies to live up to their promise of being free. They also argue that government’s job is not just to address the cost issue; quality is just as important. Participants with this view say that quality service delivery in education and health can only be achieved if the government improves facilities and staffing and does more to ensure those services reach the rural areas. The cost factor is highlighted by some participants as well. They question how the policies will be paid for and given the cost, whether they are sustainable. A few with this view wonder whether the policies will mean significant tax increases. Overall, only a small number of participants see the policies as having no merit. One concern among these participants is that the policies will lead to overcrowding, and thus, a reduction in the quality of services. Another is that these policies will increase dependency on government and encourage laziness. In group discussions conducted in the coastal areas and in the younger male group in Port Moresby, the free education and health policies are sometimes described as campaign gimmicks used to bribe the population for their votes. These participants doubted whether the policies would last beyond the election.

*It [free education] is a good service that the government is doing to reduce the burden of parents. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*The free education policy is satisfying our needs, those of us ordinary people up to those working class people. It’s a good policy... Now that education is free, the money we find, we can use it to buy food and clothes and other better things. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*It [free health services] is also a good idea. For some of us that don’t have money may die trying to get medicine. If it’s free then, we can get those who are sick to the hospital. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*The government talks a lot about free education; however, many times they only pay a certain percentage and the rest is still left to the families or parents to pay. It would be good if the government paid the full fee. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*When I heard that there were free health services, I was very happy but after some time it costs money, therefore I am not happy. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*[The free health policy is] good but before it is implemented the government must improve the status and standard of nurses and doctors...Basic free health service is good but I think prior to implementing it, health sector and basic health infrastructures in rural areas must be improved so implementation would go well. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I am quite happy with the free education policy. The continuity of the policy is the one which is my concern. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*I think that it [free health services] is ok, but taxes will increase. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*[Free education is] bad. Why, because of free education those that are not smart are helplessly sent to school who corrupt the education system...Free education breeds laziness among parents. When there no such free education policy in the past, we worked hard to save for our kids' school fees. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*It [free health services] is an election strategy of the O'Neill-Namah Government to stay in power. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*[The free education policy] is election fever. They are trying to you know just to get people's attention that if I do this people will give me votes...Free education is unbelievable. No one will have free education. They just want power so they talk about free education. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

**7. Participants mostly describe a poor or deteriorating security situation, with many saying misbehaving youth and ineffective policing are the core problems. They believe the best solutions to rising crime are programs to engage youth, to improve policing and to strengthen the village magistrates system.**

Most participants report that law and order in their areas has taken a significant turn for the worse. They say safety is no longer guaranteed and identify youth as the main perpetrators of wrongdoing. Youth, they say, engage in stealing from and harassing the public, largely due to serious drug and alcohol abuse problems among that population. In some areas, residents from settlements are seen as being the most to blame for criminal activity, and in Bougainville, participants highlight the proliferation of guns in the community as contributing to insecurity. These Bougainville participants say the weapon disposal program there is failing. Criminal elements have been emboldened and allowed to proliferate because of a poorly organized, deployed and motivated police force. Complaints about the work of the police are numerous and include the low number of police in rural areas, which encourages lawlessness, and the advanced age of policemen who do not have the energy to address crime, especially when it occurs in rural areas. Corruption is said to be a problem within the police ranks as well. Participants claim police are bribed by wrongdoers to allow or ignore criminal acts.

*Previously there were no law and order problem, but today it's worse. Today, many of our younger boys take drugs and steal from our gardens, threaten mothers who come back from markets, stand along the road and swear at people and even have no respect for our village leaders. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Law and order in this area is really bad, ranging from road block robbery to murder...Most of the law and order issues are being committed by the youths, especially those from other areas residing in the settlement along the road. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Most of these young boys, who have not been provided opportunity to be educated, have learnt these bad habits in settlements and are becoming problems to their parents because they do evil every time. They steal, break and enter, steal cars amongst other such evil. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*For us here, law and order is not strong; it is very poor. I've seen it that's why I'm talking here in terms of the weapons disposal. All the guns have not been brought out yet. A lot of guns are still hidden. That's why a lot of people cause a lot of trouble here. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*There are insufficient village police and that has allowed the drug addicts to break and enter. The owners or other people, even the village leaders, cannot say a thing because these youngsters go around in numbers and speak threats. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Law and order according to me is only on the lips of policemen and warders. It is restricted to the area where there is police presence. In areas [where police are not stationed] people are living in freedom, doing any illegal thing they wish to do. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Our old police personals must retire because they only contribute to law and order problems. They don't have the strength and cannot go to remote areas to deal with law and order problems. We need young energetic police men to go there and do that to contain the increasing law and order problems in this area. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Law and order in my area has gone worse. Law enforcers are engaged in bribery and are living with people who steal and smoke weed. I do not think law and order can be enforced anymore because it has failed. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

A greater government focus on youth is necessary to improve law and order, according to participants. They urge the government to develop avenues through which youth can become employed and through which youth can gain education and skills, such as technical training. Recommendations for addressing the policing problem mainly center on increasing the number of police and police stations, with a focus on improving coverage in rural areas. Younger policemen, better police salaries and rotational postings are other key suggestions. Village judges and magistrates are viewed as a critical component of the justice system, but participants say they do not function well at all times. Participants believe formalizing their role in government, specifically through payment, will dramatically increase their effectiveness.

*The government has to initiate projects to engage the youths...I agree that the most effective way to cut down on youth-related lawlessness is for the government to initiate projects to engage the youths. They are the worst culprits. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*It would be good if they put the younger generation to work, create employment in order to keep them off the alcohol and marijuana, but also to keep them busy so they are not reminded of the crisis and guns and law and order issues. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*The government must recruit more young policemen and women and establish more police stations in districts [to help resolve law and order problems]...More police stations must be established closer to the people. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*Establish police stations in every community or constituency in our districts so police can control law and order with the community and people. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*There should be job rotations so [police] workers will find it hard to do corruption. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*The work of our village councilors and judges needs to be encouraged by properly paying them. When this is done, the break down in law and order will be contained because these people will do their jobs with commitment and consistency. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

## **II. POLITICS AND ELECTIONS**

### **8. Participants see many problems with politics in Papua New Guinea today, calling it “con politics”<sup>14</sup> and based on bribery.**

Overall, participants have a poor view of the country’s politics and have many criticisms of how it is practiced. They feel the dominating force in politics today is greed, with corruption among politicians high and increasing, with citizens too commonly selling and candidates too commonly buying votes and with bribery (both the payment and the need to pay) getting worse. They also lament the disconnect between government and the people caused by a neglect of the rural areas and by elected officials who ignore their constituents and are only concerned about living “the big man life.”<sup>15</sup> And they say they have grown weary and distrustful of politicians because of the many false promises that have been made to them over the years. This causes some participants to describe the country’s politics as “con politics” and to equate politics with lying. A few participants say that politics in the country were better in the past, and a few blame the multiparty system, saying it is causing politics to become unstable. Participants in the Port Moresby younger men’s group believe the politics in the country is suffering because it follows Western ideals and is not upholding the Melanesian way.

*The politics of today is based on bribery and money. (Older female, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*All our politics is con politics. Every election time, candidates come and awash us with their sweet talks and when they get into power, we don’t normally see them around here. They are lost and we don’t see what they promised delivered. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*PNG politics is not very good. There is too much corruption. Corruption must be stopped, and politics has to be clean and smooth...Our politics is dirty because of the multi-party system. There are differences between parties and this leads to bribery and murder. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

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<sup>14</sup> This phrase was used by multiple participants to describe politics in the country.

<sup>15</sup> See the full quotation and attribution below.

*Members don't help the people in rural areas or the villages. There is no good support in relation to politics; they don't give good things back...All members do is live the big men life; they spend money on themselves and women. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*We all know what politics is. What is politics? Lying. There are too many lies in politics. This kind of politics must be stopped in the parliament and there should be more honest people in parliament. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Most of our members are more familiar with the Melanesian Way and cannot cope with Western values. As such Papua New Guinea politics is in a conflicting situation because Melanesian Way is colliding with Western ways. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

#### **9. Democracy is endorsed as a good system of government for Papua New Guinea, but some participants say it is not practiced well in the country.**

Most participants view democracy as the appropriate and best form of government for the country. They say it is important to maintain democracy in Papua New Guinea because it guarantees rights and freedoms for individuals and gives citizens the power to choose, interact with and change their leaders. However, while the concept of democracy is supported, some participants feel as one says, "our politics is bad and defaces democracy."<sup>16</sup> Those with this opinion say the country has poor leaders who do not embrace the true principles of democracy and believe the money used for ill purposes in politics has distorted the democratic system. Some also say that democracy in the country needs to be a more effective system of government if it is going to live up to its promise. Participants who contend that democracy is not the correct system of government for the country are more likely to be from Chimbu or Eastern Highlands provinces or from the Port Moresby younger men's group. Democracy to these participants has failed to deliver the benefits they want from government. They believe democracy has allowed MPs to ignore their duties to citizens, has encouraged political corruption and nepotism, has promoted vote buying and/or has promoted conflict between political parties. Some of the participants with a negative view of democracy suggested that a more restrictive "guided" or "limited" democracy would be more appropriate for the country.

*Our government is a democratic government and this is very good...We have to be happy as we have the right to do anything in this democratic government because in other countries they don't have the right and privilege that we have. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*Democracy is good because I can vote whoever I can vote. Democracy is good because we have freedom to speak against our leaders and not be prosecuted for that. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*It [democracy] is good because we exercise our freedom, but leaders are not abiding by policies. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*I think democracy is good and PNG should practice democracy so that we could be our own bosses to do our own thing. We must be free to do things more freely. I mean we do have*

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<sup>16</sup> The quotation is from the older men's group in Kerowagi, Chimbu.

*democracy, but later on I want it to be more effective. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*[Democracy is] not a good system. We elect bad people that corrupt our lives and everything is going bad every time. It would be a good system if nothing is wrong. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*I don't like this [democratic] system of government because it causes many problems. There are many political parties and those political parties put forward their own agendas and try to get it enriched. They are forever in constant tug-of-war to settle matters. While they are doing this, we, the people, are suffering in the village. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*[Democracy is] good. It allows people to have a say in the running of the government but it just has to be modified to fit our culture...But it must be more of a guided democracy so it guides both the Members of Parliament and citizens in the same path...It must be guided in a Melanesian Way: a Melanesian democracy and not a Western democracy. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

**10. Almost all participants say elections are a useful exercise, though many believe they are not fairly conducted in the country.**

Elections are embraced by participants as important because they are citizens' primary expression of their democratic rights and are the primary mechanism by which they can have input into the choice of their leaders. Participants also see elections as a good way to limit corruption since it gives them the power to kick out leaders they feel are dishonest and provides them with a good way to replace leaders who are not performing, especially in the areas of development and service delivery. The only participants who do not approve of elections are some in the Chimbu women's group and some in the Madang men's group. They believe that elections bring too much conflict and are too corrupted by money or that they have not been effective in delivering good leaders.

*Citizens exercise their democratic right of voting for the leaders [in elections]...It [election] gives the opportunity to choose good and qualified leaders. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*It [election] gives us the opportunity to select leaders who will service our needs and wants. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Corruption is practiced so new leaders have to be elected for positive changes and development. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*It is good because we change leaders who do not carry out their duties... It is good so we can change leaders if they do not play their roles in delivering services. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Elections allow me to vote. It gives me the opportunity to vote for somebody who can provide better services and I can legitimately complain for services if it is not reaching me because I voted during the elections. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*The way I see it, elections are not good. Every election, contesting candidates spend a lot of money and other resources and when they lose, they instigate violence and tribal conflict which results in the loss of lives and property. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Elections are not really solving the problem of finding good leaders who can serve the people. Are there any alternatives apart from elections where we can have people represent us? (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

Despite the widespread support for elections among participants, overall most say elections as currently conducted are unfair. The responses of participants on this issue differ slightly based on when the group discussions were conducted. In the eight groups held after the commencement of voting, opinions that elections in Papua New Guinea are unfair are more pronounced. In the four groups held prior to the voting, views are more evenly split between those who believe elections are fair and those who say they are unfair. This suggests that the election process had a negative impact on opinions about the fairness of elections. The most common reason participants cite for declaring elections unfair is the poor state of the common roll. Using their recent experience as an example, they say the roll contained ghost names and prevented many from voting because their names were not on the roll. In addition, some report seeing people vote whose names did not appear on the roll. Vote buying is another factor contributing to their assessment of elections as unfair, participants say. They blame campaign houses for exacerbating this phenomenon and suggest that they need to be regulated. Fewer but multiple participants see elections as unfair because of conflicts that occur during campaigning and afterwards. Participants in the Eastern Highlands groups make a specific complaint about the unfairness of elections based about their recent experience of heavy-handed actions by the security forces in their area. Some participants have a more positive view of elections, saying they view them as conducted fairly. These participants indicate they have the freedom to vote their choice and also believe that the limited preferential voting (LPV) system helps make elections in Papua New Guinea fairer.

*The Common roll was not updated and a lot of Papua New Guinean citizens did not vote for their leaders. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*It [the election] was not fair because many names of eligible voters in the country were not on the common roll...This election was not fair. Some of the people voted because of money and favour, not because of the quality of the candidate. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Elections are unfair as people whose name were not on the common role still voted. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*It's not a fair election because supporters of candidates along the roads or highways are likely to put up road blocks, if their candidates lose in the race. They threaten us that we don't feel free to move around but are held up in our own places. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*The bad thing is that security forces were harsh on the people and many were scared and did not vote. The government has to stop this. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Limited Preferential Voting has made this election a fair one. In previous election, we had only one choice but today we are able to vote three different people, which also gives us more freedom to move around. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Elections in PNG is fair because we have a right to vote whoever we want...The 1, 2, and 3 system of voting makes it even fairer...Elections in PNG is fair because you go alone into the voting booth and vote. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

#### **11. A poor quality common roll causes most participants to judge the performance of the electoral commission as poor.**

The biggest complaint overall about the performance of the electoral commission is the failure of that body to update and make accurate the voter's roll. As noted above, most participants feel that commission failure to update the roll denied many their right to vote and that ghost names on the roll left open the possibility of fraud. The commission is also blamed for allowing voters whose names were not on the roll to vote, which some participants report witnessing. As with the responses on election fairness, the responses of participants on this issue differ slightly based on when the group discussions were conducted. In the eight groups held after the commencement of voting, most participants rate the performance of the electoral commission as poor. In the four groups held prior to the voting, there are more mixed views, with some participants viewing the commission's work negatively but others having a more positive take. This suggests that the election process had an adverse impact on opinions of the electoral commission. A lesser criticism of the commission's performance but one mentioned multiple times by participants across several groups is the perception that in some areas commission officials are unduly influenced or bribed by either government or candidates. A specific accusation is that electoral commission employees "are playing around with our population figures"<sup>17</sup> by either inflating or deflating the number of names on the common roll for political benefit. The only participants who are uniformly positive in their assessment of the electoral commission's performance are in the group discussions in East Sepik province. These participants applaud the work of the commission for the exact opposite reason that other participants criticize it. They say the commission updated the common roll in their area early in the electoral process, and they are satisfied it was an accurate representation of eligible voters in their area.

*PNGEC [electoral commission] has done a poor job. Most people did not vote because of names not being on the common roll. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*The electoral commission has not done their work properly. They have failed to properly update the common roll before the election. Many of our names were not on the common roll. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Some electoral officials are good and others are bad. People in my area, with the help of bad electoral officials, include names of deceased persons, trees, rivers, animals and plants in the common roll. During vote counts, candidates associate themselves with those election and electoral officials to count these ghost names. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I think the electoral commission is not performing its duty well because it is bribed by the government...The electoral commission is bribed by candidates. Counting should be done*

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<sup>17</sup> See the full quotation and attribution below.

*electronically in 2017... Ghost names are collected during census. As a result when voting there are more ballot papers than the actual population. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*Electoral Commission is playing around with our population figures. Sometimes they raise the figure of our population and other times they drop the figure and in different places. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*The Commission's performance in our area is good. They came around and registered our names early this year. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

**12. There are varied obstacles to voting, according to participants, including security concerns. Highlands participants mention threats and intimidation as significant obstacles more often than other participants.**

Participants name several obstacles to voting that differ in significance and nature. The topic of security during elections elicits numerous concerns from participants. Those in groups conducted prior to voting in Port Moresby and East Sepik province predict security problems in the upcoming election due to competing politicians, especially between what they then described as the “two governments,” and display a high degree of fear that the election could turn violent. In the groups conducted after the commencement of voting, the most serious security hindrances to voting are reported by participants in the Highlands areas. They recount specific acts of threats and intimidation by youth and polling officials that affected whether or how they voted and also relate stories of tension and conflict among rival candidates and supporters that posed a threat to those who wanted to vote. Some participants in the Port Moresby discussions also talk about intimidation and about voters being forced to cast a ballot for someone other than their true choice, and some Bougainville participants mention tension between scrutineers and polling officials and between supporters of rivals. They also say that intimidation of voters is an issue. Bribery of voters is noted by participants in multiple areas as an obstacle that prevents freedom of choice, though obviously with the voter’s consent. The last area that participants highlight as causing difficulty with voting is logistical. They cite a number of problems, including distant and difficult to reach polling stations and overcrowded polling stations.

*Politicians are hungry for power, and this will result in a lot of problems. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I know that there will be fights and other violence [during the upcoming elections], so I am not happy to cast my votes. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I have this fear about the coming elections because of the instability and challenge between the two regimes may continue into elections. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*We felt scared [when] voting because candidates sent their boys to the polling booths...People were watching over those who went to cast their votes in the polling booth. If one votes differently from what they expect, they bash them and this is wrong. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*The biggest problem was the use of hard cash at the polling station. The acceptance of cash around the polling station imposed a lot of security threats upon our lives... Some freely voted as they please, but for some young boys grabbed the ballot papers from them and aggressively told*

*them to leave and they used the paper to vote. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*People are intimidated and forced to vote for particular candidates...Practicing bribery in polling booths as citizens are trying to vote is an obstacle to voting...Voters have the fear during elections because people are aggressive. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Some of the securities for some of the candidates were arguing with some people for switching sides to other candidates. The issue of bribery also caused a bit of tension among the people. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*Police whipped us with fan belts because it was the only polling station where about two to three thousand people have to vote and we were overcrowded. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Some people live closer to where the polling station is located, but for some of us, we had to walk a distance to go to the polling station to vote. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

**13. Views on whether the vote is secret differ somewhat based on location. Highlands and Port Moresby participants are more likely to believe who they vote for is known by others in the community.**

How participants assess the secrecy of the ballot is related in many cases to where they live. Most participants in coastal areas and Bougainville say they have no concerns about the secrecy of their vote because they vote in private and have faith that no one can learn how they voted unless they divulge it themselves. The opposite is true among Highlands and Port Moresby participants where most cite several ways in which they believe how their vote can become known. Some of the participants report that their vote is not secret because others, including polling officials, scrutineers, youth or other voters, are watching to see how they vote. This occurs either because others are allowed to surround the booth while someone is voting or non-voters are allowed to escort others into the booth<sup>18</sup> to watch how they vote. Other participants in these areas say there are more innocuous reasons their choices are known. Some note that people are asked to openly pledge their support to a candidate by leaders or others and name lists are given to candidates reflecting this support. Others say that because communities are so closely knit that your connections with or preferences for parties or candidates are common knowledge.

*I will not tell anyone who I voted for; thus it is secret. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*It [my vote] is a secret because it is my own choice. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*I believe that my vote is secret because I go into the voting booth alone and vote whoever I want to vote. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*At the polling both, no one really knew or saw how I voted or whom I voted for. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

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<sup>18</sup> Disabled, elderly and the illiterate voters are allowed to have others in the booth with them. However, that is not what participants are referencing in this instance.

*I believe that our votes are not secret...We are bending over and casting our votes, but their [candidates' supporters] eyes are fixed on the paper and the pen that is in our hands because they know the box number of the candidate and the position or design of the candidate on the paper. This shows that my votes are not secret nowadays. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*[My vote is] not secret. I had different preferences for my 2 and 3 votes. Since a relative of mine was at the polling booth watching over how I was going to vote, I was angry and voted for candidates I did not like. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*[My vote is] not secret because scrutineers of candidates watch over the voters and threaten them in the polling area...[My vote is] not secret. People know how you live and who you have links with so they will know who you vote for. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*People know who you supported since day one of the election period...[My vote is] not secret because we list our names and give them to candidates. As such they would know how we voted. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

#### **14. There are mixed views among participants on whether votes are properly counted during elections.**

There is no common response among participants about the integrity of the vote count during elections. Some believe votes are counted properly. Others are highly skeptical, saying either definitively that votes are not counted properly or that the integrity of the vote count is unpredictable and depends on the honesty of polling officials. These participants believe that in some cases polling officials personally favor certain candidates or parties or are influenced by bribes to skew the count.

*Yes [votes will be counted properly] [because ballot papers have receipts and serial numbers. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*Votes will be counted properly because there are witnesses...Yes [votes will be counted properly] because the election in our area was okay and security forces were present. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*I am thinking that my votes can either be counted properly or not counted properly. This is because there are some people who go around bribing counting officials. If counting officials are not bribed, then our votes will be counted properly. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*I am not sure. Sometimes counting is fair but at other times it is not [when] counting officials are bribed. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*I don't believe that my vote will be counted properly because there's too much corruption going on in the counting area. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*No, the votes are not counted properly. The counting officials accept bribery and favour a particular person when counting. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

**15. Most participants denounce the practice of vote buying, calling it the equivalent of bribery and saying it results in bad leaders. However, some admit to selling their votes.**

There is widespread condemnation of vote buying among the participants. They view vote buying as a corrupt act, and most say they detest it and want it to stop. The connection between vote buying and poor quality leaders is made repeatedly by participants. They say that when money or other goods are being handed out it clouds the judgment of voters, causing them to cast their ballots for candidates who do not possess the qualities necessary to be a good leader. In addition, they note the act of vote buying itself is an indication the candidate is not a good leader because when a candidate is corrupt in campaigning, he will be corrupt in parliament. A specific concern of participants is that since the candidate has already demonstrated he is corrupt, once elected he will use public money to compensate himself for the personal money he spent buying votes. The biggest problem participants have with vote buying, however, is that it sends the wrong message to successful candidates. They fear vote buying gives the winner the idea that their victory was the result of the money they spent and not the votes of the people he is meant to serve. This would mean, the participants contend, that their elected officials would feel no obligation to deliver services to the people.

Despite the dislike of voter buying, some participants confess to having sold their votes or say they can understand why others would. One reason for vote selling, according to participants, is that the money or other goods are simply needed. Some of these participants note that once money or other goods are provided, votes must be cast for the candidates who provide such or there could be serious repercussions either from the candidate or in the community. Cynicism drives vote selling behavior by some participants who say that since no one delivers for the people once they are elected, it makes sense to take whatever the candidate is offering upfront. Several participants also suggest the LPV system encourages vote selling because it allows someone to either vote their true choice with their first preference and to sell the other two preferences or to claim they will support many (more than three) candidates.

*If candidates buy your vote, you are just dumping your life. This can imply that you do not need services because if you want a good leader you would not accept vote buying...If an intending candidate practices vote buying, he is indirectly telling the people that he is not fit to be in power. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Vote buying is not good because voters vote because of money, not because of the candidates policies or qualities. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*I think if candidates buy our votes, they would not deliver services to our areas. They already bought our rights...Candidates already bought and paid us so they would not care to bring in benefits. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*It [vote buying] is rubbish, I don't like it...When he buys his vote we don't know if he is a good or bad person because in the mind of the candidate that is buying votes when he goes into parliament he will try to misuse allot of money to compensate for the money that he lost. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*Buying vote is not good. But we agree that someone who gives us money we will vote them. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*It's good because nowadays we say that give us money and get our votes because when you are in Port Moresby, you will forget all about us. Therefore buy our votes before you go and get your pockets filled up. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Now that we have our own candidate which we are going to cast our first preference vote, we still have the second and third preference remaining to sell them to the candidates to buy. However, vote buying is not good. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

**16. Candidate policies, qualities and origin are the main criteria by which participants say they make their voting decisions. Most also declare they feel free to vote differently from others in their clan, although Highlands participants are more likely to vote with their clan.**

When asked to describe how they decide whom to vote for in an election, most participants begin by saying they listen to what the candidate communicates on issues of importance to them and what action he intends to take to improve their lives. A candidate's policies on service delivery are of particular importance to most. Personal knowledge of the candidate is another factor in how participants make voting decisions. Understanding the character and qualities of a candidate, particularly leadership skills, provides a comfort level to participants that make them more likely to support that person. Preferably, according to participants, a candidate will have demonstrated through their actions that he is trustworthy and competent, especially in their ability to improve services. The desire to have personal knowledge of a candidate is also why voters place a high value on supporting candidates from their area, clan or tribe, participants explain. These are the candidates that participants say they can trust the most because they have intimate knowledge of the area's needs. Lesser factors but ones that some participants say influence their voting decisions are educational background, influence from family members, gifts from candidates and political party affiliation.

*The candidate I voted in the recent election was largely due to his policies and personal qualities. His policies look promising for our future so I voted him and also he is a simple, humble and transparent leader, whom I personally know of. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*My first and second preferences were given to the candidate who had good qualities and the third to the candidate who talked about issues affecting us. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Firstly, I will see if he has good policy platforms [before making a voting choice]. Secondly, I will see if he is a responsible leader and a good role model with good qualities in the community. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*The tribe/clan of the candidate [most influences my voting decision]. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*Another thing that influenced who I voted was the political party of that candidate. I have seen that the party had good policies, therefore, I voted that candidate. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*I am going to vote that candidate because of what that candidate gave me. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

An individual's democratic right to choose their leaders and the need to vote for good leaders trumps any benefits that may be gained by a clan voting together as a block, most participants say. At least some participants in every group but one<sup>19</sup> hold this view. However, there are also some participants in most of the groups who say that clan voting is either better or necessary. These include participants in Bougainville and in East Sepik and Madang provinces, but it is most common among participants in the Highlands areas. Participants with this view say that because the clan lives as a group it must support its interests as a group by voting the same way. They believe that voting as a clan increases the chances of the area receiving better services. There is also an element of fear that some participants describe in choosing to vote with the clan. They indicate others in the clan would know if their vote differed and that would cause problems and divisions, perhaps even conflict, within the family or clan.

*Yes [it is okay to vote differently from the clan because it is an individual's right...If the leader that my clan votes is one that I want, I would follow them. But if he is a leader that I do not prefer, I will pull out and make my own choice. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Our government is a democratic government, and we have the right to vote whoever they want to vote for. Even if he wins or loses that is still your democratic right...It is all right [to vote different from the clan] because it is my right and choice and not my people's. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*I have the right to choose my own candidate differently from my clan because I want a good candidate who would bring in service. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*We in Madang voted freely, not the candidate the chief wanted. The chief does not dictate who we should vote; it does not work that way here anymore. Chiefs are custodians of our customs and other things, not who we should vote. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*In my clan we always go together. That is because if anything happens we always work as a team. We have to vote as a team. Before the election we all meet at one's house and everyone sits and discusses who to vote for. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*We have supported a particular candidate as a family or as a whole village and that is good. It's not good to distribute our votes around but to vote in reasonable numbers to only one candidate is good because it minimizes the possibilities of conflict and differences. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*I didn't feel safe to vote another candidate when everyone in my area supported and voted the candidate from our clan. This is because it's going to cause differences among us. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

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<sup>19</sup> Participants in the Chimbu female group are unanimous in their conclusion that they did not feel free to vote differently from their clan.

**17. The LPV system is viewed by most as a positive change in the electoral process, though a significant number of participants say it is confusing and encourages vote buying.**

Overall, more participants give their endorsement to the LPV system. They especially like that the system provides the voter with power to make multiple choices. This, they say, gives them greater freedom to vote their true choice, in part because it allows them to cast a ballot for their first preference and then use the other votes to support their clan or friends or family who prefer other candidates. Some participants credit LPV with reducing conflict since the system requires candidates to seek the support of more diverse peoples since their second and third preferences could win the race. They describe the old first past the post system as causing whole areas to be considered off limits for candidates who did not have a certain village's support but that now candidates can move around more freely to seek everyone's support at some level. The ability to support multiple candidates is also viewed by some participants as increasing their chances to bring better services to their area, since it gives them a greater chance of supporting the winner. However, there are fewer but a significant number of participants that criticize LPV. These participants see the system as complicated and confusing, especially for older and illiterate voters. They also believe the system has resulted in a dramatic increase in vote buying behavior because it allows people to claim they support and take money and goods from many candidates. These participants also contrast with those who say LPV reduces conflict. In their view, LPV raises the potential for conflict because a candidate may realize his promised support from an area (even as a second or third preference) did not materialize. The increased campaigning, and interaction between rival candidates and supporters, that the LPV system has brought is also a danger, they indicate.

*LPV is good because it allows for voting three good people, which would not have been possible as in the past. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*It [LPV system] is good. We feel free to vote because we have three choices unlike previously where we had to cast only one vote...First-past-the-post system was not good. LPV gives the opportunity for people to freely vote the candidate of their choice. Therefore, it is good. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*It [LPV system] is all right. Why because as mentioned I can put "1" on the candidate I want and "2" and "3" on the other candidate that my family or clan want. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*It [LPV system] is good because we can get services from candidates of our second and third preferences if our candidate of first choice loses. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*[LPV system is] good. There would be a distribution of votes between two people from the same area. This avoids conflicts unlike the previous system which a voter has only one choice. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*It is not good because when the electoral commission came into our village and tried to explain this [LPV] system most of the people didn't understand and said it was not good. So when they went to vote they only put down "1" on their ballot papers and some won't even vote properly. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*LPV is difficult to understand, especially during counting, which results in misunderstanding and fighting. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*People from my electorate say it is a 1, 2 and 3 system which creates a lot of friends. During elections they vote for only three people though they are friends with many candidates. After voting a candidate realizes that he did not get votes from a particular area, although he made friends with the people. This then leads to conflicts. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I think it's not a good system because it encourages vote buying. With previous system, it was only one vote so there was no such thing. This new system encourages vote buying... Candidates knew that there are three votes so they waste a lot of the money and other resources to get votes...With LPV, one person can move from one candidate to another, telling a lot of lies and getting many things from them. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

### **III. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION**

#### **18. Support for women's participation in politics is strong among participants, most of whom say that women should participate at all levels. However, significant obstacles remain for women in voting and in contesting for office, they say.**

Most participants say they see no reason that women should not participate at all levels of government. Although both male and female participants support this position, it is more common among females. The female and male participants who support women's participation in government say that women are equal to men and some believe they may even be an improvement upon male leaders because women are less corrupt. Some participants, both males and females, although supportive of women in government, say that their service should be limited to no higher than parliament. A few male participants have more restrictive views. They only approve of women being involved in low levels of government or not at all. These participants either view women as weak or government as a man's domain.

*Women should participate in all the three levels of government because collective input and equal participation is needed to move the country forward...It is appropriate for women to participate in all levels of government because they will understand more and address the issues that women and children face unlike men. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I think it's appropriate for females to work at the highest political level. At this time we have only one female in parliament. It's about time we send more mothers to parliament so that there will be corporation amongst themselves and to contribute equally to any decision-making. As it is the case, there is only one female and the rest males, so they are more corrupt. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Women have the right to work inside the government and are just as equal as us the men. Women bear all the burdens of us all so when they get elected into parliament they stand and represent all our interests. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*I want to see women take over or able to sit equally in men's positions...The women can represent us well. They are able to bring to attention what is really important because they too are women. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*It is appropriate for women to work in all levels of government so there would be no corrupt practices like bribery. Women can distribute services fairly to the people. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*I don't support women to participate in government because women are not that open minded like men. Men are also the head of the family and thus should also be the head of the government. They can only do little jobs in the government like typing. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*Women have the right to participate in the government but they should occupy a lower position than the men. That is our tradition, our Melanesian style. They should not go for the high post, the Prime Minister's position should be only for the males. The women are weak. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

While support for women's participation in the political process is relatively high, most participants also acknowledge women face significant obstacles in doing so. Even in voting, women are not fully exercising their rights, they say. Participants, both male and female, say women have a very difficult time trying to vote their true choice because of coercion and intimidation. They provide numerous accounts of women being forced to vote for candidates not of their choosing by husbands, male family members, clan leaders and youth. At polling venues, some say, women are particularly vulnerable and are subjected to harassment, threats and banishment. One group of women participants describe an incident from the most recent election where their ballots were taken from them. Only in the two East Sepik province groups and the Madang male group did most participants indicate there were no obstacles to women voting. Contesting for an elective office is even more daunting for women, participants note. Many participants talk about the cultural barriers women face running for office in communities where politics is viewed as men's business and the personal barriers they face at home with husbands who may refuse to allow their spouses to contest. Even if women make the choice to run for office, they face withering criticism by men who seek to demoralize them, some say. Women are limited in their ability to contest elections as well, according to participants, because they lack the financial resources to mount strong campaigns, especially against male candidates who can buy votes, and lack political experience. In this regard, participants say that low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence combined with undeveloped political skills, such as public speaking, discourages many women from running for office. Fears about personal security in the country's rough and tumble politics also play a role in limiting women's candidacies, some believe. The chances for women to win are significantly impacted by many of these same factors. Women have a tougher time winning votes because they are traditionally seen as not fit to lead; men will not support women candidates; and they lack the skills, experience and connections to defeat more seasoned male candidates, say participants. However, some participants believe that victory in elections is possible for women candidates if they can harness the support of women voters. The Madang province participants, based on their recent election experience, say that if a female candidate is popular and has good qualities, it is possible for her to win.

*Their husbands force them to vote for candidates that they want...There are obstacles especially with clans. Clan leaders tell women to vote for candidates that they want. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*Women do not exercise their freedom to vote, their husbands grab the ballot papers from their hand and vote for them. This worries women because they do have the right to vote, but they cannot exercise it. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*When police and defence personnel were present we women had no difficulty trying to stand in line and vote, but once the security personnel left the venue, the young gents and men would chase us out and stand right in front to vote and would vote again and even vote the third time. We were helpless. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*Most times the female folk face security threats during voting times. Young girls are forced by committees or young boys, who support a candidate, to vote for their candidate...When the husbands are gone, their wives are forced by others to vote for their preferred candidate. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*No, women do not face any obstacle in voting that men do not [in voting]. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*The people think that the women [candidates] will not do anything good...In the Sepik culture, the women do not enter the haus-boy or haus-man [men's house]. This same perception prevails during elections. Parliament is a men's house so women must not enter. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*When they tell their husbands that they want to contest in the elections their husbands have negative thoughts of this idea and they will tell their wives not to contest in the elections even though he knows that his wife has the knowledge and the experience...The general idea with women is that they belong in the village. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*There are many women that have the God-given talents and brains but don't have the money to contest the election. Only few that have the money contest. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*They feel that they could not speak up and compete with men. They are not fit in public speaking. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*PNG has a dirty politics. Women are scared of being insulted and bashed up by supporters. They are scared of supporters. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*The women do not believe in themselves...I think it's the women not trusting themselves. After all, they constitute almost half of the voting population, why do they feel insecure to contest? (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*There are political parties ready to endorse women candidates but they continuously receive criticism from especially the male counterparts that they are not capable. Such criticism discourages women from contesting. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I think a woman stands an equal chance as his male counterpart. It depends entirely on the women's population, so if we decide to cast all our votes to her then she definitely will win. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*The only woman who contested in this election was a regional candidate. All the women gave her their first preference so she may win. (Middle-aged men Sisiak Village, Madang)*

### **19. Most participants support reserving a limited number of seats for women in parliament.**

Almost all female participants and most of the participants in the middle-aged and older male groups endorse the idea of a law to set aside twenty-two (22) seats in parliament for women. Participants in the two younger male groups oppose a set aside. Those who support reserving seats in parliament for women believe that women leaders may prove to be superior to their male counterparts because they will have a better understanding of citizens' needs, can help address the concerns of women and would be more likely to work to reduce corruption. Some also say the ideal government would have men and women working together to ensure the best decisions are made. Others approve of the set aside law because they view it as the only practical solution to increasing the numbers of women in government, given how difficult it is for women to get elected. The participants who oppose reserving any seats in parliament for women believe that such a move would be unfair and undemocratic. They say that women should not be given a free ride because it is discriminatory against men and will be counter-productive since the women would not be respected because they did not earn the seat. Some believe the extra costs associated with reserved seats for women are unnecessary, given they have the right to contest the regular seats. Another objection by the younger male participants is that it would be unfair to reserve seats for women and not for youth.

*I think it is good [to reserve 22 seats for women in parliament] because women are clear minded and they are always concerned about the issues that affect us. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*It is good [to reserve 22 seats for women in parliament]...I feel that if women have a place in parliament they will bring services to the people...Men involve in too much misappropriation and bribery. If women go into parliament they would do a fine job. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*Yes [reserving 22 seats for women in parliament is good] because this would allow man and women to work together...It is good because collective decision is good. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*It's [a 22 set aside for women in parliament] a good law because we need to have 22 women in parliament alone side their male counterparts to speak and voice our concerns. They will also advocate our rights. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*I am glad about it [reserving 22 seats for women in parliament] because it gives a practical option of increasing the women's chances...It is fair for them because in the existing seats, it is very competitive because a lot of money is used and the women do not have that much money. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*[Reserving 22 seats for women in parliament is] unfair and contradicts the notion of equality of participation. Other candidates spent money to contest and run their campaigns so women should do the same rather than just gaining reserve seats...It would not be effective because women will be free riders. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Creation of 22 reserve seats [for women] would result in extra expenses for the government which is unnecessary because they could have contested through the existing seats...It is not fair for the males. Why cannot the women contest for the existing seat? If 22 reserve seats are created for the women, then 22 reserve seats must be created for the youths. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

#### **IV. POLITICAL PARTIES**

##### **20. Participants have typical views of the roles of political parties but have mostly negative assessments of the contributions political parties make to the political process in Papua New Guinea.**

In describing the role of political parties in the political process, the most common responses among participants are that parties develop and implement platforms and policies, identify and support candidates and ultimately form the government. The way in which political parties operate, however, is criticized by participants who say most fail to contribute positively to the country's politics. Some participants make harsh assessments – “political parties ruin politics”<sup>20</sup> – of the parties' conduct. They say parties that have promised a lot and delivered very little and are tainted by their involvement in bribery and corruption, including vote buying and the use of the public's money to campaign. For others, the primary issue is how parties interact with each other. They contend the criticisms and attacks parties launch against other parties create a negative atmosphere and can cause conflicts into which citizens are drawn. The proliferation of political parties is also distorting the country's politics in the view of some. With so many parties, voters are confused, they say, and the likelihood of conflict is increased. With the large number of parties, others note, there is a lack of differentiation among them with most supporting the same policies and making the same promises. Some participants have more mixed views of political parties, seeing some good and some bad in party behavior. Most with this view say that political parties are an important part of the process, especially in their role of supporting candidates. Some political parties are also seen by these participants as having performed more admirably than others because of their contributions in the past or because of the introduction of policies they support.

*Political parties are formed to form policies and attract candidates to run under their parties...Political parties also make awareness about those policies through endorsing candidates. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*They [political parties] go around campaigning to gain support for their candidates and the party as a whole. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Political parties exist to fund the electoral campaigns of candidates so that they can form the government when most of the candidates they funded have won the elections. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*We have a lot of political parties who are spoiling our politics.... They make a lot of promises and confuse us with their multiple policies and bribery...They brainwash us and do not fulfill their promises. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

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<sup>20</sup> The quotation is from a younger women's group in Pokpok Island, ARB.

*Political parties compete against each other and in the process of doing so, this brings about conflicts. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Conflicts arise as a result of the multi-party system that is present in PNG. There is no stable government...It is a waste of money and resources. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*They [political parties] impacted politics in a negative way. Their policies are almost the same which confused the people... Political parties all seemed to make the same promises. It is not good to have every one of them talking about the same thing, which party was really genuine in its claim is still confusing. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Older political parties such as the PANGU have positive influence whilst the new ones just show up for the election period and then disappear after the elections until the next election. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*During this election, many political parties came. Some came with the intention of assisting the candidates they endorsed with money and vehicle, which is good. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*[Political parties' contribution is] positive. O'Neill's party introduced free education which is good. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

**21. Participants are satisfied with the quality of candidates in elections. Candidates and political parties judged to have run the best campaigns by participants in the groups conducted after the beginning of voting are those that made a connection with citizens, especially on issues of importance, and those that were well-resourced.**

Despite their disappointment with the performance of their elected officials in the past, participants say they are happy with the candidates they have to choose among in elections and believe they have had or will have many good quality choices. In the groups conducted after the commencement of voting, participants say they had personal knowledge of the candidates and understood their qualities and character. They are convinced those they voted for are the type of leaders who can bring better services to their areas. The candidates that were most attractive during the campaign period, they say, were those that had proved themselves in the community and spent significant time interacting with the people in the area. Good campaigns were judged to be those that had good candidates but also those that had major resources, such as vehicles and loud hailers, and those that were able to provide money and food to the public. Similar assessments are offered about political parties that ran the best campaigns. Participants in the groups conducted after the beginning of voting say that parties who performed best during the elections, talked about issues – especially free education and health – and supported their candidates with resources, including the ability to provide money and goods to potential voters.

*Most of the candidates are from Madang, who reside here so we know who they are. There were many candidates who have good reputation and moral character who contested. They also talked about the issues which affect us. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Yes [I was happy with the quality of candidates] because when I chose the candidate I voted for I knew the qualities and their character and what I heard from their campaign I knew this was the right candidate. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*I felt that the candidate I voted has good qualities...I voted a candidate in this election because he was with us in the village all this time and I know him very well. He is a good man...I voted a candidate because I trust him that he is going to bring even better service, because when he was an ordinary guy and was with us, he, in many ways, did something to help us. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Those [candidates] who gave money and goods to people because they wanted to get votes [did well]. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*Those candidates who spent time with the people slept under the same roof with the people and ate with the people. They did well because they want to gain our favor with their character. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*Those candidates that have a lot of money did extremely well too. They went around to all the villages and dished out cash to people to simply buy their votes and attract them to vote them. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*[The candidate who ran the best campaign] was using loud hailers, campaign on vehicles and money for buying refreshments for supporters and campaign managers. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Parties that gave cars and money to their candidates to do their campaigns [ran the best campaigns]. They did this is because they wanted to win...Parties that gave money to the people to support their candidates. [ran the best campaigns]. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*People's National Congress party did exceptionally well. They gave nothing much, but they spoke friendly and outlined the policies [so] that most people just voted PNC Party candidate even if they had no intentions to. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

**22. Sources for political party and candidate funding are primarily personal money, unauthorized public money and contributions from the international and domestic business communities, according to participants. Of these, they believe the only appropriate source is personal money.**

Participants have definitive ideas about how candidates and political parties fund their campaign and other activities. Candidates, of course, obtain some money from their sponsoring parties, but beyond that participants identify several funding sources they believe fuel most political activities. Candidates' or party members' personal money is viewed as a key source and one that is legitimate for politicians to use. The other primary sources of political funding are much more questionable, participants say. Their perception is that, aside from personal money, candidates and political parties use misappropriated government funds and contributions from international and domestic companies to finance campaigns. Most participants view both sources as inappropriate. The use of public funds for political reasons is seen as wrong not only because it is unfair and corrupt but because it also reduces the funds available to improve services. The fear with contributions from business sources is that many believe that in practice the contributions function more like loans and that government money will be used to corruptly repay

them once the party or candidate is elected. They also worry that business contributions are buying benefits, such as amendments to laws that will be harmful to the country. External business contributions are especially disliked because they raise the specter that influence over the country is being bought by foreigners. External borrowing is equivalent to “indirectly selling our country”<sup>21</sup> is how one participant puts it.

*They [candidates] get their money from political parties, because those parties endorse the candidates. Any other extra spending comes from their own money. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Some [candidates] are business people so they get their money from their business to make their campaigns. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*They [candidates] get money from us, the people, who pay taxes. The government distributes the money and these people steal the money for campaigning. They don't bring good things or help us much; this is dirty money. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*They get money from the people through funds that are supposed to be used to bring services to the people [but] are put aside to conduct their campaigns. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Many of the political parties get money from multinational companies, especially from Asians, in the hope that when they win, they will either repay them or allow them to enter PNG and conduct business...Investors are funding the candidates and political parties so that when they form the government, these political parties or candidates will be pressured by these investors to amend laws to allow them to plunder our resources. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*We hear some rumors that political parties get funds from other countries like China, Australia and America to run elections. When they win, these foreigners come into the country and gain benefits. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*I would be happy if candidates get their money from a good political party to run their campaign. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*I don't agree with this [how candidates and political parties fund their campaigns] as this money is now misappropriated by the government to finance campaigns of candidates...I don't agree with this [how candidates and political parties fund their campaigns], as this money could have been used to provide other services like health and education to the people. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*I don't approve of the funds they [candidates and political parties] seek overseas because it creates debts on our side...They are indirectly selling our country. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*I would approve of it if money is raised from fundraising and membership fees but I would not approve if they borrow from business houses or from foreign investors on conditions of repayment of having access to do business in the country at a later day...if they borrow from*

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<sup>21</sup> See the full quotation and attribution below.

*business houses or from foreign investors on conditions of repayment of having access to do business in the country at a later day that is corruption and I would not approve. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

**23. Participants say they can envision becoming loyal to or even officially joining a political party that demonstrates its competence, produces good leaders and develops policies that help citizens.**

The public's affiliation to political parties is considered relatively weak in Papua New Guinea. Despite this, most participants indicate they could provide lasting support to a political party that met their approval. The key attribute that participants say would determine whether they could connect to or join a political party is performance. A party must first prove its worth by acting in a manner that establishes it has the good of the country and the people at heart. The most effective demonstration of this would be the successful implementation of service delivery improvements. The party that accomplishes that, participants indicate, is likely to see a significant increase in loyalty. Other signs of good political party performance that participants use in their evaluations of parties are the quality of policies and leaders. Parties that develop people-centered policies, such as free education and rural area initiatives, will win their support, as will those parties that field dynamic, qualified and competent candidates and leaders. Though to a much lesser extent, there are some participants who say their support for political parties is determined by which parties are affiliated with their areas or province or which parties can personally benefit them by offering them money or shares.

*I would become a long-term supporter of a political party and even financially support a political party if this political party is honest and provides services like health, education and infrastructure to the people. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*I am going to support a political party that has promised something before and delivered it but will not if they had made promises and failed to live up to it...A party that promises and delivers services like water, electricity, better roads and proper houses and is consistent for some time will attract me to become a supporter of that party. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*They are many parties you name it, but you must support a party that has displayed quality leadership. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I would be persuaded by a political party which has done something in the past, has sound political leadership in the past. I would not support a new political party which does not have any legacy I would support, become a member and contribute financially to a political party whose policies reflect the needs of the people in the rural areas. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*If the party founder is from our district or province, then we will become a member of that party because it's our pride...If the party gives us a lot of money, then we can become supporter of that party. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

**24. The formation of coalitions by political parties in parliament is viewed as mostly a positive action. However, some participants raise concerns about conflict, instability and corruption that they say can be exacerbated by the coalition-forming process.**

Parliamentary coalition formation is a standard of Papua New Guinea politics, and most participants believe it is a useful tool. They like that a coalition represents a range of ideas and can promote collective decision-making, resulting in better policies and actions. Similarly for some, the representation of more than one party in government is comforting because they do not like the idea of a single party dominating government. The symbolism is important to them as well because they see coalition formation as an inclusive act that promotes the unity of the country. Coalitions are also viewed as a practical solution by participants. First, they understand it is rare for a single party to win enough seats to form a government on its own, and second, they believe coalitions with multiple parties gives them a better chance to have their own representatives in positions of importance in government. Fewer, but a significant number of participants, though, say that coalition formation has significant risks. These participants believe coalitions are the root of conflict between parties who fight over ministerial positions and that shifting alliances, including the possible disintegration of coalitions, result in government instability. The need to consider multiple views in a coalition can also lead to indecisiveness and inefficiency in government, they say. The last area about coalitions that concerns this group is what they describe as a tendency for corruption in the formation process. Their contention is that individuals or party leaders are often bribed, with public money, to join or leave a coalition.

*I think it [formation of parliamentary coalitions] is good because all the candidates will come together and work together and there will be unity. Everything will now run smoothly. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*It's [formation of parliamentary coalitions] good because we want our members to be in the government or given a ministry to deliver us government services. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*It's [formation of parliamentary coalitions] good because no PNG political party wins with sufficient numbers to form government, so coalitions allow for it...I agree with coalitions because it brings many good ideas and individuals from different political parties together. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*I agree with coalitions because the coalition partners would put their ideas together to run the country. Single political parties in charge of the government would be limited in ideas. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*When parties form coalitions, there is always conflict over ministerial portfolios, which I think is not good. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*I do not like coalitions because the shifting of coalitional alliances has been the result of instability in PNG politics. A single party would not worry about instability; this would make them efficient and decisive in their decision making. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*I think parties coming together to form coalition is not such a good thing because all parties have different policies and I wonder how they will compromise their policies to serve the interest of the nation. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*It [formation of parliamentary coalitions] is not good. Funds are diverted to parties to attract members instead of providing services. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

**25. Participants strongly disapprove of MPs who switch parties after elections. The only time when some view party switching as acceptable is when the MP's original party is underperforming.**

Almost all participants express a strong dislike of the relatively common practice of MPs switching party allegiances once elected. They view party switching as unfair to the original party who provided the resources for the MP to campaign and an indication that the MP is simply power hungry and not interested in his constituents. More concerning to many participants is the suspicion that party switching is driven by bribery and corruption and means the MP is selling himself to the highest bidder. Illustrating this feeling, one participant describes party switching as "similar to prostitution."<sup>22</sup> There is also a view that a candidate who won votes based on a party's visions and policies is abandoning that by which he was elected and not fulfilling his promises when he switches parties. Some are so opposed to party switching that they suggest that a law be adopted to prevent it.<sup>23</sup> Independent candidates are not held to the same standards, and it is seen as fair by most for them to choose a party to become affiliated with once elected. For those that have existing party affiliations, some do not offer any acceptable reasons for switching parties, but others indicate there is one instance in which they would view party switching as legitimate. That is when the elected official's original party is performing poorly and not delivering upon its visions and policies.

*I do not like it [party-switching] because he is a traitor and dishonest person...I hate that type of politician. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Party hopping is similar to prostitution. In party hopping a candidate switches from one party to another. In prostitution a lady goes from one guy to another. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*It [party-switching] is wrong. They are stealing from their previous political party and such people should be hanged...This is not good as this candidate is only concerned about money as he is marketing himself out to the highest bidder. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*[Party-switching is] not good. They do this because they are power hungry...Money talks whereby they are paid to hop from one party to another...There should be a law to stop party hopping. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*I do not agree with candidates switching parties. They are after money and have no concern for the people they represent...I agree with my friend that change of political parties is not a good idea. I think the OLIPPAC<sup>24</sup> should be strengthened to stop party-hopping. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*That candidate [who switches parties after election] is not loyal to his initial party's policies. This impedes service delivery because he will not implement the policies that he previously talked about in his campaign...Party hopping is not good. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*If he stands [as an] independent then it's okay, but if he stands under a party and he shifts to another party, it is not good. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

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<sup>22</sup> See full quotation and attribution below.

<sup>23</sup> These participants were unaware of the court ruling in this matter.

<sup>24</sup> OLLIPAC is an abbreviation for Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates.

*I think it's [party-switching] good, because my member cannot forever stay in a party that is dying or stagnant and not doing anything, but [must move] to a party that is vibrant and is promising to deliver. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

## V. NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND LAND OWNERSHIP

**26. Participants are highly critical of how natural resources are managed in Papua New Guinea, saying that the current approach is encouraging destruction of the environment without delivering benefits to the people. They argue that government must enact stronger regulations, ensure greater compliance, improve consultation with landowners and invest the benefits of extraction in service delivery and infrastructure projects.**

Almost no participants have anything good to say about the way the country is currently managing its natural resources. They have a litany of concerns starting with adverse impact on the environment. They talk about pollution of rivers/coastal waters, destruction of rainforests, soil erosion and bad air quality. Environmental destruction, participants note, is not just bad in and of itself but also makes life hard for local communities who depend on the environment for their livelihoods. Comments from participants on damage to the environment sometimes include references to the government prioritizing money above the environment or to the government allowing foreigners to harm the environment. Sustainability is another concern mentioned by participants. They have a keen sense that the natural resources are not unlimited and that there will be little left for future generations. What makes all the environmental degradation they see worse, participants say, is that the extraction of natural resources has not led to benefits for Papua New Guinea's people or even the owners of the land where the resources are extracted. This sentiment is reflected in the comment of one participant who says, "There are only 7 million Papua New Guineans. If there was efficient management [of natural resources extraction], then all Papua New Guineans should be wealthy."<sup>25</sup> Beyond environmental concerns, participants say that increased conflict over land ownership is a by-product of natural resources mismanagement as well. Only a few participants have anything positive to say about natural resources management. Those that do say that resource extraction is a mechanism for income generation and that if some improvements are made, such as increased monitoring, the management of natural resources would be adequate.

*[Extractive] companies come in and destroy our forest, land, rivers and animals. These things support our lives. We hunt in the forest, breath the fresh air from the trees, fish in the rivers, etc. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Papua New Guinea is not managing its resources well. We are being cheated by the government and companies; they pay us very little for the resources they extract. They also contaminate our rivers and sea. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*The government is not managing the resources well because there are no proper negotiations to ensure that we end up in a win-win situation. Most of the time we end up in a win-lose situations...The government must look more closely on how companies especially mining dump their wastes. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

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<sup>25</sup> See full quotation and attribution below.

*If we use everything at the same time our future generations will have nothing. We should try to preserve our resources and use them from time-to-time. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*PNG is not managing its resources well. Why are we poor when the country is rich in resources? Poor management is the answer...There are only 7 million Papua New Guineans. If there were efficient management, then all Papua New Guineans should be wealthy. The money from the resources should be invested in cash crop projects to improve the people's life. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*It's our environment that supports us. When government allows companies to come and mine, they destroy our land, forest, water and other things on the land. Our lives are destroyed....I hear of mining everywhere but don't see and feel any tangible benefit from revenues obtained from selling those raw materials. I don't know how the money that comes from the export of these mines is spent. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*We Papua New Guineans get nothing even though we sell our minerals. We the little people don't have the courage to talk because when asking the miners they reply that the Prime Minister allowed them. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*It is good the government is allowing companies to come in and develop our resources. There are good sides and bad sides. The good side is that the natural resources extracted for revenue but the bad side is that we are destroying our environment. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

Some participants take the stand that mismanagement of natural resources is so great that extraction activities should be halted or slowed significantly. Most, though, believe the best course of action is for the government to more actively monitor the industry. This can best be done, participants contend, through the enactment of strong regulations and laws, especially related to logging, mining and waste disposal. These regulations and laws should include tough penalties for corrupt officials and limit the number of companies undertaking extractives work, according to most. Along these lines, participants urge the establishment of home-grown extractives companies, with some supporting the exclusion of foreign companies. Many realize any new regulations and laws will be ineffective if there is not a greater effort on the part of government to ensure compliance, and so they would like the government to develop a clear plan for doing so. Consultation with benefits for landowners is also seen as area that needs immediate improvement. Because deforestation is such a concern among participants, a specific suggested action is for the government to develop and implement a re-forestation program as well. Perhaps more than any other action, though, participants want the government to begin to visibly demonstrate the benefits the country is receiving from its natural resources. To make extraction worth the environmental price, revenues from extraction must be invested to make the lives of the people better. That can be accomplished most directly, participants indicate, by improving service delivery and infrastructure.

*We must stop companies from entering our country so we can conserve our resources and we will have fresh air to breathe and clean water to drink. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*I think at the moment the government must slow down and control the amount of mining that is going on in and around the country...It is good that we are allowing companies to extract minerals on our land but before they start operating, the government must look at their conservation policies...The government must keep a proper monitoring system where they have to go to the resource and project sites to see if companies are abiding to the conservation policies. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*The government has to set a control mechanism on how our resources are extracted...No rubbish should be dumped into our river systems...Reforestation must be practiced whereby when a tree is cut down a seedling must be planted. Our river systems must not be polluted because all human beings depend on water to survive. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*My concern is that our leaders in parliament must control and set limits to the companies that come into the country so that our resources will not be destroyed. Our future is very important. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*There must be proper consultation and consensus reached with the landowners and communities before actual extraction and operations. This is because the local communities will face the effects and consequences. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*The companies' operation will affect us for a very long time so before they come, they must tell us how long they will be able to cater for us in terms of housing, proper water, health centres, schools, etc. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*The benefits from the Basamuk and Kurumbukari mines must be invested in roads and other infrastructures that would make the people's life better...Improvement must concentrate on how the people should benefit from these resources. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

**27. The nature of land disputes is varied, according to participants, but the overarching problems with land ownership are the result of poor government land policies.**

Participants provide numerous examples of land disputes and conflicts in the country, and these examples display wide-ranging characteristics. Some land disputes are described as ethnic conflicts, some as settlement problems, some as unauthorized occupation and some as greed-driven over exploitation benefits. Participants in the Highlands areas tend to talk about land disputes becoming or having the potential to become violent, while those in the coastal areas are more likely to say land disputes result in lengthy and costly court battles or mediations. The root cause for the country's land problems is laid at the feet of the government by participants who say that there are no good policies on land. The lack of good policy, they believe, has led to no proper land identification mechanisms, which in turn means that false owners and middle men swindle the real land owners out of the benefits they deserve. It has also meant that there is a lack of common understanding among government, companies and landowners on land ownership, resulting in the slow development of projects that could benefit all. Participants who comment on specific existing government land policies, such as Incorporated Land Groups, call them inadequately applied or ineffective, and a few participants hold the belief that the government favors companies over landowners regardless of existing policies. Despite the desire for good land policies, some participants express fears that the government may introduce new policies in an attempt to appropriate their land. Their lack of trust in the government on the land issue is the reason some give for not wanting to register their land under existing policies.

*Problems and even fights eventuate because two clans say that this piece of land is theirs. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*When there is an argument over land, there is an ethnic clash and people lose their lives. People regard land as something closer to their hearts, an inalienable asset that all their lives are sustained by it. Therefore, if government is trying to come up with a law, then it must be in the best interest of the people so as to avoid such bloody conflict and deaths, resulting from land arguments. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

*Land disputes in Madang sometimes arise as a result of unequal land ownership....There are land issues in Madang, especially land disputes which are settled in courts, but disputes leading to fighting and killing rivals is not common here. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*We know our land boundaries. Whenever people intrude or cross the borders to land that belongs to someone else, conflicts arise in the community. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

*When there is no development on a piece of land there is only one landowner, but when development is about to take place with foreigners moving in then there is a lot of people claiming to be landowners and they end up killing each other. This results in land disputes. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*Government has not enacted laws which would give priority to the land owners so that development on the customary land would result in the owners having maximum benefit. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*There are some people who are so-called landowners. Although they do not own the land, they tend to get more of the benefits simply because they are educated and can talk more than the actual land owners. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*The Incorporated Land Groups is not very effective. The government should look into it. Although it is being applied, it has not solved most of the land issues. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Land issues on this island are very serious as my other sister has said. Clans are arguing against other clans on the question of land ownership, and government is always demanding land registration. Why should I register my own land? The government did not give me this land. This is my own land. I do not need to register it with anyone, including the government. If I register, my land is released into the government's land and the government can give it to anybody. (Older women, Kairiru Island, East Sepik)*

*Land is our life. [The government] does not need to take these lands away from us and give it to companies or sell it to other countries...There are some policies that talk about the government selling our land or taking ownership of it. As a concerned Papua New Guinean I do not want this to happen. We have to take ownership of our own land...The government must not put land policies. Just leave us the way we are. (Middle-aged men, Muritoka Village, Eastern Highlands)*

## VI. DECENTRALIZATION AND ARB REFERENDUM

### **28. There is too much power in the hands of the national government, according to participants. Most believe it would be fairer and create a more effective government to devolve more power to the provincial and local level.**

Participants support greater decentralization of government. The primary problem they see with the current distribution of powers is that the national government is too far away from the people to be effective. They say this is in part responsible for slow or stalled development outside of Port Moresby. Participants believe that a more appropriate division of power between the levels of government would result in an equal or greater share of the power lying with provincial and/or local governments. In their judgment, having government powers located closer to its citizens would facilitate service delivery and would increase citizens' ability to participate in decision-making. The powers they deem to be especially necessary to reside at the local level are financial and administrative powers. Although there is broad support for greater decentralization, a few participants express concern about how corruption at the provincial level may negatively affect decentralization efforts.

*It seems like all decisions are made in the National Parliament in Port Moresby. Power has to be broken down to the provincial level so that budget break up will be done appropriately and funds will be fairly distributed. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*Decentralization of power is correct because it makes the distribution of resources easier...If power is decentralized to the provincial level; this would fast track the process of releasing funds for development projects. (Younger men, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*Development is not happening because power is concentrated at the top, if it is given to the bottom level who are close to the people, development will take place...Power is very far from the very people they are intended to serve, the more than 80% people in the rural areas. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*Now I see that power is concentrated at the national level and that we the ordinary people will not have much say in it. Therefore, more power must be given to provincial and further down to the local level governments so that ordinary people like us can have a say in the decision-making. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*I think that the government should draw down most of its powers to the provincial level. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

*I'll say fifty-fifty [power-sharing between national government and provincial government]. Equal. So they could come together with points and make decisions. I say fifty because some decisions can be made at the top and some can be made at the bottom, too. (Younger women, Madang Town, Madang)*

*Financial and administrative power distribution is not good. More autonomy must be given to provincial government in the areas of finance and administration. Law-making powers must be kept with the national government. (Younger men, Sawarin Village, East Sepik)*

*Less power is at the provincial level but they become corrupt...The national government makes the budget and passes the money to the provincial government which then becomes corrupt by using the money in their own ways. (Middle-aged women, Kawa and Kimagl Villages, Chimbu)*

**29. There are mixed views among participants on whether the Autonomous Region of Bougainville should become independent.**

The planned 2015 independence referendum in the ARB elicits varied reactions from participants. Some participants are opposed to independence for ARB because they have a strong desire to have the country remain united. Others say their opposition is based in their assessment that ARB is not yet ready to stand on its own. On the opposite side, there is also support for ARB's independence. These participants respect the sacrifices that ARB citizens made to fight for their independence and believe they deserve to achieve it. In addition, some supporters of independence feel confident that ARB can function well as an independent country. The views on independence are mixed within individual groups and throughout the different locations in which the groups were conducted. However, Highlands participants are slightly more likely to be opposed to independence for ARB and coastal participants are slightly more likely to be for ARB independence. The two groups conducted in ARB split in their opinion on the right course to take. Participants in the younger female group are pro-independence, while those in the middle-aged men's group do not feel independence is the right path at this time.

*It's not a good idea for them [ARB] to become independent because it's better to stand united than to divide...Papua New Guinea is a small country and it will be better if we stand together as one nation and not divided. (Older men, Kerowagi, Chimbu)*

*I don't like the idea of Bougainville breaking away from PNG. We are one country and collectively our resources are again used for the collective benefit of the nation, but if they break away then, that will disturb the economic development of the country. (Older women, Mulitoka and Kono Black Villages, Eastern Highlands)*

*They should become independent if they wish to. They have the resources, in the land and sea. They struggled for it many years so let them go ahead. (Middle-aged men, Sisiak Village, Madang)*

*According to my perspective, Bougainvilleans have been fighting hard for independence. They know that they had many natural resources like gold, copper and oil in their land and their fighting with lethal weapons and firearms has caused a lot of instability. Therefore, if they are successful [in the referendum], let them be independent because they fought very hard for it. (Middle-aged women, Port Moresby, NCD)*

*In my opinion, we should be separated from PNG and become independent. When we continue to be a part of PNG a lot of problems arise. If we become independent we can determine our own future and hopefully change ourselves so we don't turn out like PNG...A lot of blood was shed and lives were lost during the crisis, we have to make independence a reality otherwise lives would have been lost for nothing. (Younger women, Pokpok Island, ARB)*

*I would vote against independence because [ARB] is still not ready, and some of its issues we haven't sorted out yet. One of these issues is that we do not yet have a strong revenue generating entity...I would vote for no because from what I'm seeing Bougainville doesn't have*

*some of the necessary things to help it stand on its own two feet. There aren't any technical schools or universities. (Middle-aged men, Buka Town, ARB)*

## **VII. INFORMATION SOURCES**

### **30. Participants list newspapers, radio, television and mobile phones as their most commonly used information sources and say they trust multiple news outlets.**

Participants say they use a wide variety of sources to gather information about what is happening in Papua New Guinea. Radio and newspapers are mentioned most often, but television, even if not personally owned, and mobile phones are also cited as significant news sources. There appears to be little concern about media bias among participants as only one unprompted comment about media bias arose in the discussions. Sources that are listed most often and referenced as trusted news outlets by participants include the *Post Courier* newspaper, *The National* newspaper, EMTV (with Kundu 2 also noted in some locations) and NBC radio (with FM 100 and FM 93 also noted).

**APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP LOCATION AND PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS CHART**

*ALL: June 2012 Voters (Eligible)*

<b>Area</b>	<b>Rural/Urban</b>	<b>Geo-Zone</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age<sup>26</sup></b>	<b>Education<sup>27</sup></b>	<b>Employment</b>
National Capital District	Urban	Capital	Male	Younger	Upper Secondary/University	Student/Recently Employed
National Capital District	Urban	Capital	Female	Middle Aged	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self-Employed
Madang	Urban	Coastal	Female	Younger	Upper Secondary/University	Employed
Madang	Rural	Coastal	Male	Middle Aged	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self-Employed
East Sepik	Rural	Coastal	Male	Younger	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self-Employed
East Sepik	Rural	Coastal	Female	Older	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed
Eastern Highlands	Rural	Highlands	Female	Older	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed
Eastern Highlands	Rural	Highlands	Male	Middle Aged	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed
Chimbu	Rural	Highlands	Male	Older	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed
Chimbu	Rural	Highlands	Female	Middle Aged	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed
Bougainville (ARB)	Urban	Island	Male	Middle Aged	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed
Bougainville (ARB)	Rural	Island	Female	Younger	None-Grade 10	Informal/Self Employed

<sup>26</sup> Age categories are: Younger=18-29; Middle Aged=30-45; Older=46+

<sup>27</sup> Education categories are: None-Grade 10 and Upper Secondary/University

## APPENDIX B: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY NOTES

**Focus Group Research:** Focus group discussions are open-ended group interviews directed by a moderator and following a pre-set guideline. The purpose of focus group research is to understand the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of participants who are recruited for the exercise. Focus groups are particularly useful in gaining a deeper appreciation for the motivations, feelings, and values behind participants' reactions. In addition, the group format enables participants to participate in an exchange of ideas – thus revealing a more in-depth understanding of why opinions are held – that may not emerge in individual in-depth interviews or quantitative surveys. Focus group discussions are comprised of a small number of participants, typically 8-12 per group. NDI's methodology in this study was to ensure the views from diverse geographic regions and from different genders, age groups and education levels were captured. It is important to always be aware that focus groups are a qualitative, and not a quantitative, research tool. Thus, the total number of participants in a focus group study is always relatively small and cannot be considered statistically representative of the larger population.

**Group Composition:** Participants in an individual discussion groups are recruited to be as homogeneous as possible – so, for example, men's and women's groups are conducted separately – to enhance the comfort level of the participants and to clarify the views of a particular sub-group. In this study, the focus groups discussions were stratified by location, gender, age and to as great an extent as possible, education. The age categories used were defined as younger (18-29), middle (ages 30-45), and older (age 46 and older). The age categories used were none-grade 10 and secondary through university.

**Geographic Limitations.** Group discussions were held in six different areas in Papua New Guinea, although it was not possible due to budget limitations to hold groups in all of the country's distinct geographic regions. In addition, the research design called for one of the group discussion locations to be the Southern Highlands. However, security concerns prevented travel to that area and instead discussions were held in Chimbu and Eastern Highlands provinces.

**Timing of Fieldwork:** In this study, four focus group discussions were conducted prior to the election and eight were conducted following the commencement of voting. The separation of time between the two sets of discussions with the intervening event of the beginning of the election means there are some slight differences in perceptions between the pre-election groups and the post-voting groups. These occur mainly in relation to issues of the election itself, such as assessments of fairness, electoral commission performance and voting obstacles. Hence, two sets of moderator guidelines are reproduced in Appendix C for ease of reference.

**Staffing:** All focus group discussions were led by trained political science students from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) who conducted the group discussions in either English or Tok Pisin.

**Participant Recruitment:** Participants were recruited for the discussions by the trained UPNG moderators. They strived to select candidates who were typical of the area and that were not overtly partisan. All of the participants were ordinary citizens and did not include any local government or traditional leaders. In addition, participants had to indicate their intention to vote or had to have already voted.

**Discussion Venues:** In rural areas, venues appropriate for focus group discussions are sometimes difficult to locate. As a result, groups are sometimes conducted in open-air settings, although this reduces the privacy of the group. Neutral venues were chosen to hold the groups.

**Remote Areas:** Groups are only conducted in locations that are reasonably accessible by vehicle. Efforts were made to penetrate into rural areas, but due to poor road networks and security most groups were conducted within one hour's driving distance of a town.

**Outside Influence:** The group discussions were free from influence by local authorities or political parties, and the focus group guideline was not shared with anyone prior to the group. However, on two occasions the discussions were interrupted by partisan actors who mistakenly believed the groups were campaign-related. The interruptions were brief and did not adversely impact the discussions. Also, the participants are gathered in as randomly as possible, based on local conditions. In this study, there was no case in which the findings from one or more groups differed radically from findings in the other groups overall (except for some geographical trends), which suggests that any local influence that may have occurred did not impact the research.

## APPENDIX C: MODERATOR GUIDELINES

### MODERATOR'S GUIDELINE

#### **Pre-polling Guideline [East Sepik and National Capital District (Port Moresby) FGDs]**

#### **Papua New Guinea Focus Groups April 2012**

[PRIOR TO THE GROUP, AS THE PARTICIPANTS ARRIVE, ASK IF THEY INTEND TO VOTE IN THE JUNE 2012 ELECTIONS. IF THEY SAY NO, POLITELY DISMISSES THEM, THANKING THEM AND GIVING THEM THEIR STIPEND.]

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am working on a research project for the University of Papua New Guinea. We are trying to learn more about what citizens of Papua New Guinea think about the important issues in this area. I am neutral and am **NOT** working for the government or any political party. I am the facilitator for today's discussion.

- There are no right or wrong answers.
- Everyone's opinion is equally important. We want everyone to speak.
- If you disagree with someone, that is okay.
- This discussion is only between those of us here.
- I have this recorder to help me when I write the report. Your name will not be used in the report. The report will only say a [woman/man] from [location] said this or that.
- The person here is taking notes to help with the report.
- Please speak loudly so the recorder can pick up your voice.

Thank you.

Any questions before I begin?

[TAKE ANY QUESTIONS **NOT** RELATED TO THE CONTENT OF THE GROUP BUT DEFER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONTENT UNTIL AFTER THE GROUP.]

Now let us begin.

## **FGD QUESTIONS**

### **I. GENERAL MOOD & GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

1. How are things going in Papua New Guinea today – are they going in the right direction OR the wrong direction? [COUNT] [FOLLOW-UP:] What is the reason for your answer?
2. What are the things that the government does well?
3. [ONLY ASK IF NOT COVERED IN QUESTION 1] What are the areas where the government needs to improve its performance?
4. How much confidence do you have in the government to improve its performance in the future? Please explain the reasons for your answers.
5. If you were in charge of the government, what two actions would you take to improve the government's performance?
6. What do you think of the job your Member of Parliament is doing?
7. When I say the word corruption, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Please explain why?
  - a. [IF GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION MENTIONED] What are some ways for the government to address corruption that you feel would be successful?

### **II. SERVICE DELIVERY**

1. If you could tell the government three things you want improved in this community, what would they be?
2. What are the main reasons that the services the government provides are not meeting your expectations?
3. How much confidence do you have that the government will be able to improve service delivery in the future? Please explain.
4. At the beginning of the year, [primary] education was made free. What do you think of that?
5. Likewise, there has been some discussion recently about providing free basic health services. What do you think of that?
6. Describe the law and order situation in this area.
  - a. What should be done to improve the law and order situation?

### III. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. What is your opinion of how Papua New Guinea manages its natural resources, such as copper, timber, natural gas, etc.? [PROMPT ANY CONCERNS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT]
  - a. What should be done to improve how Papua New Guinea manages its natural resources?
2. What concerns do you have about how the extraction of natural resources affects local communities?
3. What are the issues with land ownership and management in this area?

### IV. ELECTIONS

1. What is your view of politics in Papua New Guinea?
2. Is democracy a good system of government for Papua New Guinea?
3. How useful are elections in Papua New Guinea?
4. How fair are elections in Papua New Guinea? [PROMPT MAIN PROBLEMS WITH ELECTION PROCESSES]
5. What is your view of the performance of the electoral commission in your area?
6. What are the main obstacles to voting? [PROMPT SECURITY AND POLLING STATION ACCESS]
7. [DO NOT ASK IF SECRECY OF THE VOTE HAS ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED IN QUESTION 6] Do you believe your vote is secret – in other words, that once you cast your vote no one can know how you voted unless you tell them?
8. Do you believe the vote you cast is counted properly? [IF NO:] Please explain why not.
9. Let's talk about vote buying. What is your opinion of that practice?
10. When campaigning begins, what are the issues that you want the candidates who are campaigning to speak most about?
11. How will you decide who to vote for in elections?
  - a. Which of the following factors will **most** influence who you vote for? Only choose one from the following list [ASK EVERYONE TO ANSWER]:
    - the opinion of your [wife/husband]
    - the opinion of clan leaders in your area
    - the tribe/clan of the candidate
    - the political party of the candidate
    - the qualities of the candidate
    - the issues the candidates speaks about

what the candidate gives me

12. Do you feel it is okay to vote differently from your clan leadership if you prefer a different candidate?
13. What fears or concerns do you have about the coming election? [PROMPT CONCERNS ABOUT VIOLENCE]
14. What do you think about the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) [the 1,2,3 system] that was introduced in 2002? [PROBE FOR POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES]
15. Most members of parliament succeed in being elected only once and serve a single five-year term. What is the reason for this?

## **V. WOMEN**

1. At what level is it appropriate for women to participate in government?
2. Are there any obstacles that women face in voting that men do not? [IF YES:] Please explain.
  - a. When voting, are women free to make their own choice about whom to vote for? Please explain. [NOTE: THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION MAIN BE REVEALED IN THE MAIN QUESTION]
3. What are the main reasons that more women do not contest during elections?
  - a. Do women candidates have as good a chance as men candidates to win elections? [IF NO:] Why not?
4. What do you think about a law that would set aside 22 seats in parliament (one for each province) exclusively for women?

## **VI. POLITICAL PARTIES/CANDIDATES**

1. What role do political parties play in Papua New Guinea?
  - a. Are political parties contributing in a positive way to politics OR are they impacting politics in a negative way?
2. When you go to vote, do you feel like you have good quality candidates to choose from? Why or why not?
3. Describe your ideal candidate for parliament.
4. Where do you think political parties and candidates get the money to use in their campaigns?
  - a. Do you approve OR not approve of how they get their money? Why or why not?
5. What could persuade you to:

- a. Become a long-term supporter of a political party
  - b. Become an official member of a political party
  - c. Financially support (even if a small amount) a political party
6. Once the election is over, some of the political parties in parliament come together to form coalitions. What do you think of this?
  7. When a candidate runs for election under the banner of one political party and then after he is elected and goes to parliament he changes to a different political party, what do you think of that?
  8. When I say the name Michael Somare, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? [FOLLOW UP:] What made you think of that?
  9. When I say the name Peter O'Neill, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? [FOLLOW UP:] What made you think of that?
  10. What are the differences between Michael Somare and Peter O'Neill relating to how they lead the country?

#### **VII. DECENTRALIZATION/AUTONOMY**

1. Is the current distribution of power between the provincial and national governments correct in your opinion? [PROMPT: FINANCIAL, LEGISLATIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE, LAW-MAKING].
2. Sometime around 2015, Bougainville citizens will vote in a referendum on whether to become independent. What do you think of that?

[IN BOUGAINVILLE ONLY, ASK:] Let's talk about the upcoming [independence] referendum. What is your feeling about the referendum? [IF NOT ALREADY ANSWERED, ASK:] If the referendum vote were held today, how would you vote? Please explain the reasons for your choice.

#### **VIII. INFORMATION SOURCES**

1. Where do you get most of your information about what is happening in Papua New Guinea? [ASK PARTICIPANTS TO NAME SPECIFIC OUTLETS]
2. Which of the ones you name do you trust most to give you truthful information? Why?

[PRIOR TO THE GROUP, AS THE PARTICIPANTS ARRIVE, ASK IF THEY HAD VOTED IN THE JUNE 2012 ELECTIONS. IF THEY SAY NO, POLITELY DISMISSES THEM, THANKING THEM AND GIVING THEM THEIR STIPEND.]

### **MODERATOR'S GUIDELINE**

#### **Polling and post-polling guideline [Bougainville (ARB), Madang, Eastern Highlands, and Chimbu]**

#### **Papua New Guinea Focus Groups April 2012**

### **II. INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am working on a research project for the University of Papua New Guinea. We are trying to learn more about what citizens of Papua New Guinea think about the important issues in this area. I am neutral and am **NOT** working for the government or any political party. I am the facilitator for today's discussion.

- There is no right or wrong answers.
- Everyone's opinion is equally important. We want everyone to speak.
- If you disagree with someone, that is okay.
- This discussion is only between those of us here.
- I have this recorder to help me when I write the report. Your name will not be used in the report. The report will only say a [woman/man] from [location] said this or that.
- The person here is taking notes to help with the report.
- Please speak loudly so the recorder can pick up your voice.

Thank you.

Any questions before I begin?

[TAKE ANY QUESTIONS **NOT** RELATED TO THE CONTENT OF THE GROUP BUT DEFER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONTENT UNTIL AFTER THE GROUP.]

Now let us begin.

## **FGD QUESTIONS**

### **PART 1: GENERAL MOOD & GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

8. How are things going in Papua New Guinea today – are they going in the right direction OR the wrong direction? [COUNT] [FOLLOW-UP:] What is the reason for your answer?
9. What are the things that the government does well?
10. [ASK ONLY IF NOT COVERED IN QUESTION 1] What are the areas where the government needs to improve its performance?
11. How much confidence do you have in the government to improve its performance in the future? Please explain the reasons for your answers.
12. If you were in charge of the government, what two actions would you take to improve the government's performance?
13. What do you think of the job your Member of Parliament is doing?
14. When I say the word corruption, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Please explain why?
  - a. [IF GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION IS MENTIONED] What are some ways for the government to address corruption that you feel would be successful?

### **PART 2: SERVICE DELIVERY**

7. If you could tell the government three things you want improved in this community, what would they be?
8. What are the main reasons that the services the government provides are not meeting your expectations?
9. How much confidence do you have that the government will be able to improve service delivery in the future? Please explain.
10. At the beginning of the year, [primary] education was made free. What do you think of that?
11. Likewise, there have been some discussions recently about providing free basic health services. What do you think of that?
12. Describe the law and order situation in this area.
  - a. What should be done to improve the law and order situation?

### **PART 3: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

4. What is your opinion of how Papua New Guinea manages its natural resources, such as copper, timber, natural gas, etc.? [PROMPT ANY CONCERNS ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT]
  - a. What should be done to improve how Papua New Guinea manages its natural resources?
5. What concerns do you have about how the extraction of natural resources affects local communities?
6. What are the issues with land ownership and management in this area?

### **PART 4: ELECTIONS**

16. What is your view of politics in Papua New Guinea?
17. Is democracy a good system of government for Papua New Guinea?
18. How useful are elections in Papua New Guinea?
19. How would you judge the fairness of the most recent elections? [PROMPT MAIN PROBLEMS WITH ELECTION PROCESSES]
20. What is your view of the performance of the Electoral Commission in Papua New Guinea?
21. What were the main obstacles to voting in the recent elections? [PROMPT SECURITY AND POLLING STATION ACCESS]
22. [DO NOT ASK IF SECRECY OF THE VOTE HAS ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED IN QUESTION 6] Do you believe the vote you cast in the recent election was secret – in other words, that once you cast your vote no one knew how you voted unless you told them?
23. Do you believe the vote you cast was [or will be] counted properly? [IF NO:] Please explain why not.
24. Let us talk about vote buying. What is your opinion of that practice?
25. During the campaigning, how much did the political parties and candidates speak about issues that were your main concerns? [ASK PARTICIPANTS TO BE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT ISSUES WERE OR WERE NOT TALKED ABOUT TO THEIR SATISFACTION].
26. How did you decide who to vote for in elections?
  - a. Which of the following factors most influenced who you voted for? Only choose one from the following list [ASK EVERYONE TO ANSWER]:
    - The opinion of your [wife/husband]
    - The opinion of clan leaders in your area
    - The tribe/clan of the candidate
    - The political party of the candidate

The qualities of the candidate  
The issues the candidates spoke about  
What the candidate gave me

27. Did you feel it was okay to vote differently from your clan in the most recent election if you preferred a different candidate?
28. Tell me about the security situation in this area during campaigning and voting. [PROMPT CAUSES FOR ANY VIOLENCE AND WHETHER PARTICIPANTS FELT SECURE TO CAST THEIR VOTE AS THEY WISHED]
29. What do you think about the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) [the 1,2,3 system] that was introduced in 2002? [PROBE FOR POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES]
30. Most members of parliament succeed in being elected only once and so serve a single five-year term. What is the reason for this?

#### **PART 5: WOMEN**

5. At what level is it appropriate for women to participate in government?
6. Are there any obstacles that women face in voting that men do not? [IF YES:] Please explain.
  - a. When voting, are women free to make their own choice about whom to vote for? Please explain. [NOTE: THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION MAIN BE REVEALED IN THE MAIN QUESTION]
7. What are the main reasons that more women did not contest during the last elections?
  - a. Did women candidates have as good a chance as men candidates to win their contests in the latest election? [IF NO:] Why not?
8. What do you think of a law that would set aside 22 seats in parliament (one for each province) exclusively for women?

#### **PART 6: POLITICAL PARTIES/CANDIDATES**

11. What role do political parties play in Papua New Guinea?
  - a. Leading up to and during the election did political parties contribute in a positive way to politics OR did they impact politics in a negative way?
12. Did you feel that you had good quality candidates to choose from?  
Why or why not?
13. Which candidates did the best during the campaign period? Why did they do well?
14. Where do you think political parties and candidates get the money to use in their campaigns?

- a. Do you approve OR not approve of how they get their money? Why or why not?
15. What could persuade you to:
- a. Become a long-term supporter of a political party
  - b. Become an official member of a political party
  - c. Financially support (even if a small amount) a political party
16. Once the election is over, some of the political parties in the Parliament come together to form coalitions. What do you think?
17. Which political parties did the best during the campaign period? Why did they do well?
18. When a candidate runs for election under the banner of one political party and after he is elected and goes to parliament he changes to a different political party, what do you think of that?
19. When I say the government of Sir Michael Somare, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? [FOLLOW UP:] What made you think of that?
20. When I say the government of Peter O’Neill, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? [FOLLOW UP:] What made you think of that?

**PART 7: DECENTRALIZATION/AUTONOMY**

- 3. Is the current distribution of power between the provincial and national governments correct in your opinion? [PROMPT: FINANCIAL, LEGISLATIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND LAW-MAKING].
  - 4. Sometime after 2015, Bougainville citizens could vote in a referendum on whether to become independent. What do you think of that?
- [IN BOUGAINVILLE ONLY, ASK:] Let’s talk about the upcoming [independence] referendum. What is your feeling about the referendum? [IF NOT ALREADY ANSWERED, ASK:] If the referendum vote were held today, how would you vote? Please explain the reasons for your choice.

**PART 8: INFORMATION SOURCES**

- 3. Where do you get most of your information about what is happening in Papua New Guinea? [ASK PARTICIPANTS TO NAME SPECIFIC OUTLETS]
- 4. Which of the ones you name do you trust most to give you truthful information? Why?

## **APPENDIX D: ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Traci D. Cook** is a Senior Advisor for Focus Group Research for the Southern and East Africa Team of the National Democratic Institute (NDI). An experienced opinion researcher, Ms. Cook has designed and authored public opinion studies in Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Grenada. She previously served as the senior director for strategic and corporate communications at the Women's National Basketball Association and as vice president of marketing communications at SS+K in New York. Ms. Cook also led a parliamentary and civil society strengthening program as country director for NDI in Malawi in 1995-1996. Complementing her work in the field of international development and in the private sector is her experience as the Political Director for the Mississippi Democratic Party, legislative work on Capitol Hill and research work for various U.S. House and Senate races.

**Teddy Winn** is a lecturer in the Political Science Strand of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea since 2010. A graduate of UPNG, he holds a BA and BA (Hons.) in Political Science (2000-2006). Prior to attaining his lectureship at UPNG, he was attached as a graduate researcher with the National Research Institute's Political and Legal Studies Division (2007-2008), and briefly as a research analyst with the Independent Public Business Corporation (2008). He served IPBC for only two months before securing a Japanese Government Scholarship to pursue his MA in International Relations (2008-2010) at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University. His academic and research interests include democratic theory, development studies, natural resource governance, and electoral politics.