MEDIA RELEASE

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES REVIEW OF NATIONAL GBV STRATEGY IN RESPONSE TO CATASTROPHIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, GIRLS AND BOYS.

26th November 2024, Port Moresby: On November 26th at 12:00 PM, the Hon. Jason Peter, Minister for Community Development, Youth & Religion will host a press conference to launch the formal review of Papua New Guinea's National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence (2016-2025) with Guest of Honour Hon. Powes Parkop, Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment. The event will be held at Parliament Haus, State Function Room and will be livestreamed on Facebook.

An estimated 1.4 million women in Papua New Guinea experience violence every year– equivalent to one every 30 seconds – while less than 2 percent of the perpetrators are prosecuted.

According to Hon. Powes Parkop, "the levels of gender-based violence in our country are repugnant and horrifying. This is a catastrophic waste of human life and human potential. GBV contravenes everything our National Constitution stands for. It is counter to our 10,000-year-old cultural traditions and beliefs. It shames us on the international stage, and it is fundamentally in our national best and highest interest to remove this GBV like a cancerous tumour. Until our women and children are unshackled from the fear of gender-based violence our country will remain in an age of darkness."

Citing World Bank estimates, Hon. Parkop stated that the economic and social cost of GBV in Papua New Guinea is astonishing: "The World Bank estimates that GBV could cost the country billions of Kina annually, amounting to as much as 2 percent of the national GDP. This does not include the strain on healthcare, law and justice and long-term social impacts. Additionally, it is estimated that employees lose an average of 11 workdays per year due to GBV, costing businesses and the government between 3 to 9 percent of payroll annually."

Emphasizing the urgency of the review, Hon. Jason Peter, MP, Minister for Community Development, Religion and Youth stated: "The first National GBV Strategy was launched in 2016 to address rising violence against women, girls and vulnerable genders – including young boys. However, the rates and severity of violence have only escalated, and the rates of prosecution only declined. We must re-evaluate our approach and find a way to reverse the trend."

Ms. Diane Kambanei, Director of the GBV Secretariat stated that: "The new strategic action plan will seek to learn from a review of the last ten years and advance a new unprecedented and comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing sexual violence, intimate partner violence, stalking and other forms of gender-based violence (referred to collectively as GBV)."

The press conference and launch event will include a roundtable discussion featuring:

- Hon. Jason Peter, MP, Minister for Community Development, Religion and Youth.
- Hon. Powes Parkop, MP, Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Governor NCD.
- Ambassador Jongho Choi, Embassy of the Republic of Korea.

- Ms. Saira Shameem, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative in Papua New Guinea.
- Mr. Jerry Ubase, Secretary for the Department of Community Development & Religion.
- Members of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on GEWE

The event will also feature technical insights from Dr. Oruvu Sepoe, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Specialist, who will review of current evidence, and Ms. Dulciana Somare, Policy Specialist, who will outline the whole-of-government approach for assessing the strategy's impact and developing a new roadmap for the future.

The Department for Community Development, through the GBV Secretariat, has committed PGK 1 million to support the National GBV Strategy review and establish clear national operating standards for safe houses and referral pathways. This significant initiative is further strengthened by the Korean Government's partnership in co-funding these vital initiatives.

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has committed $5 million USD to support one of the country's largest government-led programs aimed at ending gender-based violence (GBV) and Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence (SARV). The funding will be managed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which is leading the initiative. This partnership represents a major step forward in addressing the urgent issues of GBV and SARV, with a focus on prevention, response, and rehabilitation services.

During the roundtable, advocates and other leaders from civil society, including community-based organizations and private sector organizations, will be invited to highlight the importance of mobilizing a whole-of-society approach to prevent and address GBV.

For more information, or interview opportunities, please contact: PNGNationalGBVSecretariat@gmail.com

PHOTO CAPTION: A Papua New Guinean couple in traditional attire, demonstrate the tenderness between men and women that defines Papuan culture of old.

Image source: Cuma PNG

NOTE TO EDITORS:

About the National GBV Secretariat: In 2016, the national government launched the "National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence". The goal of the strategy was to ensure a strategic and coordinated approach to addressing violence across all sectors. At its core, the strategy focused on data, governance, prevention, and response. Oversight for the implementation of the Strategy sits with the National Gender-Based Violence Secretariat which sits within the Department for Community Development and Religion.

The National GBV Review Team: The NGBVS WanBel Team, a strong selection of experienced local and international technical and administrative experts appointed on merit to review the current NGBV strategy and to make recommendations for its successor. The proposed period of WanBel Team deliverables spans from November 2024-March 2025, within this timeframe, it is expected that the 4 identified pillars[1] of the new strategy will guide an invigorated new strategy informed by lessons learned, evidence and data.

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