



Introductory Remarks by Director of National Research Institute on the Occasion of the Launch of Book;
“Election 2007 “ on the 14th September 2011 at the PNGIPA HALL.

His Excellency, the Governor Of Papua New Guinea, Grand Chief, Sir Michael Ogio,

Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corp

The Chief Electoral Commissioner, Mr. Andrew Trawen,

The Chief Secretary to Government, Mr. Manasupe Zureneoc

Heads of Government Agencies,

The Director of the PNGIPA, Mr. Yala Yatu

Representatives Various Government Agencies,

Professor Ron May, Emeritus Professor ANU

Fellow Researchers

And Especially the Authors of the various chapters of this book,

Members of the various media organizations

And many Others of you who have come to join us for this occasion.

Welcome

May I thank you all for taking the time to come and participate in the launch of the Book, “Election 2007, The Shift to Limited Preferential Voting in Papua New Guinea, produced jointly by the National Research Institute and the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program of the Australian National University and edited jointly by Ron May, Ray Anere, Nicole Haley and Katherine When.

I want to make a special acknowledgement of the Governor General, Grand Chief, Sir Michael Ogio who has taken time to officiate at this launching. I had wanted to receive you back at the National Research Institute Conference Hall, where you had as Minister for Higher Education opened the new facilities constructed under the Incentive Fund Program. However, this was not possible, and we are here at the Institute of Public Administration Hall.

We are grateful indeed to the Director for making this facility available. It is also quite significant in a way.

When the Editors had completed their work and sent it to me about two months ago, we started thinking of organizing the launch of the book. The team at NRI felt that it would be fitting to launch this book on the national elections, an important democratic governance process of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, to coincide with PNG's 36th Independence Anniversary Celebrations.

It is therefore fitting and significant in itself that we have come to celebrate Independence Day at an Institution that is truly the home of the PNG Independence Movement. PNGIPA provided the environment for our early leaders such as Sir Michael Somare, Sir Moari Kiki, and Sir Joseph Nombri to engage in discussions in what is famously known as the Bully Beef Club.

A comprehensive study on the national elections has been produced after every election since Independence, except for 2002, produced jointly by academics from overseas and in PNG under the auspices of the University of PNG, the National Research Institute and off course the Australian National University through individuals like Ron May who has been involved in all the studies.

In the past elections, the academics used to organize themselves in rather ad-hoc manner to select an electorate observe the activities and put together a collection of papers on different themes. It would also include information on the election outcomes, such as how many candidates, votes cast and the winning margins.

In the 2007 General Elections however, the Government through IDEC, the Interdepartmental Committee on the conduct of elections engaged the National Research Institute to coordinate a Domestic Observer team. Academics from different institutions in PNG and abroad especially the ANU worked together to observe and provide feedback on the conduct and management of the 2007 General Elections.

This book complements and adds to the information captured from the 2007 national elections. It complements namely two significant reports put together by the National Research Institute.

A Domestic Observer Report was presented to the Government of PNG, through IDEC, in early 2008.

A second report titled, *Priorities for a Free and Fair Election: An NRI Issues Analysis*. A publication intended to be a discussion paper for broader community engagement in discussions teasing out main issues from the Domestic Observer Report for addressing at the next general elections.

This book adds to the volume of work on the 2007 elections as well but provides more in-depth discussions, anecdotes, personal stories and observations.

The authors had been involved in one way or the other in the national elections, either as Administrators or as part of the Domestic Observer team. They provide us the lenses through which we can see some aspects of the national elections ranging from administration and conduct of elections, security issues, political parties and the behavior of candidates campaigning, sexual behavior and HiV AIDS, corruption, to name a few and more importantly the outcomes of introducing the limited preferential voting system in the 2007 General Elections.

At the end of the book is an appendix providing data on each electorate, the number of candidates, the winning candidate, total allowable votes, number of first preference votes, percentage of first preference votes and other related data.

These anecdotes provide rich information, comprising notes, stories and explanations providing a very useful record in our history. It will provide a source of information for our current and future academics, students and others looking back to see what transpired in the 2007 General Elections.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the authors who contributed to the production of this book. We would also need to acknowledge the hard work put in by the Editors, Professor Ron May, Dr. Ray Anere, Dr. Nicole Haley and Ms Katherine Wheen. I also want to note the contribution of Jennifer Parina, the Institutes Publications Editor who coordinated the final copy editing and printing.

I would also like to take the opportunity on behalf of the Council and Staff of the National Research Institute to thank the Australian National University for its continued support and engagement in many activities including this work on elections with the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program.

The Institutes relationship with the ANU is also special in the sense that the buildings and land NRI now occupies were initially established as the base for the New Guinea Research Unit. At the time of independence in 1975, the land and chattels were handed over by the ANU to the newly established Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research (IASER), later changed to the National Research Institute. I acknowledge the presence of the first Director of the then newly established IASER in 1976, Professor Ron May. It is our pleasure to have you with us on the occasion and also your continued engagement with the Institute.

Finally, I want to thank the PNG Government who through IDEC engaged NRI to coordinate the Domestic Observer team to provide an independent feedback on the conduct of the elections. Much of the contents of this book stem from the work of being involved in the Domestic Observations.

I want to thank the Chief Electoral Commissioner and his staff for their support to the Domestic Observer teams. We also take note of the considered manner in which the Electoral Commission accepted the reports and taken action on the many recommendations put forward.

We are quite pleased to note the work being carried out by the PNG Electoral Commission to continually improve the Electoral Process so that Papua New Guineans can truly engage freely and fairly in an election process to elect a leader to represent them in Parliament and in the Governance of PNG as a country.

Our country needs good leaders now, at this juncture of our development. The education and health status of PNG is very poor. Our country's poor state of infrastructure such as roads needs attention in order for services to be delivered and accessed. Our rural folks need to access to markets to sell their cash crops and other items to get cash in order to buy other necessities.

As pointed out by the Prime Minister recently and commented on by many of us in the past, lack of development is not because there is not enough money.

Good governance and effective management of our resources including effective management of programs and activities to deliver basic services are critical. Good Quality Political Leadership is therefore essential.

This can only come about if we allow the electoral process to work as intended in a Free and Fair Process without duress.

There are many challenges ahead for the 2012 General Elections. We all have to work cooperatively to support the Electoral Commission to manage and conduct a good election, in a process that allows us to elect good political leaders.

This book provides a whole lot of information that can help each and every Papua New Guinean to gain insights, to think, discuss among many others about how to have such a Free and Fair Election System.

Your Excellency, Once again, thank you for accepting our invitation. I commend this excellent book worthy of your presence and for you to launch.

Thank you all.

