



Ministry of Information & Communications Technology

Office of the Minister

PO Box 85, Vision-City Waigani, NCD, Port Moresby Telephone: (+675) 325 0415 Email: ictminister@ict.gov.pg

MEDIA FREEDOM DAY – 3rd MAY 2023

MEDIA STATEMENT

I join the global community to celebrate Media Freedom Day today. It is an important day and one we must always protect and cherish as media freedom is a critical and fundamental part of a striving and free democracy.

Our country is going through various review and reform as we progress towards 2025, the year when Papua New Guinea will celebrate 50 years of political independence from colonial rule. This is an important crossroad in our political history as we jump over into the next 50 years and move towards 100 years as a sovereign nation.

The media has played an important role in our country's development and will continue to play this role. But it must play a bigger and more robust role in our desire now to be economically independent.

Various studies and findings show and confirm that the media has both positive and negative influences on people. The media can make a person more aware of what is happening on a local, national and global level, or it can warp one's perspective of the truth. The media has the capacity to ruin society by encouraging false ideals, praising selfishness and making the possession of fame, fortune and talent qualifications to be considered a valuable person.

The media influences the public by sharing news with an opinionated perspective. The personal values of owners and operations of media businesses impact the information shared.

The personal perspectives of reporters influence the stories they cover and the personal spins they interject into stories. Technological advances provide venues to reach a larger audience than was possible in years past.

Findings also of a recent survey by the Pacific Islands News Association into the media in the region indicate the need for a review into the media in the region.

The issues of lack of support to journalism training, Media

institutional support, Media remuneration and workplace support and capacity building and the need to protect media workers especially journalist requires attention in the region and Papua New Guinea is no different.

The media in Papua New Guinea has also raised these pertinent issues as a serious detriment to a more robust and competitive media environment affecting the profession and standards of media and journalism in the country.

As you all are aware, the government is now, amongst its various reviews and reforms, also looking into the media industry in the country.

This is a wholesome and across the board review and reforms process in the information, communication and technology sector encompassing the many changes taking place globally and transcending into Papua New Guinea.

These changes and the challenges brought about through these changes are being addressed through appropriate and relevant policy interventions, and media is a sector that is now under review.

I am fully conscious and aware that the issues of media freedom is sensitive and profound as we progress the

review.

I therefore want to again reassure all stakeholders and especially the media industry and the Journalism profession that I stand strong and steadfast in my desire to reform the media landscape in the country.

This government seek to protect media freedom and to strengthen the resolve to make media a more professional, dynamic and competitive and to strengthen its freedom and protection and access to information.

This is clearly indicated in our governments passage of the " Whistle Blowers" Act and our effort to properly establish by policy and law, the " Access to Information " law and other enabling policy and law to fight and expose corruption.

Our government through this review and reform also want to strengthen our media sector and the support to our Journalism schools in the various institutions throughout the country and more importantly to see where we can play our role in improving the welfare and security of the media and especially the Journalism profession and to allow them to write without fear and favour while being accountable and responsible.

The review also seeks to establish a prudent and

transparent self-regulatory process of accountability and responsibility.

I will soon announce the 3rd draft of the National Media Development Policy 2023. Prior to this, there will be a national survey, to be conducted commencing this week, to further gauge views of the public on key policy questions.

The survey will be available to the public and stakeholders through the department's website and Facebook page, SMS Blasts and the general media.

Following the survey, regional workshops will be conducted and a final validation workshop for key stakeholders.

I intend, following the survey and validation workshop, to bring a submission to the National Executive Council by the end of May and or early June 2023 for approval of the National Media Development Policy.

I am happy with the process so far. It is transparent and consultation is being deliberately extended to ensure a much wider and prolonged consultation process.

As our country goes through unprecedented global stress

and developments, as we seek to become a leading economic hub in the region and as we become more important in the global strategic positioning, the media becomes very crucial and this we must strengthen and protect.

I take time now to pay tribute to those in the media fraternity who have passed on and to encourage all who continue to work in the profession to continue to work hard and to strengthen our overall resolve for a free and vibrant media.

I wish you all a Happy and Progressive Media Freedom Day!

God Bless You All.



Hon. TIMOTHY MASIU MP



Minister for Information and Communication Technology
and Member for South Bougainville.