



DRAFT TALKING POINTS

NBC Radio

Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Candidates, Scrutineers and Supporters

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Opening Remarks

- ◆ Thank you for having me on the program.
- ◆ Today, I will discuss an important document for the National Election – the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, Candidates, Scrutineers and Supporters.
- ◆ On Monday this week, the Code of Conduct was launched jointly by the PNG Electoral Commission and the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission or the IPPCC.
- ◆ During this launch, all registered political parties were invited and asked to sign the Code of Conduct to show their commitment to peaceful, orderly, free, and fair elections.

The Code of Conduct

- ◆ A Code of Conduct is essential for the conduct of peaceful, credible, and orderly elections. It consists of a set of guidelines that political parties, candidates, and other electoral stakeholders adhere to during elections.
- ◆ Some countries have included a Code of Conduct in their laws, while others like PNG, have not.
- ◆ Although we have not integrated the Code of Conduct into our electoral laws or regulations, we have a voluntary Code of Conduct for political parties, candidates and their scrutineers and supporters.
- ◆ This Code is based on the Constitution, Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates, the Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Elections, the Electoral Law Regulation, as well as internationally recognized principles and standards.

- ◆ In essence, it is a written commitment of the political parties, candidates, and their supporters to the PNGEC and IPPCC that they will help ensure the conduct of peaceful, free, fair, and orderly elections.
- ◆ The Code of Conduct seeks to:
 1. Foster a peaceful campaign environment
 2. Promote orderly conduct of elections, and
 3. Ensure integrity of the electoral process.
- ◆ This is not the first time that political parties and candidates have been asked to sign a Code of Conduct.
- ◆ In the 2017 National Election, the PNGEC initiated the adoption of a Code of Conduct by political parties and candidates. At that time, 24 parties out of the 45 registered parties signed the Code of Conduct.
- ◆ I am pleased to advise that as of the 12th of May, 39 of the 53 registered parties the signed the Code – that means over 70% of parties have now signed the Code of Conduct.

Highlights of the Code of Conduct

- ◆ The following are the important provisions of the Code of Conduct.
 - By signing the Code of Conduct the political parties commit to follow and respect election laws and regulations. In addition, they commit to ensuring that their scrutineers and supporters will do the same.
 - Second, the political parties agree to enforce their own disciplinary mechanism to deter violations of the laws and regulations and the Code of Conduct.
 - Third, the Code of Conduct seeks the commitment of all signatories to report violations of the laws and Constitution to relevant authorities.
 - Fourth, the Code of Conduct asks the political parties to build the capacity of their respective party officials and candidates to understand and adhere to the Code of Conduct and electoral laws.
 - Finally, the Code of Conduct seeks the commitment of all political parties to resolve their disputes in a peaceful manner.

- ◆ The Code of Conduct also outlines key commitments that are applicable during certain stages of the election.
- ◆ During the Nomination Period, political parties commit to ensure the inclusiveness of their nomination process by encouraging the participation of women, youths and persons with disabilities.
- ◆ During the campaign, political parties commit to campaigning in a manner that respects the rights of all candidates and supporters to campaign freely. For example:
 - They commit not to disrupt campaign or any activities of other parties or candidates;
 - They commit to reach out to marginalized and vulnerable groups not only to solicit their voters but also to inform them of their programs; and
 - They commit not to use language that incites hatred or violence in any form against any person or party, or issue any materials that incite people to violence.
- ◆ During the polling period, political parties commit to ensure that the polling process is free and fair. This means:
 - They commit to not engage in any form of bribery, and to report incidents of bribery to the police;
 - They commit to not engage in intimidation of electoral officials, voters or supporters of other candidates;
 - They commit to respect the secrecy of voting; and
 - They commit to respect the role of domestic and international election observers.
- ◆ During counting and scrutiny, political parties commit:
 - not to bribe or threaten poll workers or counting staff to influence the election
 - not to interfere with or disrupt, unless for obviously valid reasons, the counting and tabulation process or disrupt transportation of election materials in anyway; and

- they commit to follow the procedures and regulations set out by the PNGEC.
- ◆ After the election, political parties commit:
 - to bring their disputes to court and not take part in or allow supporters to take part in any post-election violence, and
 - to return to their constituent communities to report on their work as a Member of Parliament (MP).

Closing Remarks

- ◆ In closing, this week's launch of the Code of Conduct was an important event.
- ◆ The leaders and/or representatives of the 53 registered political parties were invited to the launch. Media people and representatives of major civil society organizations were also invited.
- ◆ During the launch, political party leaders were invited to sign the Code of Conduct and as of the 12th of May, 39 political parties have signed it.
- ◆ The launch proved to be a valuable opportunity for the PNGEC and IPPCC to raise awareness on important topics like the electoral calendar, the nomination process, the LPV system and others.
- ◆ During the launch, copies of the Code of Conduct were distributed to the political parties and other electoral stakeholders. Other important materials like the electoral offences booklet, and nomination awareness toolkit were also disseminated.
- ◆ Leaders of political parties were also able to ask questions of the PNGEC Deputy Electoral Commissioner and the Chair of the IPPCC who were present during the event. Important issues were clarified during the open forum.
- ◆ Copies of the Code of Conduct were distributed to the political parties, media and invited CSOs.

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