



DRAFT TALKING POINTS

NBC Radio

Voter's Rights, Dos and Don'ts for Voters, and the LPV System

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Opening Remarks

- ◆ Thank you for that warm introduction and for inviting me again to discuss another important aspect of the 2022 National Election.
- ◆ In this session, I am going to discuss the rights of voters; what they can and cannot do during, before and after polling; and I will also discuss the voting system of PNG, which is called the limited preferential voting system or LPV.

The Rights of Voters

- ◆ Under the PNG Constitution and the Electoral Law, a voter is a person who has a right to cast his or her vote during elections.
- ◆ The Constitution and Electoral Law state that a person is eligible to vote if he or she:
 - Is a citizen of Papua New Guinea;
 - Is at least 18 years of age or older; and
 - Is on the electoral roll.
- ◆ The right to vote refers to the right of a person to freely choose the candidate that they want to represent them in the Parliament.
- ◆ There are other related rights that are included in the right to vote. These include the following:
 - ***The right to campaign or solicit votes for their favoured candidate –***
 - As part of their political rights, voters can campaign for any candidate whom they think should represent their electorates in the Parliament.

- ***The right to attend candidate and party rallies and campaigns–***
 - A voter has the right to attend the campaigns of political parties and candidates in the lead up to the 2022 National Election.
 - A voter has the right to receive information about the programmes the candidates intend to implement if elected.
 - This is also a responsibility of voters, as it will enable them to decide which candidate to vote for.

- ***The right to vote freely –***
 - Voters should be able to vote freely without any form of coercion or intimidation.
 - If voters feel they are being harassed or intimidated to vote, or not to vote, for a particular candidate, or to exercise to their right to vote during the election, they should inform the Presiding Officer or an officer of the PNGEC.

- ***The right to seek assistance –***
 - If a voter is not clear on the procedure or steps for voting, they have the right to ask the Presiding Officer or Poll Clerk to explain how to vote properly.
 - If a voter requires assistance to cast their ballots, for example if they are blind, unable to read or write, have low vision, are an amputee, etc. – they may bring a person of their choosing to help them to cast their vote. Alternatively, they can ask the Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer for assistance.

- ***The right to receive replacement ballots if he or she makes a mistake prior to casting their the ballot –***
 - If a voter spoils their ballot by mistake, they can ask for a replacement ballot before the spoiled ballot papers is deposited into the ballot box.
 - However, please note that it is an offence to intentionally spoil or destroy a ballot.

- ***The right to secrecy (privacy) when voting –***
 - Voters have the right to mark their ballot papers in secret.
 - No one – not polling officials, not family members – should ask for or attempt to know, how a person intends to vote, unless

the polling official or relative is assisting the voter due to disability or other forms of incapacity that prevents the voter from voting on his or her own.

- ***The right to vote and have his or her vote accurately counted.***
 - This right also includes the right to vote if a person is already in the line at closing time.
 - However, no voter should be allowed to join the queue after the closing time.

Responsibility of Voters

- ◆ While voters have rights, they also have important responsibilities not only as voters but also as PNG citizens.
- ◆ They can only be effective voters and citizens if they take these responsibilities seriously, these responsibilities include:
 - ***The responsibility to vote***
 - This is perhaps a voter's most important responsibility.
 - First, it is the responsibility of all qualified PNG citizens to enrol so they can vote during elections.
 - Second, they have to check if they are in the electoral roll and ensure that their personal information and data in the roll are correct.
 - During the polling period, they should know where the polling places are located, and
 - Finally, during the polling period, they should cast their votes.
 - ***The responsibility to protect the sanctity of their vote***
 - This means that voters should treat the act of voting seriously.
 - Voters should not sell their votes or receive any form of favour in exchange for their votes.
 - Voters should also not intimidate, coerce or exert any undue influence over another voter to favour or discredit any candidate.

- ***They also have the responsibility to conduct themselves in an orderly manner***
 - For a free and fair election to take place, it is important that voters comply with the Electoral Law and Regulations.
 - This is the best guarantee for ensuring peaceful and orderly elections.
 - Therefore, it is the responsibility of voters to conduct themselves in an orderly manner before, during and after election and encourage others to act in similar fashion. This includes:
 - Waiting for their turn on the queue;
 - Obeying the directives of electoral officials, and casting their vote peacefully;
 - After casting their vote, a voter should leave the polling place to avoid unnecessary clustering which may result in conflict, and finally
 - Complaints or disputes, if any, should be brought to the attention of the polling officials or the police rather than resorting to illegal actions.
- ***The final responsibility that I will cover is the responsibility to know the candidates that are contesting the elections***
 - This means that voters have a responsibility to know the different candidates and their plans for their electorates.

The LPV System

- ◆ I will now cover some key points about the LPV voting system.
- ◆ LPV or limited preferential voting is PNG's voting system for determining the outcomes of an election. In other words, for determining the candidate who won the election for each electorate.
- ◆ In the LPV system, voters rank their top three candidates from one to three on the ballot.
 - Thus, voters are not just voting for one person, for example, the candidate from their own village or community; they may also vote for two other candidates, who may be from other villages or communities.

- This system helps voters to think and decide who is the best, second best and third best candidate to represent their communities.
- It is important that voters find out about all the candidates so that they only vote for people who they believe will best represent their electorates.
- ◆ Under the LPV system, a candidate must have the support of an absolute majority of the electorate, or 50 percent plus one of all formal ballots.
- ◆ The Limited Preferential Voting system replaced the ‘First-Past-the-Post’ system in 2007 for national elections.

Closing Remarks

- ◆ Meaningful participation in the elections can only be possible if you know your electoral rights and obligations.
- ◆ Voting is an important right of a citizen. But it is also a great responsibility. These two go hand in hand.
- ◆ To exercise their rights to vote effectively, it is the responsibility of all voters to know the candidates and study their track record and plans for their electorate.
- ◆ The right to vote is a sacred right and should be taken seriously by all voters.
- ◆ They should not sell their votes or ask for favour in exchange for their votes.
- ◆ Voters should not also intimidate others to vote for their candidates.
- ◆ Not only are these acts considered electoral offence under our laws, they also undermine the very important democratic process of elections.

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