

Date Printed: 04/23/2009

JTS Box Number: IFES_68
Tab Number: 144
Document Title: Vote for the Future
Document Date: 1996
Document Country: Papua New Guinea
Document Language: English
IFES ID: CE01378



* 4 5 6 3 C 4 1 6 - 3 D 0 A - 4 E 5 D - 9 9 A B - 5 E D 7 2 E C 9 1 0 1 C *

VOTE FOR THE FUTURE

Yauka Aluambo Liria



1996
John Siune

Res bilong man
ol bilong wanwan Proviins
insait long Papua Niugini.

OXFORD

VOTE FOR THE FUTURE

Yauka Aluambo Liria

F. Clifton White Resource Center

International Foundation

for Election Systems

1101 15th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20005

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford New York
Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay
Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Port Moresby
Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto
and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

OXFORD is a trade mark of Oxford University Press

© Yauka Aluambo Liria 1997
First published 1997

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission. Enquiries to be made to Oxford University Press.

Copying for educational purposes

Where copies of part or the whole of the book are made under Part VB of the Copyright Act, the law requires that the prescribed procedures be followed. For information, contact the Copyright Agency Limited.

Acknowledgments: The author and publisher wish to thank the Electoral Commission of Papua New Guinea for their helpful comments and suggestions in the production of this book. The author and publisher also wish to thank the Electoral Commission and the Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace and Development in Papua New Guinea for granting permission to reproduce the illustrative material in this book.

ISBN 0 19 55 4121 9

Edited by Kate Deutrom
Text and cover design by Caroline Laird
Illustrated by Jada Wilson, Kiri Mimi, Biliso Osake
Printed through Bookpac Production Services, Singapore
Published by Oxford University Press
Editorial office: PO Box 7979, Boroko NCD, Papua
New Guinea

Contents

Message from the Electoral Commissioner	iv
1 Introduction	1
2 What is politics?	3
3 The political system	6
4 Our national government system	10
5 Candidates - how do you decide	14
6 Leadership qualities	17
7 What is development?	20
8 The electoral system in Papua New Guinea	24
9 The election procedures	27
10 Common election offences	35
11 Your future depends on your vote	41

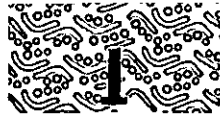
Message from the Electoral Commissioner

Young people have inquisitive minds and enjoy an active lifestyle. In traditional societies, they learned how to hunt, fish, garden, and how to take part in all the cultural activities that formed part of the community's lifestyle. Things that occurred everyday, were easy for young people to understand and accept. Activities that occurred once in a while had to be fully explained to be properly understood. The elders had an important role to play in educating the young. Our Melanesian societies have survived for thousands of years, using this principle.

For today's young people, these lessons from the past still apply, as we move at great speed into the twenty first century. In our modern nation of Papua New Guinea, our young people are required to learn many new things in a short space of time. If they are not fully informed about the society in which they live, they may encounter serious problems and the society itself will suffer. They have a right to be informed about all major aspects of life.

The election process is one such activity. Citizens have a right to be fully informed about the process of government to help them make informed decisions during an election process, and understand why voting at elections is so important. This book contains guidelines on the election process in Papua New Guinea, as well as other related issues such as politics, government systems, and development projects. All this information will help the reader to better understand this special ritual called the 'General Election'. The future direction of the nation is well and truly in the hands of its people.

Reuben T. Kaiulo MBE
Electoral Commissioner



Introduction

Why should you read this book?

This book gives you information about the election process in Papua New Guinea. Between March and June every five years, Papua New Guineans go to the polls to cast their vote. This process is called the general election. Through this activity, the people of the nation select candidates to represent them in the National Parliament. This exercise is repeated every five years.

Why should you vote?

The decision you make in an election is an important one. Your vote will help decide who will govern the nation for the next five years. By voting, you are helping to decide on the type of development and leadership for your area and the whole country. Taking part in the election process is an important political activity for everyone over the age of 18. Your vote will affect you, your children and others in your community for at least the next five years. Don't treat this matter lightly. Don't think that politics is not important. Politics affects us all.

How do you make decisions?

When making any decision in life, you need to be informed. You shouldn't decide in the dark. You must get all the information you can, to help you make a wise decision. We all know from life experiences, that we often regret decisions we make when we don't know all the facts. We must avoid

making such mistakes. Likewise, in voting, you want to make an informed choice. But do you know enough about what you are doing? Do you know the things to look for when selecting a candidate? Are you aware of the implications for you and your family when you make your selection? Do you know how to vote?



What is politics?

Members of the public were asked this question. Here are some of their ideas.

Negative ideas about politics

- it is a dirty word
- it is evil, therefore, something to avoid in our lives
- it is something politicians do
- it is just about government policies, decisions, activities and programmes
- it is about getting government goods and services
- it is about power-play, leaders and the misuse of public money
- it is something that only happens in Waigani and in Parliament

Positive views about politics

- politics takes place everywhere
- politics is about people
- it is about the country you live in
- politics arises from human inter-dependency and close relationships
- it is about what the government does for the people
- it is about how the government rules the country

Politics is all these things, and a lot more besides. It is about the work and ideas that are connected with governing a country, town, village or settlement. Here are some more ideas.

- it is a way of distributing things to people in a close and interdependent community
- it is about people in authority
- it is about the customs and traditions of the people
- it is related to a modern system of government
- it is about politicians having the power to decide how to distribute public wealth
- it is about the people getting involved in activities so they can receive goods and services from the authorities
- it is about decision-making that affects the nation
- it is about the competition amongst individuals and groups to gain the things they desire
- it is about finding ways of solving community disputes and problems, both traditional and modern

Politics exists where people exist. It exists in the National Parliament, in government departments, in schools, in clubs, in villages and settlements, in private companies and in associations. People and politics go together.

Politics is the activity that leads to decisions by authorities to distribute public wealth. It also involves decisions to resolve public disputes and problems.

When you try to influence the authorities, you too are involved in politics. If you go on strike or demonstrate to get more pay, or try to stop a road going through your land, you are involved in politics. Politics occurs in all levels of society. Here is an example.

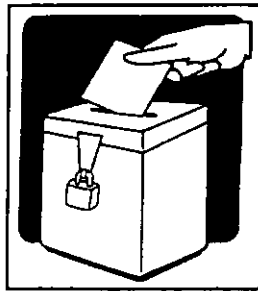
Village politics

Problem: Your village wants to build a new church at a new site. You have three clans in the village. There is disagreement on where the church should be built because there isn't much vacant land in your area. None of the clans wants to offer its land.

Authority: Who is the authority in the village to help solve the problem? It may be the clan leader, councillor or the pastor. It may be all of them.

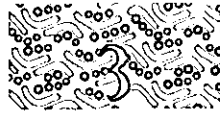
Discussion: The leaders get together and talk things over. Then, they go back and talk it over with their clansmen/women. They discuss this matter through gatherings in the village centre, and also through daily family talks in the home, and contacts made on the road to gardens or shops. They give their views and listen to what others think. This goes on for some time, until most of them agree on what to do about this matter.

Decision: Finally, the leaders get together again and talk it over and agree to build the church at a certain site. They make a decision. They give their reasons for doing so. The village accepts that decision, although some people may disagree with it. Traditionally, the authority of the leaders is recognised, respected and accepted.



Effects of politics

As you can see, politics is about making decisions. This helps to maintain law and order as long as most people in the community agree with the decision. If people don't agree with the decision, then law and order breaks down, and communities suffer. The Bougainville situation and the Ok Tedi river pollution problems are examples of this.



The political system

By now, you should know something about politics. It is an activity that involves people talking things over, to address a problem and arrive at a decision. It is an activity that people do to decide on important issues.

A political system is not exactly the same thing as politics. Politics takes place inside a political system. Many parts make up a political system. These include: the Constitution, laws and regulations; activities; organisations; customs and traditions; important offices; leaders; government departments; towns and villages.

The way in which the different parts relate to each other, and work with or against each other, forms our political system. Here are examples of some of the 'parts' which form our political system.

The Constitution and the laws of the country

The Constitution states what should happen and what should not happen in the political system. It regulates or provides order and harmony in society and provides the general direction for the nation to take. The Constitution forms an essential part of our political system. Our customary rules and practices are included within the Constitution. All individuals within society must follow the rules and regulations of the Constitution.

Political parties

The Constitution of Papua New Guinea allows different political parties to exist. In 1992, the following political parties contested the national parliament elections.

- Pangu Party
- People's Democratic Movement
- People's Action Party
- Melanesian Alliance
- People's Progress Party
- League for National Advancement
- National Party
- Black Action Party
- Country Party
- People's Labour Party
- Liberal Party
- People's Solidarity Party
- United Party

Individuals of the country can join a political party of their own choosing. The members of the party agree on the rules and regulations governing their group. This system of allowing different political parties to exist is known as a democracy. Some of the main activities of a political party are to:

- plan party policies
- select new party candidates for elections
- support selected candidates during elections
- try to persuade and influence the government, e.g. to approve certain projects submitted by the party
- provide financial resources to keep the party operations going
- make plans and take actions to get the party into government, either through the election process or through a 'Vote of No Confidence'. The job of getting the party into government is their No. 1 job.

Government organisations and activities

Many people wrongly think that this is the only part that makes up our political system. Government organisations and activities are ruled by the Constitution. They include:

- All the elected members of parliament, including the Prime Minister, Government Ministers, Members of Parliament and their staff and advisers
- Provincial governments, members, officers, and their work
- Local level governments, councillors and their work
- Government policies, decisions, programmes and projects
- Government departments, their staff and the work they do

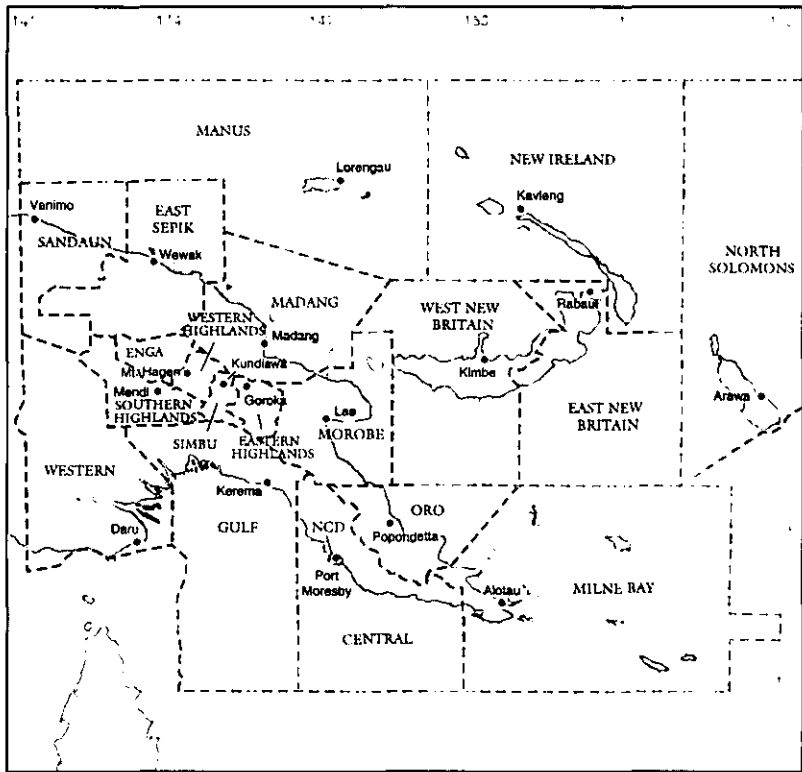
Leadership

Leadership is an essential part of our political system. It refers to the people who are seen by the community as leaders. Here are some ideas about leaders:

- they are important people who are respected in the community
- they are elected or appointed to an important office
- there are traditional or customary leaders
- they make decisions on how to distribute wealth and solve public issues
- a leader's authority, power and influence is recognised in the community
- their decisions affect everyone in a community
- they deal with public matters

Other groups

Other groups that can influence the political system include: businesses, labour unions, student groups, associations, traditional clans and tribes. These groups usually deal with issues in their own areas, e.g. the businesses only play politics regarding business matters; or village councillors involve in politics only on matters directly affecting their village areas.



Map of Papua New Guinea

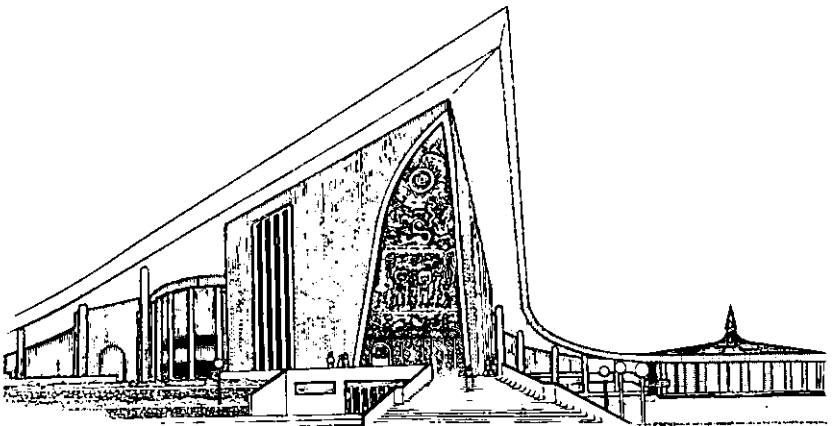
Summary

All the different 'parts' that make up the political system have to work together. For example, the government gets taxes from businesses and individuals so it can do its work. Businesses and individuals rely on the government to provide them with basic services, e.g. roads, health facilities, schools, law and order. They are inter-dependent. The relationship between the 'parts', helps form the political system. The government forms the largest part of the system, but it is not the only part. Politics involves public matters and takes place inside the political system.



Our national government system

What does the national government system have to do with voting, you may ask? The government system is the area your representative will work in. Even if he/she is in the Opposition, they are still part of the national government system. Therefore, you need to have some idea about this system so you know what to expect and what not to expect. Otherwise, you may have false expectations! If you do not understand the government system properly, you may place unnecessary and silly demands on your Member of Parliament (MP). This may result in your representative breaking rules in order to meet your demands. This can spoil or corrupt the system. There are different parts to our national government system.



Parliament House: the home of PNG's national government

The National Parliament

The National Parliament is made up of all the elected members. Its main job is to make all the laws of the nation and decide how the country should be run. It also checks on the work of the government to make sure it is doing a good job. However, the government has the largest number of members in the parliament so it has the numbers to beat the opposition in any debate or vote, as long as government members remain loyal. The government therefore, has a lot of power. If it has the numbers it can pass the decisions it wants.

The Government side

The National Government is made up of a Prime Minister, Government Ministers and ordinary members. They prepare the national budgets, approve projects and make important decisions for the country. They are the main political group running the country.

The Prime Minister and the Ministers are members of a group called the Cabinet. Cabinet is the most powerful political group in our country. They meet regularly. The Prime Minister is the Cabinet Chairman. Cabinet makes all the important decisions for the government and the nation. These are the people who are responsible for what happens in the country.

The Opposition side

The Opposition is made up of the parties and individuals that are not in government. They are led by the Leader of the Opposition. Their job is to check the work of government and make sure the government is running the country well. A strong Opposition is an essential component of any government. The Opposition contributes to the running of the country. They help approve budgets and policies by making

laws in the Parliament, together with the government side. They also voice their strong opposition to policies they disagree with.

Parliamentary committees

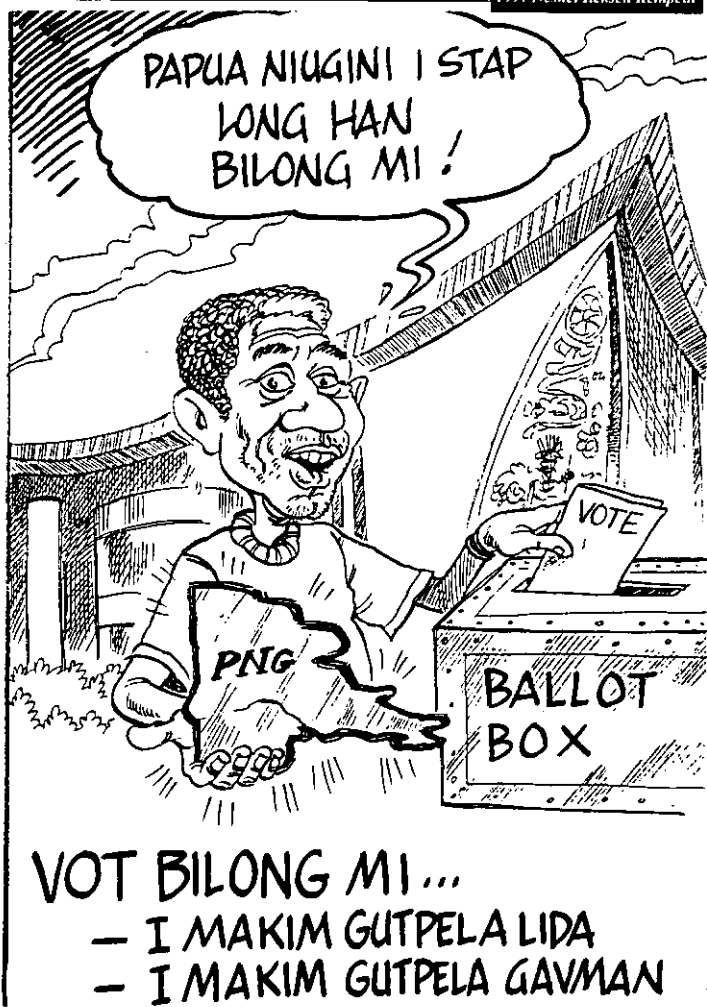
These committees are made up from members of both the government and opposition. Some of these committees include Public Accounts, Foreign Affairs, and Constitutional Review. They check on the government's work. Parliamentary committees work well if all members contribute in an efficient and effective manner.

The Courts

The courts are made up of the Supreme Court, the National Court, District Courts and Village Courts. The courts are not directly controlled by the government. But government indirectly controls them by providing them with their yearly budgets. For example, if the court system does not receive sufficient funding, it may not be able to do its work. This could mean that criminals and corrupt leaders will not be prosecuted. The appointment of judges is also controlled by the government.

Government organisations

Other government organisations that keep a check on government activities include the Ombudsman Commission, NIO (National Intelligence Organisation), the Police Fraud Squad, the Justice Department, etc. But if the government does not give enough money and support to these organisations, many corrupt people may not be brought to justice. Government departments and companies owned by the government such as Air Niugini, Post and Telikom, Elcom, Tourism Promotion Authority and others are also part of the national government system. Voters should ask candidates to state their policies regarding these organisations.



Remember: This is the system in which your candidate will represent you. He/she must understand all these areas, in order to serve you and your community. Ask your candidate to state their policies for these different areas. You can then check your MPs performance over the five years based on those policies. Any system will work well, if all the 'parts' are cooperating with each other. Our leaders form the core of our national government system.



Candidates – how do you decide?

When voting in the elections, you are making important choices and decisions. Here are some of the matters you take important decisions on.

- selecting your candidate. You do this directly, by voting for him or her.
- selecting and approving his/her policies. You do this indirectly. By voting for a candidate, you are really saying that you approve his or her policies. Often, people forget this. This is why a voter should ask the candidates to make all their important policies clear to everyone. Otherwise, you will not know what you are voting for and you could be in for a shock later!
- supporting a political party. You do this indirectly. Again, many people do not realise that this is really what they are doing. When you vote for a certain candidate, you are supporting the party of that candidate. But you may not agree with the poor record of that party and might get upset about this later. This is why, it is important for voters to know which party a candidate belongs to.
- supporting a party leader. You do this indirectly. Have you ever disagreed with a party leader and the way he/she leads the party or the country? Maybe you say you did not vote for him/her. But, what if your candidate is supporting him/her? Do you realise that by supporting your candidate, you are also supporting that political party leader? Do you approve the party's policies? Are you happy with the party's record?

How do you make a decision?

When you want a wife or husband, do you just select any nice-looking man or woman that you met for a day? No, you don't. You spend a lot of time getting to know the person to find out what they think about, what they enjoy doing, about their family, and so on. You do this because the person you choose to marry will affect your life in many important ways.

Background information is vital

Your decision to marry a certain person can mean a happy future or an unhappy future. You spend time making your decision. You ask the opinion of people you respect. You gather background information, evaluate that information carefully, then make your decision. It's not something you do lightly.

Selecting a candidate in an election is a similar process. You will face the outcomes of your voting decision in the future. It will certainly affect your life and that of your family. You cannot escape the results of your actions!

- Therefore, to be on the safe side, you should think about many things to help you choose a good candidate. Here are some things for you to consider:
- Check all information to make sure it's correct, e.g. certificates, work experiences, or statements of oaths from trusted officials supporting a candidate's claim
- Do not believe rumours, hearsay, or what the close supporters claim, if you do not see any proof yourself.
- Get another person's views on your candidate, e.g. pastor, university students, clan leaders, women's leaders. Don't just ask the candidate's supporters.
- Don't go blindly for a wantok. Check out all candidates, then decide. A committed and trustworthy candidate may be a better choice than an unreliable wantok!

A voter's guide on qualities to look out for in all candidates

What things do you look for in a candidate? Do you spend some time to think about this? Or do you go for your wantok? Or do you sell your vote for money? Many experienced leaders now agree that the following qualities should be carefully analysed in all candidates so that voters can make informed decisions.

- education
- work experience
- recognised achievements at both the community and national level
- character of the candidate, e.g. is he/she a caring, honest, reliable person
- family responsibilities
- knowledge of development with realistic goals for the country. Does the candidate have a development plan for the electorate? (In the next election, you can use the copy of that plan to judge your MPs performance.)
- candidate's intelligence or 'save'. Does the candidate show a good understanding of important issues? Is the candidate well informed and is he/she able to find out information about relevant issues. Is the candidate able to say, 'I don't know, but I'll find out for you.'

Remember: Do not judge a person on one single matter. Judge him/her on all of the above. Always get background information and prove it to yourself, before you make your decision. Don't be afraid to challenge your candidate. Your future depends on your choice of candidate.



Leadership qualities

Why are we putting so much emphasis on leadership? Because a lot of the problems within a society may be the result of poor leadership. A leader's character, strengths, weaknesses, the way he/she thinks and behaves, and the policies he/she follows, will affect everyone in the community.

Therefore, you should have a clear idea about what to look for when you are choosing a leader.

In the previous chapter, you read about some of the qualities to look for when choosing a leader.

We will now look at some of the problems that may occur if you choose a candidate who does not have leadership qualities. Poor candidates do more harm than good to the electorate.

- they may try to bribe people in the electorate to vote for them
- they may try to use violence to threaten voters and opponents
- they may not properly understand how the political system operates
- they may not be well informed regarding changes to the political system
- they may not know how to get suitable projects approved and implemented within the community
- they may think that development is the same as giving 'handouts'

- they may spend too much time on overseas trips and not enough time in the electorate
- they may not respect the laws of the country

It's part of a voter's responsibility to choose the best man or woman to do the job. If poor candidates are selected, it's because voters have chosen them. The future direction of the nation, is in the hands of the electorate. The choice is yours.

These are some of the things the community should check out in a leader. If you check out these things properly, you will end up selecting the best person to represent you in Parliament. This means you, your community and your country will benefit from your choice. But, if you vote blindly for your wantok, or sell your vote in return for money or other goods, the chances are that you, your community and your country will suffer for the next five years!

If lots of candidates get elected into national parliament through bribery, the wantok system or by threatening voters, our national parliament will be full of people who are not trustworthy, who have no respect for the law and the country as a whole. If this happens, the country will suffer.

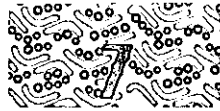
- roads may be run-down
- hospitals and clinics may not have enough trained staff and medicines
- crime may increase
- businesses may not want to invest in the electorate
- new schools may not be opened
- existing schools may not have enough teachers and resources
- people will lose confidence in leaders and the national government system
- public money may be wasted



Some points to consider when casting your vote

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the government system is made up of different parts. All these different organisations do different things, have different rules and procedures and work within their own structures. Therefore, your candidate should have the capacity to understand this large and complex government system. Politics involves decision-making, meetings, report writing, debates and negotiations with a wide range of people, both within government departments, with business people, traditional leaders and overseas representatives.

These things demand high levels of personal organisation, high-level skills in negotiations and dealing with people. Above all, a candidate must consider the needs of the people in the electorate and the country, before his/her own needs. A candidate must show commitment and dedication to the needs of the community. Leaders have a great responsibility to represent the people of Papua New Guinea in the best possible way.



What is development?

Do you know what the word 'development' is all about?
What is 'development'? How do you get it?

Definition

Everyone talks about 'development'; your politicians, the public servants, the university students, councillors, and nearly every person that you meet today. It is on the lips of every hopeful candidate.

But what exactly is 'development'? Are we talking about more money? More roads? More hospitals? More projects? More jobs?

Educators who study Politics and Development in universities all over the world, now agree on this meaning of the word 'development':

- o it is about human beings first, not roads, money, trees or cars
- o it is about improving people's well-being and welfare
- o it is about helping to provide better housing, food, water, medicine, etc.

Therefore, when you talk of 'development', you should keep the above meanings of development in mind. This will help you better understand this concept.

Goods and services, projects and other government activities such as new roads, water supplies and aid posts that are used to improve the people's well-being are the things we call 'development'.

Development: Where do you start?

Before you talk of dinghies, trucks, plantations and other things, development plans must firstly meet the basic needs of life. These include:

- adequate health facilities within easy walking distance of the community
- an adequate balanced diet containing all the food groups
- suitable housing for all members of the family
- clean water supply within easy walking distance of the community
- clean safe toilet facilities
- adequate education facilities for the whole community

Development should begin by providing these things first. Then, other large projects, ideas and plans can be considered.

Why these things first?

Because people need these things in order to improve their knowledge levels, health levels and be happy in their lives. Unhappy, hungry or unhealthy people cannot work in their gardens, shops, go fishing or work on plantations. Therefore, they cannot make their living a satisfying one. You've only to look at a hungry, sick baby to understand how important these basic needs are.

Community participation

Just as people and politics go together, development and people go together. All developmental projects must involve the people from the area.

- o people must be informed about the developmental plan and agree to it
- o people must take part in the planning process
- o the people's opinions must be included in the plan
- o people in the community should be part of the management team
- o people have a right to be informed of both positive and negative effects of the project

Projects that involve the people from the beginning of the project, will probably be more successful than the ones that push the community aside. So, for a project to be successful, the technical experts need to work together with the people from the community. The technical experts need to listen to the people and the people need to listen to the technical experts. The community needs to have realistic expectations about the development plan. By people working together, the project stands a good chance of benefiting the community and the nation. Community participation means that the communities are taking part in the decision-making process.

Lack of community participation

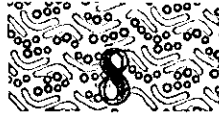
If the whole community is not involved in a project, then there will be problems. If the project benefits only a few people it will cause lots of jealousies. Ill-feelings and jealousies by those who think they are left out can lead to fights, damage to property, non-cooperation, etc. Real development will not take place because the community will be divided. Also future generations may suffer if a few greedy people are allowed to support a project that does not consider future resources. Therefore, your candidate should support projects that will involve the whole community and benefit everyone, both now and in the future. You can see that your candidate needs to be a wise and caring person. You need to

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT
GENERAL ELECTION

IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE
THE SYSTEM, THERE IS ONLY ONE
WAY TO STICK YOUR OPINION.
**THROUGH THE
BALLOT BOX**



have a clear understanding of your candidate's policies. If the policy is written down you will have a clearer picture of what your candidate wants to achieve.



The electoral system in Papua New Guinea

In Democratic countries, one thing that must happen regularly is the general elections. In our country, which is a democratic country, we hold general elections every five years. For example, one in June of 1992 and another one in June 1997, June 2002, June 2007, etc.

What is a general election?

- o symbol of a democratic country
- o regular activity in which the whole nation participates
- o it is a way of selecting national parliamentary representatives by the people
- o it is a way of selecting local level government representatives
- o citizens over the age of 18 years can take part

What is an electoral system?

Many things make up our electoral system. The electoral system refers to the people, laws and regulations, and the organisations related to electing representatives to our National Parliament and local level governments. These include:

- o the Constitution, laws, regulations and rules that deal with anything concerning elections
- o the organisation that looks after elections, the Electoral Commission
- o the Electoral Commissioner and his/her staff

- the planning, preparation, holding and declaring of general elections
- the education of the people about elections
- drawing of electoral boundaries
- Ombudsman Commission

Voters must understand the electoral system so that they can make good decisions during elections.

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is a constitutional office. This means that the office and its top job are created by our Constitution. Therefore, it is not easy for the government to abolish this office.

Because it is a constitutional office, all its work is clearly stated in the Constitution. Government has no power to direct the Electoral Commission, as it can with other government departments. The Electoral Commissioner, the top officer in the organisation, holds a constitutional office. He/she works independently from the government.

The work of the Commission

It is the only organisation allowed by the Constitution to conduct government elections, whether they be for national, provincial, or local level governments.

The Commission also draws up the electorates' boundaries. Each electorate should have approximately 30 000–45 000 people.

The Commission's head office is located at Boroko in the National Capital District. It also has regional and provincial offices, to attend to all matters relating to its constitutional role.

How do you use the Electoral Commission?

The Electoral Commission is there for you to use regarding any electoral matter. You may ask them for information about electoral boundaries, voters' names on the Electoral Roll of your electorate, candidates bribing voters, candidates threatening voters, and any other matter concerning elections or the Commission itself.

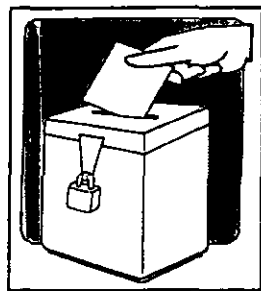
When you use them, they help you to understand the system better.

If you understand the system better, you can educate others, too.

People who understand the system better, can contribute to the aim of the elections, which is to elect good quality people who can provide leadership in government at national, provincial and local government levels.

If voters cooperate with the Electoral Commission, then things such as bribery and election violence can be reduced. These things may prevent voters from selecting the best person to represent them. This can result in poor leaders getting into office and the outcome of this can create major problems in the electorate, e.g. medical supplies may be in short supply, schools may close down, roads are not maintained properly, etc.

Remember: Use the Electoral Commissions officers to get information, report problems, check the Electoral Roll, check the electoral boundaries, etc. Use the Electoral Commission to help you help the nation.



Ballot box



The election procedures

In this section, we will look at the election procedures in Papua New Guinea. If you know the procedures well, it will help you make wise decisions so that you can select the best candidates belonging to strong political parties. Your vote will affect your future and that of your family. As we learned earlier, the election procedures are part of the political system of the country. Therefore, if you are familiar with the system, you can participate in a way that will help you, your family, your community and the country.

The election procedures consist of: confirming the electoral boundaries; registration of voters; putting together the Electoral Roll; awareness exercises; polling; counting and declaring of winners.

Confirming the electoral boundaries

Before any general election can proceed, the electoral boundaries must be made clear by the Electoral Commission. The Commission may draw up new boundaries or just confirm the existing ones. Boundaries are affected by the size of the electorate's population. This means, there should be about 30 000–45 000 people in one electorate.

Registration of voters

To vote you must be 18 years of age or older. You must make sure you register your name in the Electoral Roll of your electorate, e.g. the Maprik open electorate. You should have

lived in that electorate for the last six months or more. You can nominate to stand as a candidate for the electorate if you were born there, or if you have lived there for the last five years. Your chance to register expires when the Governor-General issues a document called the 'writ'. This writ is usually issued by the end of March in the year of a general election. Therefore, you must register your name before the issue of the writ. If you are late, you will NOT be registered and this can stop you from voting.

Putting together the Electoral Roll

After everyone has registered, the officers of the Electoral Commission will put together all the names of the registered voters from the same electorate in a single book called the Electoral Roll. You should check this Electoral Roll before the Governor-General issues the writ.

Other points about the Electoral Roll

- o You must have a witness to say that you are from the area before you can enrol. If that witness lies, a fine of K400 can be charged.
- o You are allowed to check the Electoral Roll of your electorate before the writ is issued. This is your last opportunity to make sure your name is on the Roll and that the other names on the Roll are correct.
- o The electoral officers will ask you for some information during registration. You must provide this information in order to register. Everyone who registers has to provide this information, so you should not feel worried about doing this.
- o There may be some names that are on the Electoral Roll that you do not agree with. You are allowed by law to object to this through the electoral officers. Objections must be made on special forms provided by the electoral officers. K4 must be deposited for any single objection,

and if found untrue, this money will not be refunded. Objection forms must be made to the Returning Officers in your province. Also, objections must be done before the writ is issued, otherwise it will be too late to do anything about it.

- Returning Officers can provide the answers to the objections, either orally or in writing.

What does this information mean to you?

If you do not agree with the way the electoral boundary is made, you can speak to the electoral officers and raise your objections. Where possible, people of the same culture/language/district group should be in the same area. You should check the Electoral Roll to make sure all the people in your village are on the Roll. Also, check for any outside people or people who do not exist! Report these matters to the officers so they can stop cheating in the elections.

Election awareness exercises

Educational programmes by the Commission have been designed to help the voters understand the election procedures. Informed voters can help to educate others. Youth groups, community groups, church groups, etc can all help the Commission to bring awareness to the people, especially before the elections begin. Awareness is important for all voters.

Polling

This is the period of actual voting. Papua New Guinea has a fourteen day voting system. Voting locations called 'polling booths' are set up and operated by officials. Voting should start at 8.00 a.m. and finish at 6.00 p.m. on each day of voting. You will vote for **three** representatives; your national parliament **open** representative, your national parliament

provincial representative and your local government council ward. The provincial government members will be made up of your local government presidents. If your area is having law and order problems, voting should not start without the presence of the police or the army.

Ballot papers and voting

There are two main types of ballot papers, one for each of the national parliament representatives and the other for the local level government representatives. For the national parliament representatives, you will use two different ballot papers; one for the provincial seat representative and the other for open seat representative.

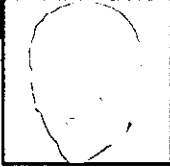



INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Organic Law on National Elections
BALLOT-PAPER
NAMATANAI OPEN ELECTORATE
GENERAL ELECTION 1992
NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

Directions:—

1. Mark your vote on this ballot paper by placing an "X" in the square opposite the name of the candidate whom you wish to vote.
2. Do not put more than one "X" on this paper.
3. Do not put any other mark on this paper.

Wei Long Mekim Mak:—

1. Makim vot bilong yu long dispela pepa wantaim "X" in-wait long Dida bolis ananit long huasit yu laik givim vote long an.
2. Nokan mekim planti "X" long dispela pepa.
3. Nokan wotim arapela kain mak long dispela pepa, mekim "X" taosol.

<p>1</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>JULIUS CHAN</small> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>JULIUS CHAN</p> <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>2</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <small>RABBE L. NAMALIU</small> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>ESEKIA TOMON</p> <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>
--	--

Specimen ballot paper for an open electorate seat used in the 1992 general election

INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Organic Law on National Elections

BALLOT-PAPER

NEW IRELAND PROVINCIAL
ELECTORATE

GENERAL ELECTION 1992







NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

Directions:—

1. Mark your vote on this ballot paper by placing an 'X' in the square opposite the name of the candidate whom you wish to vote.
2. Do not put more than one 'X' on this paper.
3. Do not put any other mark on this paper.

Wei Long Makim Mas:—

1. Makim vot blong yu long dispela pepe wantaim 'X' insait long liklik boks anenit long husait yu laik givim vote long an.
2. Noken makim planti 'X' long dispela pepe.
3. Noken wokim anepela kain mak long dispela pepe, masim 'X' isait.

1			JULIUS CHAN	<input type="checkbox"/>
	PAUL TOHIAN			<input type="checkbox"/>
2			RABBIE L. NAMALIU	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MICHAEL SINGAN			<input type="checkbox"/>
3			INDEPENDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MISKUS MARALEU			<input type="checkbox"/>
4			INDEPENDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>
	ILIAS KASIKIT			<input type="checkbox"/>

Specimen ballot paper for a provincial seat used in the 1992 general election

For your local level government representative, you will use a separate ballot paper.

If you make a mistake with a ballot paper, ask for a new one. **DO NOT** put in the ballot paper with mistakes on it because this can confuse counting officials and your ballot paper may not be accepted. After you have filled in all the details on the ballot papers, fold them neatly and put them in the box. If you are not sure, always ask the officials who

will be present at the booth. It is part of their job to give you correct information. For people who cannot read and write, officials are there to help them. But another witness can make sure the ballot paper is marked according to the wishes of the illiterate voter.

Counting

This is done at the district or provincial headquarters. There must be a police presence at all times during counting. The returning officer, is the person in charge of counting, and all candidates and supporters have to abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the returning officer. There should be a stand-by generator or coleman lamp to use if the power goes off! Previously, some candidates have attempted to cheat in the dark. Party leaders and scrutineers should talk to each other to avoid suspicion, misunderstandings and violence amongst their supporters, during the counting.

Declaration of winners

The last part of the election procedure is to declare the winner in an electorate. The power to do this is with the Returning Officer for that electorate and no one else. Returning Officers should declare a winner only after all ballot papers have been counted.

What does all this mean to you?

If you understand the election procedures, you can help to educate others in the community. This will help to ensure that everyone can vote in a correct and fair manner. If there is cooperation between the party officials, the police/army and the electoral officials, then problems such as bribing and violent behaviour should not occur. Everyone has the right to vote in a secret way. However, people are encouraged to ask for help if they wish.

Effects of the reformed government system on the election procedures

What are some of the effects of the reformed system of provincial government?

- Your provincial government assembly will be made up of your national parliament open members, your provincial MPs from the province, and the presidents of the local government council. The person elected to the provincial seat, will normally be elected as Governor of the Provincial Government Assembly. Other members of the Provincial Assembly will be made up of persons appointed by the Governor, e.g. one woman representative and up to three other representatives.
- Your local level government will be represented in the provincial assembly by the council presidents and by members representing the local wards. In the past, council presidents were elected in the council chambers by councillors themselves. Now, they will be elected by the people.

Systems of voting

In Papua New Guinea, we select our candidates by the 'first past the post' system'. In this system you select only one candidate for each seat. You are not allowed to state your second and third choices. The candidate who gets the highest number of votes, wins the election, even though the number of votes may be relatively small.

The problem with this system is that the winner does NOT truly represent the electorate because he/she may have won with only a small number of votes. For example, in an electorate of 34 000 voters, 15 candidates contest. The winning candidate might receive only 5000 votes! Therefore, the new MP may feel he/she only represents those 5000 people. But what about the remaining 29 000 people? The new MP is

not truly representative of all the people in the electorate. To be called truly representative, an MP should receive over half the number of total votes cast. Some politicians think that this system limits or denies the democratic rights of voters because it forces people to select only one candidate.

Another system of voting which was used in Papua New Guinea is called the 'optional preferential system'. This system was used in PNG before independence. In this system, voters vote for more than one person, in order of their choice. Their first choice gets first vote; second gets second choice and third gets third choice and so on. In this way, the second and third choices also count towards the vote. The winner wins by a 'popular vote'. This means the winning candidate gets over half of the total votes cast. In our previous example we saw an electorate with a population of 34 000 voters being won by a candidate winning with just 5000 votes. In the 'optional preferential system', a candidate must get over 17 001 votes.

Some leaders and educators think that the 'optional preferential system' is more democratic than the 'first past the post system' because the most popular candidate supported by the majority gets elected.

Summary

In the 'first past the post system', any candidate who polls more votes than all the rest of the candidates can win, regardless of how representative the vote is. Using this system, candidates with as little as 6% of the popular vote have been elected to parliament.

In the 'optional preferential system' the winning candidate has to poll more than half of the votes cast. In this way, he becomes a member by a majority vote.



Common election offences

It is against the law to interfere with voting procedures. People convicted of these offences may find themselves in prison. If you accept a bribe you are just as guilty as the person giving you the bribe.

Election offences can be serious enough to bring big social problems amongst clans, villages and tribes after the elections, e.g. a tribal fight might occur between villages after the elections. We all need to be aware of these election offences and inform others so we can try to prevent them from happening. Election offences can affect us all.

The important thing for you to understand now is that, election offences do affect you, but mostly indirectly. For example, if you accept a bribe to vote for a candidate, he/she may behave in a similar way when in parliament. He/she may misuse government money that might have been used for developing your area.

This means you, your family and your community suffer indirectly, as a result of you and many others selling your votes for money! You may have collected K20.00 as the bribe, but the suffering you go through if the aid post and the school are closed will be much larger and longer lasting.

We all have a responsibility to stop these offences occurring. If others commit these offences, it will still affect everyone. Therefore, everyone should know of the consequences and avoid them.

Who commits election offences?

The answer is, anyone can commit election offences.

- o the electoral officials
- o the police
- o army
- o other government officers working in the election area
- o the business community
- o clan and village leaders
- o women leaders
- o candidates
- o you the voter

Following, are some examples of Electoral election offences.

False electoral claims

False electoral claims can occur when voters who do not belong to an electorate falsely claim that they are from that area, and cast their votes in that electorate. Some candidates deliberately bring people from outside areas to vote for them. The penalty for this offence is a prison term of seven years.

If you are being transported around by candidates to vote outside your own area, they are using you to try and gain an unfair advantage. They have no respect for you as a person, and they have no respect for the laws of this country. Yet they call themselves leaders! Do you trust them?

If they do not respect you and the laws of the country now, they certainly won't respect you when they are powerful people in parliament. Why help candidates who won't help you, later?

Double voting

Another electoral offence is double voting. Some voters manage to rub off the ink from their thumb and vote for a second time. If caught doing this, you can be jailed for two years. By committing these offences voters are trying to corrupt the government system. Corrupt voters, are partly responsible for what may happen later in our national political system. There is a saying that, 'corruption breeds corruption'.

Bribery

Bribery is another serious election offence. Bribing occurs when valuables such as money, pigs, etc. are given to a voter, in return for the voter voting for the candidate. The penalty for this crime is a fine of K400 or a prison term of one year.

The question you, as a responsible and concerned person, should be asking yourself and the other voters is, 'Where is all this money coming from?' If someone is lending that money to a candidate, surely they will want it back with a big profit! And that may be one reason why some MPs are pressured into using public money to repay debts! And this is where corruption starts. You are involved from the start!

In the end, you and other ordinary people will suffer, because if candidates get voted in through bribery, the whole system will soon be full of corrupt people! If that happens, the whole country will suffer. Development will not take place and everything may come to a full-stop.

Undue Influence

This offence is usually committed by supporters, through the use of excessive force, intimidation and threats to voters. The penalty for this offence is a K400 fine or a prison term of one

year. This practice can result in creating a lot of problems in the community, e.g. supporters of candidates may start a fight. This may develop into major tribal warfare. Such a major problem in the community will certainly interfere with development. People who live in fear are unable to work in their gardens, their coffee or oil palm plots. Children will be unable to complete their education and businesses may close down and move somewhere else.

If people allow intimidation and threats to become part of the election process, instability will occur nationwide. That will be very dangerous for the country. Other nations in the world have already experienced instability as a result of illegal election procedures being used, and they are still suffering.

Consequences of electoral offences

Court cases after elections are the result of illegal practices by candidates and their supporters during elections. You and your community should realise that court cases are costing you, the taxpayer, thousands of kina. This government money is your money. When it is spent on court cases and investigations, then your money, meant for community development, is wasted. In a previous election, a successful candidate who was found to be involved in election offences lost his seat. He was found guilty by the court, of offering bribes to voters, and was jailed. Fresh elections were held in that area.

If the Court sends your sitting MP to prison, you will be without a representative in parliament, until new elections are held. You can miss out on many things as a result of this. In fact, development can come to a stop in your area. This has already happened to several national MPs, when the Courts have jailed them. This has resulted in those electorates going without representation in parliament over the jail term!

Court cases also lead to a change of MPs. When there is a change of leadership in your electorate, the progress of development gets affected. New MPs may disagree with the past projects and switch money to new projects. Or the leadership style of the new leader may differ from the previous one. For example, the new leader might prefer to spend his development funds on collective projects such as road maintenance, aid posts and water supplies, whereas the former MP had a hand-out policy. Also, a change in leadership can cause delays in implementing new projects. And again, all of these things will affect you, the voter.

Will you commit election offences?

Most people are worried about election related offences. Everyone should make an effort to stop people from committing these offences. Are you a responsible person in your community? If you see that election offences are being committed can you do something about it? Can you inform the people about what is happening? The election process is a collective activity. Therefore, everyone who votes needs to be informed with the facts.

Responsible leadership

A responsible leader will not commit election offences or, allow his/her supporters to commit offences. A responsible leader will respect the laws of the country, even if he/she is losing the elections. A responsible leader will understand the consequences of election offences. Therefore, he/she will not encourage supporters to commit election offences because he/she doesn't want them to suffer in the future.

Leaders who are not responsible

Leaders who are not responsible, may encourage you and others to commit election offences, so they can win! But that

leader does not care about your future! Should you give him/her your support?

1997 Nasional Election Campaign





Your future depends on your vote

Now we will look at some of the things that can happen in the future, as a direct result of your vote.

The candidate you select must show strong leadership qualities. Elected candidates who show no loyalty to a political party, may move from one party to another causing a lot of uncertainty, especially in government. This means that some government leaders, may be tempted to use tax payers' money to keep these MPs on the government side. This could then result in money being taken away from such things as village projects, schools and hospitals. Grass roots people will suffer because money will be diverted for other uses. Candidates need to let the electorate know what their policies are and what political party they support.

Another problem caused by elected candidates jumping from one party to another is the amount of time that gets wasted. Government leaders waste their time talking, making promises and agreements in trying to keep MPs with them. As a result, the real business of government doesn't get done.

Instability can be caused if elected candidates move around from party to party, looking for better deals for themselves, and not their people! A change of government through votes of no-confidence results in the peoples' money and time being wasted. And real development comes to a stop.

What does all these mean? Voters should vote for a suitable candidate who belongs to a political party with policies they

support. The party is as important as the candidate. A candidate who does not belong to a strong political party may cause instability. This can result in you and your community suffering.

Policies

You should pressure your candidates to clearly outline their election policies. These policies can then become the guide for you to judge your candidate. Also, you can use a winning candidate's election policies to measure an MP's job performance over the next five years. At present, few politicians provide development plans. Therefore it's difficult to know what their plans are. All candidates should show the people their development plans for the electorate.

These are plans and programmes that a candidate has in order to develop the electorate. This plan should cover the whole five years that the candidate will be in office. Voters have a right to be properly informed about these policies. Verbal or *toktok long maus tasol* is not good enough. If the plan is written down, you can study it and compare it with others to see which one you like best.

You can keep this written developmental plan and use it to check your MP's work. If he/she is not doing what the plan states, you have every right to question him/her about it.

Some suggested development policy areas

Candidates should state their policies on these and other matters. Here are a few examples.

- o how to create employment
- o how to fight corruption by leaders
- o how to support 'grass roots' projects
- o how to improve education
- o how to increase health facilities

- how to increase tourism
- the role of churches & NGO's
- mining and forestry policies — these activities have caused a lot of social and environmental damage in some areas, but have also been responsible for bringing much needed development to the area and the other parts of the country. Do you want to stop mining and forestry in your area? Do you accept some of the problems that come with mining and forestry and still want to go ahead with it? Ask candidates to clearly state their policies on these matters.
- down-stream processing — this is a term that describes the way companies set up factories to make a finished product from the raw material. This means that companies should not sell things in a raw form but only in manufactured forms. For example, in the forestry business, if we apply this idea, we will see that companies make tables, furniture, etc from raw logs. All these activities happen in the country and we will not export raw logs any more. Fisheries and agriculture may also benefit from this process. Using this process, more jobs can be created. More jobs may help to reduce crime. However, foreign investors who disagree with this policy may prefer NOT to come to Papua New Guinea and that will affect us, too.

Lack of policies

You have seen what can happen if a candidate wins and has no strong party support. He/she usually becomes a big problem in the National Parliament!

Now we will look at the effects of candidates who do not have clear developmental policies. This is one way of helping you to choose a suitable candidate. Candidates with no developmental plans may go around making false promises to you.

These candidates may:

- o show no vision for development in your area
- o develop a hand-out mentality in the electorate by 'giving' cars, trucks, dinghies and money to individuals instead of using the funds on community projects such as: cocoa, coffee or oil palm projects; community schools; aid posts; and other community projects
- o practise too much of the wantok system
- o try to punish people who did not vote for him/her by not visiting them, not assisting them with genuine community projects, and even stopping services from going into the area
- o use EDF (electoral development funds) money to buy off leaders and other important people in the area
- o seem to give more time to foreign friends than their own people
- o spend more time overseas than in the electorate
- o make too many investments overseas

Voters have a right to expect a lot from their elected leaders. Leaders have been elected to serve the people, not themselves. Being a good leader is not easy. Look around you and observe how your leaders perform. When it's your turn to vote, choose wisely.

You can make a difference

The information in this book is useful for anyone taking part in the election process. Voters need information before they cast their votes. This book can also serve as a useful resource book for adult training courses and other courses involving leadership, government and development. Everyone can help to educate the voters so that they can make wise choices. Can you make a difference?



Your vote will affect you, your family and others in the community for at least the next five years. **Vote for the Future** is a guide for citizens of Papua New Guinea to help you make informed decisions during an election process, and understand why voting at elections is important. It describes how you, the voter, can become involved in the process of government and the democratic process of decision making, so that you can take part in the process of nation building.

Yauka Aluambo Liria comes from the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. He worked for twelve years in the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, before resigning his commission as captain in 1993. He completed his degree course in public administration at the University of Papua New Guinea, and is presently working with the Office of the Prime Minister.

Cover illustration by John Siune



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS