New Law on Informal Economy could be a Game Changer

By BUSA JEREMIAH WENEGO


The report contains a set of recommendations and the proposed Bill that would be presented to the government for its consideration and endorsement sometime in the year.

If passed the Bill may well be the game changer to transform PNG’s socio-economic landscape. Particularly if the informal economy is seen as a “wealth distributive mechanism” it could allow money generated in big impact projects such as the PNG LNG, to be transferred to the majority of the populous who are its beneficiaries.

Furthermore, if provided the right environment it could unleash entrepreneurship and innovation that is abundant among many Papua New Guineans but lethargic due to lack of support. One should only take a bus ride to the infamous Gordon Market or travel up into the kakaruk markets in Goroka or elsewhere to witness the vibe of energy and salesmanship at play.

This is what the law aims to nurture but in compliance with appropriate minimum standards to protect consumer welfare and generate confidence.

So far the government has failed miserably in this area although it has introduced a policy and law, to address issues affecting the informal economy in PNG.

The informal sector law in its current form does not address the issue of enforcement. This means that enforcement agencies like the Department of Community Development & Religion have no regard to the administrative set-up of certain provinces like NCDC.

By allowing provinces to have the “freedom to make necessary amendments to the modal law” to suit their unique situation, it is hoped that they will effectively control negative aspects and promote the positive side of their own informal economy.

This is where the Department to its credit has already embarked on a restructure (with no progress as yet) that will see a new section dedicated to coordinating the implementation of the policy and the law.

Yet questions are being asked if the growth of the informal economy is “controlled” to minimize its harmful effects.

The informal sector law in its current form in fact advocates for this. This is contrary to the views that it “gave fire” to the widespread chaos that is unfortunately the hallmark of PNG’s informal economy.

The draft report to the credit of the CLRC has reinforced this idea with penalties raised depending on the severity of the offence which is determined by taking into consideration an informal economic business activity’s impact on the environment, hygiene, health, safety and the nature of the items sold whether it is addictive and other factors.

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Your Thoughts...  
What is your New Year’s resolution?...

By Esther Bralyn Wani

LITERACY is not just about reading and writing in English. It is more than that, literacy provides more than reading and writing. It becomes the source of all knowledge once a person knows how to read and write.

Even though, a child or an adult may get an education and they can know the basics of reading and writing, it all depends entirely on the person because that does not guarantee them knowing everything. If the person reads more on everything and anything, they will pick up more than what they have been taught.

An educationist, Mesia Nouau said, “Literacy is the base of all knowledge. It will build positive development to contribute to the country. It is important to increase the rate of literacy in the country.”

Mr. Nouau who is a teacher by profession said the literacy rate is not the same anymore in the 1950s and 70s. He said today’s literacy has dropped by 1% which shows that PNG’s knowledge base is around 58%.

He said they could charge innocent men and women just because they do not know how to write or read.

Understanding things when reading them builds the rate of knowledge that one consumes. The introduction of new technology comes with a price, it has its disadvantage and advantages when using it with responsibility it is very helpful but it can be harmful too.

Minister for Research Science and Technology, Malakai Tabar, mentioned the rate of literacy decreasing in the Buk2Buk Seminar at the University of Papua New Guinea.

Minister Tabar said, “It is time to go back to the books now with the introduction of technology, students are using tablets or phones to take shots of notes and just leave it there without even reading it.”

He said students can start reading books and get a lot of information they need instead of depending on their phones which can be very distracting.

HIV/AIDS kills! Stick to one partner...
Impressions of a visitor

By Dominic Roche from India

OUR aircraft landed at Port Moresby at a quarter to six in the morning on the 1st November, 2015.

Now nearly forty days later in a country which has just celebrated its 40 years of independence recently, especially after a whirlwind tour of Wewak and (Mount Hagen) Eastern Highlands Provinces, the breath-taking beauty of this country is really wholly new.

The first thing that struck me was the greenery and the flowers! Flowers in the gardens, flowers in the hedges and wild and exotic flowers of a wide range of bold hues around the countryside and mountains!

Barring few found in the gardens, most of the flowers I had the good fortune to drink in the beauty of, for the first time in my life!

That brought me to think of our National Capital—hot and sultry; with its lawns and hedges dry and fading away; while the people themselves in their colourful attire move up to its right-hand side of the road, one tends to think that the city has seen better days!

The Holy Bible being placed in the Parliament and the resolution that all laws promulgated henceforth shall be in conformity to the Holy Bible...things that do not cease to amaze me!

The robust response struck by the Church to the call to chip in with funds and plans to meet the threat of the life-crippeling drought and following it up with the countries committing themselves to help mitigate the impact—and the major denominations of the various churches coming under a single banner for facing such practical realities as one united front augur well for the future.

"The Country Prays for Rain..." the newspapers flashed boldly the other day.

I would like to join the praying millions and firmly believe that the time is just round the corner when all those sincere prayers going up will come down in the form of welcome showers restoring the greens and colours of the country.

Thus I go back to India with pleasant memories of having lived in a fascinating country although for a short time, rich in its natural beauty—its mountains, rivers and seas and its simple and kind-hearted people.

A glance through the newspapers reveals the effort being taken; ports, airports being inaugurated; projects put in place in various sectors for development of the country and its rich natural resources with a call to all to join hands for a bright tomorrow.

Let the words of Confucius ring true for this country and its people: "The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones."
PM calls for mature debate

PRIME Minister Peter O’Neill has expressed disgust and disappointment at the way in which the Opposition has sought to drag politics to a new low level over Christmas.

“I had hoped that in 2016 the nation would have a mature and responsible Opposition, but with the way Mr (Don) Polye has sought to manage his affairs in this last week of the year I expect that the way we will be disappointed.”

“The people of Papua New Guinea are sick and tired of the cheap and personal gutter politics we have seen from the Opposition Leader in this term of Parliament.”

Papua New Guineans want debate on policy on substantive issues that matter to the lives of the men, women and children of our nation.”

“The paranoia the current and previous opposition leader has displayed is not the standard that is needed in this country,” said Mr O’Neill.

The Prime Minister made these comments after Mr Polye made a series of unsubstantiated claims in a press release content over Christmas.

“The prime minister misleads media with the expectation that some journalists will not fact-check the facts.”

“Polye’s latest misleading claims related to land - because he knows there is no more emotive issue in our nation than land ownership.”

“His further continues to make unsubstantiated claims of conspiracies between government agencies that he often claims to be doing with undermining opposition.”

“I can assure the media and people who received these latest Opposition statements that there is no truth to his claims.”

“I urge all journalists to fully investigate the claims made by Polye, which is the independent media of our nation, and not simply publish unsubstantiated drivel.”

Prime Minister Peter O'Neill

PM O’Neill said as the nation prepares for elections in 2017, the level of public debate has to mature and rise to levels for the general elections in 2017.

“The 2017 elections will be the most important in the history of Papua New Guinea, and we need the people of our nation to hear debate on the serious issues of the economy, climate change, education, health, infrastructure and law and order.”

Meanwhile Mr Polye said Mr O’Neill’s claim that the Opposition is telling lies is something ‘evasive and defective of his predatory behaviour.’

Mr Polye has lashed out at the ‘media darling Prime Minister’ for the first time in criticizing the media, which is the government’s fourth arm.

He denied telling lies to the media in his statements, saying to his ‘fellow highlander Prime Minister’ that the truth hurts.

Polye, who has been at the forefront debating on many government policies and decisions, said he was cautious of public feedback and with this in mind he strives to tell people nothing but the truth and facts about national issues.”

Polye said it is his duty to educate Papua New Guineans to prepare themselves for the general elections in 2017.

Mr Polye has taken Mr O’Neill to task over the land in Port Moresby’s Boroko area to clear his name, saying his involvement amounts to ‘abuse of office for personal gain’.

He reiterated that the PM was alleged to have been pestering the PNG Power Limited board to sell it cheaply without the proper tendering and procurement process.

Polye said he doubted whether the Prime Minister was genuine when he called for constructive debates as the writing was on the wall that the PM sabotaged the Opposition’s budget debate.

He has urged the Prime Minister not to contradict himself.

“Our people, media, investors, donors and other development partners are the Opposition’s best judges,” he said.

“I don’t make remarks which are below my belt against the Prime Minister nor any other MPs in government as I encourage constructive debates.”

With the guide of our Opposition’s alternative government policy Skill-Industry Development & Control Act 2004.

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