

Govt helping women

BY GORETHY KENNETH

THE Government's interventions are slowly having a big impact on women's lives all over Papua New Guinea, says Linda Babao, wife of Prime Minister Peter O'Neill.

This includes the Government's key policies such as free education, free basic health care, stronger law and order, and better infrastructure which now are having significant impact on the well being of women, she said.

She said the Government's focus on infrastructure such as roads was now starting to assist women to get to medical facilities, schools and markets to sell their produce instead of tracking for hours through rough terrain.

She was speaking at the closing ceremony of the 2015 PNG Women's Forum held in Port Moresby for three days.

The forum was co-hosted by the US government through the US embassy in Port Moresby and the National Government through the Department of Religion, Youth and Community Development.

"I am so humbled to be in the company of so many courageous and powerful women and strong partners who continue to advocate women's issues. Together we continue to promote gender equality and empowerment of our women population," Ms Babao said.

"Thankfully, we have a Government that is listening."

"Our Government has taken major strides in legislation that are providing avenues to advancing the well being of our women and girls, such as the recent amendments of the criminal code, the family protection bill and legislation to combat human trafficking."

"Our leaders know that 50 per cent of the population, or votes, as some may see it, are women, we can no longer be ignored."



PARTICIPANTS of the three-day PNG Women's Forum held at the Crowne Plaza in Port Moresby with over 500 participants

Women must speak with one voice

WOMEN need to continue to partner with one voice and one goal to achieve outstanding outcomes in every society, says Linda Babao, wife of Prime Minister Peter O'Neill.

She said women need to understand that gender equality is not about one individual but about us all and future generations.

Ms Babao said this when closing the three-day 2015 PNG Women's Forum this week, which was attended by more than 500 women leaders and students in Port Moresby. "Papua New Guinea is a young nation

"Women need to continue partner with one voice."

Linda Babao
Port Moresby

and we must be proud of our achievements in our short history," she said.

"We have come from a traditional society with very strong cultural beliefs and practices to a vibrant modern country finding its place

in the changing global community. And this is all happening in one generation.

"Our girls are taking their places in all levels of our society, as leaders in our country, as captains of airlines, as doctors in hospitals, as judges in courts and the list goes on.

"Many of our mothers did not dare to dream of such responsibilities in our society. We are changing our society, our country and our world.

"As we continue to speak with one voice as sisters and as mothers, people listen to us. Partnering our

Government in their initiatives is important in bridging the gender inequality."

Ms Babao said she believed that in order to succeed in gender equality, women must also take full ownership of their responsibilities. Women needed to understand that gender equality was not about one individual but about women and future generations.

Throughout the forum I have heard many distinguished speakers and panelists, speak about how unsupportive women were throughout their careers in comparison to men.

Taylor eyes lasting legacy

BY GORETHY KENNETH

THE first woman secretary-general of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Dame Meg Taylor wants to leave a legacy and a successful place especially for young women in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific.

In her concluding remarks at the 2015 PNG Women's Forum, Dame Meg, who was a panel participant on a discussion on partnering for mentoring and leadership development, encouraged mutually beneficial mentoring relationships among women and partnerships to develop the next generation of women leaders, gave this message:

"What do I want to be sure that when I have left, I leave a legacy and a place for those coming after me to succeed, especially our young women in Papua New Guinea and in the Pacific?" she said

"And how are we going to do that? We are going to explore the discussion to the mentoring power, very important for those of us, older generation are making sure that the young ones that are coming through, have the confidence, the ability, the capacity and the passion to succeed for our country."

Apart from her political career, Dame Meg spoke about other top women leaders who made an impact in her life, in the likes of World Bank boss Christine Lagarde, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Eleanor Roosevelt.

She also spoke so highly of her father and mother whom she said was a pioneer in everything she did.

"My values are made of gospels... Have I made mistakes, have I not always adhere to them, gospels have been fundamental in my life, but I embrace and respect hard work and discipline and also responsibility for family, community and to be accountable for what you do, this is where it's really lacking for many societies."

The bottom line The largest natural bridge on Earth was virtually unknown to the rest of the world, until it was observed on Google Earth.

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