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Papua New Guinea Business Advocacy Network Unveiling its First Steering Committee

The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) is working with business leaders from a diverse background to advocate for regulatory reforms that promote women's participation in the economy by sharing its proven Women's Business Agenda (WBA) in PNG. CIPE's program supported some 60 business and civil society leaders in uniting to form what is now the Papua New Guinea Business Advocacy Network (PNG BAN).

The PNG BAN is announcing its first Steering Committee, the leading body that will oversee efforts to develop a WBA in PNG. Seven members were voted in from a pool of 10 nominees to assume a leadership role for the PNG BAN. These women represent a variety of organizations, including the tech sector and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well the youth and disabilities communities. The common goals of these members in the BAN WBA process is to enhance the opportunities available for women in business and provide a more inclusive representation of their economic interests through advocacy.

The individuals selected to serve on the Steering Committee were: Susil Nelson Kongoi, serving as Chairperson; Jacqueline Boga Garoau, serving as Deputy Chairperson; Akae Beach, Treasurer; Bronwyn Kili, Secretary; Dianne Aikung; Luania Temu; and Priscilla Kevin.

"The areas I'm interested in advocating for are removing barriers for women's participations in decision-making, having women represented at the highest levels," Susil Nelson Kongoi shared on a recent Zoom call with the newly elected Steering Committee. Bronwyn Kili said she is "passionate about ensuring women and youth are included in discussions about development and sustainability," while Jacqueline Boga Garoau said, "it is important that people with disabilities have a voice at the decision-making level no matter what sector they work in."

With this leadership in place, the PNG BAN will begin desk research and hold consultations with private sector stakeholders on priority policies that bolster women's economic engagement. A draft list of policy recommendations was generated during the November 2019 PNG Women's Forum, a US Embassy event. Then local businesswomen, activists, and other private sector stakeholders in PNG convened in February 2020 to build a coalition to develop a WBA, a document containing research on barriers to women's participation in commerce and a set of policy recommendations. The PNG BAN anticipates that the WBA will be released in first quarter of 2021.

The PNG BAN is supported by CIPE, a U.S. Chamber of Commerce affiliate, and this project is funded through the generous support of the United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. A key priority in its programmatic strategy, CIPE has strengthened indigenous voices for women in business reform and lowered barriers in over 60 countries. CIPE is assisting the PNG BAN Steering Committee through offering guidance and best practices on the WBA process. CIPE implements other initiatives in PNG, including the PNG WBRC, which has provided access vital resources for economic empowerment to more than 3,000 women since 2017. For more details about the PNG BAN please email pngwba@pngban.org.