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2018 Budget: Jobs and Growth Crisis

“PNG’s Alternative Government has positive solutions for the jobs and incomes crisis facing our country. Development needs to become more people focused with a much better sharing of the gains of growth rather than primarily to government besties. The Alternative Government will rebuild this nation by getting growth going again, creating more jobs and forming a better business environment. We did this in the 2000s for the people of PNG, and we can do it again” said the Shadow Minister for Treasury and Finance, Ian Ling-Stuckey.

“In my response to the fake 2018 budget, the Alternative Government set out to expose, oppose and propose. Three economic crises are facing PNG – a jobs and incomes crisis, a foreign exchange crisis and a budget crisis. Today, I will outline the jobs and incomes challenge facing PNG. Over the next few days, I will then set out specific solutions to this jobs crisis” said Mr Ling-Stuckey.

“The Alternative Government has the experience to fix this economy and fix this country. The National Alliance Party had to take over the reins of bedding down economic reform commenced around 1999. These reforms were started by Sir Mekere Morauta who is a vital member of the Alternative Government. They were continued during the term of the Leader of the National Alliance, the Honourable Patrick Pruaitch in his senior roles as a National Alliance Minister in Grand Chief Somare’s government, including his many years as Minister for Treasury and Finance.

“Those National Alliance years were good years for Papua New Guinea. From 2003 to 2011, there was growth, after allowing for inflation, of 5 per cent per year in incomes measured by non-resource GDP. It is better to measure the economic welfare of the people of Papua New Guinea by focusing on the nonresource parts of our country rather than giving too much weight to just big mines and LNG projects.

“In contrast, the current government is aiming for increases of only 2 per cent each year. We need to aim higher. We need to get back to higher growth rates relevant to PNG’s people” said the Shadow Treasurer.

“During the National Alliance years, nearly 15,000 formal sector jobs were created every year. Under this government, over the last five years, there has been no formal sector job increase– in fact, the number of jobs has been going backwards by some 4,000 jobs per year. The National Alliance has demonstrated that we can deliver on

improving the standards of living and jobs prospects of our people. This is in a big contrast to the current government.

“The Alternative Government of Papua New Guinea has a better vision for this country. This vision is truer to our founding principles and ideals. Over the last five years, it seems, the government has lost some of its way on serving the interests, of the people of PNG.

“We need to get back to focus on PNG’s people, our rural people, the often-forgotten majority, who have no access to clean, reticulated water, electricity and privileged access to urban services like shopping centres and even just basic government services. We talk a lot, eat a lot, smile a lot and are always in the newspapers, tv and even all over this uncontrollable dragon called Facebook! We need to see and touch, our billion kina budgets, we need to see these millions and billions working in our remote villages and remote provinces. It’s just not happening! And if it is - it’s not fast enough. We need to empower our rural people, so they and their children can live healthier and more productive lives. As the people’s representatives in Parliament, we have this as an obligation. One that should be above politics and personnel gain” said Mr Ling-Stuckey.

Mr Ling-Stuckey stated that his budget reply speech outlined specific solutions: “These included keeping the extra money going into agriculture and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, but to spend the money in a better way. The forthcoming “Inclusive Growth and Jobs Strategy” from the Alternative Government will provide the incentives to allow people to lift growth rates to 5 per cent per annum within 3 years. It will commit to working with the private sector to improve PNG’s business environment. The Strategy will also set out a different philosophy towards development, one that will include both formal and informal sector job creation. The focus will be on making PNG internationally competitive, with a vision of getting PNG food to the supermarkets of Asia rather than just the supermarkets of Port Moresby.

“This will be a more people driven approach, based around market incentives to allow people to use their potential, rather than an approach dominated by big government and big business besties of government” said Mr Ling-Stuckey

Hon.Ian Ling-Stuckey,CMG.MP
Shadow Minister for Treasury & Finance

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