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May Christmas be Filled with Joy for all our Children

“As I celebrate time with my wonderful family amongst the beauty of Lemus Island in Kavieng, New Ireland Province, I reflect on the Christmas message. The birth of Christ was a true gift of love to the world. Through his birth and eventual sacrifice, he has shown the path to save the world. We must share this message of love” said the Shadow Minister for Treasury and Finance, Ian Ling-Stuckey.

“Despite all of the presents many of us might have received during this time, I must reflect on the near 40 per cent of the population, an estimated 3 million people in Papua New Guinea, who are considered to live below the poverty line. PNG’s poverty rate is by far the worst in the Asia-Pacific region. I reflect on all of those children who do not have enough food and clean water. I reflect on the unfortunate truth that PNG has the highest rates of malnutrition in the Asia-Pacific and the second highest rate of stunting.

“As I reflect on the birth of Christ, I am saddened that our health services do not have the resources to protect over 400 mothers who will die in childbirth in 2018. I am saddened that our under 5 infant mortality rate is still 57 per 1,000 live births, the fourth worst rate of the 43 countries of the Asia-Pacific region” said Mr Ling-Stuckey.

“I also reflect on how our wonderful Tok Pisin language calls all of our woman as a Meri, sounding so similar to Christ’s mother. May we all show more respect for our meris with the elimination of domestic violence and fake witch craft allegations.

“I reflect on all those who are sick on Christmas Day, often related to not enough investment in ensuring our people have access to clean water and adequate sanitation as PNG has the worst rates of access in the Asia-Pacific region. I also reflect on those suffering from malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDs where PNG has either the highest or second highest rates of incidence in our region.

“In the forty-two years since Independence, we have not done enough to live up to God’s message of making PNG a fairer society where all can celebrate the joy of life. As I reflect on the Christmas message, I hope that all of us politicians and leaders will commit to serving our people better. We all know that PNG faces many challenges at the moment. May we come together now in peace and friendship and do what is necessary to help ensure all our children and their children will have more opportunities to enjoy the joys of Christmas” said Mr Ling-Stuckey.

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

26TH December 2017