



**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT & MEMBER FOR MORESBY SOUTH**
HON DAME CAROL KIDU, DBE, MP

As per the NEC Decision No. 106/2008, No. 175/2008 and NO. 232/2008, the Prime Minister, Rt, Hon. Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare utilizing both Sections 101 and 102 of the National Constitution called for Expressions of Interest from women citizens for Nominated Seats in Parliament. A large number of women from all over PNG responded by sending in their EOI's, even from very remote parts of the country. This, in itself sends a clear message that women want to participate in the political and democratic governing process of our nation.

This historic NEC Decision for affirmative action for women as provided for in Section 55 (2) of our Constitution was not a sudden nor a hasty decision. It is the culmination of many years of hard work started by the National Council of Women and Women in Politics in the 1980s. Twice in the past, male MPs (Hon John Nilkare and Hon Luther Wenge) have also tried to utilize the Nominated Seats provision to bring women into Parliament. In 2004, I was unsuccessful with an NEC submission on Sections 101 and 102 so I then stopped working on it because I was confident that the Limited Preferential Voting system would help women in the 2007 election. We all know that I was wrong and once again I am the only woman in our parliament of 109 (0.9% of the Parliament whereas women are 50% of the population).

Since 2007 a lot of work has been done to find a way forward to make sure that women will have a place in our Parliament. This includes a nationwide diagnostic workshop analyzing the 2007 election; a regional workshop on special measures for affirmative action; and three NEC

submissions until the final endorsement and inclusion in the 2009 budget in November 2008.

I thank the Technical Working Group that has been providing me with technical back up support to facilitate the implementation of this historical land mark NEC Decision for Papua New Guinea to adopt affirmative action through the temporary special measure.

PNG is not the only country to adopt such measures. Many countries that have few women in Parliament have adopted similar measures to allow for women's participation in political decision making. Many of these countries adopting 'special measures' are those that have ratified various International Human Rights Conventions including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women – CEDAW, which PNG became a party to in 1984.

I acknowledge the financial support rendered to this process by UNDP whereby an independent HR firm has been contracted not only to provide technical advisory and secretarial support to the Screening Committee but to document the whole process as it will go down in herstory (history).

My best wishes to the Screening Committee who have a difficult task over the next few days as they go through the 78 EOIs. And it is my hope that this fact sheet on Qs & As will clear a lot of doubts in the minds of the many followers of the development on the Nominated Seats for Women in the past few weeks.

I also assure the public that the Technical Advisory Group working with me on this landmark NEC Decision have noted the genuine legal questions being asked and are in the process of seeking further legal clarification to ensure that all this work will not be in vain.

Carol Kidu DBE, MP

Minister for Community Development & Member for Moresby South