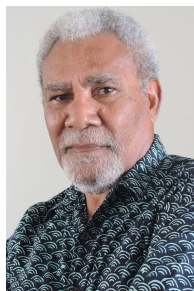


**Public Statement by
Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta
Port Moresby, 18 July 2016**

Peter O'Neill's raids on public institutions must stop



Papua New Guinea can no longer afford Peter O'Neill's raids on public institutions to keep himself in the Prime Minister's chair.

"The cupboard is bare, and everyone knows it," former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta said today.

"The Prime Minister is a serial raider, but there is nothing left to raid. He has nowhere to go except overseas and borrow at high interest rates."

"Mr O'Neill's history is littered with the wreckage of his raids – National Provident Fund, Papua New Guinea Banking Corporation, Finance Pacific and Resource and Investment Finance Corporation (RIFL), the Treasury coffers, and State-owned Enterprises," Sir Mekere said.

"He raided PNGSDP by illegally expropriating OTML, without compensation; he has raided OTML itself; and he is still trying to raid PNGSDP and get his hands on the \$US1.3 billion in the Long Term Fund.

"The reported K60 million raid last week on landowner funds is, if true, another chapter in a sorry history. Where could that money have come from? Trust accounts? What purpose was given for these deals?

"Now we hear he has raided Treasury to pay out K111 million in DSIP cheques immediately before a vote of no confidence.

"The Prime Minister should come clean on these reports and state whether they are true or not."

Sir Mekere said every time Mr O'Neill touches a public institution it ends up requiring rescue and rehabilitation – and most of all injections of taxpayers' money, which should be going to schools, hospitals and other essential services.

Where we are today as a nation, economically and socially, the struggles we face now, are a reflection of his destructive history, he said.

Mr O'Neill states that Papua New Guinea needs political stability. Yes it does. But not if that stability is used to destroy the country. What we need right now is dedicated people with integrity, a sense of public good and a capacity for hard work in the national interest, not self-interest.

The country needs a well planned economic and financial rescue plan that is properly funded, has the support of the people and is backed by Papua New Guinea's international friends and multilateral partners.

The country also urgently needs another mini-Budget to correct the Prime Minister's mistakes in the original 2016 Budget, mistakes he should have learned in 2015.

The nation cannot be kept alive by more raids on State-Owned Enterprises or random, high-cost borrowings.