

**Public Statement**  
**by Rt Hon Sir Mekere Morauta**  
**Port Moresby, 11 June 2017**

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**Sir Mekere tells PM to deal with PNG LNG landowner Issues**



Former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta today said that the Prime Minister needed to deal with PNG LNG landowner issues immediately to avoid shutdown of the LNG plant.

“Why is Peter O’Neill so quiet and passive on this very important issue?” Sir Mekere said.

Sir Mekere said he understood that PNG LNG had paid royalties due to the Department of Petroleum and Energy, which should then have passed the money to MRDC for distribution.

“What has happened to this money? Why has it not been paid to landowners?”

Sir Mekere said the Government’s excuse that landowner groups had not been properly identified was not valid for the plant site landowners from Papa, LeaLea, Boera and Porebada.

“The PM must tell these landowners the true story immediately,” he said. “Has their money been used for other purposes like infrastructure for SP Games and the looming APEC? If the landowners’ royalty money has been spent, Peter O’Neill has to find some other money to pay the landowners immediately.”

Sir Mekere said that in the case of the wellhead and facilities landowners, they also need evidence from the Government that their money is kept safe, and be told when the Government expects to release the royalty money.

He was also concerned about the PNG LNG Infrastructure Development Grant. This grant is K1.2 billion, K120 million every year for 10 years from 2010.

“That is already K960 million,” Sir Mekere said. “What infrastructure can landowners from Hela, Southern Highlands, Gulf, Western and Central see has been built from this money for their benefit?”

“Has this money also been used by the Government for other glorification projects?”

“PM, don’t do your usual trick of blaming others, in this case landowners, MRDC or DPE. You are the Prime Minister. You take full responsibility and avert this looming threat of LNG shutdown by paying the plantsite landowners their money immediately.”

Sir Mekere said that it was clear that MRDC was not fulfilling its custodian role for landowners properly.

“MRDC has become a bag-carrier for the Government. Landowners need a structure that is insulated from the tentacles of the octopus.”