



## DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & RELIGION

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### *Office of the Secretary*

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#### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **HIGHLANDS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TRAINING A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

The Highlands Human Rights Defenders Training 2017 that took place in Mount Hagen from 27-29 March was hailed a success and a start to strengthening partnerships with Human Rights Defenders on ground to do their work effectively.

The training conducted at Hotel Kimininga in Mt Hagen was jointly organized by the Department for Community Development and Religion, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and OXFAM.

A total of 15 participants of Human Rights Defenders, Male advocates and Community Development officers from the Districts and Provincial level representing Eastern Highlands, Chimbu, Western Highlands and Southern Highlands took part in this three day training with high level of discussions covering various topics on the perspective of human rights.

First Assistant Secretary for Gender and Human Rights, Ms Karen Haive on behalf of the Secretary of the Department thanked UNOHCHR and OXFAM for partnering with the department to facilitate the training and making it possible for Human rights defenders in the Highlands region to be part of the training programme.

“Many things are happening on the ground but the government do not know about them. Strengthening your partnership with the District, Provincial and National level is very important. You need to get that communication channel open as well as your reporting system,” said Ms Haive.

Ms Haive made these comments following concerns raised by the human rights defenders that most of their reports on the work they do goes unrecognised and does not make it to the national level.

She added that the training was an opportunity to see how the missing links can be filled so that everyone is working together in a more effective and coordinated manner through the correct systems that are already in place to address human rights issues.

Facilitator for the training and Advisor to the UN Office of the Human Rights Commission, Mr Kedar Poudyal told the participants that the training was also timely for the Department, the Development partners, NGO's and civil societies to identify areas of cooperation and how everybody can work together in addressing human rights issues here in PNG.

“We cannot work in isolation if we want to address human rights issues. It takes collective efforts and cooperation by everyone to address human rights. And I think we have all learnt a lot in this training with the level of discussions been very high,” said Mr Poudyal.

The UN Advisor to the Office of the Human Rights Commission was also impressed with the amount of information shared during the training with some recommendations highlighted by the human rights defenders on how collaborative actions can help address human rights issues.

Monitoring and documenting human rights issues was one of the vital topic of discussion during the training, which participants were given an in-depth presentation on how they can better improve their approach through utilising resources that are available when dealing with human rights issues.

One other vital topics covered was Human rights in Election were few recommendations were put forward by the human rights defenders based on the evaluation from experiences of human rights defenders from previous elections.

Meanwhile, the participants were praised for their high level of participation through discussions and sharing of information and experiences. They were all presented a Certificate of Participation for completing the three day training.

**Ends//**

**APPROVED FOR RELEASE BY**

*Ms Anna Solomon*

**SECRETARY**

**Department for Community Development & Religion**