Meet to strategise women candidates

AN INTENSIVE training for women candidates is underway in Port Moresby.

Attendees from four of the regions of the country attended the training in preparation of election 2012.

The trainers will return to their regions and train women candidates.

While awaiting the outcome of the Equality and Participation Bill now before Parliament, Department for Community Development through the Office of the Development of Women (ODW) with funding and technical support from UNDP and Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI), has embarked on this strategic move to build the capacity of women candidates and their campaign managers.

The process of discussion and consultation began early this year with a consultative workshop in Lae to find a way forward on how best the department and core partners can help facilitate capacity building programmes of the women candidates and their campaign managers.

Secretary Joseph Klapat made it clear that the department does not support the political aspiration of individual candidates including women candidates.

"Our job is to facilitate mechanism and process for a fair and equal participation of both women and men in the Parliamentary process of the Government through creation of enabling environment," he said.

This message was relayed in his speech and read by one of his officers yesterday.

The training on the 22 reserved seats and the short term strategy for women candidates contesting the 2012 General Elections is an affirmative action taken, in light of the extreme inequality between women and men's participation in Parliament.

The workshop is first in a series of events aimed at increasing the chances of women being elected to parliament at the 2012 national elections.

Between now and the election, ODW will convene a sequence of training workshops for women candidates and their campaign managers in regional centres across the country.

These workshops will equip candidates with the knowledge and skills needed to devise and manage their election campaigns.

The workshops will help candidates develop campaign plans, consider campaign messages, manager media relations, understand campaign financing, appreciate the rules of the game (including the LPV voting system) and discuss the roles of candidate and campaign manager.

The first round of workshops will be completed before the end of the year, with follow-up progress check events to be held in each region early next year, at least three months before the election. ODW will also provide drop-in feedback services immediately after the event is issued, to allow candidates and campaign managers to test their campaign plans.

ODW is working closely with regional civil society partners to ensure the delivery of these events which are part of a training strategy developed by ODW with support from UNDP’s Women in Leadership Program and the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) at the Australian National University.

Leader: Support women's bill

NORTH Bougainville women leader Elizabeth Burain has challenged the O’Neill-Namah Government to act on special temporary measures for women who are receiving the benefits of the new Government.

"The passing of the bill will be an important step for the Government of Papua New Guinea towards ensuring the women don't stand a chance against a male dominated society. Ninety nine per cent of male candidates are elected into Parliament.

"I therefore strongly urge the Government of Papua New Guinea to reconsider the measure for women in all elections."

Safe motherhood in Wutung

SAFE motherhood and education grants for less privileged children are among other social development programs that the Border Development Authority (BDA) is embarking on in the Wutung village of Sandaun province.

Water and sanitation and road electrification are other projects that are ready to be implemented pending a final report from Wutung elders.

The Border Development Authority (BDA) has embarked on its award drive to mobilise the Wutung village to participate in the K50 million Wutung border trade and investment project.

BDA officers conducted awareness last week about how the villagers can benefit from the project. The ADB Development Bank (ABD) fun project that will run for four years have two programs to implement.

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Time frame sho

FORMER Minister for Community Development and member for Moresby South Dame Carol Kid was the key note speaker at the meeting.

The former minister said that the training and groundwork being laid for the elections.

She said although NEC had issued the by-elections, the timeframe was very short.

Dame Carol said so much effort had been made to make the by-elections a success. She said she had been accused of bias against foreign agenda into PNG but there are a lot of foreign agendas already in PNG, in the country, including Christianity.

When giving a very brief account of her experiences of the campaigning and her overview of the challenges of women candidates, Dame Carol said the training must continue.

"Note that the training must continue, and we must get to that point of making sure we are not just talking about it but doing it," she said.

Dame Carol said it was important that the training continued not just for women candidates but for campaign managers and all those involved in the election process.

"It is most important that the training continues not just a one shot," she said.