

## **Conflict-free mining is thoughtfully targeted**

### **Wantok Niuspepa, PNG, November 2009**

Transitional arrangements are likely to be in place to facilitate the possible return to mineral exploration and mining on Bougainville, before the drawdown of mining powers takes place under the Peace Agreement.

The World Bank has committed almost K6 million to achieve what it describes as strengthening the foundations for a conflict-free mining sector in the Autonomous region.

The ABG has recently established its own Department of Mining, which has a small number of staff and limited equipment and facilities.

The World Bank has committed the funds at the request of the ABG to build the capacity to manage the re-establishment of exploration and mining activities on Bougainville.

### **building staff capacity**

The principal target of the funding is ABG's future DoM staff, who will be supported to establish the organizational framework for the department and implement an effective policy and regulatory environment for mineral exploration and development in Bougainville, a World Bank document says.

Transitional arrangements will facilitate granting of exploration and mining licenses for Bougainville until mining powers are transferred to ABG, a Bougainville Sustainable Mining Policy, operation of a functioning ABG Department of Mining, a Bougainville Mining Act, a Bougainville Mining Safety Act and enabling regulations, hiring of professional staff for the ABG Mining Department, twinning of ABG Mining Department staff into MRA and the PNG Mines Department, or other appropriate organizations, and the development of small-scale mining support services and outreach on Bougainville, the Bank says.

### **respect for the risks**

Mine related issues, particularly those at Panguna, are seen as central to the conflict that grew into the Bougainville Crisis, and the World Bank document pays respect to the risks as well as the potential benefits of promoting a return to both large-scale and small-scale artisanal mining.

“The possible re-establishment of mining activities in Bougainville will have critics and has the potential to re-ignite conflict in some areas if not managed appropriately.

“The Project will include development of a communications and information program to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of the Project objectives and activities, particularly in Bougainville,” the World Bank document says.

“All extractive industry locations in Papua New Guinea are subject to occasional conflict, often over benefits sharing.

“The focus on improving local governance and accountability is expected to help mitigate this risk.

“The Project will support training for local stakeholders in conflict resolution.”

The World Bank, with more than K100 million to spend in several areas of support for mining throughout Papua New Guinea says it is including Bougainville in response to an invitation from the ABG to strengthen mining management capacity.

### **mining opportunities identified**

The document points out that there are both benefits and risks involved in the re-introduction of mineral exploration and development in the Autonomous Region.

The opportunities relate to the benefits of mining which typically consist of direct and indirect large-scale and small-scale mining employment, mining-related financial transfers, and improved access to employment opportunities and services including in particular health and education services.

The risks include environmental disturbance, loss of land for subsistence agriculture, and possible cultural harm.

A gender bias exists whereby the bulk of the benefits accrue to men whereas the bulk of the risks fall upon women and children.

All of these benefit and risk issues need to be discussed and made known to all stakeholders, the World Bank says.

“With the Bougainville Peace Accord and the establishment of the Autonomous Government of Bougainville, Bougainville could again become a prime destination for mineral exploration,” the Bank concludes.

## **Laying down the guns**

### **Wantok Niuspepa, PNG, November 2009**

The surrender of weapons has been likened to the disarming of the soul.

“There cannot be peace while we live under the shadow of the gun.

“Likewise, we cannot ask God to bring us peace while we have blood on our hands.”

These are the messages being carried into areas of Bougainville that have known war, and do not yet enjoy complete peace.

The messenger is a man who has known both conflict and reconciliation, and who is now tasked by President James Tanis with bringing the process of cleansing and forgiveness to those remaining areas of the once-troubled Region where peace is not yet fully restored.

Dennis Kuiu is a veteran of the conflict on Bougainville, now acting in the new Autonomous Government as CEO of the Division of Peace, Reconciliation and Weapons Disposal.

Like his President he is modest about the past, when facing the challenges of Bougainville’s future, but like most men and women who serve the Autonomous Bougainville Government today, either as elected Members or as appointed public servants, he has belief in process, confidence that lasting peace can be achieved by following steps of cleansing and reconciliation that exist within the traditions of Bougainville society.

“We believe that all Bougainvilleans have a common cause, which is a free and peaceful society heading towards a referendum on independence.

“But during the crisis, and in the years since, we may have lost our way, as people took different approaches, or sought opportunities for themselves.

“The challenge is to reconcile not just the conflicts that have occurred in the past, but also the views on our best way forward.”

It is not unique to Bougainville that the rule of law has in many places been taken over by the rule of the gun.

But in a post-conflict era, peace and guns do not lie easily together, and the weapons of all kinds that are still held in the wrong hands must be surrendered, destroyed or contained, the Tanis government believes.

“This is a process that belongs to everyone, and we are seeking to empower the chiefs and the women and other elements of traditional authority so that there is no longer just the power of the gun.

“This means bringing together faith-based and civil-based organisations and all elements of the government, so that all people can see where we are going.”

The approach is practical, and measured.

North Bougainville is seen as being in a process of reconstruction.

Central and South Bougainville are still going through stages of reconciliation, and restoration of faith in the government, and the rule of law.

“The conflict started at Panguna, and we believe it can be ended there, and that is why during this month there will be cleansing and reconciliation ceremonies in that area.

“Elsewhere we have identified five impact areas where we can expect weapons to be surrendered, and conflicts resolved.

“These are key areas, with key people setting an example that should be followed throughout the region, including areas where ongoing conflicts have nothing to do with independence, but are being fought over with guns.

“Central to the process of Bougainville development is the peace process.

“While it is government policy to create opportunities for people to find employment and income from agricultural rehabilitation and mining, there is no more important issue than peace, and weapons disposal.”

The focus of Mr Kuiai’s efforts is now in Central and South Bougainville, where the reconciliation process should be followed by a return to Arawa as the seat of Government, as further evidence of a return to normalcy.

“Buka has been the crisis capital.

“As long as Government remains in Buka, there is still a crisis.

“I believe that we are making progress, and we wish to be seen as making progress,”

Dennis Kuiai said.

## **Bougainville President welcomes first visit in twenty years by BCL**

**Wantok Niuspepa, PNG, November 2009**

President of the Autonomous Bougainville region Mr James Tanis said this week that the visit to Buka by the PNG representative of Bougainville Copper Limited Mr Paul Coleman was welcome and timely.

“Mr Coleman has come to the Autonomous Bougainville Region at my invitation, for talks which have been awaited for some time, and which should be beneficial to all stakeholders.

“There are many issues to discuss, which do not include the resumption of mining, and BCL’s first visit to Bougainville after almost twenty years indicates a willingness to talk these issues over in an open and friendly fashion.

“It may also give Mr Coleman another opportunity to meet with some of the people of Bougainville, and hear from them the issues that are of most interest to them,”

President Tanis said.

The BCL representative travelled to Buka last week and stayed for two days of talks with members of the Autonomous Bougainville Government and other interested parties.

Referring to the previous period of disputation, President Tanis said:

“The conflict must end where it started, at Panguna.

“It arose out of disputes between landowners, members of the North Solomons Provincial Government, the Government of PNG, and BCL and CRA.

“Therefore it is these stakeholders who need to be assisted to come together to end the Panguna conflict.

“As President my role is to ensure that these parties come together to solve the problem once and for all,” President Tanis said.

Mr Coleman said he was very pleased to be on Bougainville at the invitation of President Tanis, and the people of the Autonomous Region.

“Bougainville Copper Limited has had a long standing relationship with the people of Bougainville, and although it has been twenty years since we have been here officially, it is well known that BCL has always had an open door and a friendly welcome to anyone from Bougainville who has wanted to talk to us about issues of mutual interest.

“The Bougainville Copper Foundation has also helped to keep us in touch, through the programs of education and other assistance which have been maintained at all times since the crisis.

“BCL has a natural interest in viewing the state of its assets in the Region, and hearing from the people first hand, on the matters that concern them.

“There are many things to discuss, and it is very pleasing to be making a start on these talks, here in the Autonomous Bougainville Region, among the people.

“I thank President Tanis for having the vision and the concern for his people to initiate this meeting,” Mr Coleman said.

“It is also pleasing to note that the World Bank will have a representative here within a few days, to further discuss the Capacity Building program for administration of the mining industry on Bougainville, funded by the Bank, which could well help to facilitate the draw down of mining powers under the Peace Agreement, and lead all stakeholders towards the renegotiation of the Bougainville Copper Agreement.

“Many of the issues of interest to the people of Bougainville, and their future as an economically independent Region, might well be discussed under the terms of such renegotiation,” Mr Coleman said.

“For the moment, it is pleasing to be here, and extend my thanks to the people of Bougainville for making me welcome.”

## **Relationships will be Transparent: Tanis**

### **Wantok Niuspepa, PNG, November 2009**

The Autonomous Bougainville Government will no longer accept invitations from private companies to make overseas visits, because this leads to expectations by the providers of such travel that they may receive favourable treatment of their business proposals.

“We will deal on a Government to Government basis, so that the integrity of the Autonomous Bougainville Region is not exposed to compromise,” ABG President James Tanis said, noting that he had received a formal invitation from the Australian government to make a visit to that country, and a similar invitation to visit the UK.

“If there is a formal relationship on a transparent nation to nation basis, it can properly lead to investment proposals being considered.

“To otherwise engage in business transactions, and even the initialling of agreements overseas which commit the Autonomous Region to a deal with a private corporation, will almost certainly lead to the suspicion that private advantage, on either side, is being sought.

“New nations are not built this way,” President Tanis said.

President Tanis said that the process of reconciliation to heal the wounds of the Bougainville crisis, required reconciliation with governments and peoples beyond the shores of Bougainville, as well as at home.

“We need the help of other nations, and we need to earn respect as a people with transparent values and commercial integrity, on the basis of which serious investors can approach us with confidence,” the President said.

“Nations are not built by opportunists, but by committed and consenting citizens, with ownership of the democratic process, and participation in the benefits of development,” President Tanis concluded.

## **Women recruited to uphold the law**

**Wantok Niuspepa, PNG, November 2009**

Every woman on Bougainville will have access to a female police officer, providing advice, support and protection within her home community, as Bougainville Police numbers come up to full strength.

Although the police women now being trained and inducted into the force receive a short, concentrated period of instruction, they have full police powers to enforce law and order, and to arrest and charge law breakers.

Twenty percent of the full strength Bougainville Police will be female officers, their team leader Murray Lewis said this week.

He was speaking as the latest batch of recruits received their final period of instruction, before being posted as Community Auxiliary Police.

“It is very important that women in the community can have a female police officer to turn to for support, particularly in matters regarding home and family.

“But these young police officers also have all the powers and responsibilities of general duties police.

“They will be respected and have authority within their own communities because it is from those communities that they have been nominated,” Mr Lewis said.

The New Zealand aid program to Bougainville is facilitating the community policing project.

The rationale behind recruiting and retaining women in the community police auxiliary is that it will not only make female officers more accessible in the community, but will also raise the profile of women in general, provide women with a role to enforce law and order alongside male auxiliary police, and assist in providing a better response to crime and other events in the community.

To date the number of women in the CAP has risen from five percent to almost the twenty percent target, out of a total establishment of 350 auxiliaries.

Not all would-be auxiliaries make a success of their new careers as law enforcers.

Some find the work too demanding, or for other reasons fail to perform their duties to the satisfaction of their team leaders, and several have been terminated.

This unfortunate outcome has the positive benefit of making room for new recruits, and overall the scheme has proved to be an outstanding success

The recent emphasis has been to deploy the new police men and women into areas of central and south Bougainville, where there is a demand for the services of women police in the communities.

Women CAPs have also been recruited, trained and placed in the Atolls communities.

As a measure of the commitment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, the latest class of graduates passed out as the Hon James Tanis Recruit Wing.



## **Bougainville up with next generation communications technology**

**Wantok Niuspepa, PNG, November 2009**

A huge roll out of communications technology is underway in the Autonomous Bougainville Region.

Telikom in co-operation with the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the New Zealand restoration aid program, is erecting nineteen VSAT communication links across the length and breadth of Bougainville and its surrounding islands.

At the same time, next-generation Wireless telephones will be operational when Telikom launches its Fixed Wireless service based at Buka.

Shortly after this, Fixed Wireless will be available at Arawa.

Two containers of Telikom technical equipment are currently on the wharf at Kieta, containing all the components necessary to construct a new transmission site towering over Pok Pok Island in Kieta Harbour, giving line of site access into Arawa.

This tower, constructed by Telikom with Treasury funding, will support a bembobile service into Kieta and Arawa, with CDMA Wireless to follow.

Telikom is also providing a High Frequency radio telephone link into the Carteret Islands and Tasman Island, to further enhance communications for outlying populations.

Not only is there a healthy trade in cocoa, copra and other valuable commodities throughout the Bougainville region at this time, but the cruel winds of climate change are posing challenges to island communities and emergency services, all of whom will be greatly dependent on the new Telikom links.

The new Telikom VSAT terminals will be installed to serve remote population centres across the Region.

It is believed that this will stimulate socio-economic development and improve the efficiency of service delivery to people isolated by distance and poor transport infrastructure.

The Autonomous Bougainville Government says improved telecommunication is a top priority, and that Telikom's VSAT system is the best choice to deliver immediate outcomes.

ABG Minister for Public Service, Communications Media and Culture, Robert Sawa came to Port Moresby to sign a contract with Telikom's Peter Loko for the installation of the fourteen terminals and associated telephone and internet services, which is supported by funding from New Zealand.

Mr Sawa said Bougainville suffers from an unreliable communications network and the installation of the VSAT system is expected to improve communications and make a positive contribution to economic activity and social life, particularly for people in the remoter parts of the Region.

"Large numbers of our people live rural areas, and to make a trip to town just to talk to relatives outside the Region is very expensive and time consuming.

"An efficient Telikom communication system at the people's door step is ideally the way to go, and as well as stimulating economic and social development, we believe VSAT will help create a well informed community with knowledge of issues and developments around them," Mr Sawa said.

Mr Sawa acknowledged the New Zealand government for its contribution and Telikom PNG for its assistance in the installation of the VSAT systems.

Signing the contract agreement, Telikom CEO Peter Loko said placing VSAT terminals into remote locations was expensive and technically challenging, but was seen as a partnership, with Telikom staff willing to go into distant places and give of their best, to provide vital telecommunication services to the people.

Telikom VSAT provides a small but powerful satellite terminal, powered by solar energy in the many places not in reach of rural electrification, making possible direct communication to the Telikom hub at Boroko.

Hanging off the smaller terminal can be six to twelve telephone lines, including public phones, district office and health centre phones, and perhaps an internet access link for school children.

Larger VSAT broadband installations can support a larger number of lines, and even a mobile phone tower, if population numbers justify the installation.

In many cases, Telikom does not anticipate making sufficient revenue to justify the capital cost of installation, but invokes its Community Service Obligation, to serve the people.

ABG President James Tanis welcomed the telecommunications revolution, and said that a key benefit was the flow of information.

"Every Bougainville citizen must be in receipt of the information necessary for meaningful participation in the development of our Region, and our people," the President said.