



June 15, is a very symbolic occasion. It marks the anniversary of the day when Bougainville's political aspirations were recognized with the formal establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, in this sense *Bougainville Day* captures the hopes, dreams and aspirations of all Bougainvilleans.

The last twelve years have been some of the most challenging, yet fruitful, for the Autonomous Region of Bougainville as we continue to forge ahead to decide our ultimate political future.

The Autonomous Bougainville Government has made significant progress in strengthening its faculties through passing important laws in the Bougainville House of Representatives and revitalizing the Bougainville Public Service into a lean and effective service delivery mechanism.

We have passed many new and important laws such as the *Bougainville Mining Act 2015* which is one of the very best in the world as it gives Bougainville resource owners more control over their land and resources. The recent partial lifting of the Mining Moratorium on Bougainville is a clear indication of the ABG's drive to foster fiscal self-reliance in the region.

Over the years our public service has been plagued by corruption; it is a deeply rooted problem that continues to hamper our development but we have since made efforts to curb this problem.

The setting up of the Auditor's Office and the recent opening of the Ombudsman Commission's office in Bougainville has provided us with the necessary means to tackle the corruption problem head on, not just in the public service but throughout Bougainville. The recent developments in the public service shows that the ABG will no longer tolerate corrupt practices.

We have set the indicative date for the referendum to be held on June 15, 2019. The ABG is already preparing for this very important event and the newly created Department of Peace Agreement Implementation will be taking the lead on this.

I would like to remind you all that our people are a people highly favoured. We have been blessed with the right to self-determination and this right we have paid for with the blood, sweat and tears that we shed through the darkest hours of our history, and that was the Bougainville Crisis.

We will not go quietly into the night, we must stand firm and stand united and make our voices heard, for at this juncture, unity is our greatest bargaining power on the eve of the referendum.

Today I ask all Bougainvilleans to reflect and to consider what you can each do to help Bougainville achieve its true destiny and dreams.

All of us have a role to play – our farmers, industrialists, students, teachers, health workers, public servants and our elected leaders.

By working together and moving ahead with a common goal there is much that we can achieve.

My challenge to you is to embrace this change and contribute to the journey. Together we can achieve greatness and as your President that is my ultimate goal – for a proud, united Bougainville.

Happy Bougainville Day and God bless you all.

**Chief Dr. John L. Momis GCL, MHR**  
**President**