

## **Press Cuttings**

### **Forest law amended - The National 29 Nov 2007**

PARLIAMENT has approved amendments to the Forestry Act to enable better coordination in forestry development.

Forest Minister Belden Namah yesterday introduced two bills – Forestry (Amendment) Bill and Forestry (Timber Permits Validation) Act which were given the nod by Parliament.

Mr. Namah said the Forestry Act 1991 was further amended particularly; Section 90A, 90B, 90C and 90D, to ensure the PNG Forest Authority conformed to its statutory obligations under these sections of the Principle Act.

Here, the amendments will improve and streamline the existing provisions which were considered cumbersome and lacking in incentives to spur genuine investments.

“The amendment will enable better coordination between the Department of Agriculture and Livestock, Departments of Works and Transport and the PNGFA ... this would enhance closer coordination in promoting integrated forestry development along with agriculture and infrastructure development,” Mr. Namah said.

He stressed that the Forestry (Timber Permit Validation) Bill 2007 was a consequential Act that would ensure that timber permits granted over timber concessions identified in the National Forest Plan 1996 were valid and in force for the term in which they were granted or entered into.

He said the amendments were necessary and were in the national and public interest.

Meanwhile, Parliament also approved the Oil and Gas (Amendment) Bill 2007. Petroleum and Energy Minister William Duma, who introduced the bill, said the proposed amendments to sections 43 (b), 44 (2) and 45 of the Principle Act contained in clauses 1, 2, 3 of the bill were intended to reduce the term of the second extension to a petroleum retention licence (PRL) from five years to one year, renewable every 12 months.

He said the first extension term of five years remains unchanged.

Mr Duma said the amendments did not extinguish the rights of a current PRL holder.