

# STATEMENT FROM MARKHAM VALLEY LANDOWNERS

25 OCTOBER 2018, AIRWAYS HOTEL, PORT MORESBY

PRESS CONFERENCE – 10AM

Good morning.

I am Sam Meyab -- Chairman, Zif Faring Business Group -- Orowangin Clan, Chivasing Village

With me are:

- Kelly Jim -- Treasurer, ZFBG -- Feref Clan, Tararan Village
- Michelle Steven -- Secretary, ZFBG -- Chuwaif Clan, Tararan Village
- Waia Langim -- Ward Councillor, Ward 19, Chivasing Village, Chuwaif Clan
- Marason David -- Ward Councillor, Ward 20, Tararan Village, Chuwaif Clan

We are five landowners from the Markham Valley in Morobe Province.

We are representing more than 60 families.

All these families have committed land to the renewable energy PNG Biomass project.

Most of us have worked since 2011 with PNG Biomass project.

We believe that our land can transform PNG by giving renewable energy through trees on our land.

But now after more than 7 years, why is this project not finally building the power plant?

We know that the biomass project has all licences and permits, all approvals, and a signed power purchasing agreement with PNG Power.

We know that the biomass project sponsor Oil Search Limited wants this project to go ahead.

We are ready with our land and trees.

The project is ready to go, but what is stopping it?

That is why we are here in Port Moresby. We are here to ask questions from our Government.

We are here to confront PNG Power, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Treasury.

Tell us, what is delaying our biomass project?

By signing the power purchasing agreement with PNG Biomass in 2015, and recently issuing the generation licence, the State now has made a commitment.

This is a commitment to bring 30 MW biomass energy to the Ramu Grid.

This is a commitment to drive inclusive economic growth for the people of the Markham Valley.

This is a commitment to a better world of clean and renewable energy.

This is a commitment the State should honour.

To be honest, we know what the problem is.

They might not tell us, but we are not stupid.

We know what is going on. Read the newspapers.

The politicians think coal is the answer to powering PNG.

But listen carefully: we landowners of the Markham Valley, people of Papua New Guinea, we do not want coal-fired power or coal mining in our country.

We want a clean, renewable, healthy future for our children.

Coal has no place in PNG. Never had, never will.

They think coal is cheap, but we have seen the numbers – they don't make sense.

They think coal is less polluting than HFO or diesel – they are so wrong.

They think coal is a quick, short-term solution – again, wrong. A coal power plant lasts 50 years.

They think a quick visit to Australia to see a power plant justifies their actions – it doesn't.

Don't destroy our country. Don't be stupid. Coal is dirty and bad economics.

We landowners are already benefiting from the biomass project.

We are getting incomes and jobs and benefits even before the project start building the power plant.

We see every day how almost 300 people have jobs in the Markham Valley because of PNG Biomass.

We know there will be more jobs when the project starts power plant construction.

We are already getting land rental money.

We are growing our intercropping fruits and vegetables on biomass plantations. This makes a lot of money for our women, and it brings food security.

We are creating business groups for employment with biomass project.

We are setting up incorporated land groups and registering our lands.

All of us, more than 60 families, are participating in the biomass project.

It is our land that grows the trees – and we are getting already a lot of benefits.

We want to keep the biomass project and keep our benefits.

We want renewable biomass to power our homes, not dirty coal.

We want healthy lives, not a polluting coal power plant in Lae.

We want our Government to honour its commitments; to us, to the developer, to the country, to the world.

Now is the time to show the world that PNG is leading the fight against climate change – APEC and the world are watching!

Papua New Guineans, stand up and say #RausimCoal and #WelkamRenewables!