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PRESS RELEASE

MRA impressed with Woodlark Gold Project resettlement homes & facilities

The Acting Managing Director of the Mineral Resources Authority (MRA), Mr. Jerry Garry has expressed satisfaction with the high-quality homes and associated facilities being built for landowners by GeoPacific Resources Limited, the developer of the Woodlark Mining gold Project.

The potential mining affected landowners have been residing over the planned Kulumadai mining pit and near the processing site, were involved in the resettlement exercise that began 2.5 year ago.

Mr Garry who returned from the project site on Saturday, after a two-days inspection of the houses and facilities, said he was very pleased and satisfied with the very high-quality achievements which had set a new benchmark for of the entire extractive industry including mining. "This is the minimum type of housing standards we wish to encourage every player in the extractive industry to build for our resource landowners either it be oil and gas, mining or even forestry.

GeoPacific is setting a benchmark in the relocation/resettlement exercise, even before they mine an ounce of gold. This is something that we have never seen before in the extractive sector of this country," said Mr Garry.

The MD said about two and a half years ago, at the height of COVID-19 pandemic, the MRA was made aware of sub-standard houses built for landowners, through the mainstream media and local member of Parliament (MP). He said, the MRA as the regulator of the mining industry in the country, had to intervene immediately and ask GeoPacific to stop the construction work, remove the houses, submit a revised plan, and engaged in construction according to a revised plan approved by the MRA.

Mr Garry said the company responded positively to MRA resulting in the better homes, schools, churches and canteens built today.

Mr Garry said, "I am very pleased and satisfied with the progress to-date. He commended Geopacific Resources management, landowner leadership, and Local MP, Minister Isi Henry Leonard for these remarkable achievements.

He reiterated the need for every extractive player in the country, to follow the excellent example, set by Woodlark gold project, by changing their mindsets and approaches in dealing with landowners, and in a respectable manner that improve their performance in the economic, social and corporate governance (ESG) space to meet the expectations of the globe.

GeoPacific Resources' Community Affairs Officer, Mr. Bosco Lapis said, the company would build a total of 223 houses of which, they had completed over 100, where impacted landowners have moved in. He said they were yet to complete 83 houses of which 23 were 90 percent complete.

Mr Lapis said the time frame for the completion of the remaining houses would depend on logistical and financial situation going forward. However, he said, the project is a priority for the company and that the company would ensure the all houses were delivered.

The residential houses generally feature 3 to 5 bedrooms, steel frames and other materials built to last long. Other facilities that are being constructed such as classrooms, clinics, church, stand-alone toilets and trade stores also feature similar properties.

The relocation exercise is part of the company's mining plan where it has to relocate villagers from Kulumadau to Baowen, Seloka and Dikoyas, in order to mine resources that at Kulumadau.

Impacted landowner groups including the Landowner Association, women, youths and church representatives also expressed satisfaction although they raised issues with certain features of the houses such windows which Mr Lapis said they were already working on these issues.



Acting MD doing inspection.