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PRESS RELEASE

Ramu Nickel project women landowners sign loan agreement

Women landowners of mining projects in the country, will be given more recognition in terms of business opportunities from mine derived benefits going forward, said Acting Managing Director of the Mineral Resources Authority (MRA), Jerry Garry.

Mr Garry was speaking during the launching of the Ramu Nickel Project women landowners' micro-credit scheme in Madang on February 23, 2023.

Mr Garry said that for far too long, women had been missing out on their share of benefits deriving from projects. He said in most cases, when menfolk receive benefits, they do not consider their women's economic and development aspirations and needs resulting in poor quality of life for families. Mr Garry said women are the backbones of families, societies and that it is women who make us men, who we are and therefore must be given better opportunities.

The launching of the scheme coincided with the signing of the contract for the scheme, between the MRA, Mibank and the four women associations of Kurumbukari, Inland Pipeline, Maigari and the Basamuk. Another highlight of the event was the announcement of a seed capital funding of K490, 000.00. This fund will be parked with the Mibank Madang Branch where, the women will apply for small loans at affordable rates. The fund will be used as an equity support of 75% to each loan application, submitted by applicants, using the MiBank's loan appraisal system.

The types of business activities these women may venture into will vary from project to project and can include street vending, trade stores, bakeries, small scale mining, fisheries, agribusinesses such as poultry and egg farms, piggery farms, growing of cash crops.

The scheme is a national government initiative under the Public Investment Program (PIP), aimed at economically empowering women landowners of selected mining projects, so that they can participate meaningfully in small business opportunities presented by their respective mining projects directly and indirectly. Given the current situation where many landowner women in mining communities are often overlooked by their menfolk in terms of wealth and resource distribution resulting in poor living standards, this project is intended to economically empower the women and strengthen their capacities to make sustainable improvements in their living qualities

The women from Ramu project are the third group of mining project landowners in the country, to be involved in the scheme. The women associations of the Hidden Valley and Simberi projects, were the first and second associations respectively, to sign their contracts last year.

The women collectively expressed joy saying that this project would contribute immensely towards improving their livelihoods going forward. They thanked the National Government, MRA and other stakeholders involved.

Minerals for Life

Ramu Nickel Mine's Community Affairs representative Albert Tombe, told the women that the scheme was a great sustainable project for them, as the mine would shut down one day, and that they had to rely on other means of supporting their families when that day comes.

MiBank's Madang Branch Manager Solomon Singur told the women that they were lucky to have this opportunity which most small businesses in the country did not have when it came to applying for loans. He said small businesses did not normally have equity to put as collateral which in their case, the government had already made it available through the scheme.



Ramu Nickel project women landowners receiving funding assistance from MRA