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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Bakoidu-Tolukuma Road Project Gets Greenlight From Los**

Landowners of the Bakoidu-Tolukuma road project area in the Kairuku and Goilala Districts in the Central Province, have given their approval for the road infrastructure to be constructed.

Paramount Chief of Foleka Deva Deva village in the Kunni Local Level Government (LLG) Kairuku District, Albert Mara, and the Woitape LLG President and landowner of the Tolukuma Mine, Fabian Aia, welcomed the project saying that the road project would bring much needed services to their people.

The leaders told a government team led by the Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) last week, that their people had waited for many years for the project to take off the ground. They said it was a long over-due project, and that they wanted it to start immediately so that their people can benefit.

Chief Mara said he had already organized his people and that they were ready to participate in the project in partnership with the National Government and contractors. He said he had 27 clans who have come together to form five major clans in preparation for the project roll out and benefits negotiation. Mr Mara emphasized the importance of a benefits package for his people.

The government team comprising officers from the MRA, the PNG National Forest Authority (PNGNFA), the Department of Works (DoW) and the Central Provincial Government Forestry Section, held meetings at Foleka Deva Deva village with landowners, and at Kubuna Catholic Parish with stakeholders of the project. The consultative meetings were held to get consents and views of the two groups, on the proposed project. Stakeholders include Woitape, Kairuku, and the Kunni LLGs.

The landowner and stakeholder leaders said they welcome the project as long as they benefit out of it.

The MRA's Executive Manager for the Development Coordination Division, Andrew Gunua, urged all stakeholders to work together to ensure the project comes into fruition. He said cooperation amongst stakeholders and landowners was crucial in achieving the common objective of having the project implemented.

Mr Gunua explained that the next phase of the project would involve land survey, forest inventory, and assessment of economic trees along the proposed road corridor. He said this would be done by the Department of Lands & Physical Planning (land survey), and the PNGFA (Forest inventory).

The road project has been a national government commitment under two revised Tolukuma Mining Project Memorandum Of Agreement (MoA). The project could not be implemented due to various reasons including financial issues.



**Photo: The National Government team in meetings with LOs and stakeholders at Foleka Village and Kubuna Catholic Parish**