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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Coalition of Youth Organisations raises youth voice into Electoral and Drug and Alcohol Laws

A group of PNG youth organisations and stakeholders have formed a powerful coalition to progress issues affecting young people in PNG.

In PNG young people under the age of 35 make up about 70% of the population and yet they have limited voice in parliament or on many of the laws and policies that affect their lives.

Early this year The Voice Inc., a youth development organization, invited 25 youth organizations and stakeholders in Port Moresby to explore the idea of forming a youth coalition to take collective action on issues affecting young people in PNG.

The coalition was launched and includes The PNG Cancer Foundation, The PNG Olympic Committee, Eco-Services Limited, The PNG Tribal Foundation, InterYouth Wave Rally and more. Andrew Lepani, Deputy Secretary General of the PNG Olympic Committee explains;

*"Many of the elite athletes of PNG fall into the "youth" segment of society and so PNG Olympic Committee is glad to be a part of the Youth Coalition to give voice to their opinions on important issues facing the youth of PNG."*

The Youth Coalition will work by focusing collective energy on specific development challenges (eg. youth unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse), creating a sector resource hub, using combined influence to amplify youth voice into political spaces & by sharing training and capacity building opportunities. The Voice Inc. houses the secretariat for the Coalition.

The first action for the Youth Coalition is to conduct a survey to gather Youth Voice on two key areas of legislation. The Constitutional Law Reform Commission has requested that public submissions be made on the laws relating to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs and representation of special interest groups in Parliament. The Youth Coalition aims to channel thousands of youth voices into this process.

Priscillar Napoleon, Executive Manager of the PNG Cancer Foundation explains their support for the survey.

*"The Papua New Guinea Cancer Foundation supports youth engagement with the laws on drugs and alcohol use as one step in encouraging youths to start making healthy lifestyle choices and reducing cancer risk."*

The survey is open to all young people aged 18-35 and can be accessed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BVFZXFT> or picked up in hard copy from The Voice Inc office, Ground Floor, Cuthbertson House, Town, Port Moresby.



**Picture 1:**  
Representatives of each of the organisations and stakeholders at the first Youth Coalition workshop



**Picture 2:** Group discussion during the first Youth organisation and stakeholder workshop.

