

# Commerce and Industry the engine room of PNG development: Minister

**Commerce and industry is the "engine room" of development in Papua New Guinea, according to new Minister for Commerce and Industry the Honourable Gabriel Kapris.**

Mr Kapris said this during a recent welcoming function held for him by the Department and associated statutory organisations Investment Promotion Authority (IPA), Industrial Centres Development Corporation (ICDC), National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology (NISIT), and Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC).

"The Department of Commerce and Industry is an important Department," he said.

"Commerce and Industry is the engine room of development in this country.

"Without Commerce and without a supportive industry, generating needed income and employment, this nation would waste away.

"Our functional role is not merely a Department that will continue to be playing a policeman role.

"We will shift to become proactive development partners among stakeholders within the Commerce and Industry sector.

"We must redefine our role with a new purposeful vision of moving out of past into the future."

Mr Kapris said he had only recently taken office, and had to acclimatise to his new responsibilities.

"However, from the outset, I should say that I will support project priorities and policies that carry common good, defines need, and merit-based," he added.

Mr Kapris said Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare had tasked his Ministers to deliver three major impact projects within the first 100 days in Government.

"I noted that this Department has 28 ongoing major and minor projects," he said. "In meeting with the Government expectation and consistent with the Prime Minister's tasked activities, I am pleased to announce that our three priority projects to deliver are:

- CMSS International Hotel;
- Dringas-Duara Road Project and;
- Madang Industrial Marine Park.

"Our responsibility is to reinforce and expand the commercial and industrial base which would in turn give us greater consistency and solidness to build a greater nation.

"Diversification of the economic structure would reduce the country's dependency on the oil, gas, and mining sectors, giving greater stability.

"On account of considering this view alone, I have selected these three projects.

"These impact projects would save foreign exchange and further improve the balance of payments.

"We will focus on delivering these three projects as a matter of government priority."

Mr Kapris said that to effectively and efficiently manage many of the ongoing projects, the functions of Trade should be returned from Department of Foreign Affairs to Department of Commerce and Industry.

"Almost all of these ongoing projects involve dealing with foreign transnational business and businessmen," he said.

"These are people and companies that conduct business across national borders of different nations.

"Our Department is resourceful, empowered by various Acts of Parliament, and has the capacity and technical capabilities to advise, and assist to drive new foreign investment.

"Without the functions of Trade, our Department's purpose of existence and activities is not achievable within real time.

"We must put our case forward to the Prime Minister on this issue."

Mr Kapris called for total commitment from all staff of his Department.