



DRAFT TALKING POINTS

NBC Radio

Polling Schedule, Polling and Counting

22 June 2022

Opening Remarks

- ◆ Thank you for inviting me to your program.
- ◆ In this session, I will discuss:
 - the polling schedule, how it was prepared, and how voters can be informed about when they will vote in their ward
 - the voting process, including the separate voting lines for men and women, and how to mark the ballot correctly, and
 - the counting and scrutiny process, including how the ballots are counted and results tabulated.
- ◆ Lastly, I will answer some of the most frequent questions voters have asked in social media.

Polling Schedule

- ◆ For each election, the PNGEC prepares and publishes the polling schedule, which includes the dates and places where polling will take place.
- ◆ PNGEC is finalizing the polling schedule in preparation for gazettal.
- ◆ The polling schedule will be published widely as soon as the gazettal process has started.
- ◆ The polling schedule has been developed in close collaboration with the provincial election offices, and in consultation the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, taking into account movement, logistics, and security considerations.
- ◆ The polling schedule has been designed to ensure that all enrolled electors are given the opportunity to vote in the election.

- ◆ For the 2022 National Election, the polling period is from **2 to 22 July**. However, there will be no polling on Saturdays or Sundays, so the first day of voting will be **Monday, 4 July**.
- ◆ There will be one-day polling, on different days, in the seven Highlands provinces, in NCD, in Madang Urban LLG, and in Lae Open Electorate.
- ◆ Almost everywhere else, there will be multi-day polling according to the polling schedule. The polling teams will move from one polling place to another in accordance with the polling schedule.
- ◆ Voters are encouraged to check the local area for more information about when the polling team will be in their location. Voters should seek information only by official sources.

Polling administration

- ◆ For the 2022 National Election, polling will take place at over 11,000 polling booths across over 9,600 polling places country-wide.
- ◆ Polling places are typically central locations in a city, town, or village, such as schools, markets, church yards, or other well-known locations.
- ◆ Polling opens from 8:00am and closes at 6:00pm.
- ◆ There will be separate voting compartments for male and female voters. This also means the certified lists of voters will be printed by gender.
- ◆ Polling is administered by the polling team, which is generally composed of seven members.
- ◆ The duties and responsibilities of polling team members are provided in the polling manual. A brief description of their roles is as follows:
 - Presiding Officer – is responsible for the overall management and administration of polling. The Presiding Officer is also responsible for issuing and initialling the back of the ballot papers in the male voting stream.
 - Assistant Presiding Officer – assists the Presiding Officer in management of polling. The Assistant Presiding Officer issues and initials the back of the ballot papers for female voters.

- Poll Clerks – Each polling team will have two Poll Clerks, one in each male and female voting stream. Poll Clerks are responsible for marking voters’ names off the certified list of voters and for applying ink.
 - Door Keeper/COVID-19 Warden – one to manage the queue for male voters, and one to manage the queue of female voters. They will also have responsibility of applying COVID-19 precautionary measures.
 - Ballot Box Guard – There will be one ballot box guard, responsible for guarding the ballot boxes and advising voters to ensure they place their ballots into the correct ballot boxes.
- ◆ Other persons who can be present at the polling booth include:
- Scrutineers – who have a certificate of appointment by the Returning Officer. Scrutineers are “agents”, or “representatives”, of candidates. Only one scrutineer for each candidate is permitted to remain in a polling booth at any time.
 - Members of the media may also be present but cannot enter a polling booth unless approved by the PNGEC and must not undermine the secrecy of the vote.
 - Electoral officials and other persons authorized by the PNGEC may also enter a polling booth.

Voting steps

- ◆ I will now provide an overview of the voting steps.
- ◆ There are a number of steps in voting:
1. At the entry of the polling booth, there will be two voting lanes: one for men and one for women. Voters will stand in the lane of their gender.
 2. Upon entry, an official will check the voter’s name in the certified list of voters – the roll. Voters are not required to present an ID, but the name must appear in the certified list of voters in order to vote. The official will also apply indelible ink to the small finger of the voter’s left hand.

3. Next, the voter will receive two ballot papers: **BLUE** for provincial electorate, and **PINK** for open electorate.
4. Voters will go to the voting compartment of their gender and vote freely and in secret. Candidate posters with the candidate names and numbers will be at the voting compartment. To mark the ballot papers correctly, the voter should:

- Write the candidate number **or** name of their first choice candidate beside number 1.
- Write the candidate number **or** name of their second choice candidate beside number 2.
- Write the candidate number **or** name of their third choice candidate beside number 3.

After marking both ballot papers, the voter should fold each of them in half to protect the secrecy of the vote.

5. Next, the voter is to place the ballot papers in the correct ballot boxes:

- The **BLUE** ballot goes in the provincial ballot box.
- The **PINK** ballot goes in the open electorate ballot box.

- ◆ After voting, voters should follow the signs to leave the polling booth.
- ◆ If a voter is unsure of any voting procedures, they are encouraged to ask questions to the Presiding Officer.
- ◆ In the voting queues, priority will be given to people with disabilities, pregnant women, and elderly persons, who are allowed to go to the front of their gender queues to enter the polling booth.
- ◆ If a voter needs assistance to mark the ballot, the voter is allowed to bring someone with them, but the person providing assistance cannot be a candidate or scrutineer. The Presiding Officer can also assist the voter if required.
- ◆ Voters should remember that voting is secret. Their vote is their right and they do not have to tell anyone how they voted and no one will be able to know how they voted either.

Closing the Polling Booth

- ◆ Now I will talk about the closing of polls.
- ◆ Polling closes at 6:00 pm on each day that polling is scheduled.
- ◆ If there is still a queue at 6:00pm, all voters in the queue are brought into the polling booth and are allowed to cast a vote. If in an outside area, a Polling Official will stand behind the last person in the queue to identify the last person who can vote – no one can join the queue after 6:00pm.
- ◆ After polling closes, the Presiding Officer will fill in the relevant forms in the Presiding Officer Journal.
- ◆ After a polling team has completed all its assigned polling, the Presiding Officer will securely transport the materials to the counting centres.

Counting and scrutiny

- ◆ After end of polling, all the ballot boxes are brought to a counting centre.
- ◆ For the 2022 National Election, the PNGEC will apply a variety of counting centre models, counting ballots physically at district and/or provincial capitals, organized on LLG-based count-stations, in order to increase accountability, efficiency and transparency in the counting process.
- ◆ Counting will start and finish at different times in different places.
- ◆ Counting can begin as soon as polling is finished in an electorate.
- ◆ For example, if all electorates in a province finish polling at 6pm on one day, then counting may begin in the province any time after that, even though polling may be taking place in other provinces.
- ◆ At the counting centres, all the ballot boxes will be opened one at a time to identify which ballot papers are formal (valid) and which are informal (invalid) according to the rules set by the Electoral Law. Only the ballot papers that are declared formal will be counted.
- ◆ Once the total numbers of formal and informal ballot papers is determined, the first preference votes are then allocated to each individual candidate.
- ◆ When the allocation of first preference votes is completed, then counting of the first preference vote for each candidate takes place.

- ◆ If no candidate secures an absolute majority of the first preference votes, then the candidate with the lowest (least) number of votes is “eliminated” from the count. This process continues until a candidate obtains an absolute majority. This process is called the Distribution of Preferences.
- ◆ Any candidate who receives an absolute majority at any stage of the count, is declared elected after the consent of the Electoral Commission.
- ◆ The official results are expected to be announced by the 29th of July 2022, the date by which the majority of the electoral writs for the 2022 National Election must be returned to the Governor-General.

Closing Remarks

- ◆ The 2022 National Election is coming.
- ◆ Voting is an important right of a citizen, but it is also a great responsibility. These two go hand in hand.
- ◆ If you are unsure about any voting procedure, please ask the Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer.
- ◆ I also want to encourage the public and all political parties to exercise caution when discussing the electoral process to avoid false or misleading information.
- ◆ PNGEC will continue to engage with stakeholders, including the media, to communicate accurate information about the election.