

2012 fiscal year marks change

By NEVILLE TOGAREWA

THE 2012 fiscal year should see a marked change in minimum basic services delivered to the millions of people living in the rural areas of Papua New Guinea.

It is all thanks to the commendable work of the National Economic and Fiscal Commission (NEFC) that has seen slow but incremental changes or improvements in the effective utilisation and implementation of goods and services grants to all the provinces in the last three years.

And if the National Government, all the 18 governors and their respective provincial administrators and program managers are serious about service delivery, they should make mandatory min-

imum budgetary allocations for health, education, primary industry, road and transport infrastructure and village courts in their 2012 budgets.

This is the result of a set of recommendations adopted by participants of a two-day Highlands regional workshop on Inter-governmental Financing and Service Delivery at Mt Hagen's Highlander Hotel on Friday.

The workshop adopted the same recommendations agreed to at the Southern regional workshop in Port Moresby two weeks ago.

The CEO and chairman of National Economic and Fiscal Commission, Dr Nao Badu told the participants that the same recommendations would be put to the NGI forum in two weeks time, fol-



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Dr Nao Badu
Mt Hagen

lowed by the Momase workshop to be held in Lae two weeks later.

The Mt Hagen workshop,

attended by Deputy Provincial Administrators, Budget Officers and all Program Managers responsible for key sectors like health, education, primary industry, works and village courts focused on Minimum Priority Activities (MPAs) in these vital areas of service delivery.

The resolutions include allocation of adequate funds to the MPAs, quarterly reviews of MPAs performance indicators, rollover of sectoral funds to the same sectors and not to any other activities in the following fiscal year, and transfer of adequate funds from the provinces to the districts and local level governments to ensure effective delivery of minimum basic services to the people.

Dr Badu told the participants that

they had a big responsibility to make sure that the Government's policy on service delivery worked for the benefit of the people.

"Despite what may be happening on the streets, in the Parliament and the Government, you are the team that can provide stability in all our provincial administrations and deliver basic services to our people," he said.

"Next year is election year and if we all go to the election, babies will die. It is as simple as that. I am counting on you to hunker down and continue to provide stability and services to our people," Dr Badu said.

"This is our fundamental obligation. It is not an option for us. Without you democracy is meaningless for our people," he said.