

**REPUBLIC OF NAURU**  
**LEADERSHIP CODE BILL 2016**  
**SECOND READING SPEECH**  
**Honorable Baron Divavesi Waqa MP**  
**9<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

Mr. Speaker Sir,

I have the pleasure of introducing to the House today a Bill for the *Leadership Code Act 2016*.

Mr. Speaker and honorable members, today we have before us a Bill for a law that signals a change for this country. This Bill will change the face of leadership as we know it.

I'm sure we have all heard the adage "Great leaders are born, not made". I no longer believe this is true. True leadership comes from years of hard work, perseverance and experience to be able to stand up after falling down, dust yourself off and carry on whilst at the same time taking something away from that experience and using it to better oneself. The same goes for our beautiful nation of Nauru. We have been pushed down and trodden on and yet here we are today better and stronger than ever.

This Bill when it becomes law will ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated and that our leaders are accountable to the people that they serve. The definition of 'Leader' in Clause 8 of the Bill is quite extensive.

Established in the Bill is the office of the Ombudsman which has the task of receiving complaints, investigating those complaints and penalizing those who breach the Act. If the Ombudsman cannot investigate or suspects that it is a matter for the police then the Ombudsman will request the Commissioner of Police to conduct investigation. If there is a situation that a criminal case must be filed then the Commissioner of Police will forward a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman is an independent office and is not subject to the control of any authority or person. This is an essential provision in the Bill and

independence means that the Ombudsman can look into any complaint against any leader without fear or favour. Fairness and accountability feature largely in this Bill.

Also included is a Code of Ethical Conduct that leaders must abide by. The principles include a leader displaying honesty and compassion, making decisions in accordance with the law, arranging their affairs so as to prevent conflicts of interest, not soliciting gifts or economic benefits.

Leaders must also never step out of their official roles to assist any private entities dealing with government where it would result in any preferential treatment to any person, or to use government property for purposes that would afford that leader any type of economic benefit. Finally, leaders, after they have left their public office, must not act in any manner that takes improper advantage of their previous office.

Leaders will be accountable to the people through a declaration and registration of their assets and declaration of interests. This Bill considers the importance of custom within the Nauruan society and as such has factored in its provisions dealing with custom and gift giving or receiving. If a leader has given or received a gift in custom, the burden is on the leader making the claim to prove that the gift was made or received in accordance to Nauruan custom.

Mr. Speaker, accompanying the Bill is a detailed explanatory memorandum that explains the Bill in much clearer detail.

Before I commend the Bill to the House, I thank all those involved in the preparation of this Bill from its first inception within this House, the Select Committee, the consultations, the drafting and its final return to us, the Members of Parliament.

This law must be seen as a light rather than a sword being yielded by Government.

In the words of Noel Preston, an academic and social and political activist:

*...nothing is more dangerous to the wellbeing of the body-politic than a public official who is technically competent or strategically astute but ethically illiterate or unfit.*

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.