



COUNTRY STATEMENT PRESENTED BY HON DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER AT
THE PLENARY UPOLU PLENARY HALL

Mr President
Excellencies
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

“What does the 3rd SIDS Conference hold for us in our quest to achieve sustainable development’ is the question Samoa has had to consider as it prepared to host this important event in the Pacific. At every opportunity we have pushed to contribute not only to the processes but also into shaping the outcome or SAMOA Pathway because it was felt that there has to be a difference in bringing to bear how we could influence the modalities for implementation. Clearly there is urgency in how we can effectively implement the SAMOA Pathway in tandem with the lead up to the Post 2015 agenda.

2014 is an important year for Samoa – it was the first commemorative year ever for small island developing states, it was the year Samoa graduated out of Least developed country status and these events coincided with the hosting of the SIDS conference.

As a small island developing state as well as a Least developed country, the special case of SIDS due to vulnerabilities had no influence on a graduation rule which unambiguously accepted the superiority of the per capita income criterion over that of vulnerability– something that is unjustifiable from our viewpoint. However we have looked at graduation as a time of opportunities perhaps because the only inclination is to look forward and ahead as we had for some time been prepared to settling into a smooth transition from LDC special measures.

In reality, the LDC benefits never weighed heavily among the factors of our economic progress. Samoa did not maximally exploit preferential market access through LDC treatment, the preferential market access we have been enjoying was granted to us by virtue of special arrangements –mainly with Australia and New Zealand. We appreciated LDC benefits such as UN-related travel funding by the UN Secretariat, or trade-related technical assistance through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for LDCs, but these have never been engines of our economic progress. Accordingly, our change of status was not such a rough landing, and indeed, ‘smooth transition’ is a notion we prefer to consider with reference to the future rather than with reference to the past. It is without doubt that the journey out of LDC status is very much reflective of the partnership arrangements we have established with our partners that are very much premised on the principles of effective development cooperation namely ownership, alignment, harmonisation, mutual accountability and results based. As well, Samoa has adopted the global monitoring frameworks under the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

The current Strategy for the Development of Samoa (2012-2016) clearly underscores a balanced consideration of the three pillars of sustainable development and set about prioritising investments that gave emphasis to economic and social development as well as environmental issues. Furthermore, there was recognition of the importance of inclusive development and the meaningful engagement of all stakeholders in the development process. Already the Government had facilitated partnerships with civil society and the private sector and is promoting public private partnerships with the support of its development partners.

It is therefore not a surprise that Government provided significant support to dedicate one day forums to partnerships with youth, major groups and the private sector as well as to priority areas or sustainable development namely renewable energy. Together these chosen areas formed the core of the preconference events program concluded successfully last week. The Youth Forum recognized that in order to fully accomplish goals and implement the call for action outlined in the Samoa Pathway, all partnership stakeholders including Governments, private sector, NGOs, development agencies and other stakeholders are strongly urged to put into place an overarching

monitoring mechanism for youth through a formal structure (e.g. United Nations Major Group of Children and Youth) to track government processes in implementing commitments made in the SIDS S.A.M.O.A. Pathway.

Similarly the SIDS youth, are taking a firm stand to commit themselves to take action and do all that is within their capacity to collaborate with governments, private sector, IGOs, NGOs and relevant stakeholders to implement the proposals and recommendations of both the SIDS Pre-Conference T.A.L.A.V.O.U. Forum and the SIDS 2014 S.A.M.O.A. Pathway.

The Major Groups Forum focused on the pressing challenges of climate change and disaster risk reduction; indigenous rights and gender equality; sustainable energy; and economic development. Critical for implementation would be the drive to seek out new collaboration—both among the Major Groups themselves and also with unfamiliar and new actors to advance the next stage of sustainable development with genuine and durable partnerships at its core.

We applaud a number of concrete partnerships and initiatives that were announced by private sector stakeholders that would contribute towards advancing sustainable development in a number of SIDS. The establishment of a SIDS Global Business Network was called for as well.

In terms of renewable energy options, the Forum conveyed a unified and strong message of renewables being key to sustainable development of SIDS; emphasized political commitment, the will to act, and the challenge of implementation. The SIDS Conference and the Secretary General's Climate Summit present a unique opportunity to build momentum and accelerate action in renewable energy for SIDS. The High-Level panel reiterated the three core principles of sustainable energy for all of universal access, increased renewable energy and energy efficiency as being relevant to SIDS and welcomed the timeliness of IRENA's Lighthouses initiative and emphasized the need for IRENA and other partners' engagement and support.

Partnerships are about commitment. The commitment of the Government of Samoa has led to extensive reforms which have ensured credible and robust country systems – our partners have shared and participated in the assessment of our country systems on a regular basis. We are open to the scrutiny of the multilateral financial institutions and this has resulted in revised policy frameworks and greater cohesion. Interesting partnerships have evolved into joint policy matrices which are the bases of our engagement with our development partners.

While we have yet to be a financial donor, Samoa is already actively promoting south south cooperation and works with many of its Pacific neighbours to organise work place attachments of those nationals in ministries in Samoa particularly in the areas of public financial management. Similarly it is also in a position to share some of its expertise with other Pacific countries.

While we recognize that the United Nations is still some way away from special considerations for SIDS, as they do Least developed countries, Samoa as host country asks that this request for special measures for SIDS not be discounted as an impossible reality.

Thank you for your attention.