



2 SEPTEMBER 2014

APIA, SAMOA

ITU - SIDE EVENT - BRIDGING BROADBAND BARRIERS OF SIDS

**OPENING ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA
TUILAEPA LUPESOLIAI SAILELE MALIELEGAOI**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to welcome you here in Samoa, for the continued celebration of the International Year of Small Island Developing States, and for the *Third International Conference on SIDS*.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of many Leaders of Governments in this event. Your presence, Excellencies, clearly demonstrate your commitment to developing information and communication technology, and in particular Broadband, as a catalyst, for advancing the sustainable development of our countries, in the next decade.

I wish also to thank Mr Brahima Sanou, Director of Development of the International Telecommunication Union, for the excellent effort and commitment to help SIDS with such technological developments.

I am also happy to note that Samoa is already contributing to the work of ITU, through one of its nationals, whom I understand is part of the project team.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Samoa conference, is not just about the recognition of the tremendous challenges faced by small island developing states, but also of the many opportunities, for sustainable social and economic development in our small island countries, when we recognize and accept ICTs and broadband at the same level as other utilities, such as electricity and water.

I know that while some of us have submarine cables, it is indeed a challenge to roll out these technological advances to our remote islands and rural areas. This is why satellites will continue to play a crucial part in providing broadband access to those vulnerable areas, so that the regional vision of “ICTs for all” becomes an achievable target. As we all know there are numerous benefits of having access to broadband. Today, it is not difficult to imagine how people can cope without mobile phones.

Distinguished guests,

We have success stories of broadband in urban Samoa today, but we have yet to measure the access of rural Samoa to broadband. The Faculty of Medicine based at the National University of Samoa, uses online facilities for learning. In this case, broadband connectivity is a must; it should be faster with a lot of bandwidth to enable teaching of a class, made up of many students scattered in other parts of the world.

With broadband development, we can all enjoy faster and better Internet access for bridging communication spans, and for other opportunities in education, health, and the environment.

Needless to mention, there are also harmful aspects of the Internet and we must be vigilant in addressing these issues. This is why in 2013; Samoa passed in Parliament the revised Crimes Act, which included cybercrime provisions, again, through the assistance of the ITU.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My proposal today is for we, Leaders to support the development of Broadband, as a key initiative for implementation of the SAMOA Pathway towards sustainable development and the post 2015 development agenda. Such development efforts are vitally important – because ICTs are accelerators in terms of all development goals, including the eradication of poverty. Also, when it comes to the area of emergencies and disasters, which SIDS are particularly prone to, broadband becomes crucial, and can save lives.

I would urge all of you here today that together, we can do much to ensure that the small island developing states reach their full potential, and enjoy the benefits of ICT and Broadband towards sustainable development.

It is now my pleasure to declare this side event opened.