



**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE HON PRIME MINISTER TUILAEPA LUPESOLIAI
SAILELE MALIELEGAOI AT THE MAJOR GROUPS FORUM
28TH AUGUST, 2014 – TUI ATUA TUPUA TAMASESE EFI CONVENTION
CENTRE**

Secretary General of the Conference Mr Wu Hongbu
Excellencies
Distinguished participants
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to welcome you all to Samoa, the Pacific and particularly to the Major Groups Forum today. Samoa despite the odds remained determined to host the preconference events and its choice of the preconference events it wished to host was premised on the principle of inclusiveness. I wish to thank you all for the commitment to come to Samoa as I am of the view that as small islands developing states we have rich experiences we could share with each other and that these are aligned to many of the key tenets that Major Groups support towards sustainable development of Small island developing states.

Your presence today reflect your support of Samoa's aspirations towards hosting the Third SIDS conference as we wanted to demonstrate how and why Samoa as a small island developing state has graduated out of Least Developed Country status and more importantly how to live sustainable development. We wanted to promote the hope that SIDS are indeed a special case for global partnership and that the political will is there to commit to ensuring SIDS receive priority consideration in their quest to achieve Sustainable Development.

Our choice for the Theme of the Samoa Conference of “SIDS’ sustainable development through genuine and durable partnerships’ reflect the modest successes we have achieved through our consolidated partnerships framework; albeit the issue of Partnership has not warranted a special place as a stand alone priority in the SAMOA Pathway.

I do recognize that Major Groups might have been marginalized in the preparatory process for the SAMOA Pathway however for Samoa, civil society organisations are integral, genuine and durable partners that will continue to contribute to its sustainable development path into the future. I am proud to acknowledge that my portfolios include being the Minister for Civil Society.

I wish to draw your attention to the new areas in the SAMOA Pathway that the Major groups can effectively advocate for at the global and regional levels. These include food security and nutrition, Gender equality and empowerment of women, management of chemical waste as well as invasive alien species which accelerated presence poses a huge threat to sustainable development. The threats include undermining of SIDS protection of biodiversity and livelihood, preserving and maintaining ocean resources, enhancing ecosystems resiliency, secure food security, and initiatives to adapt to impacts of climate change.

Climate change is the most serious issue of our time and Samoa has implemented a National adaptation strategy as well as begun work on a Mitigation framework and has also established climate financing modalities in cooperation with its development partners. Like many of its Pacific neighbours, Samoa has moved to implement renewable energy options with a target of 20% renewables by 2030. In this connection, I would encourage you all to visit some of the solar projects already in place including the biggest solar array in the Pacific; part of which is located at the SIDS Conference Venue. Related to climate change impacts I would also encourage the Samoa Conference to focus discussions on and make the commitment to address the issue of a Vulnerability Index specifically for SIDS as the GDP indicator and other economic measures continue to be inappropriate for Samoa and SIDS;

I do share a strong sense of inclusiveness in the role of Major Groups around SIDS and invite you all to contribute to the series of discussions as your experiences are vital in further shaping the SAMOA outcomes! It is also worth noting that the 17 Sustainable Development Goals follow similar priorities to the SAMOA Pathway and we would call on states to recognize this as a sign of global commitment to SIDs.

Finally, I encourage you all to enjoy the comprehensive activities in side events, parallel events, partnership dialogues, visit villages and the rest of my country, and indeed learn from the Samoa experience of both successes and failures!

I take this opportunity to thank UNDESA and the major Groups Steering Committee for organising this Forum in collaboration with our own SUNGO. I also thank the European Union for facilitating Samoa's hosting of the preconference events.

I wish you well in your deliberations over the next day and look forward to your plenary statement which I hope will further highlight and reflect the outcomes of this Forum and others.