



**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER TUILAEPA SAILELE  
MALIELEGAOI OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM ON SATURDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST AT THE  
TANOA HOTEL RESERVE**

Secretary General of the SIDS Conference

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa lava and a very warm welcome to Samoa.

I am delighted to join you this morning as we gather to celebrate the official opening of the Private Sector Partnerships Forum, a pre-conference event of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, of which my country is a proud host.

The Government of Samoa, in partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, alongside our very own Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, are privileged to convene the Private Sector Partnerships Forum.

It gives me great pleasure to see such a diverse group of participants from business, civil society, the UN system and governments. Your presence this morning is an acknowledgement of the importance of the broad alliance that the private sector, in partnership with various sectors of society, can bring about to advance the sustainable development aspirations of small island developing States, or SIDS as we know them.

The acknowledgement of the role of the private sector in our societies is not a new phenomenon. For SIDS, the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action, the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for Implementation and the 2012 Rio+20 outcome document – The Future We Want – recognised the invaluable contribution of the private sector to meeting sustainable development in SIDS. It must however be mentioned that for the Pacific in particular, the prevailing context is one of underdeveloped private sectors especially for the smallest of our neighbours.

As the international community now gathers here in Samoa to adopt the SAMOA Pathway, I can assure you that once again the private sector's role in contributing to sustainable development in SIDS will be further recognised and supported. The hosting of the Private Sector Partnerships Forum as one of the major pre-conference events is testament to this recognition of the private sector's contribution to fostering entrepreneurship and innovation along with supporting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth.

The thematic areas being addressed by the Forum: Sustainable Agriculture, Connectivity, Disaster Risk Reduction, Oceans, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Tourism and Financing are not new nor are they emerging issues for SIDS. They do however remain high on the development discourse for SIDS and I am encouraged that this Forum has taken a holistic approach in recognising the cross-cutting nature of these thematic areas.

I also urge all participants during your deliberations to take into account other cross-cutting issues concerning: women in business, youth entrepreneurship, informal sector integration, capacity development, ease of doing business and access to inclusive finance.

Furthermore I encourage all participants to take full advantage of the sessions and the business-matchmaking events that are on the agenda for the Forum. As well I would encourage all SIDS participants – including those from Small and Medium Enterprises - to embrace this opportunity to build the crucial business networks and seek opportunities for investments that are conducive to the future growth and viability of your companies and organisations.

The right investment, no matter how large or small, has the potential to have a significant impact on the livelihoods for many of our people. To our friends from developed countries, I encourage you to see the private sector in SIDS as equal partners who are ready, willing and able to expand your business horizons and help you tap into the new and exciting markets that SIDS have to offer.

It is the spirit of entrepreneurship that has brought so many of you to our part of the world to attend this Forum. The Forum is therefore more than a platform to discuss business as usual, it is a venue to discuss innovative ideas, to think outside the box and importantly, it is a venue to foster genuine and durable partnerships and scale-up existing ones.

I am particularly encouraged to hear that a SIDS Global Business Network will be discussed throughout the Forum. Such a network will provide an important bridge to enable closer private sector ties between the three SIDS regions, but also with the international business community.

I for one am supportive of the intention to reflect the Outcomes of this Forum at the plenary sessions as well as Partnership dialogues and that they will be integrated into the SAMOA pathway framework and subsequent implementation through genuine and durable partnerships.

Lastly, while you are enjoying the Private Sector Partnerships Forum, I welcome you to also take the time to visit our beautiful islands and to witness first-hand the exciting products and services our local entrepreneurs have to offer. In the coming week, if you are extending your stay to be at the conference, do take the time to visit the SIDS Village where you will be treated to vibrant displays of entrepreneurship.

I take this opportunity to thank UNOHRLLS the lead steer for this Forum, other international and regional partners and the EU for their support to facilitate the Government of Samoa hosting the pre conference events.

I wish you well in your deliberations.