



STATEMENT BY

HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER TUILAEPA LUPESOLIAI SAILELE MALIELEGAOI
PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA AND PRESIDENT OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
AT THE CLOSING OF THE SIDS CONFERENCE
4 SEPTEMBER 2014, 6:00PM, UPOLU PLENARY HALL, APIA, SAMOA

Heads of State and Government
Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

We have just adopted by consensus the SAMOA Pathway. We have similarly accepted as part of the conference outcome the summaries of the six multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue sessions. I want to thank you all for your cooperation without which we would not be able to complete our task on time.

This week has been a great privilege for me and all my Pacific brothers and sisters to host you on our shores at the 3rd SIDS Conference. I hope your brief sojourn in our islands has given you a deeper appreciation and empathy of our realities and allow you to witness first-hand what we are doing to deal with the major global problems of our time. That was the overriding reason for us hosting this conference.

I hope this experience has been as rewarding for you as it has been for us and that you will leave here with a sense of what it feels like to be a small island developing state in a global arena of competing priorities and demands, where those with the resources and the influence emerge the winners. I hope too that you had a chance to see how we celebrate our culture to fully appreciate how interwoven our lives, economies and societies are with our environment. And that fundamentally we are all part of a global family and our destinies are very much linked with yours.

Before closing, I have a few messages to share with you. I hope your reflections are similar.

At the outset, let me remind that Samoa is by no means the final destination for responses to SIDS development challenges. But is an important launch point to key future stops on our journey to sustainably employ the few resources available to SIDS to improve and raise the standard of living for our communities.

The first meeting of consequence is BAN Ki-moon's leaders' summit on climate change in three weeks' time, an essential forerunner to the Lima and Paris negotiations for an ambitious climate change treaty in 2015. For SIDS, capturing their positions in a Paris treaty is an absolute priority.

Equally important is the 3rd global conference on Disaster Risk reduction in Japan next March. The gradual but inevitable shift of focus from SIDS vulnerabilities to building their resilience means any decisions on this front must be informed by SIDS perspectives.

And, there are of course the sustainable development goals to be finalised soon, and the post-2015 UN development agenda framework under negotiation should be under SIDS constant watch so that these key stops do not become missed opportunities for the group.

Thus after today's closure, I hope the SAMOA Pathway will not be viewed as an end in itself to be used only as a reference point until the next SIDS conference. Much investment in genuine goodwill by SIDS and their partners went in to agreeing to the SAMOA Pathway as the blueprint for SIDS sustainable development for now and the immediate future.

To our partners and to SIDS in particular, I trust that over the next ten years, the SAMOA Pathway will become your compass to guide your trip, your itinerary so that you don't bypass any important multilateral meetings along the way, and importantly as your prepaid ticket so that you are guaranteed a seat on this journey to ensure your voice is heard by other members on any matter affecting the international family.

This week, the messages emanating from SIDS conference have been heard loud and clear around the globe, thanks to the power of internet technology and connectivity. Distances have been eliminated and different time-zones not a barrier anymore. This was made possible with the support of local IT companies and global corporate partners like Microsoft Corporation. We owe them all a note of gratitude.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Today marks a beginning, not an end.

This week we have all helped to build a great SIDS *va'a* or voyaging canoe, the SAMOA Pathway. We have also equipped it with the many paddles necessary to move it forward, through the many partnerships we have celebrated and launched here in the Pacific. We are departing on a journey together and as we chart a course towards many multilateral negotiations awaiting us, it is our sincere hope that you will all be Ambassadors of Goodwill for SIDS. Indeed, as I said at the outset, Samoa and the Pacific is your home, and you will always be welcomed as family and friends.

Ladies and gentlemen, the time for speeches is over. We must now set sail with determination that the course of action we have chartered here at the Third SIDS conference will be delivered to achieve our priorities. With genuine and durable partnerships established during the conference there is every reason for SIDS to look ahead to the future with great comfort and confidence.

I thank you. Faafetai ma ia manuia.