



**Statement**  
**By**  
**Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi**  
**Prime Minister of Samoa**  
**For The Opening Ceremony of**  
**the 11<sup>th</sup> Regular Session Of The WCPFC (Tuna Commission)**  
**Upolu Plenary Hall, Faleata Complex, Tuanaimato**  
**Monday, 1 December 2014 at 9.00am**

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Reverend Afamasaga Mautofu Fuimaono,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Chairman of the Commission, Your Excellency Dr Charles Karnella,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to be here today and to say a few words on the occasion of the official opening in Samoa of the 11<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, or commonly referred to as the Tuna Commission. On behalf of the Government and people of Samoa, I would like to extend to you all, especially those from outside the Pacific region and those visiting Samoa for the first time, a very warm welcome to our island country. Thank you for accepting our offer to host this year's annual session in Samoa and hope that you have been able to enjoy our country since your arrival.

Your meeting this week is most opportune as it follows immediately after the successful completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations International Conference on Small Island Developing States which Samoa hosted in September this year. As host and President of that Conference, we were honoured to have hosted more than 130 countries

and 100 organizations in this same complex and in this very Hall. These facilities were purposely built and refurbished for the SIDS Conference and we are very pleased to have been able to use them again for the Tuna Commission meeting this week. These same facilities will be used again next year when we host the Commonwealth Youth Games. These are examples of the importance we place on sustainable management and strategic utilization of limited resources and the promotion of economic development opportunities available to small island developing States especially in the Pacific region.

The outcome document of the Conference entitled the **SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action Pathway** or the '**SAMOA Pathway**' in short, highlights oceans and seas as essential components of the Earth's global ecosystem and their intrinsic connection to sustainable development, including that of Small Island developing States. Healthy, productive and resilient oceans and coasts are critical for poverty eradication, access to sufficient and nutritious food, livelihoods, economic development, and essential ecosystem services and many other elements of sustainable economic development that are important to us all.

In the spirit of collective aspiration, it is incumbent upon all of us, both members and cooperating non-members, to work together in the true spirit of genuine and durable Partnership to ensure our fish stocks remain healthy for current and future generations. Your annual meeting is an important forum to continue the dialogue on strategies and management measures to achieve this goal.

The fisheries resource represents a most significant natural resource for all the Pacific countries with many of the economies relying heavily on fish and fish products. Fishing and fisheries have historically provided sustenance for our Pacific peoples and it is our sincerest wish that it would continue to do so into the future.

The Pacific Leaders at its annual Forum and in the Pacific Plan have continued to give high priority to fisheries issues and development, underscoring the importance of fish resources to the economies and

societies of the Pacific countries. Indeed, this year's Forum Leaders meeting held in Palau selected the theme "The Ocean: Life and Future" demonstrated the emphasis that Pacific Island countries place on the ocean and fisheries and a consistent call for optimum benefits to be derived from these resources.

I understand an important issue before you this week is a strengthened and enhanced conservation and management measure for the South Pacific albacore. South Pacific albacore is the most important target species for many island countries in the region, Samoa included. In order to maintain the long-term sustainability and economic viability of the fishery for South Pacific albacore, and to ensure livelihoods for local fishermen, it is important that stronger and more effective fisheries management arrangements for the South Pacific albacore are agreed at this meeting. A new strengthened measure will promote SIDS domestic access to resources and provides a better enabling framework for SIDS' development aspirations. I encourage you all to work together in the true spirit of Partnership to reach this common goal. In signing the Tokelau Arrangement, Samoa, like other signatories, actively contributes to the cooperating effort to conserve and manage albacore, an important fishery to the Pacific Islands.

The issue of compliance to conservation and management measures as well as timely reporting are equally important. Illegal, unreported and unregulated or IUU fishing in the high seas and in the Convention area, continue to threaten and undermine fisheries conservation and management efforts by both national fisheries administrations and regional organizations.

Much of the success of any measure the Commission puts in place will depend on the commitment and compliance of all parties and especially the adherence by the fishing industry. Therefore, hard decisions need to be made to give meaning to the principal objective of the Tuna Commission to ensure the long term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the Western and Central Pacific ocean.

Evidence indicates that fisheries in other regions are severely overfished or have collapsed. The Pacific fisheries clearly face the same danger. But it is not too late to manage the Pacific fisheries resources to be sustainably harvested into the foreseeable future. However, it would require everyone represented in this hall to avoid cynicism and instead to work and cooperate together in the spirit of genuine and durable Partnership, to heed the lessons and avoid the mistakes made in other regions in the exploitation of their fish stocks. I wish you well in your deliberations and for a successful conclusion to your meeting.

To end my remarks, I do support that the Commission rules require that the annual sessions of the Commission should be held at the Commission headquarters unless the Commission decides otherwise. The reason for holding the Commission in the Pacific is obvious as custodians of the resources and its environment. In order to preserve those rules and the principle that as many Commission meetings be held in the Pacific region, Samoa stands ready and willing to avail its services and these facilities before you, for that purpose.

I hope you will enjoy your stay with us and that you return home safely to your families for a happy festive season.

Thank you. Soifua.