

SAMOA



STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA**

AT THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Samoa commemorated its fiftieth anniversary of independence this year at home and abroad. The United Nations Headquarters was one of the venues, and for good reason. Our aspirations to be a sovereign state founded on democratic principles, Christian beliefs and our cultural values were facilitated ably by the United Nations. New Zealand as the administering power was sympathetic and supportive which hasten the attainment of our independence. Our people were given the choice to decide the future of our country. The United Nations and the administering power supported the process, and paved the way. As we also heard from the President of the United States, people everywhere ultimately long for freedom to determine their destiny.

Half a century later, there still remain territories today even in our Pacific region where people have not been able to exercise their right of self-determination. In the case of French Polynesia, we encourage the metropolitan power and the territory's leadership together with the support of the United Nations to find an amicable way to exercise the right of the people of the territory to determine their future.

Mr. President,

The RIO+20 Outcome Document provides the blueprint of the future we want. It is a future we all signed on to, a partnership of shared responsibilities, commitments and undertakings amongst all members, big or small. For all the goals to be achieved, every country must deliver on its pledges in good faith and not try to negotiate a way out.

For Samoa, amongst the gains includes the re-affirmation that Small Island Developing States is a special case for sustainable development due to their unique and particular vulnerabilities. But acknowledging SIDS vulnerabilities without attendant resources to strengthen their resilience makes this goal nothing but a hollow victory.

The oceans and seas are resources most members of our group have access to. The call to conserve and harness the marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions including taking a decision on the development of an international instrument under the Convention of the Law of the Seas, are important major achievements worthy of support.

The decision to hold a SIDS Review meeting in 2014 is important and timely. Samoa's offer to host this meeting is a matter of record. Coincidentally, 2014 holds special significance for Samoa. Barring any natural catastrophes, we will graduate from the category of Least Developed Countries on 1 January that year.

This was one of the motivations for our bid to host the SIDS Review.

We want to underscore that through genuine partnerships with development partners our Small Island Developing State, also an LDC is able to markedly lift the socio-economic situation of our country and the standard of living for our people. Importantly, every member state should be afforded the opportunity to host UN meetings. And the success of meetings should be measured on the quality of the decisions and commitments agreed to, not just on costs and number of participants considerations only.

Mr. President,

The Millenniums Development Goals are not mere aspirations of what might be, but tangible outcomes of what should be. By their very nature, they are a restatement of our own people's development needs and hopes. Thus the achievement of the MDGs in 2015 for us, is not for any pride but a matter of necessity and we shall continue to do everything possible to bring about this desired result. Success also means that we start the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals framework at higher thresholds, which would help spur greater effort to improve the lives of more and more of our people.

Mr. President,

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will succeed the MDGs is already getting central-stage attention in some quarters. From Samoa's perspective, clear, time-bound, targeted and measureable global benchmarks are critical. We must ensure the post 2015 development agenda builds on the important progress of the MDGs and is expanded to cover broader sustainable development issues as agreed in Rio.

As well, we must ensure that the important priorities that the 2014 SIDS Meeting identifies in its outcomes, are integrated into global development frameworks of post 2015 and comprehensively addressed, to respond to the needs of SIDS.

Mr. President,

Climate change is the world's most urgent problem requiring a decisive global response. It is a challenge that should unite us, not divide us. Entrenched positions devoid of today's realities and in pursuit of unrelated agendas do not have a role in our collective effort. All countries are impacted by climate change in varying degrees. No one should stay detached and unconcerned to our common plight. We must work together with a sense of urgency and commitment to address climate change, today, not tomorrow. It should not just be the science that recommends what we should do, but also our conscience and the political will to follow through.

Clearly, we want leaders who view the world as a single constituency where everyone must work together within the limits of their capacity and capability to be part of the total solution.

The climate change negotiating process has been a long and frustrating journey especially for small island developing states. They contributed the least to the causes of climate change, yet stand to suffer the most and least able to adapt effectively to the adverse impacts.

Climate change cannot be wished away. Even those countries which have been in self denial to date, must surely now accept the weight of scientific evidence. Climate change, facilitated largely through human-induced activities, poses one of the gravest threats to humankind and the continuation of life in our world as we know today.

Mr. President,

Samoa's unwavering support for the United Nations Peacekeeping work is underscored by twelve years of uninterrupted police deployment to serve in missions in Liberia, Sudan, Timor-Leste and South Sudan. Our commitment is rooted in our firm belief in the role that the United Nations peacekeeping plays in helping to eliminate the causes of conflict and in bringing about peace and stability. A peaceful environment helps in the betterment of the lives of those who have been affected by conflict and ultimately in achieving of our common goal for a peaceful coexistence of our peoples and nations.

We are determined to gradually increase over time, the level and number of our officers in peacekeeping duties.

Regionally-owned and coordinated solutions to regional upheavals can be quite effective and successful. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, under the umbrella of the Pacific Islands Forum demonstrates this very well and Samoa will continue to provide strong support to regionally owned solutions when required.

Mr. President,

Samoa reaffirms its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms. Our continuing determination to work with other member states to fight against terrorism by all means possible, is consistent with human rights and the rule of law.

The horror of terrorist atrocities is a common and almost daily occurrence. Terrorist acts committed under whatever pretext or purpose is deplorable and morally unjustified. In its various forms and manifestations, terrorism is responsible for the permanent scars of horror and fear which have gripped international attention in recent years. These attacks have underlined the fact that while terrorist acts may permeate national borders, the indiscriminate nature of terrorism means that no peoples or countries will ever be immune to the threat of terrorist violence.

So many innocent lives had been lost indiscriminately and unceremoniously. More than ever, terrorism is a major threat that must be confronted by a collective international response at the national, regional and international levels. It must be condemned in the strongest terms possible to send out the message unequivocally that it is neither accepted, nor condoned, and perpetrators should not expect any sympathy for their actions.

The tragic events in Benghazi reminds and reinforces the importance of all nations working together, including through the United Nations, to put in place practical and effective measures to provide for the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives worldwide. Samoa will continue to work with like-minded countries towards that goal.

Mr. President,

Samoa's membership of the United Nations is grounded on the promise of hope, equality and justice the United Nations offers the member states, irrespective of their economic, political or military strengths. States in leadership positions and those aspiring for the same status, must lead responsibly and by example.

Every member state irrespective of size or strength should be able to contribute appropriately to decisions and actions of the United Nations to make our organization an agent of change during these challenging times.

The UN continues to play an important role in our collective effort to achieve the objectives of our organization, whether in peace and security, the environment, poverty alleviation, the fight against terrorism and many other challenges that threaten our world.

Mr. President,

This week during the Treaty Event, I deposited Samoa's Instrument of Ratification for the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We did so because we place great faith in the rule of law and the vital protection that the law offers to all states, especially to the weak and small.

Mr. President,

Lately, serious disputes have arisen amongst bordering states with the potential to escalate into confrontation with far reaching consequences. We would encourage the parties concerned to resolve these through appropriate peaceful settlement arrangements.

Mr. President,

Clearly, member states can only do so much. We need a committed Secretariat that is aware and sensitive to the needs of

the peoples it exists to serve. Hence why Samoa supports the Secretary-General's vision to create a professional career service that is flexible and mobile to allow for quick and positive responses to the diverse demands of member states. The need for the UN to deliver as one entity cannot be overemphasized. It adds value and quality to the process, eliminates wastage, minimizes overlaps, and ensures scarce resources entrusted to its care are used optimally to supplement members' hard-earned efforts.

Mr. President,

The United Nations remains the only viable institution that draws all the nations of our world together. The necessity to revitalize the General Assembly and to reform the Security Council has been obvious for many years. In the case of the Security Council, as long as its current composition and rules ignore today's global realities, it will continue to struggle to gain legitimacy and to effectively carry out its intended tasks as we have witnessed over many years.

Samoa remains firm in its position that the permanent and non-permanent membership categories of the Security Council should be expanded. Member states with appropriate credentials and the disposition to contribute to the Council's work and resources should be encouraged to stake their claims for membership of this important organ of our organization. Importantly, the inter-governmental process should continue in earnest during the

current session to bring finality to an issue that has taxed members' patience and endurance for over a decade and a half.

Mr. President,

For the United Nations to be truly reformed, we also need a strengthened and revitalized General Assembly as the primary policy and decision making organ of the United Nations. Moreover, we encourage efforts underway to streamline the work of the different UN agencies to eliminate wastage of resources and unnecessary duplication of time and effort.

Mr. President,

We often congregate around our points of commonality, finding validity and safety in numbers. It is however, diversity that has historically ensured human adaptability, resilience and true dynamism. Our own Pacific region is going through a process of maturity where sub-regionalism is evolving and the uniqueness of capacity and comparative advantages are coming to the fore. The same can be said of our UN family and its dynamic leadership. The diversity can enable a platform for collective progress if, in the words of President Obama "we ensure that we are strengthened by our differences, not defined by them".

Mr. President,

As we heard from other leaders including the UN Secretary General and the US President it is of critical importance for the Palestinians to be allowed to realize their right to a viable state of their own, existing alongside a secure and safe Jewish State of Israel.

This has also been and continues to be Samoa's long-standing position on this issue. We remain hopeful that current efforts to secure a peaceful settlement in the Middle East that is durable and fair will be successful. All efforts towards this goal rekindles hope and should be supported. A peace deal is central to providing conditions conducive to the achievement of a two-state solution.

Mr. President,

We wish you well as you lead the work of our General Assembly.

We also want to place on record our appreciation to Secretary General Ban ki-Moon for the leadership he brings to the work of our Organization and wish him success in the discharge of his key responsibilities in the challenging times ahead.

Thank you