

# SAMOA



**STATEMENT BY**

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**AT THE**

**FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE  
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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*Please check against delivery*

Madame Chairperson and distinguished participants,

It is an honour to address you on behalf of the Government of Samoa at the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The Government of Samoa wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the global movement for the advancement of women and to the national implementation of global initiatives for gender equality, namely:

- :- CEDAW
- ❖ the Millennium Development Goals
- :- the Beijing Platform for Action
- ❖ the Pacific Platform of Action AND
- ❖ the Commonwealth Plan of Action

Samoa's approach has been to integrate the critical themes and objectives of these international instruments into the implementation of its national development activities.

Over the last decade, the Government has implemented a comprehensive programme of legislative reforms, financial and economic reforms and public sector reforms which have and continue to directly benefit women in many ways.

Legislative reforms include: new citizenship laws which allows Samoan women to pass on their citizenship to their foreign spouses on a equal basis with men. The new Births, Deaths and Marriages registration laws toughen compulsory registration.

Financial and economic reforms have resulted in: improved access to credit facilities, increased income generating activities, increased support for business enterprises.

Madame Chair, I would like to detail a number of public sector reforms which directly impact on women's advancement.

Public sector reforms resulted in the realignment of the former Ministry of Women Affairs with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry for Youth affairs creating the *new Ministry for Women, Community and Social Development*. The new Ministry's first Corporate Plan covering 2004-2007, focuses on enhancing the role of women in the development of their families and communities.

The Ministry is utilizing its multi — sectorial partnerships to achieve its mandate on gender mainstreaming which includes the CEDAW Partnership that comprises of Government Ministries and Non Government Organization representatives.

In 2003 the Ministry of Women Affairs developed a national CEDAW plan of action in collaboration with the CEDAW Partnership. This Plan integrates critical areas and objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Pacific Platform for Action, the Commonwealth Plan of Action and the Millennium Development Goals, relevant to the Samoan context.

In 2004 Cabinet endorsed the establishment of village elected Government Women Representatives whose function is to oversee women development initiatives and programs spearheaded by Government for the

**wellbeing and economic empowerment of women, especially in the rural areas.**

**In 2004 Samoa's Police Services initiated the 'Safer Samoa' campaign, which embodies a major shift in policy from reactive law enforcement to proactive crime reduction and the promotion of community safety and confidence. Domestic Violence is one of the critical focus areas of the campaign.**

**In March this year, the Government will open its first dialysis center to provide low cost treatment for diabetes patients. Diabetes is a serious health issue in Samoa which affects a significant proportion of women in the country.**

**There is a well known and ancient Samoan proverb: "E au le Inailau a Tamaitai", which means "The legacy of women is one of total achievement". Indeed, the high status of women has long been recognized in our culture and traditions. When women succeed, their families succeed and society prospers. This is the Samoan way.**

Samoa delivered its 'Report on the Status of Women in Samoa', to the UN CEDAW Committee just a few weeks ago and, acknowledges that there is much work to be done. While the Government recognizes the pertinent need to advance the status of women according to its constitutional, international and moral obligations, it must do so in a responsible manner and can only do so in partnership with the community and through international and regional assistance.

We, as a collective and as individual nations, being responsible in both capacities to advance the status of women, must maintain a steady course. The momentum created by Beijing in 1995 and refueled by New York in 2000 must be maintained. We urge for the continued assistance from the international community for the full realization of the Beijing Platform for Action and all related international instruments for the advancement of women.

la Manuia Le Fono.