

SAMOA



STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER

OF THE

INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

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Mr. President,

Our world continues to change in profound ways. Technological advances have accelerated globalization bringing diverse challenges and new agendas.

The magnitude of today's threats requires holistic solutions with a multilateral approach. No one country, however powerful, can resolve these on its own. Nations of the world need to work together to forge a coordinated approach. It is a shared responsibility and the problems would only be solved successfully through effective collaboration.

To meet these challenges requires a vibrant institution that is equal to the task and responds to the imperatives of our time.

Sixty five years ago, the world created the United Nations as the legitimate authority for our collective peace and security. International cooperation and solidarity were the bedrock of its existence. To this day, the United Nations provides the only viable framework and legitimate authority to act globally to address issues that transcend national borders.

As a world institution, the United Nations needs to pay attention to its ability to offer itself as a safe place, not just for its traditional stakeholders – the member governments, but also for international organizations, the business community and civil society. Partnerships with these sectors of society are an important vehicle through which the United Nations helps the development of individual countries and allows our organization to achieve in large measure the key objectives of its mission.

Our organization is not without shortcomings and is why we must constantly redefine its role and adapt it to respond to the needs of the world that our organization exists to serve.

Mr. President,

That is why over the years under the Security Council reforms, Samoa has not wavered from its principled support for an expanded Council in both the permanent and non-permanent memberships. The economic and political liberalization have changed the contemporary geo-political realities and landscape, and the enlargement therefore of the Security Council in both categories is essential for true multilateralism and for the Council's integrity and credibility.

Equally vital is the ongoing reform to give prominence to the General Assembly as the truly deliberative and representative body in the global decision making process, giving voice and representation to all member states irrespective of a country's wealth

and might. This was the basis for Samoa becoming a member of this world body over thirty years ago.

Mr. President,

The threat of climate change is grave with dire implications for global peace and security. It threatens to intensify existing drivers of conflict in a way that could roll back development across many countries. The causes of climate change and those responsible for it, the multifaceted threats it poses and the solutions to mitigate and adapt against its negative impacts, are well documented and duly validated by science and real life experiences.

A new climate change instrument is currently under negotiation. Progress has been painfully slow, which contradicts the gravity and urgency of the problem. Sadly, vested national interests are taking precedence over concern for a global and just solution. Intransigent positions are being advanced to force concessions and to frustrate progress. For a privileged few, their fortunate geographies and resource endowments may persuade them to feel that climate change is not an urgent priority and they can afford to wait out the negotiations of a legally binding climate change agreement for as long as it takes.

There is no such luxury for island nations, who paradoxically are at the frontline of the destructive impacts of climate change, but least responsible for its causes and often least able to respond and adapt. Indeed for some island nations, climate change threatens their very existence and survival as sovereign states.

With the stakes so high, climate change is unquestionably an immediate and urgent priority for the world. It would be a big mistake for any country to think otherwise. Similarly, it would be unhelpful to view climate change simply as an environmental issue. Climate change is cross-cutting and endangers economic and social development with serious implications for the peace and security of our communities, be it national or cross-border.

Any new climate change treaty no matter how ambitious, comprehensive and binding will be ineffectual without full membership and participation of all UN member states, especially those with the obligation to do so. The absence of solutions to reverse the impacts of climate change should not be blamed for inaction, but rather the unwillingness of some countries to be part of a unified global solution.

Mr. President,

The much publicized "fast track" funding announced in Copenhagen to meet the adaptation needs of the most vulnerable countries has become a "best kept secret".

Information on how much of the pledges have been honored, disbursed and to whom, has been scarce. When available, the information is vague and seems bereft of coordination. Yet the fast track resources were commitments made at the highest political level, in recognition at Copenhagen of the pressing need for an interim measure to help the most vulnerable countries avert further harmful effects of climate change pending the conclusion of a negotiated agreement.

The uncertainty as to the legal form, content and completion date of a new treaty makes it a moral imperative for the promised fast track resources to be made available without delay and with clear simplified guidelines to ensure that the intended recipients do indeed access assistance.

Mr. President,

Between now and the conference in Cancun, state parties should move beyond rhetoric and commit to reaching agreement, as a minimum, on those building blocks of the Bali Action Plan where negotiations have reached a level of maturity and convergence on agreed compromises. We cannot continue to defer making the hard decisions. We need to reclaim credibility of the process. Every day of indecisiveness increases the risks disproportionately to vulnerable countries experiencing more frequent and severe climate change impacts.

We cannot afford to leave Cancun empty-handed. Concrete results must be achieved not only to give our people confidence that substantive responses are being reached to protect against climate change and at the same time strengthen our belief that our United Nations can deliver a legally binding agreement.

Mr. President,

Our global security is at risk. Terrorism transcends international borders in its attack on universal values. Like other international threats, terrorism is an area of mutual concern that demands a collective response.

Terrorist acts committed under whatever pretext is deeply deplorable and should be strongly condemned. And those who find self-glorification in the atrocious crimes they commit and perpetrate should not expect any sympathy nor provided safe havens to hide.

Mr. President,

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the risk of their acquisition by terrorists, criminals and others should continue to be a top priority of the United Nations.

Nuclear terrorism is one of the most challenging threats and hazards for international peace and security. A world without nuclear weapons is safer, more secure and a prosperous place to live. We have heard from this podium the renewed efforts by the major nuclear weapons powers to restart the reduction of their nuclear arsenals. This is encouraging, but we believe that the only absolute guarantee against the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons is through their total elimination. In this connection, we are comforted by the announcement earlier in the year by the United States Government that it was moving towards ratification of the Pacific region's Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Mr. President,

The peacekeeping work of the United Nations contributes in large measure towards the stability of countries and regions where it has a presence. It is one of the organization's growing and most visible mandates that has the full support of my government. Samoa's policewomen and men are serving side by side with officers of other contributing countries in peacekeeping missions in Timor Leste, Sudan and Dafur.

In our Pacific region, we continue to honour our commitment to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands under the aegis of the Pacific Islands Forum through our police contingents.

Mr. President,

Samoa welcomes the recent US-brokered initiative for direct negotiations between the leaders of Israel and Palestine to advance the two-states solution with nations of Israel and Palestine living in peace and security alongside each other. We remain hopeful that with the genuine support and understanding of other leaders in the region that this will not be another missed opportunity.

Mr. President,

Wednesday this week marks the first anniversary of the tsunami that devastated Samoa resulting in the heavy loss of life, injury and destruction of property. Life will never be the same again for the survivors and those who lost loved ones. However, a sense of normalcy has returned and stability re-established.

With the generous support of our development partners, the reconstruction phase is progressing well and families and villages affected have resettled on higher grounds inland away from the coast. The necessary infrastructure and utilities for the new settlements are well on their way towards completion. The progress achieved

would not have been possible without the kindness and understanding of Samoa's development partners and the international community.

Of significant importance to Samoa in its efforts to reinvigorate our economy following the dual impacts of the tsunami devastation and the financial crisis, is the recent decision by the General Assembly to grant three years to help Samoa put in place a transitional strategy to guarantee sustainability of its economic performance following graduation from LDC status in 2014.

Mr. President,

Samoa's post-tsunami experience and the passage of the consensus LDC resolution are important benchmarks that underpin the close and warm relations my country enjoys with the United Nations members.

At the bilateral and personal level my government has already acknowledged the timely and tremendous support of all who contributed during the emergency, recovery and the rebuilding phases in the aftermath of the tsunami. The UN membership has similarly been thanked during the adoption of our LDC resolution.

Nevertheless, I would like here in the General Assembly to again convey on behalf of the people and Government of Samoa our sincere appreciation to all our development partners including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the People's Republic of China, the European Union, the United States of America, our Pacific neighbors, the United Nations and its related and specialized agencies, and others too many to mention for your generosity and kindness to Samoa.

We are very grateful.

Thank you