



**Statement**  
**by**  
**Hon Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi**  
**Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa**  
**during the**  
**General Debate of the**  
**69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly**  
**26 September 2014, U.N. Headquarters, New York.**

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Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. President,

Samoa congratulates you on your election and lends its full support to the agenda that will guide our work during your tenure.

In the same spirit, I applaud our Secretary-General and Samoan Prince Tupua Ban Ki-moon for his firm commitment and strong leadership in steering our organization during this particularly turbulent and difficult period for the world.

Mr. President,

As members of the global family, our futures and interests are inextricably linked. Crises with a global reach threaten to engulf the world and affect all nations irrespective of whether they caused or contributed to the crises.

**CLIMATE CHANGE.**

Climate change is one such crisis. It is the world's most urgent problem and the greatest moral challenge of our time.

Known crises of global dimensions pale in comparison to what climate change poses to our world as a whole and to the future security of some of our low-lying islands as sovereign states.

Climate change is indifferent to the suffering of countries touched by its destructive reach. The victims can be rich or poor, large or small, resilient or vulnerable, but they hardly matter. It impacts all. For some there are already existential implications looming. Others may consider the effect on them to be minimum. Such complacency would be a grave mistake and tantamount to gross negligence. If climate change is not addressed comprehensively, the consequence for our planet is dire indeed and affects all countries.

No country should therefore stay detached and unconcerned to the plight of the majority. All countries must work together. Apportioning blame for the present state of our environment is itself yet another human failing. It serves no useful purpose. Being judgmental will not restore our environment. Those who exploit the traditional divide between developed and developing countries, and ideological and political differences, do so conveniently to mask their unwillingness to be part of the solution to an impending global catastrophe.

There is so much at stake for the world to just sit idly by. Strong visionary leadership that rise beyond the dictates of vested national interests and political tenures and 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 is at a premium. Governments must yield not to vested interests and expediency of time, but because it is the ethical and just thing to do.

Our timelines are slipping by fast and soon we will be playing catch-up. Yet each day lost to indecisiveness and wrangling on petty points, only intensifies the challenges we face.

The Lima and Paris climate conferences provide the best openings for the world to redeem itself. UN member states should step forward with a sense of urgency and commitment to address climate change, today, not tomorrow. It should not just be the science and real life experiences that forces us to act, but also our consciences.

Mr. President,

Against this backdrop, the Climate Summit on Tuesday was timely. Its message was clear and simple. Our actions to address climate change are grossly inadequate. We are

focusing more on symptoms, not the root causes. And the solemn truth is that things will only get worse if we do not act collectively now.

Couched delicately however in this ominous prediction was a ray of hope best captured in the following fundamental truths,

- Firstly, climate change is a societal problem. It requires decisive political leadership and a whole-of-society approach. Every individual effort and every national action count because in unity, we succeed, but in division there is little we can do;
- Secondly, we need a global solution if we are to succeed. The United Nations is our last best hope. It is indispensable to a sustainable solution to provide the necessary commitment to turn the tide against climate change, and
- Thirdly, climate change is solvable, with the solution firmly in our hand

Only through enlightened leadership and concerted efforts by all countries with the major green house gas emitters at the forefront can we stand a chance of lessening the destructive impact of climate change and the chances of reaching a credible post-Kyoto climate Agreement next year.

Mr. President,

Samoa calls upon those member states of our organization in position of world leadership to lead the charge and do what needs to be implemented quickly, and decisively so that Paris can deliver on an ambitious Climate Change Agreement that is effective, binding, capable of swift implementation and universally owned and respected by the 193 UN member states.

## **EBOLA.**

Mr. President,

The EBOLA outbreak is a deadly pandemic causing chaos and untold suffering in parts of West Africa. Its reach is global, and if not treated, can be unstoppable. It has no respect for national borders or government sovereignty and its victims are selected indiscriminately. Born and unborn babies are robbed of their youth, girls and boys of their adulthood, women and men of their productive lives, their dignity and worth, and countries are dispossessed and deprived of their valuable human assets.

Can we win the war on EBOLA? Samoa believes we can, and we should.

That was why we were honoured to be among the 134 co-sponsors of the Peace and Security in Africa, with reference to Ebola last Thursday. The Security Council resolution passed with the highest ever number of co-sponsors, and was swiftly followed the next day by a General Assembly decision, which unanimously approved a proposal to establish an international emergency response mission for Ebola.

Samoa welcomes the rapid, decisive and coordinated response from UN Member States, and UN agencies in particular the proactive role the Secretary General played in mobilizing both the political will and material resources necessary to respond to this grave crisis.

The global response to the Ebola outbreak is a powerful illustration of what is possible when states collaborate and coordinate to assist each other to achieve common and critical goals. Such unified responses have tangible results, and save lives. Samoa encourages all member states to take this spirit of cooperation forward, and harness and follow this example when dealing with other critical global issues.

## **TERRORISM IN MIDDLE EAST**

Mr. President, as we meet here at the UN, the rise in extremism has taken a turn for the worst. Radical militants are committing unspeakably brutal and barbaric atrocities across the Middle East, and threatening to spread their evil brand further afield.

As a small island nation in the Pacific Ocean, these threats can seem extremely far-removed from my country of Samoa. However, in the globalized age in which we live, all countries are threatened by challenges to international peace and security. Developments in one state invariably have effects in other, and this is true of my country, as far away as we are.

Global interconnectedness has brought innumerable benefits to all countries, but it also increasingly brings risks from far-away corners of the earth. As such, it is imperative that the UN and its member states commit to tackling threats to international peace and security, especially through the UN Security Council.

Specifically, UN member states must increase collaboration and cooperation to find solutions to challenges to peace and security, and work diligently to implement them. The UN was founded upon values of collective security, and for small nations, remains a critical forum in which to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, stability and prosperity. This is particularly important for small island

developing states, who risk a reversal of the development gains they have made due to crises far from home. To cement and build upon development goals already achieved, international peace and security must be maintained, and it is the responsibility of all member states, particularly those on the Security Council, to work in close cooperation to ensure this happens.

## **SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

Mr. President,

Samoa belongs to the group of Small Island Developing states, a UN recognized group with special needs and inherent vulnerabilities, not by their choice but by factors completely outside of their control.

Part of the dilemma we continually face is the misconception that SIDS challenges are minuscule in comparison to the needs of other special groups and regions and that their one and only concern is climate change.

Nothing can be further from the truth.

Mr. President,

My country was honoured to host on behalf of the Pacific region the once in a decade International Conference on Small Island Developing States three weeks ago. Our primary goal in hosting the Third SIDS Conference was the opportunity for the spotlight of international attention to fall on SIDS on their challenges and realities.

Now that the spotlight has passed on, we hope the increased understanding and appreciation of SIDS issues and challenges gained at the conference will not be forgotten with the passing of time or sidelined due to other competing priority issues.

The international community has a very full agenda. We as nations are being pulled in many directions. This general debate and the ensuing 69<sup>th</sup> session will show just how packed the agenda is. The follow up to the SIDS conference will be part of that agenda and our hope is that, amidst all the demands, political, economic and other, that the realities of SIDS, so clearly spelled out in Apia and in the SAMOA Pathway are able to retain the attention of the wider international community. We took seriously the commitments given for SIDS at the conference and we will remain deeply mindful of how those commitments are turned into actions.

The conference had as its theme the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships. We are ready to build on our existing partnerships. We may be small but we are also able to demonstrate the impact of our people and our countries of successful, 21<sup>st</sup> century partnerships.

We may be small and sometimes invisible to many. However we know that united the SIDS are a strong and a positive group. AOSIS is showing its determination in a growing range of areas and forums. Samoa like other Pacific islands is proud of its place within AOSIS.

The SAMOA Pathway asks the UN Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of how the UN system supports SIDS. This is the opportunity to ensure the UN is fit for purpose when it comes to support for SIDS. There is ample scope for improvement and we look forward to engaging fully in this process. The time for "business as usual" has long passed. Let us work for an approach to SIDS that shows the UN at its best.

The SAMOA Pathway is a well crafted intergovernmental agreement that has the zeal and stamp of approval of the UN membership. Going forward, it falls on SIDS themselves to be prepared to lead and own the SAMOA Pathway if it is to be sustainable. Together with the specific entities within the UN Secretariat entrusted to advocate and champion SIDS causes, they should be more proactive and assertive. Jointly, they must re-position themselves to engage better in a more effective and visible partnership.

Moreover, what we need to achieve is to have a "Human face of SIDS" to every issue that comes before the UN, be it security, human rights, climate change, development, gender, or indigenous issues. That way, SIDS issues are at the forefront of the UN agenda, they remain topical and relevant, and are considered, debated and actioned daily, weekly or monthly and not conveniently set aside to be discussed only when we have another SIDS conference ten years from now.

## **PEACEKEEPING.**

Mr. President,

Samoa continues to support the UN peacekeeping efforts worldwide. Small as we are, Samoan police continue to serve side by side with officers from other countries in places that require the intervention of the United Nations.

Within the Pacific region, our solidarity to challenges facing our neighbors means a guaranteed Samoan police presence in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands under the umbrella of the Pacific Islands Forum.

## **MIDDLE EAST**

Mr. President,

A durable peace settlement in the Middle East continues to elude us. But that's not ground to be pessimistic. We should support every effort to create conditions conducive to the creation of an independent Palestinian State alongside a secure and safe State of Israel to succeed.

Finally, those bent on creating fear and panic throughout the world will stop at nothing to achieve their aims. We must not be held hostage to their devious designs. Individually and collectively we must step up our efforts to combat the threat of international terrorism in its many manifestations. No country can succeed on its own. Only by working collaboratively can we be successful.

## **POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

As we approach the new Post-2015 Development agenda, the culmination of many years of international negotiations and agreements on sustainable development, we must ensure that while a one Framework approach is important - this does not equate to a one size fits all for purposes of implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

Indeed the applicability of the MDG's and their indicators to small island countries proved difficult and much tailoring was necessary before these global targets were seen as relevant for us to meaningfully participate. It is important therefore in the defining and refining of the SDGs and Post-2015 Development agenda that we account for groups like SIDS, and ensure that indicators developed are applicable to their situations also. Building on the existing processes and experiences in these SIDS countries and their respective regions and sub-regions is critical in this regard.

Fortunately we are on the back of a successful SIDS Conference, whose theme was focused on effective means of implementation through partnerships. We must ensure therefore that the means to implement the SAMOA Pathway is solidly laminated into the Post 2015 Development Framework. These arrangements are well entrenched in the High Level Political Forum and review arrangements of the ECOSOC. It is important that the intergovernmental architectures of our respective SIDS regions are included in this process and that means working together. We cannot afford a situation where we have Intergovernmental organizations developing separate policies and implementation arrangements and partnerships for the same things. We must work together.

Finally we must break down what has been a traditional 'them and us' perception on both sides of the members states and the secretariats established to serve our collective needs. This has not served either side well and in fact we are on the same side of the coin. Therefore I would encourage that any coordination mechanisms established have representation of both for transparency and balance of perspectives and interests. The Inter-Agency Consultative Group is perhaps an arrangement that could benefit from member state representation as well where open discussions can take place around effective implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Some of our development partners, traditional and new, have reached out to help us. What they have in common is trust and respect for our views and needs. Bilaterally, regionally and internationally, they are partnering with SIDS to overcome some of the constraints imposed by limited land and narrow natural resources bases, isolation and downward agricultural production, sustained food security for our expanding populations, and the need to provide a meaningful existence for our people and communities in the rural areas.

Mr. President,

United Nations was established to prevent wars, bring peace and security and protect human rights through multilateralism and intergovernmental cooperation. The architecture of the organization we have today is complex and there invariably are imperfections. However the fact that we have consistently without failure meet in the UN General Assembly each year is irrefutable evidence that our organization works at many and different levels. It is hard to imagine where the world would be without the United Nations. It is why Samoa's support for our organization is unwavering.

I thank you.