

SAMOA



STATEMENT BY

**HONOURABLE TUILA'EPA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI SAILELE MALIELEGAOI
PRIME MINISTER OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA**

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE SIXTIETH-SEVENTH
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE RULE OF LAW**

New York, 24 September 2012

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INTERNATIONAL LEVELS
24 SEPTEMBER 2012

Mr. President
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

The global challenges to human development and security are multiplying and becoming more complex.

The United Nations was created to bring about universal justice. It is uniquely placed to lead and coordinate global initiatives to achieve this noble goal. Today's meeting is timely, and its focus on "The Rule of Law" pertinent. Strengthening the Rule of Law at the national and international levels is key to guaranteeing peace and security, human rights, and social and economic justice for all.

But our discussion today should not be a one-off effort. It must be the start of a concerted and continuous process. The achievement of the rule of law at all levels should be the objective of every member state. The challenge is to ensure that a coordinated approach is in place to develop effective instruments to address the interrelated threats to the peaceful coexistence of peoples and Nations. But the United Nations must do more than that. There must also be a means for our organization to ensure that that the rhetoric we preached is in fact being practiced

Mr. President,

The rule of law does not exist in a void. Ultimately, it is how individual governments localize the international norms and behaviors that the rule of law has meaning and benefits ordinary people everywhere. Only then can the long term sustainability of the rule of law be assured.

Mr. President,

Samoa has no military forces and is not a member of any military grouping. Thus our only guaranteed security is the strict observance of the rule of law to protect us. As well, our cultural institutions and our traditional chiefly system have helped to maintain peace in our land for over three thousand years well before our first contact with Western influences.

These have been the foundational pillars on which our society is built to ensure stability and an improved quality of life for all. Respect for the rule of law has been an integral part of Samoa's journey as a proud independent nation for fifty (50) years now. Let me highlight therefore a few examples of how we are contributing to the strengthening of the rule of law at all levels;

To increase our compliance with international law, we established a Law and Justice Sector which launched a four year plan with the vision of "Justice for a Safe and Stable Samoa". The Sector Plan focuses on improving and strengthening the legal system and services in Samoa through increasing of community safety, improving access to justice, integrating customary and community based justice with the formal justice system and promoting integrity and good governance.

A product of the Sector Plan was the establishment of the Samoa Law Reform Commission which is undertaking a comprehensive review of existing legislation and regulations to ensure that they reflect present day realities, congruent with the culture and traditions of a changing and modernizing Samoan society and in line with our international obligations.

The Law Reform Commission works closely with relevant stakeholders and members of the public to assess legislative compliance of international conventions, particularly the human rights conventions Samoa is a state party to.

Its works are published and its Final Reports are presented to Samoa's Legislative Assembly.

Mr. President,

Samoa is fully committed to the peacekeeping work of the United Nations, one of our organization's most effective and successful mandates. The small size of our police force has not prevented us from contributing officers to peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, Timor Leste and to the Regional Assessment Mission in Solomon Islands.

We are proud that more than thirty percent (30%) of our peacekeepers are women, already surpassing the UN goal.

Samoa also is a participating country in the "Justice Rapid Response" multilateral stand-by facility. Being part of this initiative underscores our strong support to ensure that all serious human rights and international law violations must be investigated and brought to justice.

Our long term vision of an "improved quality life for all Samoans" is the key underpinning of our "Strategy for Development 2012–2016". A major goal of our strategy is strengthening social cohesion and stability and the need to have in place legislations to meet this ultimate goal.

The Strategy contains concrete targets to support government's efforts to provide an enabling environment for private sector development, mindful of our responsibilities and obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization as of May this year.

Women parliamentarians had always been an integral feature of all our Legislatures over our fifty year history. The amendment to our Constitution to be enacted before the end of this year to allow for a ten percent (10%) of the seats for women will ensure that there is a guaranteed minimum level of representation for them in our national Parliament.

Mr. President,

Samoa regards the International Criminal Court as an important part of the architecture of world peace based on the rule of law. The institutionalization of the court ten years ago was a major achievement in the protection of human rights and in upholding international humanitarian standards.

The unanimous approval last year of the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute allows the crimes of aggression to be added, finally to the list of crimes that cannot go unpunished.

Mr. President,
Distinguished colleagues,

In line with the spirit of today's meeting, I would like to conclude by making a pledge that I will implement this week before I leave New York.

Samoa's is committed to ensuring that the rule of law is respected and adhered to at all levels. I am happy therefore to announce that Samoa will be ratifying the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on crimes of aggression tomorrow as part of the UN Treaty Event.

Thank you