



NATIONAL VOLUNTARY REVIEW SESSION 3
Presentation by Samoa's Minister of Finance, Hon. Sili Epa Tuioti

***Mr President,
Mr Moderator,
Honourable Ministers from the volunteer countries Finland, Germany
and Uganda,
Discussants,
Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen***

S1. The complexity behind the need to effectively communicate 17 goals, 169 targets and 200 plus indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, will challenge the political will for commitments at country, region and global levels. But we see the opportunity for resource-constrained countries like Samoa, to adapt and localize the SDGs to suit our context. Localization ensures inclusive consultation and an expansive outreach.

As a small island developing state (SIDS) from the Pacific, Samoa strongly supports the overarching objectives of Agenda 2030 namely; eradication of poverty, and the healing of the health of the planet, through attaining sustainable development by 2030 without ***leaving any one behind***. Furthermore, we are happy to find that the 2030 Agenda can deliver for SIDS building on the SAMOA Pathway

S2 Four key messages have emerged from the review process.

1. Importance of the use of existing in country processes, systems

and institutions in support of contextualization.

National preparations for the review followed the open and consultative processes for the development of the national strategy for sustainable development known as the Strategy for the Development of Samoa, as well as the sector level plans for implementation. Mainstreaming of the SDGs, the Samoa Pathway, the Paris Accord, Financing for Development as well as the regional platforms, in the SDS and sector plans/programs is an ongoing process. The institutions and systems used remained the same except for the establishment of a coordinating body for monitoring and reporting purposes, the National SDG Task Force. The two successive national sustainable development strategies have focused on inclusiveness and securing citizens' rights to development and an improved quality of life for all as well as ensuring that *no one is left behind*.

2. The centrality of timely and accurate national statistics in the monitoring of the SDGs is underscored given that quality statistics add value to the requisite political and policy discussion involved to advance the pathway to sustainable development. The key role of national statistical offices will need the close collaboration of other key stakeholders for the collation and validation of indicators relevant to country and regional contexts.
3. There is integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in the national strategy for sustainable development under which the 17 goals and means of

implementation fall.

4. The translation of ambition into action for the successful implementation of the SDS and SDGs relies on increased investments in human capacity and institutional capabilities as cornerstones of sustainable and inclusive development. In this connection, the support of development partners is welcomed.

S3 The Context:

Samoa, like other small island developing states is characterized by small size, extreme isolation, limited and narrow resource bases, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets, diseconomies of scale, capacity limitations, susceptibility to climate change and natural disasters and global crises. As a parliamentary democracy, Samoa has maintained political stability since it became the first independent country in the Pacific in 1962. The recent elections in March 2016 yielded interesting results by way of having the highest number of female candidates running for parliament, a resultant increase in the number of women elected from 6% to 10% and the election of a first ever female deputy prime minister.

Samoa is now a middle income country after graduating out of LDC status in 2014. It has a real GDP per capita of just under US\$4,000 and was ranked 105 out of 188 in the 2015 Human Development Index, placing it in the high Human development category. Samoa however has a Gender inequality index of 0.457 ranking it 97 out of 155 countries.

Samoa was one of the fastest growing Pacific island economies before the global financial crises, a tsunami in 2009 and Cyclone Evan in 2012. Growth has since then, remained at less than 2% annually. There are projections of steady GDP growth in 2016/17 to be around 3% in real terms. Debt to GDP has risen above threshold levels over the years and is currently at 55% of GDP. The need to increase spending and subsequently debt, was to rebuild infrastructure following the crises and more recently to modernize key infrastructure at the airport, and ports. Fiscal consolidation and structural reforms have ensured that macroeconomic stability is maintained. The fundamental approach to economic development reflected in the SDGs must recognize the economic challenges facing Small Islands Developing States. These are often masked by current development measures used, which do not adequately reflect economic inequities, social crises, and ecological risks.

S4 What has been the Methodology and processes used?

We undertook the Mid Term Review of the Strategy for the Development of Samoa for the period 2012- 2016 in late 2014. As part of the review, we conducted a preliminary Integrated Assessment of the SDS, against the SDGs. The assessment provided an indicative overview of the level of alignment between SDS and the SDG targets. The consultative processes which followed covered the whole country and involved the public representing civil society, private sector and parliamentarians. The review findings formed the basis for the drafting of the new SDS 2016-2020 which theme is 'accelerating sustainable development and creating opportunities for

all.’

The review of the SDS 2012-2016 was carried out initially at sector level on an annual basis through a review of sector plans. The outcomes of the sector plan reviews were then mapped against the various national outcomes of the SDS. The information collated and data collected formed the basis of the public consultations. National preparations were supported through broadening the sector stakeholder engagement in the monitoring of the SDGs with a particular focus on localizing the SDGs by aligning the goals and targets to the key development priorities.

Following the launch of the SDGs in September 2015, the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Finance conducted stakeholder consultations to evaluate and assess the initial list of global indicators that were the result of the work of the Inter Agency Experts Group. Key sector stakeholders were invited to comment on the relevance, and alignment of such indicators to the sectoral and national indicators of the SDS. The consultations highlighted specific targets that are not covered in the SDS and sector plans.

S5 The Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) conducted an internal mapping exercise which resulted in the identification of national indicators produced and sourced from its data collection activities as well as those to be sourced from the sector plans and associated development programs. The SBS mapping exercise was extended to create a preliminary framework generated from the matrix officially approved by the IAEG that grouped the indicators using a Tier

classification. Against the 230 global indicators finalized, Samoa was able to identify 52 indicators already part of data collection by the Samoa Statistics Bureau. As well, 94 indicators developed at sector level were deemed aligned to the global indicators. These indicators, 146 in total would be used to measure implementation progress. The remaining 80 indicators are classified under Tier 3.

Joint collaboration between the Statistics Bureau and the Ministry of Finance has produced a mapping of SDS goals and indicators in alignment with those of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway and the means of implementation. Assistance has been requested of development partners to facilitate and fund an assessment of development financing in order to identify financing gaps.

S6 So what is our Overall Assessment?

The national sustainable development strategy, the SDS is generally aligned to the SDG goals and targets. Goals 1- 6 including Goal 10 constitute the unfinished business of the MDGs and are prioritized for implementation. An accelerated program for the MDGs prior to the end of 2015 has yielded positive results such as the lowering of the proportion of the population living below the basic needs poverty line from 26.7% in 2008 to 18.8% in 2013. Based on regional prioritization under the Pacific Framework for Regionalism; Goals 13, 14 and 15 are given emphasis including at national level as well, under environmental considerations;. Goals 7, 8 and 9 are pivotal in the achievement of economic growth and livelihood opportunities. Goals 11 and 12 need further attention in particular

the development of appropriate localized targets and indicators. Goals 16 and 17 are crucial to determining the means of implementation through meaningful and consolidated partnerships as well as the institutional development reforms that will continue in order to improve on accountability. As well Goal 17 will also reflect on the importance of inclusiveness and volunteerism as a means of implementation of the SDGs.

The review also highlighted the importance of capturing early, the advantages of synergies. Through the implementation of the SAMOA pathway, we know that synergies already exist between climate change policies and the sustainable development agenda in energy efficiency, renewable energy, transport and sustainable land-use policies. We know that economic growth and modernization will enable the construction and maintenance of resilient physical infrastructure and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change. The upgrading of physical infrastructure is being undertaken with regard for climate proofing and building back better to ensure sustainability. In such an approach also, we can look to climate financing for needed infrastructure. Part of the solutions for the future, involves prioritization of sectors for which, climate change impacts will have a particular effect on the vulnerable.

S7: The Thematic review – ‘leaving no one behind’ provides the opportunity to report on selected themes on an annual basis.

The intention is not to report on the detail on the application of the theme across goals but simply to note the principles and actions related to the theme of ‘leaving no one behind’ such as in initiatives

to reduce poverty and consideration of the most vulnerable groups, actions to address inequality, education hunger and food security, rural development, and south south cooperation.

The promotion, respect, protection and fulfillment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind, is indispensable to ensuring that no one is left behind. Much progress has been achieved in this area as validated by our much commended second Universal Periodic Review completed in May 2016 and for which the Constitution already has provisions. The Government has undertaken legislative and policy reforms to ensure equality *for all* under the law, irrespective of age, sex/gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status, and the realization of civil and political rights, as well as social, economic and cultural rights, including non-discriminatory access to education, health and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Inclusive and sustainable development can only be achieved with the realization of gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of all women and girls. In the Samoan context, gender equality is integrated throughout all plans, the SDS and sector plans and strategies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and that progress in the realization of gender equality is monitored and reviewed under this Voluntary national Review and Universal periodic review.

Meaningful civil society and youth participation is a critical enabler of successful SDG implementation, and essential to effective global, regional, national and sectoral follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The government continues to encourage civil society to

be involved in the development of implementation plans and strategies. Specifically, young people are given the opportunity to participate in the formulation of policies, laws and programs that affect their lives.

S8 Institutional mechanisms for implementation

Samoa in line with the implementation of its national sustainable development strategy is taking the same sector wide approach to implement the SDGs which are integrated into the SDS. The national SDG Task Force comprises representatives of the lead ministries representing the 3 pillars of sustainable development namely Finance and Planning, Natural Resources and Environment, Community and Social Development and is supported by the Samoa Statistics Bureau, the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade. Co-opted members include the relevant sector ministries that are each responsible for each of the Goals as well as representatives of civil society and the private sector. The establishment of the national SDG taskforce and application of the peer review process can assist and strengthen country level reporting and national voluntary reporting. The composition of the SDG National Task Force is such that this is the core group that drives reporting whereas the sector representatives are responsible for implementation. The process at national level is such that the national report is to be passed by Parliament as this ensures that there is continuation in the implementation of the SDGs even as administrations change.

Links with the regional institutions and global institutions are important. At the regional level Samoa is a member of the regional Task force and that, regional reviews can provide reporting backstopping for small island countries in areas where there are information or statistical gaps.

S9 Means of Implementation

For the effective implementation of the SDGs, the national development strategies need to be linked to budgetary processes and the coordination mechanisms of development cooperation for policy coherence.

The means of implementation to be employed must recognize the special case of countries such as small islands developing states due to their vulnerability to external shocks and the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

In terms of financing, Samoa is working with existing resources provided through the budget as well as from its development partners through development cooperation.

The means of implementation involve not only financing but also trade, capacity building, knowledge sharing, science and technology and innovation, engagement of the private sector as well as durable stakeholder partnerships. As a result Samoa has accessed the SIDS Partnerships Framework and is working to renew commitment to the implementation of the 17 partnerships that would apply at country level as well as the 30 plus at regional level.

As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, volunteerism can be another powerful and cross-cutting

means of implementation. Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning, and implementation for sustainable development goals. As well, volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between government and people for concrete and scalable actions.

S10. Challenges that are common among the Pacific SIDS include human and institutional capacity constraints, lack of ownership and political will, lack of awareness and engagement of stakeholders and the challenge of localizing the SDGs, lack of alignment with global and regional actions, insufficient resources and capacities of resource implementation, lack of baseline data and capacities to collect and analyse data and data disaggregation. Some SDG indicators are not relevant for Pacific Islands countries or unable to be measured. In addition, more efforts are needed to strengthen development partner coordination and to strengthen aid effectiveness tracking.

S11 What have we learnt from the review and what are we putting in place in the form of good practice?

1. Mapping the global indicators against those available at the Samoa Statistics Bureau (SBS) and from the sectors help to strengthen the national statistical capacity in support of the sustainable development agenda. Importantly the SBS in collaboration with the National Planning Office in the Ministry of Finance have been actively engaged in the processes of

harmonization and disaggregation of the national list of indicators with regard to definitions, coherence as well as consistency in the concepts used in the formulation of indicators. This should add value to consolidating ownership at the sector and national levels.

Mapping the common goals and commitments across the SDGs, *SAMOA Pathway* and *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* provides a solid starting point to confirm the region's development priorities, especially in relation to trans-boundary issues (for example, Oceans, Climate Change, ICT, fisheries and trade).

2. Developing national and regional roadmaps for the implementation of the SDGs. The Pacific SDGs Roadmap is intended to guide the delivery of the directives of Pacific leaders, and outlines the steps to set regional priorities and indicators
3. There is strong and consistent political and technical leadership articulating clear and strategic plans linked to regional and national resourcing using country and regional mechanisms, institutions and systems
 - There is contextualized implementation suited to national and Pacific context which calls for using existing regional and national coordination mechanisms to reduce duplication and complexity.
 - There is a need for Capacity building and successive planning; using simple language that can be easily understood and simplified processes; building and sustaining capacity in data collection/analyses and utilization; attention to the basics such as infrastructure and social services; properly analysing aspects of

growth – ensuring inclusivity, vulnerable groups in society, social protection, etc.

S12 To conclude Mr Moderator allow me to emphasize the following:

I can assure you, of the commitment of the Government of Samoa to the implementation of its development framework inclusive of the SDGs, as reflected in the convergence of outcomes delivered at the level of regional and global platforms that Samoa is actively engaged in and in some instances playing a lead role in.

Samoa views and perceives the SDGs as a timely opportunity to address the development challenges ahead. The review report as prepared serves to inform the UN at the July 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) about the progress that Samoa has made in integrating the SDGs into our national development processes. Samoa in being the only small island developing state and a Pacific island member country, in opting to be part of the initial voluntary review process is hopeful that, it can encourage other Pacific SIDS to follow suit so that they can benefit from the learning and the sharing of experiences.

The preparation of the report for Samoa has generated a lot of public interest and awareness of the SDGs. On the national launch of the SDGs 17 selected schools presented their interpretations of each of the 17 goals through drama, song, dance and recitals and event was broadcast live on television.

It is important to ensure that the integration and mainstreaming

processes are carried out as a matter of priority at country level and that as much as possible, use existing systems and processes as well as institutions

Understanding the different ways that 'leave no one behind' could be interpreted will make implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) more effective in practice. Linked to the theme is the general optimism about the value of the disaggregated data that could be generated across all sectors and themes as the principle of 'leave no one behind' is being implemented.

The consultation processes that have taken place as part of Samoa's national preparations for its National Voluntary Review report has strengthened the framework for coordinated monitoring. These processes have indeed further strengthened our whole of government agenda and the commitment to the delivery of efficient and quality services to ensure that no Samoan is left behind

I thank you for the opportunity to present Samoa's first National Voluntary Review report.