

**Statement of Lord Tu'ivakanō**

**Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade,**

**and Minister responsible for Defence of the Kingdom of Tonga**

**to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States,**

**Apia, Samoa, Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014**

The President of the Conference, His Excellency Prime Minister Tuilaepa Lufesolai Sailele Malielegaoi

The Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, His Excellency President Baron Waqa

The President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Dr. John Ashe

The United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon

The Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Wu Hongbo

The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you upon your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference. I assure you of my personal and my delegation's support throughout our meeting. I would also like to thank you for the generous hospitality that has been shown to my delegation and I during our time in Samoa. It is always a pleasure to be back in your beautiful country.

Mr. President,

I am keenly aware of our joint aspirations as SIDS over the last 22 years. We have trekked the last 20 since the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) working hard with our partners who have committed through various means and ways, to assisting the sustainable development of SIDS. This has resulted in the draft outcome document that we know-as the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway or the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway.

Mr. President,

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate all SIDS delegations in New York, and from Capitals, who had tirelessly worked through the Group of 77 and China to ensure the draft text was reached through the spirit of understanding and compromise, with our partners. I would be remiss if I did not also recognize the hard work of the Co-Chairs

Singapore and New Zealand, the vice-Chairs of the Bureau, and the Co-facilitators in the preparatory process.

Mr. President,

The implementation of the commitments laid out in the Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA), and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) has resulted in our recognition of the good works done between SIDS and our partners, but it likewise acknowledges the significant gaps in the implementation of the commitments to SIDS in the last 20 years. The SAMOA Pathway provides us with a blueprint on how best to pursue our joint commitments, in order to achieve the sustainable development of SIDS and to ensure no one is left behind.

Mr. President,

The realization of the score years of SIDS partnerships for sustainable development is that there is a need for a different approach or a shift in the paradigm to enable effective implementation of the SAMOA Pathway to address the many SIDS challenges. Indeed Mr. President, as your theme for our Conference aptly and very timely declares, what is needed is “genuine and durable partnerships” in order to not only realize SIDS sustainable development today, but into the near and far future. The title of our outcome document reflects our shared aspirations – not just SIDS aspirations, but our aspirations as Member States of the United Nations, for accelerating progress in the sustainable development of SIDS through the full and effective implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Mr. President,

Taking this commitment further, the SAMOA Pathway must be advanced through not only its consideration and absorption into the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, but also into the individual development plans and programmes of SIDS as well as the genuine and durable partnership approaches of our development partners. We will indeed have chance to provide a litmus test of the political will and commitment we will undoubtedly give this week, through the regular reviews by the High Level Political Forum under the auspices of the ECOSOC, on the implementation and sustainable development commitments and objectives of the international community. My delegation looks forward to this in earnest.

Mr. President,

The proposed sections of the SAMOA Pathway are clearly iterated reflecting SIDS sustainable development interests today, and that SIDS sustainable development is not going to work without genuine and durable partnerships with our friends in the international community. This partnership must be defined by the principle of national ownership, mutual trust, transparency and accountability. We as SIDS take ownership and leadership in the process of meeting our challenges and pursuing our interests through international cooperation and partnerships with states, international institutions, the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

The SAMOA pathway accounts for our development aspirations with an actionable plan that will attain the future we want for our islands and leaving no SIDS behind. With our partners committed to this cause as agreed to in our draft text, we are confident in our endeavors toward poverty eradication and sustainable development given SIDS' unique and particular vulnerabilities and circumstances. With commitments to genuine and durable partnerships, we can better address the adverse impacts of climate change in terms of SIDS viability and its very survival. We acknowledge that climate change has been successfully captured in the work of the Open Working Group on sustainable development goals, in addition to other equally important goals such as sustainable energy, oceans and seas, health and NCDs, and the means of implementation.

Mr. President,

This year not only marks our once-in-a-decade international conference on SIDS, but it also marks our first time to celebrate an International Year of the SIDS. It is a timely reminder of the "special case" of SIDS in the sustainable development paradigm, and it also provides us with the opportune moment Mr. President to revive commitments made to SIDS in our past outcome documents, resulting in the SAMOA Pathway. While we learn from the past, we must not dwell on it, but work together on the lessons learned. As I emphasized at the 2013 Energy Summit in New Zealand we must work together, quickly, and holistically with our development partners. We must do the same with this SAMOA Pathway to forge and shape our common future together.

Tonga certainly looks forward to embarking upon the SAMOA Pathway with much enthusiasm and vigor, and is committed wholeheartedly to its success.

Mr. President,

Faafetai lava, Malo 'aupito, and Thank you