



Remarks

by

**Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi
Prime Minister of Samoa at the ceremony to hand-over the
conference venue to the United Nations
Saturday, 30 August 2014 at 10:00 a.m.
Nu'utele Accreditation Centre
Tuana'imato, Faleata Sports Complex**

Susuga Faife'au Toeaina Tauti'aga Senara
Conference Secretary General, Mr. WU Hongbo,
Members of Cabinet,
Members of Parliament,
Members of the Judiciary,
Members of the UN Secretariat,
Distinguished Guests,

We gather here today in unity and in partnership to bear witness to this historic moment. The Government and people of Samoa hand over to the United Nations in this ceremony this land and premises for use for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

In an important symbolic way, this ceremony reflects the theme of the Conference of genuine and durable partnerships. Samoa's connection with the United Nations goes back to the years before Samoa's independence and the UN has also since remained a strong partner in Samoa's development.

The fact that Samoa is able to hand over the facilities today has been possible through close collaboration with its partners. This successful cooperation reflects in a very real sense 'genuine and durable partnerships' in dynamic action. I would like on the occasion of this ceremony to express our great gratitude to our partners both in government and from the private sector for the generous and immense contributions that made it possible for Samoa to meet the time line for the Conference.

Today's happy occasion also reflects the trust and belief of the United Nations in Samoa as epitomised by the steady confidence of the Conference's Secretary General Mr WU Hongbo that the facilities will be ready. Mr Wu may well have had moments of doubt but he is too consummate a diplomat and gentleman to let on. And knowing Mr Wu he would not have wasted time worrying and instead take immediate action behind the scenes to resolve any such doubt if they ever existed!

Light humour aside, I want to place on record our deep appreciation to Mr WU for his leadership, guidance and personal interest to ensure that our conference venue and related facilities are UN-compliance and ready in time. Being host country is no easy task.

Ensuring we meet all our responsibilities was challenging. But Mr Wu's understanding and forbearance of our challenges and the sympathetic and ready support from this team allowed us to have today's handover ceremony.

In handing over the conference venue and facilities, I trust that the UN will find them satisfactory. Importantly, I hope they will provide all delegations that had graciously travelled from the corners of the globe a welcoming sense of partnership so that their deliberations will be facilitated and the decisions they take will be beneficial to the long-term sustainability of SIDS.

Before ending my remarks, I would like to express my appreciation to the many of our own people, in government, in the private sector and in our community that worked tirelessly for months and over long hours to complete the construction the landscaping. Thank you for your hard work and many sacrifices.

On this note, it is now with great pleasure that I officially hand-over the Conference premises to the Conference's Secretary General, His Excellency Mr Wu Hongbo.

Thank you.

Soifua ma ia Manuia.