



Samoa's Second Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

GOAL 1
👤👤👤

NO POVERTY
End poverty in all its forms everywhere

GOAL 2
🍲

ZERO HUNGER
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

GOAL 3
🏥

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

GOAL 4
📖

QUALITY EDUCATION
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

GOAL 5
♀️

GENDER EQUALITY
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

GOAL 6
💧

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

GOAL 7
☀️

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

GOAL 8
📈

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

GOAL 9
🏗️

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

GOAL 10
⚖️

REDUCED INEQUALITIES
Reduce inequalities within and among countries

GOAL 11
🏙️

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

GOAL 12
♻️

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

GOAL 13
🌍

CLIMATE ACTION
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

GOAL 14
🐟

LIFE BELOW WATER
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

GOAL 15
🌳

LIFE ON LAND
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss

GOAL 16
🕊️

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

GOAL 17
🤝

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

“Improved Quality of Life For All”



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Women sitting on the ground and district planning,
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Samoa's 2nd Voluntary National Review Report for
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SECOND VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS TO ENSURE

“Improved Quality of Life for All”

"Our 2nd VNR report demonstrates strong political leadership to contextualise and integrate multiple universal commitments, it informs us in advocacy and engagement of the issues and shines a spotlight on where we are at improving the quality of the lives of our people ensuring empowerment, inclusiveness and equality"

Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi
Prime Minister of Samoa



MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER



Since the Millennium Declaration in 2000, Samoa committed to ensuring its people achieve an improved quality of life for all; through sustainable development that balances economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental resilience. We reaffirmed this commitment through the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015. Building on lessons learnt from the MDGs, Samoa made an early start on the SDGs, which led to it being amongst the first countries in 2016 to present its Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the SDGs. During our first report, we confirmed that localisation of the SDGs was necessary and would be facilitated through a sector wide approach thus ensuring alignment with our Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020 and its fourteen sector plans.

Whilst the report is useful for international and regional benchmarking, its real value is that it is part of Samoa's national planning, monitoring and review process and is a useful basis for national discussion and actions to address key development challenges and priorities identified. Building on synergies and addressing gaps to ensure better prioritisation will help galvanise support for implementing the SDGs thus addressing poverty eradication, support the delivery of quality basic services, mobilise climate action, and lead to more effective inclusion. More importantly, it helps ensure that we "leave no one behind".

The report for Samoa recognizes that progress towards the achievement of the SDGs is an incremental process and that measurement of progress is not always continuous as data sets for indicators often come from periodic surveys, sometimes five or ten years apart. While we have had some success in collecting data and information beyond those collected by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, data may also be inconsistent over time in both coverage and methodology, and as a consequence, interpreting trends can be difficult. However, despite the issue with data and statistics, we do collect enough data nationally to enable telling of our story on how we are progressing or otherwise on the SDGs. Using existing national mechanisms and processes is crucial especially when trying to widen stakeholder engagement and link to financing including the budgetary process. To ensure a truly integrated approach, we have aligned stakeholder engagement, data collection, monitoring, review and implementation of the SDGs with our implementation efforts for other regional and international commitments, including the Paris Agreement, S.A.M.O.A Pathway, the Pacific Framework for Regionalism, the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development and the Human Rights, Disarmament and Environmental Conventions.

This report will share our SDGs localisation experience on how we are responding to each of the 17 SDGs. More importantly, we place emphasis on the 'People Goals' demonstrating the importance of ensuring prosperity, a healthy planet, peaceful societies and strategic partnerships to deliver on our long term vision for Samoa's people of an 'improved quality of life for all'.

We acknowledge with appreciation the ongoing support of our development partners, in particular the coordinated support of the United Nations in helping Samoa with its sustainable development journey. Only through genuine and durable partnerships can we achieve our Sustainable Development Goals.

Universally we are in trying, unprecedented times. The circumstances the world is facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic have tested the very mettle of our nations and governments beyond any limits that we have known in our lifetime. For Samoa, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived while we were still responding and recovering from another health crisis – the measles epidemic that took 83 young lives and affected over 5,000 people. We are already seeing evidence of the direct impact of COVID-19 on our people and their livelihoods reversing some of our hard-fought progress since the MDGs, slowing our efforts towards sustainable development. This is the greatest challenge before us. But we remain confident, that in unity as a 'one UN' family, we can adapt to any new normal. We believe that it is during these times of global uncertainty and crisis that the world needs a truly 'United Nations'.

Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi



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ACRONYMS

AAAA _____ Addis Ababa Agenda for Action	HDI _____ Human Development Index	NOLA _____ Nuanua O le Alofa	SOE _____ State of Emergency
ADB _____ Asia Development Bank	HIV _____ Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome	NWU _____ North West Upolu	SOE _____ State Owned Enterprise
AIDS _____ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	ICCPR _____ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	NKFS _____ National Kidney Foundation of Samoa	SRWMA _____ Samoa's Recycling Waste Management Association
AUA _____ Apia Urban Area	ICT _____ Information and Communications Technology	NUS _____ National University of Samoa	SSFPG _____ Samoa School Fees Grants Programme
BNPL _____ Basic Needs Poverty Line	IE _____ Inclusive Education	NYC _____ National Youth Council	SQA _____ Samoa Qualification Authority
CBD _____ Central Business District	ILO _____ International Labour Organisation	NYU _____ New York University	STEM _____ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
CBS _____ Central Bank of Samoa	IMPRESS _____ Improving the Performance and Reliability of RE Power System in Samoa	ODA _____ Official Development Assistance	STI _____ Sexually Transmitted Infections
CEDAW _____ Convention on Ending Discrimination Against Women	INDC _____ Intended Nationally Determined Contributions	OECD _____ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	STI _____ Sexually Transmitted Infections
CED _____ International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	IPV _____ Intimate Partner Violence	OVT _____ Overseas Treatment Scheme	SUNGO _____ Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organisations in Samoa
CEO _____ Chief Executive Officer	IWSA _____ Independent Water Scheme Association	PDNA _____ Post Disaster Needs Assessment	SWSD _____ Samoa Women Shaping Development Project
CFC _____ Chlorofluorocarbon	IWRM _____ Integrated Water Resource Management	PEFA _____ Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Assessment	SWA _____ Samoa Water Authority
CITIES _____ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species	KBA _____ Key Biodiversity Area	PEN Fa'a Samoa _____ Package of Essential NCDs programmes	SWAP _____ Samoa Water Sector Coordination
CRC _____ Convention on the Rights of the Child	LDCs _____ Least Developed Country	PLWHA _____ People Living With HIV/AIDS	TC _____ Tropical Cyclone
CSO _____ Civil Society Organisation	LDN _____ Land Degradation Neutrality	PNG _____ Papua New Guinea	TCM _____ Trade, Commerce and Manufacturing
COVID-19 _____ Coronavirus	LERA _____ Labour Employment Relations Act	PSDC _____ Pacific Sustainable Development Committee	TIMS _____ Tax Invoice Monitoring System
CSSP _____ Civil Society Support Programme	LIDAR _____ Light, Detection and Ranging	PSET _____ Post School Education and Training	TSM _____ Temporary Special Measures
DAC _____ Disaster Advisory Committee	LMIC _____ Lower Middle-Income Country	PSSF _____ Private Sector Support Facility	TVET _____ Technical and Vocational Education Training
DDP _____ District Development Planning	LNOB _____ Leave No One Behind	ROU _____ Rest of Upolu Island	UNCAC _____ United Nations Convention Against Corruption
DHS _____ Demographic Health Survey	MDGs _____ Millennium Development Goals	RSE _____ Recognised Seasonal Employer	UNCAT _____ United Nations Convention Against Torture
ECE _____ Early Childhood Education	MEAs _____ Multilateral Environmental Agreements	SADATA _____ Samoa Database on Human Rights Recommendations	UNCCD _____ United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertification
EEZ _____ Exclusive Economic Zone	MESC _____ Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	S.A.M.O.A Pathway _____ SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway	UNCRC _____ United Nations conventions on the Rights of Persons with disabilities
EU _____ European Union	MMR1 _____ Mumps, Measles, Rubella 1	SACEP _____ Samoa Competitiveness Enhancement Project	UNDP _____ United Nations Development Programme
FPL _____ Food Poverty Line	MNRE _____ Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	SAV _____ Savaii Island	UNICEF _____ United Nations Children's Fund
GANHRI _____ Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions	MPMC _____ Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	SBS _____ Samoa Bureau of Statistics	UNEP _____ United Nations Environment Programme
GBV _____ Gender Based Violence	MTO _____ Mobile Money Transfer Operator	SCBS _____ Senior Citizens Benefits Scheme	UNFCCC _____ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GCF _____ Green Climate Fund	MWCSO _____ Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development	SDGs _____ Sustainable Development Goals	VAW _____ Violence Against Women
GDP _____ Gross Domestic Product	NAMA _____ Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions	SDS _____ Strategy for the Development of Samoa	VNR _____ Voluntary National Review
GEC _____ Global Economic Crisis	NCDs _____ Non-Communicable Diseases	SEHCI _____ Samoa Early Human Capability Index	WASH _____ Pacific Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Coalition
GEF _____ Global Environment Facility	NDMP _____ National Disaster Management Plan	SFHA _____ Samoa Family Health Association	WB _____ World Bank
GER _____ Gross Enrolment Rate	NEOC _____ National Emergency Operating Centre	SIDS _____ Small Islands Developing States	WHO _____ World Health Organisation
GHG _____ Green House Gas	NER _____ Net Enrolment Rate	SMSMCL _____ Strengthening Multi-Sectoral Management of Critical Landscape	WIBDI _____ Women in Business Incorporated
GPEDC _____ Global Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation	NHRI _____ National Human Rights Institution	SNTF _____ Samoa National Tripartite Forum	WILS _____ Women in Leadership in Samoa
HLPF _____ High Level Political Forum on SDGs	NMIRF _____ National Mechanism for the Implementation, Reporting and Follow up of the Human Rights Conventions	SPELL _____ Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level Test	WTO _____ World Trade Organisation
HIES _____ Household Income and Expenditure Survey		SPREP _____ Pacific Environment Programme	
HCFC _____ Hydrochlorofluorocarbon		SRCS _____ Samoa Red Cross Society	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. Samoa's long-term sustainable development vision is “**Improved Quality of Life for All**” by ensuring no one is left behind while respecting and protecting our land and our ocean resources. This vision is underpinned by our fa'a Samoa culture and traditions. We are a communal people. We take collective responsibility for each other, our 'aiga' and families and the good of all in our villages, our communities and country. We believe in shared prosperity, social equity, social security and the sustainable use and protection of our natural resources. These values and customs have shaped our approach to development since our Independence 58 years ago. Decades of pursuing our sustainable development aspirations coupled with the renewed commitment in 2015 to an ambitious global agenda to ensure that no one is left behind; has allowed for the necessary reassessment and provided the needed momentum to help respond better to the growing economic, social and environmental challenges.

2. The early assessment and alignment of the 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to our national Sustainable Development Strategy through our first VNR report in 2016 was an important first step. The lessons learnt and challenges from the first review helped Samoa respond better to the integrated and indivisible nature of the SDGs and our own SDS through the sector wide approach. This second VNR assesses progress on all the SDGs with a focus on the **People Goals**. But in order to fully assess how we are delivering sustainable development for our people, an assessment also needs to be made of our economic and environmental resilience, and the promotion of human rights, peaceful, just and inclusive societies through effective partnerships.

3. Samoa since its first report has further improved integration of SDGs into national processes for better data collection, monitoring and evaluation and linking to budget and planning processes, development assistance and other international obligations. Stakeholder engagement improved using existing platforms and processes allowing for further contextualisation of the goals. This not only helped address some of the key challenges raised in the first VNR but ensured engagement of all stakeholders including the vulnerable groups.

Progress Highlights

4. Overall, preliminary assessment indicate that Samoa has met 23 out of 246 indicators that point to the existing legislations, plans or policies that are key to the implementation of each SDG. The review revealed some regression in some indicators and targets and lack of progress in others and has allowed us to identify areas of focus to help accelerate implementation and to inform the review and finalisation of our new sustainable development agenda for the next five years and Samoa's Vision 2040.

People

5. Investing in human capital and the provision of basic and essential services and infrastructure, are the foundation of our national development journey. Education is compulsory and fee-free for children aged from 4 to 14 years old. There are a significant number of annual tertiary education scholarships. There is universal access to health care with a comprehensive network of highly subsidised public health facilities and services including overseas medical treatment for complicated health care not available in Samoa. Health care at public health facilities is fee free for children up to 12 years, for antenatal mothers, for pensioners, for persons with disabilities, mental illness, and chronic diseases.

6. There is high almost universal access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity with increasing proportion of renewable energy production. The challenge is to maintain the levels of access and quality of infrastructure and services especially with regular maintenance needs and damages from natural disasters and flooding.

7. In the ten years prior to 2008, Samoa was one of the best performing economies in the Pacific growing at an annual GDP growth of 4.3% between 1998 and 2008. Despite this, as a Small Islands Developing State (SIDS), our development remains sensitive to increasingly more frequent and intense natural and man-made global shocks such as the Global Economic and Food and Fuel Crises in 2008, natural disasters which hit Samoa in 2009, 2012, 2016 and 2018, the measles epidemic in 2019 and the COVID-19 in 2020. There was also the closure of the country's biggest manufacturer and employer in 2017 because of changing global market conditions. All these events have disrupted national development, affected economic growth, and undone many of the hard-fought development gains. Preliminary 2018 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) results show a slowing of economic growth.

8. Despite positive outcomes in terms of near universal access to essential services and overall positive GDP growth over the past five years, not everyone is benefiting equally. One in five of Samoa's population are living under hardship conditions, and while there is no extreme hunger, food and nutrition insecurity is rising. Unemployment levels are rising especially for women and youth and income inequality is significant with the top 10% of the population earning more than the combined earnings of the bottom 30%. While there has been positive progress in reducing maternal mortality and overall better access to health services including reproductive health services, the Non Communicable Disease crisis continues to cause more sickness, pre-mature deaths, disabilities and costing government up to 15% of the health budget. The pressure on the health system and government in general is exacerbated by the twin challenges of the 2019 Measles Epidemic and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant loss of 83 lives to measles primarily children in 2019.

9. Most of our children are in primary and secondary schools but only 1 out of 5 of our infants are in early childhood education and the low retention rate and quality of education in primary and secondary levels is a national concern especially for our boys.

10. Our gender equality and women empowerment efforts have yielded positive results although a lot more remains to be done. Our girls are outperforming our boys at all levels of education and there are more women than men in top and middle management in the public sector. The representation of our women in parliament is increasing but still low compared to other Pacific nations and globally. Unfortunately, despite multiple legislations and national and community programmes and initiatives, Samoa still struggles with unacceptably high levels of violence against our women and girls and there are also incidences of child labour. Furthermore, our men outnumber our women 3 to 1 in the labour force and formal employment and women's unemployment level is double that of men. On a positive note, women and likewise persons with disabilities earn more on average.

11. Building resilience to disasters and climate change is fully integrated across all sectors and more importantly at the community level. In focusing on the people goals, we can re-examine how to address poverty and nutrition security, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all Samoans can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

12. The analysis on Samoa's response to the vulnerable groups confirm that overall, we have come a long way in terms of improving the lives of all Samoans including our women and persons with disabilities. However, much more work needs to be done. Data collection and effective engagement are some of the first steps to ensuring that the most vulnerable people are not left behind.

Prosperity

13. Samoa's efforts to ensure all Samoans can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature have been positive. Despite all the challenges of being a SIDS, decades of significant investment and improvement in building resilient and inclusive infrastructure for Samoa have helped with the near universal access of the population to basic services, creating more and better opportunities particularly for the vulnerable populations; supported the tourism, trade and manufacturing industries; advanced social inclusion and improved connectivity within but also outside of Samoa. Coverage of the population by mobile phone and road networks is 97%, improving access to information, economic opportunities and transactions, e-learning and financial inclusion. More recent developments include upgrading the Faleolo Airport and all ports including the Apia wharf; launch of the submarine cables; increasing availability and spread of hospitals and schools in rural areas and across the country, investing in clean energy technologies, relaunching the national airline and ensuring resilient road networks throughout the country. There is also improved recognition and increased investment in innovation through research and development.

14. While overall improvement in quality and affordability of some of the basic services still needs work, the vulnerability to natural disasters, external shocks and the current COVID-19 situation can have serious setbacks to the developments so far. Continuing to build financial and environmental resilience at all levels including at the community level and strengthening social protection with close consideration of the Samoan context is crucial to our response. This and analysis for targeted response with close consultation with all sectors and stakeholders such as private sector, civil society, vulnerable groups and communities to address the rising inequalities, unemployment and people below the basic needs poverty line, will be critical for Samoa in ensuring a prosperous population.

Planet

15. Samoa is no stranger to environmental threats. Years of experience in devastating disasters have meant many lessons learnt and decades invested in building resilience and learning to build back better. The goals that protect our planet and our environment are clearly integrated into the work of the Environment sector and is a cross cutting priority for government. Samoa with the support of all its partners continues to build resilience to disasters and climate change by strengthening our adaptive capacity, early warning systems and disaster risk planning and response. Of significance is the extensive engagement of our communities, NGOs, youth, children, private sector, and all stakeholders in our climate resilience building efforts through mitigation and adaptation initiatives. These initiatives also help improve their livelihoods, food security and women and youth empowerment. Our communities are also fully engaged in our marine and terrestrial sustainable protection and development efforts which include significant marine protected areas, national park reserves and marine sanctuaries. These often contribute to tourism and healthy living. We have also taken leadership in the fight against plastics with a national ban on plastic bags in 2019 and on Styrofoam plates, containers, and cups by June 2020. We are also on track to meet our nationally determined contributions and maintain our commitments to the Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC, and all the multilateral environment agreements.

The analyses on Samoa's response to the vulnerable groups confirm that overall, we have made significant commitments to identifying the issues of vulnerability and responding appropriately to meet the needs of those involved including our women and youth, and people with disabilities. However, much more work needs to be done.

16. Despite progress in most environment goals, the loss of our terrestrial biodiversity is worsening, and a significant portion of our remaining forest cover is non-native. Ensuring further improvement in sustainable consumption and production patterns are critical. The biggest challenge is despite all our mitigation efforts, to fully address the climate change issue, it is significant global commitment that is important. Otherwise, disasters continue to regularly disrupt our development efforts and cause losses of lives, livelihoods and public infrastructure setting us back years and exacerbating hardship situations.

Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions

17. Samoa continues to be blessed with a generally peaceful and safe society with a free and active media community. Crime levels while increasing, are still comparatively low. Parliamentary elections are considered open and fair and although corruption is generally low, there are incidences in the public and private sectors. Samoa's UNCAC accession has continued to increase efforts to address corruption. There are no national conflicts and people generally follow the rule of law. Order and security are greatly supported by our integrated traditional village governance systems that work closely with an unarmed police force. Samoa's established National Human Rights Institutions and other mechanisms enhance a 'human rights-based approach' to development and to link implementation and review of human rights obligations with SDGs. However, despite legislations, national policies, plans and the many national and targeted programmes aimed at protecting our citizens including our women, girls, and children, levels of domestic violence against our women and children remains stubbornly high.

18. Enforced disappearance, human trafficking and people smuggling while there are no recorded cases, there are policies and institutions in place that work closely with regional and international organisations to counter transnational crimes. Crucial to the quality of life of people are peaceful societies. Samoa continues to "promote a safe, fair and just Samoa".

Partnerships and Means of Implementation

19. All the best laid plans cannot happen unless there is adequate financing, resources, and capacities to implement. The SDGs are ambitious and for a SIDS like Samoa with its inherent challenges and limited resources, better coordination, identifying synergies and interlinkages is key. Implementing all the SDGs will rely on effective means of implementation through a sector wide and whole of society approach.

20. Financing for Samoa is stable with domestic financing increasing mainly through improved tax administration. ODA and FDI levels fluctuate but are increasing overall with ODA contributing on average 12.5% to GDP. Export earnings fluctuate between SAT\$478.5 and SAT\$828.4 million and the trade deficit continues to increase. Debt is high but sustainable. Tourism earnings and remittances continue to be major sources of national income contributing on average 20 to 22% of GDP, respectively.

21. Credible and accountable national institutions, systems and capacities are critical to national development

planning, implementation, and monitoring. This includes recognising the critical role of key development partners, the international community, the private sector and civil society, communities in supporting the government to deliver on national, regional, and international priorities across all the sectors. Samoa's national planning, public financial and aid management systems are well regarded globally and within the Pacific region with some good practices replicated in other Pacific Island Countries. Samoa's sector wide approach to development planning, budgeting, and reporting is enabling a multi-sectoral, cross sector approach engaging multiple stakeholders. Samoa is one of the few Pacific countries with dedicated financing and support facilities for the civil society (Civil Society Support Programme) and private sectors (Private Sector Support Facility).

22. External development partners are generally respectful of government systems and leadership and have aligned their development assistance accordingly. However, public officials still struggle to manage the competing demands of well-meaning but multiple and sometimes complex development partner initiatives and accountability requirements. Worryingly, gains made over the past in improved development cooperation is eroding with a decline in the proportion of development assistance using Samoa's planning, budgeting, financial and aid management systems, resulting in increased transaction costs and less external support reflected on the national budget which leads to less transparency and potential duplications.

23. Samoa's monitoring and data management systems and capacities have improved with significant investment in the Samoa Bureau of Statistics. Multiple census and surveys undertaken over the past ten years have yielded a wealth of socio-economic data critical for policy making and

accountability purposes. Samoa's monitoring and data management systems and capacities have improved with a National Statistics Development Strategy in place, regular national surveys and significant administrative data, annual sector reviews and SDS progress tracking. Management and sharing of government data amongst government ministries is an ongoing issue, however the VNR process was important in the data sharing between all key stakeholders.

Challenges and opportunities

24. The key challenges faced in our SDG implementation efforts are, the limited capacity particularly in data analysis and management given the huge demand for data for SDGs. This also includes capacity to measure complicated indicators. Samoa values the assistance and support from all partners however, our experience confirms that uncoordinated SDG support efforts can lead to duplication and waste of resources including further strain to limited capacity. The biggest challenge Samoa is now trying to address which will also define achievement of many of the SDGs, is the increased vulnerability to external shocks, disasters and emerging threats, including the socio-economic impacts of the measles epidemic 2019 and the ongoing COVID-19 situation in 2020.

Conclusions and next steps

25. In conclusion, Samoa's next steps are taken within the context of continued threat of natural hazards and climate induced disasters and an uncertain and unpredictable future and global economic environment. The COVID-19 situation will also exacerbate the economic slowdown due to the measles epidemic and has already resulted in loss of jobs in the hospitality industry which is an important sector for Samoa. In order to accelerate action and identify transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, Samoa will use its VNR process and findings to feed into the finalisation of our 5 year Strategy for the Development of Samoa, inform the Samoa 2040 Strategy and help Samoa respond to the COVID-19.

26. The key takeaways and lessons learnt is the importance of strong and decisive national leadership, systems and capacities; government cannot do it alone and needs a society-wide approach to meet the SDGs; data analysis and effective stakeholder engagement is crucial to accelerated progress and ensuring that there is improved quality for all by leaving no one behind.

The key takeaways and lessons learnt are: the importance of strong and decisive national leadership, systems and capacities; government cannot meet the SDGs alone and needs a society-wide approach to do so; data analysis and effective stakeholder engagement is crucial to accelerated progress and ensuring that there is improved quality for all by leaving no one behind.

Accountabilities

What we monitor

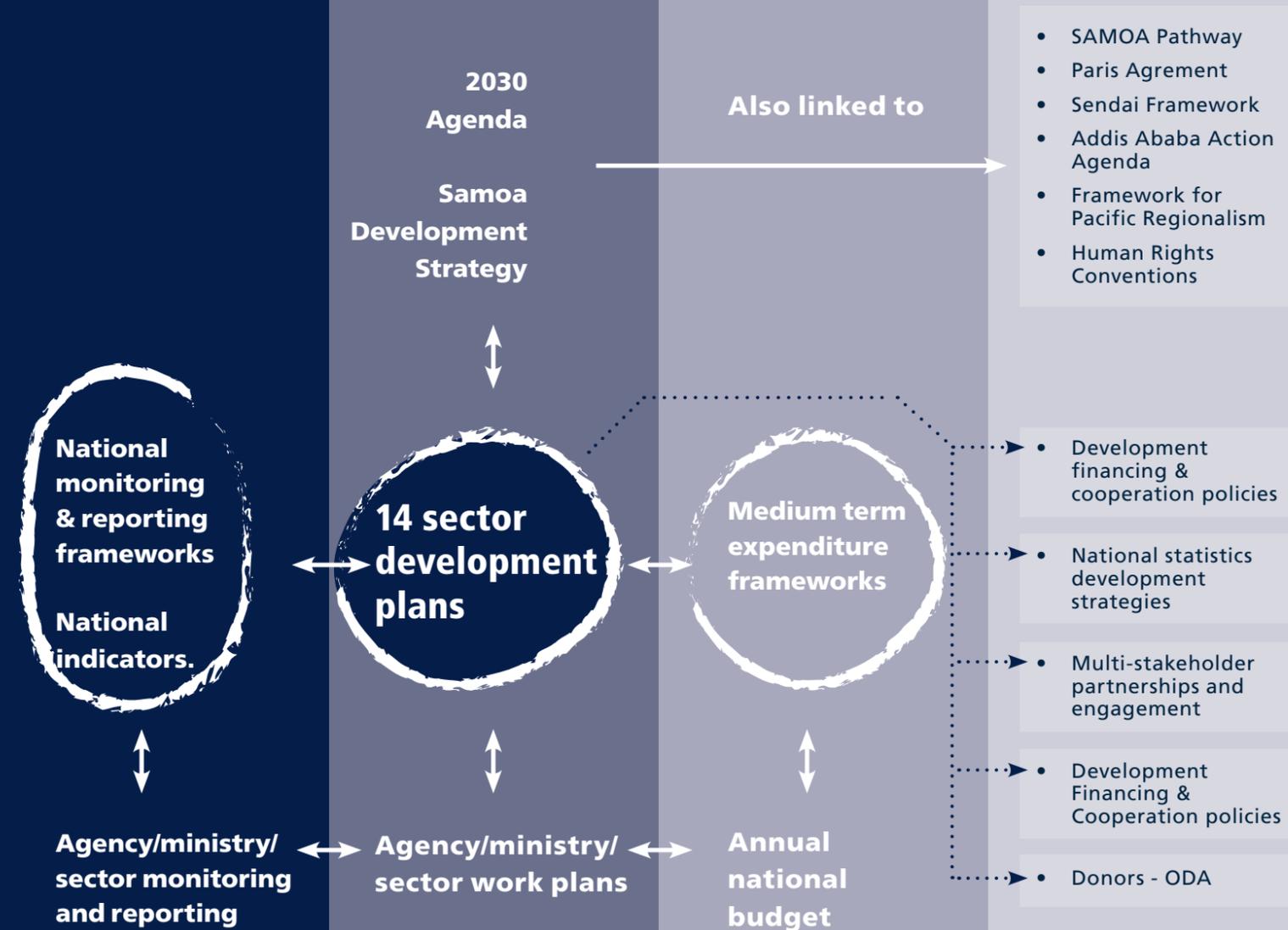
Development priorities

Plans and Strategies

Means of implementation

How we deliver

Regional & global



"Urban development must be in tune with the socio-economic and environmental aspects"



INTRODUCTION



1. This Second VNR report for Samoa reflects our efforts on localisation of the SDGs and implementation since the first report in 2016 but with a specific focus on the people goals and its interlinkages to all the other SDGs underscored by the importance of the means of implementation.

2. This report highlights how Samoa responded to the integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, how it addressed some of the challenges highlighted from the 2016 report; and reflected on how implementing the 2030 Agenda contributes to our sustainable development vision for an “Improved Quality of Life for All”. Pursuing this vision will help ensure no-one is left behind.

Background

3. Samoa is a Christian country with a people proud of their Samoan heritage and a history tracing back 3,000 years. The Fa’asamoa is a unique way of life that is key to our pursuit of sustainable growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability. As a parliamentary democracy, Samoa has maintained political stability since it became the first independent country in the Pacific in 1962. Samoa’s total land area is 2,820 km², with an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 98,500 km², the smallest of all Pacific countries.

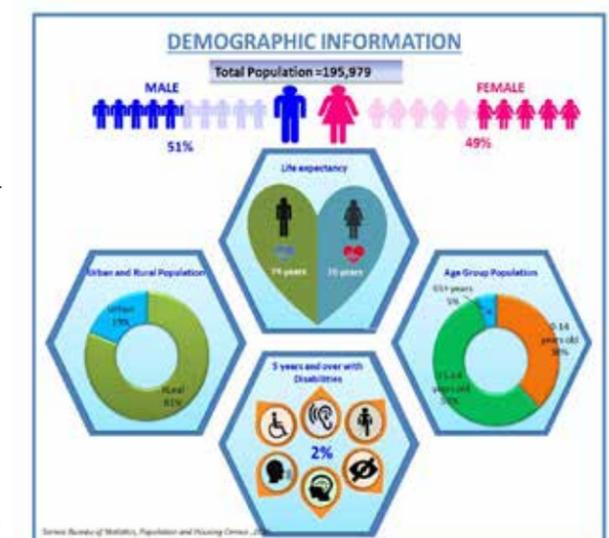
The Fa’asamoa is our unique way of life that is key to our pursuit of sustainable growth, social progress, and environmental sustainability.

4. Samoa’s total population is 195,979 with 49% female and the large majority (81%) living in rural areas. Around 38% of the population is under 15 years of age, 26% are the youth and the elderly (65 years+) make up 5%. There is 2% of the population aged 5 and older who are persons living with disabilities facing a lot of difficulties. Samoa’s life expectancy is amongst the highest in the Pacific with an increase from 64 years in 1991 to 75 years in 2016; and women have higher life expectancy, at 76 years, compared to men, at 75 years. However, the latest Human Development Index 2019 records Samoa’s life expectancy at 73.2.

5. While Samoa graduated from its LDC status in January 2014, it remains a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with inherent structural challenges. This includes, distance from major centres of economic activity, a small domestic market,

susceptibility to climate change and global crises, and to more frequent and intense natural disasters. Economic growth has been steady following the recovery from the 2008 Global Economic Crisis, the 2009 Samoa Tsunami and Tropical Cyclone Evans in 2012 with peak growth of 7.1% in 2015/2016 largely due to the expansion of the fisheries sector and major construction works; including those related to Samoa hosting international events such as the 2014 3rd SIDS Conference, the 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games and the 2019 Pacific Games. Traditionally, the economy was largely based on agriculture and fisheries, however, industry and services have now become significant contributors to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Samoa is a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC) with a GDP per capita in 2018/19 of approximately USD4000, and 2019 HDI of 0.707 placing it 111 out of 185 countries. Samoa’s 2019 Gender Inequality Index is 0.364 showing constant improvement.

6. In November 2019, Samoa declared its first ever public health State of Emergency (SOE) following a wide scale measles outbreak. The SOE lasted six weeks with significant impact on the population and the health care system. There were 5,700 measles cases and 83 measles-related deaths, the majority of whom were children under the age of 5. This also led to a contraction of economic activities with the GDP for December 2019 Quarter declining by 3.7% making it the first negative growth recorded over 18 months. Samoa was still recovering from the measles outbreak when it had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic threat in January 2020.



Samoa's Sustainable Development Approach

7. Integrating the SDGs into the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) ensures that their implementation is suitably contextualized and is part and parcel of the overall national planning, budgeting, and accountability processes. Samoa, in line with the implementation of its national sustainable development strategy is taking the same sector wide approach to implement the SDGs.

SDG	SDS	Lead Implementing Sector/s
SDG 1	Key Outcome 1 -14	Finance
SDG 2	Key Outcome 2	Agriculture
SDG 3	Key Outcome 6	Health
SDG 4	Key Outcomes 7 and 11	Education
SDG 5	Key Outcomes 8 a and b, 11	Community, Law and Justice
SDG 6	Key Outcome 9	Water
SDG7	Key Outcome 12	Energy
SDG8	Key Outcomes 4 & 5	Tourism, Trade Commerce and Manufacturing, Public Administration
SDG9	Key Outcome 10,11	Transport, Communication
SDG10	Key Outcomes 1, 8a and b	Finance, Community
SDG11	Key Outcomes 10 13 14	Environment, Transport
SDG12	Key Outcome 4,13,14	Environment, Tourism
SDG13	Key outcome 12, 13, & 14	Environment
SDG14	Key Outcome 2, 13 & 14	Environment and Agriculture
SDG15	Key Outcome 13 & 14	Environment
SDG16	Key Outcome 8b	Law and Justice
SDG17	Key Outcomes 3, 5 11 but also linked to all KO – Partnership frameworks and development cooperation programs	Finance, TCM, Communication,

8. The Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020 (SDS) focuses on four priority areas of Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Environment. The Second VNR allowed for further analysis of these priority areas confirming that the SDS shares the interlinkages of the three dimensions of sustainable development as the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. SDGs implementation is linked to the 14 sector plans and their existing Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and more importantly to the key development financing and projects for each sector and SDG. Most of Samoa's aid is on budget. All goals have been allocated for implementation by sector or sectors.

9. Therefore, for every financial year, our national budget reflects the projects and total resource allocation to be utilized for each sector, thus the same financing and partnerships can be linked to relevant SDGs. The link to the SDS and its sector plans also helps link implementation efforts for other regional and international commitments, including the Paris Agreement, S.A.M.O.A Pathway, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Pacific Framework for Regionalism, the Human Rights, Disarmament and Environmental Conventions.

10. Since Samoa's first VNR report, the Pacific published its first Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report in 2018. This was important for our ongoing efforts to collect information and data to build on the work since 2016. With the support of the Pacific Sustainable Development Taskforce, the SDGs were mapped against the priorities and means of implementation of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, regional declarations and frameworks, the S.A.M.O.A Pathway, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Addis Ababa Agenda for Action (AAAA) and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). This helped identify synergies that can be pursued in the national plan for more effective and efficient implementation within Samoa's limited resources and given the high demand on limited global resources.

11. Through the work of Samoa's SDGs Taskforce and the National Mechanism for the Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF) of the Human Rights conventions; the identification of synergies between the Human Rights Conventions and their review recommendations, and the SDGs was also key. Additionally, Samoa developed a roadmap for review and reporting on the HR Conventions and processes with the SDGs and its sustainable development sectors to help also with planning and integrating related processes including using the Samoa Database on Human Rights Recommendations (SADATA) to mine data for SDGs monitoring

12. The review concludes that the sector wide approach remains essential to meeting our national, regional, and international obligations including the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

Samoa's sector wide approach to sustainable development:

- broadens ownership by partner Governments over decision making with respect to sectoral policy, sectoral strategy, and sectoral spending
- increases the coherence between sectoral policy, spending and results through greater transparency, wider dialogue and through ensuring a comprehensive review of the sector
- minimises as far as possible the transaction costs associated with the provision of external financing, either by direct adoption of government procedures or through progressive harmonisation of individual donor procedures
- Better enables wider stakeholder engagement, better planning, and well informed and participatory communities to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind.
- Promotes the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and policy coherence across sectors
- it is an important means of empowering a whole of society approach to implementation of the SDGs

The review concludes that the sector wide approach remains essential to meeting our national, regional, and international obligations including the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

The Review Process

13. The second review process built on the preliminary integrated assessment of the Strategy for Development of Samoa, against the SDGs carried out for the first VNR review. The review for the Second VNR report began when the decision was made by the SDGs Taskforce in 2018 to report at the HLPF 2020. This decision allowed the taskforce to hold dedicated SDGs consultation processes for the different SDGs stakeholders and utilise related processes to widen the engagement, share costs, increase ownership and promote alignment of the SDGs across all related areas and processes. The Samoa SDGs Taskforce core members are; MFAT, MPMC, SBS, MNRE, MOF and the MWCSD.

Stakeholder Engagement

14. The consultative process therefore for the Second Review was much broader and it strengthened effective and meaningful engagement by institutionalising stakeholder engagement for the SDGs through the SDS and sector reporting and review mechanisms. This allowed a whole of society approach and involved representatives of all government ministries, SOEs and public institutions, civil society, NGOs, private sector, academia, community representatives, regional and international organisations including the UN and development partners.

15. In addition to the sector related consultations, there were dedicated briefings and consultations coordinated by the SDGs Taskforce with parliamentarians, School Forums on Environment Goals led by the Prime Minister, heads of Government departments and State Owned Enterprises through the National Policy Coordination Committee, Sector Coordinators and Joint meetings of the SDGs Taskforce and NMIRF group of stakeholders. Separate meetings were also held for the academia, media, and the private sector; followed by meetings with the UN Agencies, Development Partners and Diplomatic Missions present in Samoa. The committee also decided to use some of the planned national events at the end of 2019 such as Environment Week, 6th Environment Sector Annual Review and Environment SDGs Review, and the 12th Annual Health Sector Forum. The Taskforce also held a separate meeting with the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organisations (SUNGO). The Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the Regional VNR Capacity Building Workshop for Pacific SIDS in October 2019 was a timely contribution to the review process allowing further engagement with national and regional stakeholders. The workshop assisted Pacific SIDS in their preparations for the VNRs.

METHODOLOGY



16. The one-week data validation consultations in May 2020 was a critical step in finalising the data and information that helped inform and shape the report. The draft indicators matrix was widely shared across government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders for input. The consultations provided the opportunity to validate and discuss existing data, better understand the global indicators, contextualise further the goals and targets, share best practices and clearly identify the custodians and important users of the data. Coordinated by the Samoa UN Resident Coordinator's Office, about 40 experts from the UN System in particular the custodians of various SDGs indicators were engaged virtually from New York, Geneva, Paris, Nairobi, Suva and Apia during the 5-12th May data validation workshops and also the review of the Zero Draft report from 5-9 June 2020. Full Report in Annex 1.

17. The draft report was shared with similar stakeholders particularly those that actively participated in the previous consultations especially at the data validation workshop.

18. Several other related processes engaged multiple stakeholders that also helped inform the report including related national consultations and independent reviews as noted below.

Using related processes

19. Additionally, the taskforce identified some of the processes that were utilised for socialisation of the SDGs, engaging different and multiple stakeholders, collect data and help Samoa promote the integration of the SDGs into other relevant processes including on human rights, peace and security, environment, maritime and disarmament.

Some Examples:

First visit by the Special Procedures Working Group on the issue of Discrimination against Women in Law in Practice in 2017.

Mock session, preparations, and presentation of Samoa's 6th report on CEDAW in 2018.

Preparations for 1st quadrennial Pacific report on SDGs 2018.

Review and consideration process for accession/ratification of UNCAC (2018) and UNCAT (2019).

Women Peace and Security Summit 2019 in Samoa.

2019 report on the review of the progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

Arms Trade Treaty implementation through the VTF project 2018 – 2019.

First Samoa Ocean Strategy and First National Security Policy consultations.

Workshop on Samoa's Maritime Boundaries Delimitation.

84th extraordinary session of the CRC in Samoa - First CRC meeting outside Geneva held in March 2020; and

Samoa's 3rd National Communication and Biennial Update Report National Consultation Stakeholder Introductory Workshop 12 Feb 2020.

SAMOA PARLIAMENTARIANS SDGS FORUM



Caption: Samoan Prime Minister, UN Resident Coordinator, Development Partners and Parliamentarians at the Seminar for Members of Parliament: The Role of Parliament in Promoting the Strategy for the Development of Samoa and Sustainable Development Goals, 22-23 August 2018, Taumeasina, Samoa.

84TH EXTRAORDINARY CRC SESSION IN APIA, 2020



Caption: Breakout sessions during the CRC meeting in Apia.

VNR DATA VALIDATION WORKSHOP, MAY 2020



The one-week data validation consultations in May 2020 was a critical step in finalising the data and information that helped inform and shape the report.

Independent Reviews

i. OECD

1. In November 2019, a joint OECD-NZ mission on SDGs visited Samoa as part of a series of country case studies planned for the SDG analytical project: "Using the SDGs as a Shared Framework for Results." The mission involved meetings and interviews with a range of key government officials and providers of development co-operation with field presence and included a workshop with key stakeholders.

2. The mission provided some important initial feedback highlighting Samoa's key strengths that create a favourable environment for SDG adoption; identified promising emerging areas where efforts could continue; and opportunities and quick wins for Samoa and its partners. Initial impressions by the review team and some of the good practices they highlighted are reflected below and in this report.

ii. Audit

3. In 2019 the Samoa Audit Office carried out a performance audit to assess how prepared Samoa was for the implementation of the SDGs which covered July 2015 to June 2018. The findings and recommendations were shared with the SDGs Taskforce and circulated widely to ensure these are addressed. The OECD review also recognized that: "*Samoa is showing some vanguard examples of SDG action beyond central agencies, as exemplified by the Audit Office's SDG preparedness audit exercise in Samoa – creating positive incentives for further transformation of current management practices to fit with the SDGs.*"

4. Some of the key findings highlighted the positive integration of SDGs into national context and noted that the sector wide approach is important to addressing the funding needs for SDG implementation. The report emphasised that significant statistical gaps particularly for analytical capacity exist at the ministerial and sector level and while there is clear alignment and mapping of the SDGs to the Sector plans, the sector review reports need to mention the relevant SDGs progress in their sector review reports. This and other suggestions to strengthen sector level integration of SDGs were welcomed. The May 2020 SDGs data validation workshop and much of the data collection exercises were also opportunities during the VNR process to improve and address the gaps as raised by the Audit report.

5. The Audit Office also became a permanent observer of the Core SDG Taskforce and was an important partner in the Second VNR report and review process.

iii. National Human Rights Institution Review

6. Given the alignment of our human rights conventions and process reporting to the SDGs as part of our human rights approach to sustainable development, we highlight the findings of the 2019 National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) report which assessed actions undertaken by the Government to address recommendations from the NHRI Human Rights reports for 2015, 2016 and 2017. The NHRI State of the Human Rights Reports are seen as independent annual assessments of our state of human rights and these reports allow the government and the people of Samoa to continuously discuss some of the key human rights issues for our people. This assessment is important particularly for our efforts in all the SDGs and the principle of leaving no one behind. The recommendations are important especially for SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

"Samoa shows strong country ownership of the 2030 Agenda, as reflected in leadership's commitment at country and regional levels, and the Government's inter-ministerial arrangements to manage SDG adoption, integration and reporting".

7. The findings of the 2019 NHRI report highlights that, "a lot of progress has been made and various human rights issues depicted in the NHRI State of the Human Rights Report recommendations have been addressed. However, there is still work to be done to ensure the full enjoyment by Samoans of their rights." From the NHRI assessment, they gave Samoa a 'B' which by their categorization means the recommendations they have provided have been implemented by the Government to a reasonable and sufficient extent.

iv. Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice

8. Samoa was the first country in the Pacific region to receive an official visit by the Working Group. They were in Samoa from 8 to 18 August 2017 at the invitation of the Government. The Working Group engaged in a constructive

dialogue with a wide range of government and state representatives and other stakeholders, including civil society actors, health professionals, women's groups, academia, scholars, religious leaders, individual artists, and the UN country team. They reviewed efforts on eliminating discrimination against women in law and in practice. The Group visited the women's prison, a middle school, a health clinic, and observed a planning meeting among village councils and participated in a dialogue with members of a village council.

9. This review is important for Samoa's SDG implementation efforts especially for SDGs 1, 3, 5, 10 and 16. One of the main conclusions of the mission is:

v. CEDAW review

10. Given the direct link of the implementation of the SDGs to the CEDAW obligations especially for SDG 5, the review of Samoa's 6th periodic report to CEDAW was seen also as the review of our implementation of SDG 5. In the concluding remarks following the presentation of Samoa's report, the CEDAW Committee recalled the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all the 17 SDGs. It urged Samoa to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect. They welcomed the progress achieved since the last report in particular the Constitutional Amendment Act, in 2013, providing for a quota to increase the representation of women in Parliament; the Crimes Act, in 2013, increasing maximum penalties for various sexual offences, including broadening the definition of rape and criminalizing marital rape and the Family Safety Act, in 2013, extending protection to victims of domestic violence and introducing protection orders.

vi. Trade Policy Review 2019

11. The first Trade Policy Review of Samoa in 2019 was an excellent opportunity to deepen the WTO's understanding of Samoa's economic and trade policies since its accession to the WTO in 2012. This review is important for the SDGs as it touched on issues of trade, economic growth, environmental resilience, and gender equality, which contributes to the assessment of progress of the SDGs. Members praised Samoa for the overall good performance of the economy, with an annual GDP growth rate of close to 2% in the period 2012-18. It was recognised also that the economy proved resilient in the face of the devastation caused by

cyclones Evans in 2012 and Gita in 2018, as well as the closure of the country's largest manufacturing plant in 2017. Members also recognized that Samoa faces major challenges in achieving higher economic growth and attracting more investment, owing to its remoteness and small domestic market, and vulnerability to natural disasters.

vii. Peer review

12. Samoa, along with Papua New Guinea, Australia, and a Fiji CSO representative, was part of a Pacific Islands Forum Peer Review for Vanuatu's VNR report in 2019. This was the first global review of a VNR process. Given the measles epidemic and COVID-19, it was difficult for Samoa to add a peer review or twinning for this process as initially planned. All the reviews mentioned above, and lessons learnt from being part of Vanuatu's review helped with Samoa's 2nd VNR process.

“Samoa has made important strides in developing a legal framework that abide by its own Constitution's bill of rights and comply with its international human rights obligations, particularly, over the past decade, with regard to the elimination of discrimination against women. The criminalization of domestic violence, the legal guarantee of equality between men and women in employment and the constitutional amendment for 10% women in parliament are important milestones”.

Sector and SDS review process

13. The sector meetings and reviews which feed into the review of the SDS 2016-2020 are important inputs to this VNR process. The reviews helped with stakeholder engagement, for example the Environment week and sector review was one of the key consultation points for the review particularly for the environment goals. Findings are integrated into the relevant SDSs.

14. In May 2020, the review for Samoa's national strategy was carried out and the findings from this VNR report was being used to inform the consultation and shape the plan for the next five years. The draft VNR report was circulated to all sector coordinators for their comments and use in the SDS review process.

Data and National Indicator Matrix

15. Critical to the review process was the data and statistics collection efforts led by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS). Building on the work from 2016, including the localised SDGs Framework assisted by UNDP, the Bureau remained engaged in the work of the UN Inter Agency Experts Group on the SDGs Indicators Framework (IAEG) at the global level and started working closely with the different sectors through the coordination and support of the Ministry of Finance and the SDGs Taskforce to ensure better integration of the SDGs in the sector plans, frameworks and their work. Using the latest data matrix from the SBS identifying all the data they can or will collect; the SDGs Taskforce Secretariat with the support of the UN system compiled a matrix with all the relevant data for each global indicator. The key sources were national government of Samoa reports globally, Samoa Sector Review Reports, Sector Plans, Sector Policies, National Surveys and Census; Cabinet Development Committee Papers; Reports of Government Ministries, NHRI reports and National Demographic and Global Surveys. Where no data was available from national reports, the taskforce Secretariat looked at relevant regional and global sources such as datasets on SDGs from the Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2018, UN, World Bank, ADB, OECD, SPC, SPREP and so forth.

16. This matrix formed the basis of a week-long data validation process and another week of follow up consultations. There were around 150 participants involved in the data validation of the attached matrix including representatives of government, NGOs, private sector, regional and international organisations especially UN agencies based in Samoa,

Fiji and headquarters of non-resident agencies in New York, Geneva, Paris and Nairobi and the OECD in Paris. The consultations were robust open and focused, which allowed for frank discussions amongst the various stakeholders which resulted in the attached National Indicator matrix for the SDGs (Annex 2). The matrix reflects the baselines agreed to by the relevant stakeholders and the key sources of data. There are 246 indicators made up of the global SDGs indicators and national indicators relevant to Samoa's context to measure its progress against the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Limitations

17. There were a few key limitations to the review process. Importantly, we lost five months in the process due to the Measles and COVID-19 situations, which led to several of the key consultation processes related to the review particularly on data collection such as the SDS review, key sector consultations, the HIES 2018 results, DHS-MICS 2019 being postponed or delayed.

18. This led to the SDGs Taskforce reverting to the use of all past census and national reports and other relevant data sources, to finalise the data matrix. Given restrictions, we resorted to electronic consultations to assist with finalising the data collection, receiving feedback and comments to the draft and for further consultations with government stakeholders, NGOs, and private sector.

19. The COVID-19 situation also made it difficult for the report to be tabled in Parliament before its submission. However, it was tabled and cleared by cabinet with plans to submit through Parliament once a scheduled date for parliament discussion is set.

20. Another key challenge to the review process were the multiple numbers of related processes which stretched the capacity of the core SDG Taskforce and its stakeholders.

21. In addition to the unavailability of some of the latest key data, there are the complicated global indicators metadata that are difficult to translate to reflect Samoa's key needs at the national level. Some of the key indicators for Samoa are without metadata and Samoa looked at national proxies or additional indicators based on our national circumstances, national plans, and available information.

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING CONSULTATIONS



22. Samoa's sustainable development approach has always put people at the centre. Its main national priorities focus on improving the lives of all, emphasising economic sustainability, social inclusion, access to infrastructure and basic services and building environmental resilience. The past decades have seen Samoa's continuous investment in its human resources and thus the focus of its sustainable development strategy and approach on its people. The progress report will therefore focus on all the SDGs but particularly on the 'people' goals and our contribution to ending poverty for all SDG1; ensuring nutrition security SDG2; securing a healthy people SDG3; empowering through education SDG4; protecting gender equality SDG 5 and access to water and sanitation SDG6.

23. The review suggests that Samoa has met 23 global indicators of the 246 selected indicators to measure Samoa's progress on SDGs implementation. Based on preliminary analysis of the available data, Samoa so far is either on track or has achieved 47% of the indicators and is off track or in progress for 38%. There is no data for the remaining 15%. We acknowledge however, the challenges with the available data given the different timelines and different source bases. Therefore, these are preliminary as there is ongoing assessment of the indicators including possible further prioritisation noting also that we are still only five years into implementation of a 15-year agenda.

PROGRESS ON GOALS AND TARGETS SAMOA'S SDG JOURNEY



Leaving No one Behind: A Human Rights Approach to Sustainable Development

24. With a people centred sustainable development approach, the emphasis is on reviewing progress, challenges and initiatives related to reducing poverty and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups. It also provides the opportunity to highlight actions to address inequality and promote the fulfilment of all human rights by building peaceful societies, ensuring nutrition security and access to basic services including education, health, water and sanitation, while pursuing environmental and economic prosperity.

25. The socio-economic wellbeing of our people remains at the core of Samoa's development initiatives, thus the promotion, respect of, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, without distinction of any kind, is indispensable to ensuring that no one is left behind. This is demonstrated in our commitment to a human rights approach to sustainable development and attempt through this VNR process and report to highlight the integration of the sustainable development and human rights processes and actions. To achieve this, the government has given priority to the mainstreaming of development issues of gender equality, children, youth, elderly and persons with disability into all national policy development and reporting processes.

26. Samoa's sustainable development approach, linked to its human rights obligations recognises that the principles and actions related to 'Leaving No One Behind' requires consideration, engagement and empowerment of the most vulnerable groups which include women and girls, youth, people with disabilities, children, the elderly, and people disadvantaged through the lack of opportunity. The disadvantaged can be further defined through the different sectors by way of access and enhanced quality of services as there are different disadvantaged groups for each sector. This allows additional and more tailored strategic action through the sectors. The focus nevertheless across the board in all sectors is to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups – women and girls, children, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

27. The multi-stakeholder sector wide approach that ensures meaningful engagement of civil society, private sector, development partners, communities and vulnerable groups 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.

Samoa actively seeks community-based engagement and civil society participation in bottom-up accountability approaches, in government's sector steering committees and in problem/solution identification at local level. This has been recognised by the 2019 OECD-New Zealand review as an important good governance arrangement for Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) approaches for implementing the SDGs.

Women and Girls

28. Women and girls make up 49% of the total population and they continue to play prominent roles in many spheres of society; such roles are widely acknowledged. They are critical to the stability and wellbeing of families and communities' which are at the heart of a Samoan society. Compared to 30 years ago, women's advances in managerial positions and professional occupations have increased significantly including representation in parliament. Current statistics show they outperform their male counterparts academically, and there are increasing numbers of women occupying leadership roles in the public sector, private sector, and civil society organisations. Access to basic services have improved including to sexual and reproductive health services. There is also an improvement in the number of females in the labour force from 32.2% of the labour force in 2012 to 36% in 2017. While overall average gross monthly wages for paid employees reduced slightly in 2017, this increased for females from 2012 to 2017. However, women's unemployment level is double that of the men, and they represent the majority in the informal sector and are likely to be more vulnerable to hardship than those in paid employment as studies have confirmed.

29. Samoa's commitment to the elimination of discrimination against women and implementing SDG 5 have been a priority since Samoa ratified CEDAW in 1992. While much progress had been made in the past 30 years, the progress on SDG 5 in this report highlights some key areas where dedicated attention needs to be focused on. To truly address the issues of inequalities and add the needs of the most vulnerable, the gender equality components across all goals cannot be ignored. There is also recognition that women and girls can be agents of change and will be an important part of the transformational equation for the SDGs.

30. While gender equality is recognised as a cross cutting issue in our sustainable development approach, more work still needs to be done on gender mainstreaming. The importance of evidence-based policies and interventions has led to Samoa including some of the key violence against women

and intimate partner violence statistics in the DHS-MICS surveys. These are important developments and crucial to the much-needed whole of society approach to ending violence and sexual and other types of exploitation of women and girls. A focus also on violence against women with disabilities will need clear and dedicated interventions. Efforts are being made to encourage intergenerational dialogue and community-government partnerships to address some of the root causes of gender-based violence. Samoa is calling for proactive leadership by village councils, church leaders and Government to prevent the occurrence and improve the response to violence against women, children, and persons with disabilities. Programmes such as the recently launched EU-UN and Government Spotlight initiative will hopefully help accelerate action on the issues of violence against women and children, and provide a more coordinated and coherent approach by all partners

31. The 2016 general elections had a record of 24 women that stood for election with was a 300% increase from the previous election. There are many programs such as the Women in Leadership in Samoa (WILS), Strengthening Legislatures in Pacific Islands Countries Project (SLIP), and Women in Leadership Advocacy (WINLA), that promote gender equality and contribute to several efforts by the government, partners and the NGOs to encourage women representation in parliament, especially with the next elections in 2021.

Children

32. Samoa ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1994 and in 2016 it was the first Pacific island country to have submitted the instruments of ratification for the three Optional Protocols to the CRC. This was a demonstration of Samoa's continuous strong commitment, political will and leadership in the promotion and protection of children's rights. Children less than 15 years of age make up around 38 % of the population. In Samoa, cultural and Christian principles have a strong influence on child rearing practices. The Samoan proverb "O au o matua fanau" - Children are parents' ultimate treasures and the universal saying that Children are the future of families, communities and a nation, are some of the many beliefs and principles associated with how children are nurtured and reared in a Samoan family. The same is also said of the Christian principles. Children are regarded as a blessing and a responsibility from God. As a result, families are, overall, highly protective of their children.

33. The SDGs implementation review has highlighted some

of the positive results in addressing the needs of the children of Samoa. Children's access to basic services such as education, health care, water and sanitation are high with results showing low prevalence of undernourishment, malnutrition including stunting and wasting compared to other Pacific Island nations. Overall, children in Samoa appear to be developing well in terms of their physical development, verbal communication, and approaches to learning. There are also positive trends in terms of the increase in the number of children with disability enrolling in schools. Despite increased opportunities for education, only 23% of our infants are in early childhood education. Food security is not an issue, but the prevalence of overweight is a serious challenge for Samoan children. Despite these positive metrics, the preventable loss of lives for about 80 children during the 2019 Measles Epidemic in Samoa was a wakeup call about the need to be more meticulous in the delivery of longstanding health programmes for children including immunisation.

34. Child Labour is prohibited in Samoa and it is compulsory for children 4 to 14 years to attend school. The minimum age of employment in Samoa is 15 and for hazardous work is 18 years. Despite this, there are children vendors selling goods mainly through informal retailing and domestic services during school hours. A 2015 ILO Rapid Assessment of Children Working on the Streets of Apia Pilot Study identified 106 (29% F and 71% M) children ages 7 to 17 working on the streets of Apia at the time. A total of 41 or 38.7% were below 15 years and 8.5% had never attended school. Of those that did, 68.1% had dropped out and 31.9% were still in school, a significant number dropped out after primary school. Most of the children are from the rural areas and live with their parents. About 84% identified working to support their families or to pay for school fees as the reasons for child vending indicating that financial difficulties is pushing children into street vending. However, with the fee-free paying schools grants scheme and the Compulsory Education Act, government continues to engage affected children and families to address some of the issues highlighted in this study.

35. The Ministry of Police and Prisons and Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development are working with the villages and families of the children to seek solutions including through the Child Vendors Programme that also looked at back to school programme for the vendors. The MWCSO works with the children and their families through monitoring visits to identify activities in accordance to the needs of the families. With data available only through one off studies or current programmes, the government is now

looking at the next DHS 2019 for information on child labour to better inform further interventions on the issue.

36. Violence against children and exploitation is one of the key concerns that needs to be addressed in relation to children. The statistics as per recent MWCSO studies and the NHRI Public Inquiry into family violence record troubling statistics. This goes against the cultural and Christian principles that see children as blessings from God and treasures of families. The Samoa Family Safety study 2017 reports 43% of children as subjected to emotional abuse, 35% to both emotional and physical abuse and 12% subjected to physical abuse only. Disturbingly, 79% of the abusers were parents.

37. The issue of violence against children was also raised during the Extraordinary 84th session of the CRC held in Samoa in March 2020. This session was a milestone event not only for the Committee meeting outside of Geneva for the first time but the valuable opportunity for the committee to engage with children of Samoa and the Pacific. This provided a platform for the children to discuss and understand better their rights and for Samoa to hear their voices on some critical issues including climate change, gender equality, right to health, culture, and their rights. This added to the number of open dialogues and platforms created to allow children to have their say. The children also called for all stakeholders to work harder to guarantee children's right to participation, education, health, climate change and freedom from violence. The District Development Plans rolled out in the communities by MWCSO also encourages the participation of children and youth in the discussion of the community level plans.

38. The VNR process was an opportunity to review and gather all the different challenges related to children for the different sectors and SDGs and identify dedicated attention and better coordination on the many initiatives to address some of these challenges. The vulnerabilities of children during disasters as was evident during the measles epidemic 2019, sheds light on the need for vigilance and dedicated attention to avoid putting our children in vulnerable situations in the future. The Safer Families and Stronger Communities policy, the Draft Child Protection Bill and the community sector engagement will be key to Samoa's ongoing efforts to eliminate violence in the family, especially violence against women and children. There should be zero tolerance for violence in Samoa.

Persons with disabilities

39. Persons with disabilities often lack consistent access to health care, education, employment, and economic opportunities equal to those without disabilities and, thus, are more likely to suffer social exclusion, economic vulnerability, and other hardships. Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalised and poorest members of Pacific communities with often lower economic, health and education outcomes.⁹ Acceding to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in September 2014 followed by ratification in December 2016 were important milestones that reflect Samoa's continuous dedication to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. Samoa's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by persons with disabilities dates back to the 1970s, where they started with special educational programs for persons with disabilities.¹⁰ Nuanua O Le Alofa was established in 2001 by persons with disabilities for persons with disabilities as the national advocacy organisation for disability. NOLA worked closely with Government to achieve the ratification of the UNCRPD in 2016 and continues this partnership for its effective implementation. The Strategy for the Development of Samoa and the Community Development Sector Plan 2016–2021 fully mainstream disability and continue to demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring persons with disabilities are not left behind. The Government aims to promote disability mainstreaming across all 14 economic, social, infrastructure and cross-cutting sectors.



40. A number of important developments demonstrate progress in addressing the situation of persons with disabilities such as: the launching of the Samoa Disability Program now called the Samoa Disability Partnership Programme coordinated by the MWCSO and financially supported by Australia and includes setting up of the Mobility Services Unit at the Ministry of Health; a UNCRPD comprehen-

sive legislative review in 2016; second National Disability Policy, a Gender Disaster Management Policy, Disability Disaster Management Policy and especially the review of the National Building Code of Samoa in 2020,¹¹ the LERA Act, Election Act to ensure provisions were included for persons with disabilities. To improve on policy and relevant interventions, data and statistics are crucial. Hence, the 2018 Samoa disability monograph was an important step forward to documenting the extent of disabilities and impact on people's lives, access to services and employment opportunities.

41. The Samoa disability monograph helped confirm the disability prevalence rate for Samoa given the three different classifications of disability and degrees of difficulty. This confirms that 7.1% of Samoa's population five years and older have some difficulties while one in every fifty or 2% faces a lot of difficulties (this is the Washington Group recommended cut off point for disability). Across the regions, Savaii has the largest percentage of persons with a disability. Most persons with disabilities were found in the middle quintile (22%), 66% have access to improved drinking water and 97% have access to improved sanitation facilities. Thus, there is no disadvantage for persons with disabilities when accessing improved water and sanitation facilities however their wealth status and access to clean energy sources needs improvements. The findings of the 2018 Monograph further shows significant disparities exist in education and economic activities that require urgent policy and programmatic attention.

42. Inclusive education that enables the participation of all including those with disabilities is a priority of the Government. An Inclusive Education Unit at the MESC and the Inclusive Education (IE) Policy for Students Living with Disability 2015 provide a framework to improve educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Teacher training have been conducted on the learning requirements for students living with disabilities. A growing number of children with a disability are attending school. Students with special needs are attending tertiary institutions but the PSET are not adequately recording information on their attendance/participation

43. The VNR process revealed the further need for disaggregated data for all SDGs to better reflect the situation of persons with disabilities and to ensure all sectors reflect interventions for them and their inclusion. There are still pending recommendations from the Samoa Law Reform review that need to be addressed such as ensuring the completion of the necessary review of other national legis-

lations to ensure they are CRPD compliant and the need for the development of a disability Act. The current COVID-19 State of Emergency and the inclusion by government of sign language in all of the Prime Minister's daily media programme has in partnership with NOLA been an important step in ensuring inclusivity and also raised the importance and visibility of the issues of persons with disabilities. This has led to more government ministries coordinating COVID-19 to prioritise translation of information into accessible formats.

Youth

44. Samoa's youth constitute the majority of the active labour force with the 15-29 years age group accounting for 44% of the total 'working age' population in Samoa. Youth unemployment was higher and almost doubled between 2012 and 2017 (from 16.4% to 31.9%). The highest rate of unemployment is within the 15-19 years for both males and females. Youth made up 44.7% of the unemployed in 2017. In addition, the proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training rose from 35% to 37.9% between 2012 and 2017. Therefore, Samoa missed the 2020 target of reduction of youth not in education, employment, or training. These details are important as the youth left idle can lead to more social problems. The current COVID-19 situation will have severe repercussions on national efforts and any progress to address the issues of youth education, employment, and empowerment.

45. While there is no specific national youth employment policy there is a Samoa National Employment Policy 2016-2020 that addresses youth unemployment such as provision of skills training, vocational guidance and counselling, business development and financial services for business start-up. There are also various programmes focused on youth employment including; the Youth Farmers Programme, Youth Internship Programme (Chamber, MWCS, NYC), Street Vendors Back to School Programme, Green Jobs for Green Works (Red Cross, ILO, MNRE), Young Weavers Programme (MWCS, ILO), Seasonal workers Scheme, Youth Entrepreneurs council under Chamber, Youth Co Lab under ILO, ILO Samoa Action Plan for Youth Employment, and UNDP – youth employment programme.

46. The district development plans have also enforced better representation of youth and other vulnerable groups in formulating and implementing the district development plans. Opportunities for engagement in policies are crucial and there are NGOs such as the National Youth Council that also help provide a voice for youth. Churches play a major

role in engaging the youths and there are partnerships between the government and the churches to address some of the youth related concerns and problems including access to education and employment opportunities. Through the CRC engagement, SDG youth forums and other platforms, the sector wide approach will need to look at how to better engage and empower our youth to contribute positively to economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

The Elderly

47. Samoa's elderly (65 years +) make up 5% of the population and are amongst the most important, revered and well looked after in Samoan society. However, the First Pacific Quadrennial Report highlighted that the elderly and other vulnerable groups are more often likely to fall into hardship and poverty. The Samoa Hardship and Poverty Report 2014 noted that 13.3% of elderly were living below Samoa's national Basic Needs Poverty Line. Furthermore, the prevalence of disability is higher for persons 50 and over hence this impacts the elderly population. The VNR revealed that insufficient disaggregated data for the elderly making it difficult to measure accurately development impacts on their lives. Furthermore, clarity in terms of responsible agencies for issues of the elderly population is crucial. At the moment, the community sector through the MWCS are the key forum for highlighting and addressing issues of the elderly population through their community engagement.

48. Despite this, the elderly population in Samoa are the only vulnerable group with a 'cash benefit' which is the universal old-age pension system or the Samoa Senior Citizens Benefit. They also have free health care and fee-free inter-island travel. The elderly were also the main targeted beneficiaries for the two phases of the Samoa COVID-19 Stimulus packages with \$300 cash grants in April followed by an additional \$100 cash grant in May plus an increase in their monthly pension from SAT\$ 145 in January 2020 to SAT\$160 starting July 2020.

Data collection and effective engagement are some of the first steps to ensuring that the most vulnerable people are not left behind.

49. The Mapuifagalele Old Peoples Home run by the Catholic Sisters of the Poor is a very well-known home that receives donations from the wider community to support the work and care they provide for the elderly population. The May 26th Government COVID-19 Stimulus package includes cash grants to the Old Peoples Home.

50. The review process reveals that better data would provide a better assessment of the situation of this vulnerable group and how to move forward to ensure the elderly are not left behind in the pursuit of the SDGs.





SDG 1/2/3/4/5/6

PEOPLE

SDG 1



NO POVERTY

End poverty in all its forms everywhere
la maua e tagata uma o avanoa tutusa

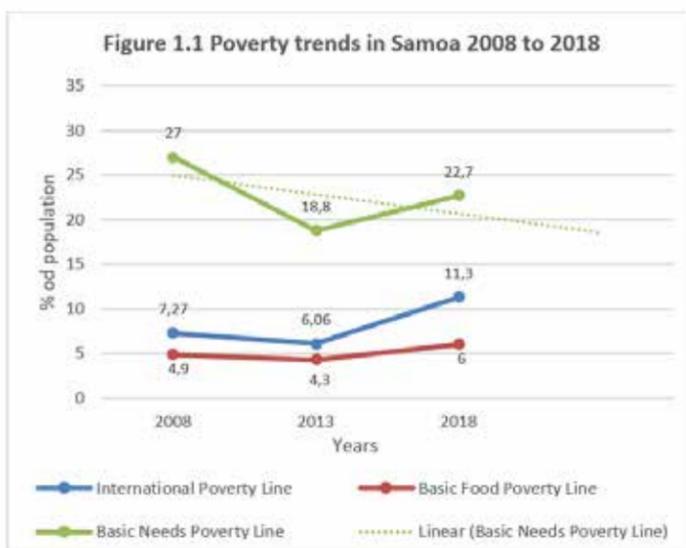
Overall, Samoa's progress for SDG 1 is mixed. Samoa has achieved two of the indicators related to disaster resilience and risk reduction (1.5.3 and 1.5.4), and there is good progress on the social protection and access to basic and essential services targets. There is evidence of strengthened resilience with overall positive economic growth, and improved capacity in climate and disaster risk management. But as a SIDS, vulnerability to the negative impacts of more frequent disaster events remains a challenge and data shows regression on the poverty targets since 2013.

Global shocks, natural disasters and health crises are disrupting national development, affecting economic growth, and undoing hard fought development gains. Preliminary 2018 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) results show a slowing of recovery and the negative impacts of the more recent cyclones, multiple and more severe mass flooding and closure of the biggest manufacturing company (Yazaki) in Samoa in 2017. Proportion of population living below the National Food Poverty Line stands at 6%, up from 3% in 2013, whereas, the number of Samoans living below the National Basic Needs Poverty Line has increased from 18.8% in 2013 to 22.7% in 2018.

Samoa context- Broadening opportunities for all

51. In Samoa, it has always been recognised that extreme poverty and hunger do not exist in the form envisaged in the MDGs and SDGs. The global poverty indicators are not relevant to Samoa. However, it is recognised that in every society there are those who are less well-off than average. This condition may arise from poverty of opportunity hence poor education, poor health, isolation and remoteness, the impact of natural disasters among other reasons. While we may not have very many of those living in extreme hardship, there is still a significant difference in the standard of living throughout the population where there are some who are unable to enjoy a standard of living comparable to others in Samoa. In addressing SDG1, Samoa in its national development strategy is looking at accelerating sustainable development and broadening opportunities for all through delivering on all its key priority economic, social, infrastructure and environment outcomes.

Status and trends



52. Overall, Samoa's progress so far for SDG1 is mixed although Samoa has achieved two of the indicators related to disaster resilience and risk reduction (1.5.3 and 1.5.4). While data shows regression on the poverty targets since 2013, there is good progress on the social protection and access to basic and essential services targets. There are very positive results for the disaster resilience targets through evidence of strengthened resilience but as a small island developing state, vulnerability to the negative impacts of more frequent disaster events remains a challenge.

Poverty

53. Samoa classifies households and individuals as extremely poor if their income falls below the national food poverty line. Samoa's population living below the National Food Poverty Line stands at 6%,¹² up from 3% in 2013. Despite the increase it is relatively low. Based on international poverty line definitions (IPL), 11.3% of the Samoan population are living below the IPL increasing from 6.06% in 2013.¹³

54. Contrastingly, approximately 1 in every 5 Samoans (22.7%) were estimated to be living below Samoa's *Basic Needs Poverty Line* (BNPL) in 2018.¹⁴ The proportion of the Samoan population living below the BNPL fluctuated from 23% in 2002 to 27% in 2008, declined to 18.8% in 2013 and rose again to 22.7%¹⁵ in 2018. The 2018 increase however was uneven across Samoa with the more rural areas of Rest of Upolu (ROU) and Savaii (SAV) recording significant increases and the urban areas of Apia Urban Area (AUA) and semi-urban area of North West Upolu (NWU) recording slight increases in incidence of Basic Needs Poverty.

55. Importantly, while BNPL has increased since 2013, the overall ten-year trend from 2008 is declining.

Impact of natural disasters, health crisis and building resilience

56. Samoa had recovered well after the negative impact of multiple national and global shocks in the late 2000s; the 2008 Global economic crisis (GEC), the 2009 Food and Fuel Crisis, the 2009 Tsunami and 2012 Cyclone Evan¹⁶ Recovery and growth were aided by significant public spending, development partner support including for reconstruction and recovery development, hosting of major events such as the SIDS Conference in 2014, the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2015 and the Pacific Games in 2019.¹⁷ Development was supported by strong recovery and growth in two of the key national income sectors of tourism and remittances.

57. However, preliminary 2018 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) results show a slowing of recovery and the negative impacts of the 2016 Cyclone Amos, 2018 Cyclone Gita, multiple and more severe mass flooding of Apia and Upolu from 2015 onwards, and closure of the biggest manufacturing company in Samoa (Yazaki Samoa) between 2016 and 2017.



1 IN 5 SAMOANS LIVE UNDER THE NATIONAL BASIC NEEDS POVERTY LINE BUT THE OVERALL TEN YEAR TREND FROM 2008 FOR POVERTY IS DECLINING

58. The increasing basic needs poverty levels in Samoa is exacerbated by the impact of more frequent and intense natural disaster events. Samoa was affected by up to 9 natural and climate induced disasters over the past 12 years with significant impact on loss of life, homes, businesses, infrastructure, livelihoods and overall economic and development costing between 0.1% and up to 30% of GDP in damages resulting in erratic economic growth and periods of stagnation and negative growth.¹⁸ The 2009 Tsunami killed 143 people, affected 7,663 per 100,000¹⁹ people, led to the relocation of entire villages inland away from their coastal locations resulting in loss of livelihoods and incurring millions for new infrastructure and utilities. Cyclone Evans in 2012 resulted in 12 deaths, temporary displacement of approximately 7,500 people and devastated livelihoods and assets, causing damages totalling \$480M (USD 210.7),²⁰ undoing years of economic gains in infrastructure development including flooding of a major Hotel in Apia causing it to close for years.²¹ This resulted in negative economic growth of -1% in 2011/12 followed by -2% GDP in 2012/13.²² In 2018, Cyclone Gita caused significant flooding and unprecedented landslides that damaged roads, impacted businesses, homes, and public infrastructure totalling an estimated SAT\$2.5M in damages. Remedial measures for the massive landslide blocking full access to the eastern side of Upolu where many of the prime beaches and tourist attractions are located, are yet to be fully addressed.

59. Considering past experiences and the more frequent and increasingly significant impact of national disasters, Samoa has invested considerable effort and resources over the past ten years in disaster risk management, planning and response. The focus is to build back better and ensure resilience through better disaster and climate proof development to minimise disaster impacts. Climate change and disaster resilience is one of the key strategic outcomes of the SDS where all sectors, ministries and implementing agencies need to improve their climate and disaster resilience planning. There is a well-established National Disaster Management policy and governance mechanism that helps with coordinating national disaster risk planning, management, and response.

Social protection, basic services, and government spending on essential services

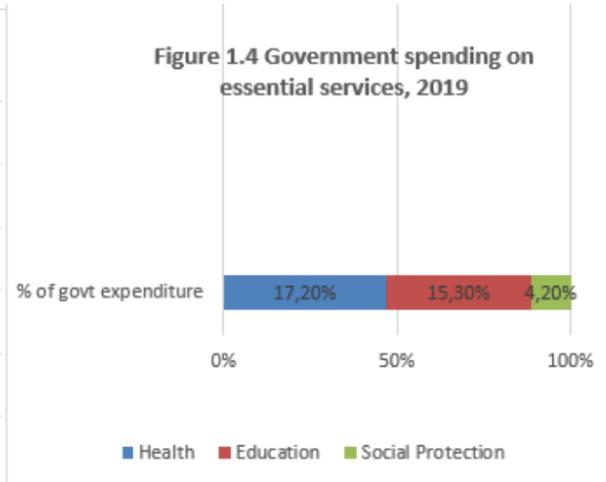
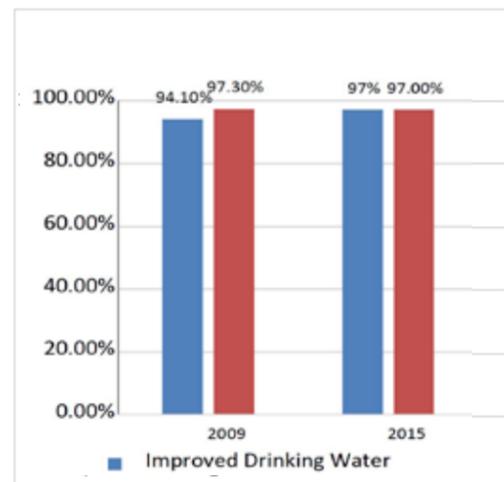
60. Disasters often lead to a downturn in the trajectory of socioeconomic development and exacerbate poverty. Thus, social protection systems and access to affordable basic and essential services help prevent and reduce the impacts and provide a safety net for the vulnerable. However, limited

fiscal space makes it a challenge to provide comprehensive basic and essential services and social protection coverage in a Small Island developing state like Samoa.

61. Despite these challenges, there is overall, high level of access to basic services such as improved drinking water sources and sanitation facilities. Improved drinking water sources increased from 94.1% in 2009 to 97.3%²³ in 2015. For sanitation facilities it improved from 94.7% in 2014 to 97% in 2015. Government spending on essential services such as health, education, and social protection as a proportion of overall government expenditure was also reasonable at 40% in 2015 and 36.8% in 2019.

62. There is still difficulty in properly capturing Samoa's social protection coverage and expenditure given the limited availability of data. Samoa's social security is regulated by the National Provident Fund Act 1972, which provides for a provident fund program and a universal old-age pension system or the Senior Citizen Benefit Scheme (SCBS). The SCBS covers citizens and permanent residents aged 65 years and older, residing in Samoa. This provident fund program covers both formal and informally employed persons, including household and agriculture workers. Voluntary coverage is available for self-employed persons.

63. However, while the Senior Citizens Scheme is the only type of 'cash benefit' for vulnerable groups in Samoa, there is an extensive network of social protection measures across different population groups. This includes fee-free public and mission school education for Years 1-8 in primary and Years 9-11 in secondary schools, fee-free medical care at public health facilities for children up to 12 years, fee-free antenatal health care, fee-free health care for pensioners and people with chronic illnesses including with disabilities and mental health illnesses; fee-free inter-island travel for pensioners. There are benefits in the form of paid leave for public and private sector employees such as paid sick, maternity, paternity, and bereavement leave. A 12 weeks and 6 weeks maternity leave (4 paid) for mothers in the public and private sector respectively and 1 week paid paternal leave for fathers in both public and private sectors. There is also accident compensation coverage for work related accidents during work hours for workers in public and private sectors. Additionally, there is the Government Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme (OVT), supporting the costs of treatment in New Zealand and Indian private hospitals for Samoan-based patients with life-threatening medical conditions but with a good prognosis for recovery. This is fully funded by the government including travel and hospital visits.



64. In April and May 2020, as part of the Government of Samoa's COVID-19 Stimulus Package, the elderly through the Senior Citizen's Scheme received an additional one off cash benefit of SAT\$300 for FY2019/20 and SAT\$100 for FY 2020/21 plus an increase of the monthly benefit from SAT\$145 to SAT\$160 effective July 2020. Government also introduced unemployment subsidies for those that have lost jobs due to COVID-19. Furthermore, cash grants were made available for vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, the GOSHEN Mental Health facility, the Home for the Elderly, and others.

65. It is also important to note that in the Samoan culture, the strong sense of community through extended families, the church and village communities has always and continues to provide a safety net for the vulnerable. In this way, there is the belief and practice that no one goes hungry or become homeless because every community will take care of all its members. In this regard it is difficult to measure, track, and report to reflect this type of 'social protection' at the global level. For example, with the impacts of the SOE and lockdowns for COVID-19, while the stimulus packages and other support mechanisms are being provided for those most affected through job displacement in the hospitality industry, every Samoan can count on family and community for their basic needs in terms of food, shelter and clothes.

Good practices

66. To achieve government's vision for 'improved quality of life for all' and ensuring no one is left behind; capacity building for our communities and nongovernment organizations is critical. This is key to empowerment and ensures the communities, families and the most vulnerable have the means to meet their basic needs, provide security and build resilience. Government has long recognized the critical role of NGOs and Civil society to delivering on its sustainable

development agenda including the SDGs. To this end, Government has established a financing facility, the Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) for CSO, NGO and CBOs with an independent administrative body. Through the CSSP Training project, the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organizations' (SUNGO) climate change resilience program is directly aimed at building community resilience through the development and use of the tools and resources to enhance their resilience to climate effects. All training encourages participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities and the elderly. SUNGO remains a key partner in the whole-of-society approach to implementing the SDGs. Their membership includes 54 NGOs, 137 community-based organizations and 10 trusts.²⁴ SUNGO through strategic partnerships including with Government Ministries, donor partners, Universities and communities carry out training for the benefit of their membership and affiliated community-based organizations in the rural areas. For example, under the Independent Water Schemes Association (IWSA), over 50 villages and 600 participants benefited from courses that targeted the villages that were members of the IWSA. For 2018 – 2019, a total of 16 Training courses were delivered which covered counseling skills for social services; Project Design; basic computer and IT Skills and Data Collection and Analysis for CSOs.²⁵ SUNGO in partnership with regional organizations provided training related to human rights.

67. The Government of Samoa has invested heavily in strengthening Samoa's resilience to natural disasters to address the frequent disruptions and impacts of national disasters on national development. Samoa has integrated national disaster planning and resilience building into its national and sector planning and policy making processes. Samoa has a National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) 2017 - 2020; a National Action Plan 2018 - 2021; a DRM Gender Policy and a Disaster Risk Reduction Plan. Disaster Risk Management has been incorporated across seven

sector plans, related programming and implementation including the Environment Sector, Water and Sanitation Sector, Agriculture Sector, Health Sector, Infrastructure Sector (Building), Community Sector, Tourism Sector, and the Education Sector. At the community level, Samoa has also fully engaged the communities and non-state actors in building resilience at village level with an extensive network of 41 Community Integrated Management Plans and district and village disaster management and response plans. Importantly, gender considerations have been included as a standard procedure for Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). Consideration of gender issues in the Cyclone Evans PDNA informed the work of the NDMO. The Samoa Red Cross is also training more women to join its emergency response teams.

68. Generally, Samoa's experience in responding to the more frequent and intense disasters has resulted in increased capacity nationally and at the community level to quickly respond to and recover quickly from national disasters.

69. During the measles epidemic and COVID-19, it is the village community networks that enabled the Government and the multitude of development partners to undertake the two days (5th and 6th November 2019) mass immunisation for Measles resulting in the now 95% coverage achieving herd immunity in Samoa. Similarly, the Government–community partnership networks have facilitated an extensive outreach program for public awareness of the preventative and preparedness measures for COVID-19.

Challenges and Opportunities

70. Samoa's overall development efforts is constrained by the limitations inherent for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of geographic isolation, narrow resource base and vulnerability to external and climate induced shocks and hazards. Samoa is impacted by natural and external shocks on average every two to three years and have costed around 20 to 30% of GDP often undoing years of development efforts and gain in a matter of hours. The recent health crisis of the measles epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic have added an additional layer of risks that further exacerbate vulnerability and derail development efforts and gains. In this context of limited fiscal space and many competing national priorities, it is a challenge to provide comprehensive basic and essential services and social protection coverage.

71. The twin Health Crises (Measles Epidemic Aug 2019 to February 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic) is already affecting economic development especially in the tourism

sector which is one of the main income earners for Samoa. Based on Central Bank of Samoa figures; total arrivals dropped considerably by up to 25% in December 2019 and in January and February 2020 compared to figures from the year before. Total visitor earnings in the same months declined significantly from 13.3% in Nov 2019 to lows of 4.4% in December 2019 and 0.8% in Feb 2020.²⁶ A Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry COVID-19 Impact on Employment for Samoa Businesses Study in May noted that 51% (158) of respondent businesses had made staff redundant, 55% had staff take voluntary leave without pay (LWOP). The businesses that instituted LWOP were Hotels and Accommodations (70%), Primary Production (67%) and Transport (59%).

72. Samoa is currently working on expanding the coverage of its social protection measures in place, in collaboration with the UN system under the SDGs Fund. A social protection floor will be established which can assist with the response to the impacts of climate change, natural disasters, global shocks, and the measles and COVID-19 impacts, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Interlinkages

73. In order to lift the population from below the FPL and BNPL and end poverty in all its forms, enhanced investment in social sectors, climate resilient and green infrastructure is critical to be on track towards low carbon emissions development pathways and reducing the impact of natural

The communal family (aiga) and village system in the fa'a Samoa remains an important aspect of social protection, which is central to Samoa's social structure and way of life.

disasters. This links the successful implementation of SDG1 to all the other sixteen goals.

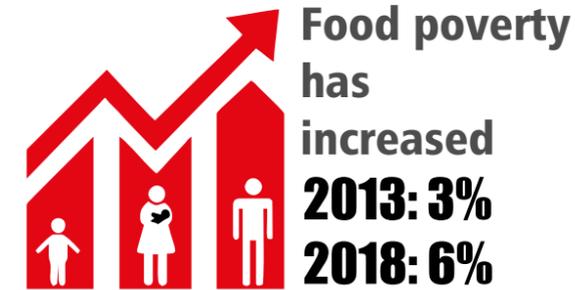
74. The negative economic and health impacts of the Measles outbreak and the current COVID-19 Pandemic will likely undo the past decade of progress including that of SDG1. Progress on the poverty targets has reversed since the MDGs due to a combination of multiple climate induced cyclones, unprecedented flooding, and closure of the biggest manufacturing plant and largest private sector employer in 2016/2017. This highlights the direct link of economic prosperity, environmental resilience, improved access to basic services and social inclusion to poverty alleviation efforts.



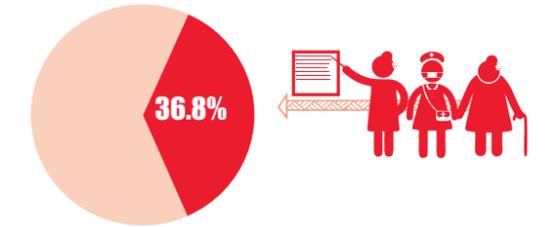
SNAPSHOT:



End poverty in all forms everywhere



Government spending on essential services

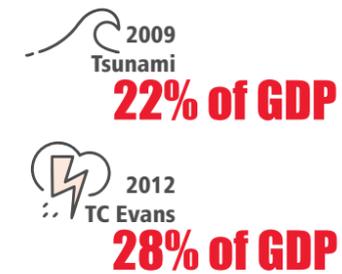


*health, education and social protection

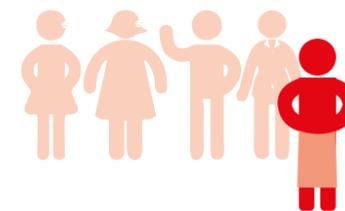
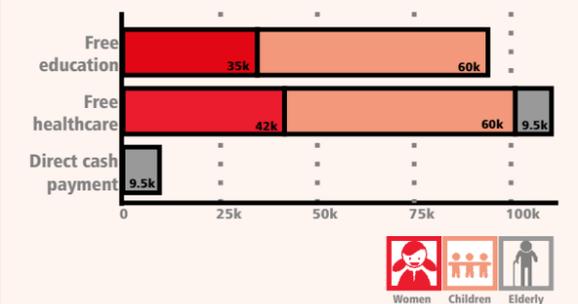
Samoa and the UN will develop a social protection floor to reduce poverty through universal access, better targeted benefits and labour market interventions



Economic cost of recent disasters



Population covered by social protection



1/5 Samoans live in hardship/poverty



Near universal access to basic services

SDG 2



ZERO HUNGER

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

la faamuta le tulaga o le lē maua o ni taumafa lelei mo le soifua malōlōina

Agriculture is important to overall development in Samoa contributing around 9.4% of GDP in 2018 and 3.6% of government expenditure. Overall, there is low level of extreme hunger and undernourishment, but nutrition security is a concern. One in five people are considered moderately food insecure with 2.4% of people considered severely food insecure. WHO reports indicate that compared to other Pacific nations, there are low levels of stunting and wasting in Samoan children.

The challenge in Samoa is access to and affordability of locally produced healthy foods especially when there is ready access to cheaper processed food-imports often of lower nutritional value.

Samoa context - increasing food, nutrition, and income security in Samoa

75. Agriculture, fisheries, and subsistence production is an intrinsic component of Samoan and Pacific cultures and traditions. An estimated 97% of all Samoan Households in 2015 engage in some level of agricultural activity, primarily for subsistence and consumption including for traditional, family and village obligations and ceremonies.²⁷ That is, they grew some crops and/or raised some livestock.²⁸ An estimated 36.5% of urban and 60.3% of rural households owned agricultural land.²⁹ The share of own food production in total per capita food expenditure was 26% in 2013.³⁰

76. Family farming forms the core of smallholder agriculture systems in Samoa. A thriving smallholder family farming sector provides the basis for food security, good nutrition, and rural livelihoods. Growing the agriculture sector and investment in zero hunger will also promote rural development. Therefore, enhancing smallholder productivity, production capacity and related food supply chain quality as well as reducing post-harvest losses will be critical for protecting and sustaining food security and nutrition in Samoa. Improving access to productive resources, financial services, and business skills particularly for women will also be important. Global experience has clearly shown that where women have increased access to income generating opportunities and social decision-making empowerment at community level, household nutrition improves.³¹

77. There are only six major export commodities, of which fish represents almost half of total exports, followed by nonu juice, beer, taro, coconut, and virgin coconut oil. Emerging export products include bottled spring water, cocoa products (pods and beans), cigarettes, scrap metal and bananas.³² The vulnerability of fisheries and agricultural-based production and trade-related infrastructure to natural hazards including disasters are reflected in contractions in exports following natural disasters. For example, exports fell in 2013 by some 30% following Cyclone Evans in 2012.

78. The Agriculture sector that leads in the implementation of SDG2 aims to strengthen government partnerships, particularly with the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and development partners, to leverage agriculture's potential to promote enhanced health, prosperity, job creation and resilience. The approach is to improve inter-linkages especially with the Trade, Commerce and Manufacturing, Environment, Health, Education, Tourism, Finance, Water, Transport, Community and Energy sectors. Gender, Climate Change and Disaster Manage-

ment are critical crosscutting issues that have a significant bearing on the agriculture sector plans. Samoa continues to focus on increasing investment in food security and inclusive commercial agriculture/fisheries production systems; increasing supply and consumption of competitively priced domestically produced food; ensuring sustained increase in production, productivity, product quality, value adding and marketing of agriculture and fisheries products. More importantly it is essential to have sustainable agricultural and fisheries resource management practices in place and focus on strengthening climate resilience and disaster relief efforts.³³

- 97% of all Samoan Households in 2015 engaged in some level of agriculture activity primarily for subsistence and consumption.
- Overnutrition, over-eating or consuming poor quality food is a major issue in Samoa impacting health and wellbeing.

Status and trends

79. Overall, Samoa's progress shows there is low level of extreme hunger and undernourishment, but nutrition security is a key concern. One in five people are considered moderately food insecure with 2.4% of people considered severely food insecure. WHO reports indicate that there are low levels of stunting and wasting compared to other Pacific island countries. Agriculture productivity is improving including a growing proportion of small-scale farmers engaging in sustainable organic and also, commercial farming. What is a challenge in Samoa is access to and affordability of locally produced healthy foods especially when there is ready access to cheaper processed food-imports often of lower nutritional value.

80. Agriculture is important to overall development in Samoa though contributing just over 10% to national GDP, with fish representing almost half of total exports and supporting employment, rural livelihoods, food, and nutrition security. The share of the agriculture sector (agriculture and fisheries) in Samoa's GDP however, is half the levels twenty years ago reducing from 17% of GDP in 1999 to 8.8% in 2015 but starting to increase again and at 9.4% of GDP in 2018. The Agriculture Orientation Index increased from 0.23 in 2010 to 0.38 in 2018.³⁴

Similarly, agriculture's share of government expenditures increased from 1.8% in 2015 to 2.2% 2019. This reflects the intensification of government and development partner investment in agriculture since 2010.

81. Despite the entrenched nature of agriculture and subsistence living, most of Samoa's meat (95% chicken and 67% beef³⁵) is imported with food imports increasing 60%³⁶ between 2005 and 2014 and food imports accounting for 27.5% of total imports in 2015 including an estimated US\$15 million in low priced canned tuna in 2016.³⁷ However, the investments by government and development partners in national and targeted agriculture and fisheries initiatives is starting to yield improvements in local food subsidization and increasing engagement in commercial farming. The availability of local meat food produce in the local market has increased significantly between 2013 and 2017 with the volume of beef doubling, local vegetables increased by 62% and local fruits by 48%.³⁸

a. Nutrition and Food Security

82. Extreme hunger is not a concern in Samoa as food availability is not an issue given that most of Samoan households have access to land for agriculture and food production purposes, and the soil is relatively fertile. A Samoan consumes on average 2,480 kcal per day which is enough to meet the basic energy requirements.³⁹ Less than one person in twenty is undernourished or not accessing enough food to meet their basic energy requirements (<5%).⁴⁰

83. Food insecurity is the limited access to food by an individual or households due to lack of money or other resources. This does not take into account access to food through support by the extended family or communities where money or other resources may not be needed. About 2.4% of people in Samoa or one out of forty people are severely food insecure or went without eating for a whole day because of a lack of money or other resources over the last 12 months.⁴¹ About 22.4% of the population are moderately food insecure or did not have regular access to nutritious and sufficient food even if they were not necessarily suffering from hunger. Food insecurity is more prevalent in Savaii and rural Upolu than in urban Apia. Given the wide access of Samoans to land, whenever poverty and food insecurity is publicly debated it is not uncommon to find people referring to 'hunger' as a result of one's laziness.

84. Various national studies and anecdotal evidence show that 'over nutrition, over-eating or consuming poor nutrition food is a major issue in Samoa impacting health and wellbeing.⁴² The draft State of Food Security and Nutrition

- Agriculture productivity is improving including a growing proportion of small scale farmers engaging in sustainable organic and also commercial farming. 42% of Households are engaging in organic farming.
- 1 out of 4 Samoans are concerned about accessing good quality and a variety of food for a diversified healthy diet

in Samoa Report note that, accessing good quality and a variety of food for a diversified healthy diet was a major concern for more than one out of four Samoans. There has been a 60% increase in imported and often poor nutrition but more affordable food between 2005 and 2014.⁴³ It costs less than SAT\$1 to access 1,000kcal from cereals, sugar and sweets, but SAT\$2.5 to acquire the same amount of calories from fruits and vegetables and more than SAT\$4 to get from meat or milk and cheese. Diet related non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases are resulting in many Samoans being chronically ill, having poor quality of life or dying prematurely.⁴⁴

b. Stunting and Wasting

85. Prevalence of undernourishment (<2.5%*)⁴⁵ and malnutrition including stunting (5%)⁴⁶ and wasting (4%) are also low compared to other Pacific Island nations although prevalence of obesity (overweight (5%)⁴⁷ is a challenge for Samoan children. Malnourished children tend to live in rural Upolu and come from the lowest wealth quintile households.

86. An estimated 22% or one in five households identify agricultural work as their main source of income and about 42% of the employed population in 2016 engaged in agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishery related occupations.

87. In total, 3,884 (3715 M, 169 F) individuals worked for households in paid crop, livestock, or fishing employment, 70% in crop and 24% in livestock. On average, Households earned \$645 a year from livestock (65% cattle, 27% pigs and 4% chicken). For fisheries, small-scale subsistence and semi-commercial fisheries are an important source of food and livelihoods in Samoa, with consumption levels of about 100 kg per person per year in rural areas.⁴⁸

88. Most agriculture employees are male (96%) and receive cash payment (86%) although the average wage is very low at SAT\$81 a week.

89. An estimated 12.7% of agricultural land was considered to be under productive and sustainable agriculture in 2009. Furthermore, there was a 27% increase in Households in Samoa engaged in organic farming and an 8% drop from 50% to 42% of major crops households still using pesticides between 2009 and 2015.

Good practices

90. There are many partners engaged in strengthening agriculture produce and food security in Samoa. The importance of sector plans, and good aid coordination and management allow Samoa and its donor partners to engage in projects where the need is clearly identified. Projects such as the Samoa-China Agricultural Technical Aid Project launched in 2010 has enabled capacity building through 25 agricultural experts from China, establishment of demonstration farms, setting up 9 agricultural stations, supporting 100 model farmers, distribution of various high yielding vegetable and fruit varieties, new facilities and processing equipment, application of cost-efficient and effective technologies towards mechanisation, and provided agricultural training for more than 7000 farmers and scientists.

91. The World Bank's engagement in the agriculture sector through the Samoa Competitiveness Enhancement Project (SACEP 2012-2018) supported the revival of livestock development with shipments of cattle and sheep from Australia and Fiji to improve the government stocks, the establishment of multiplier farms to increase breeding stocks in Samoa, as well as enactment of the Samoa Meat Supply Act 2015 to regulate improvement in the hygienic slaughtering of meat for the retail market via the mobile and static slaughtering units through the Samoa Agriculture & Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project starting in 2020.

92. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has successfully led the establishment of marine reserves and protected areas that have yielded positive environmental impact, enhanced engagement with rural communities and improved benefits for the tourism and fisheries industry. Established reserve areas range in size from 15,000 to 175,000 sqm² and many include ecologically important mangrove and sea grass environments which are important breeding grounds for fish stocks. The reserves are also helping replenish adjacent fishing areas through reproduction and migration. Increase in fish and other marine resources benefit both subsistence fishers and tourism.⁴⁹

Challenges and Opportunities

93. Agriculture and fisheries in Samoa are very vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The more frequent and destructive cyclones, heavy rainfall, increasing acidification of the ocean, and sea level rise are already impacting local produce for farming and fishing families. Limited access to credit, farming tools and supplies for micro, small and medium scale farming enterprises is a commonly recognized challenge for agriculture production.

94. At the sector level, the main challenges are the shortcomings of the necessary infrastructure, human resource capacity and tools for improving the productivity of the agriculture sector. There is a shortage of supply breeder cattle from government and commercial cattle farms; unsustainable costs of imported breeder stocks, lack of functional stockyards, loading ramps, unreliable water supply systems and extremely tenuous access roads to farms affecting access to markets. Timely delivery of services by MAF are hampered by; a shortage of qualified veterinarians and Meat Inspectors to meet the growing animal health and regulatory demand; lack of qualified livestock production and animal nutritionists; and the need to invest in a workable and competent national disease surveillance program.

95. Despite the challenges, investments in the agriculture sector including through the SACEP and SAFPPROM projects supported by strategic partnerships with development partners and also with other sectors such as health, community and environment; can yield more positive results in implementing SDG2 and meeting the vision of increasing food, nutrition and income security.

96. The COVID-19 pandemic SOE and lockdowns have triggered the need for each sector to look at their responses to the current circumstances. The agriculture sector has a focus on ensuring food and nutrition security through encouraging farming as an import substitution measure, working with communities to encourage the production and saving of open pollinated seeds, establish distribution centres and develop strategies for the distribution of planting material and seeds to established farmers, households and communities. In the medium to long term the sector is strengthening the revival of traditional food production and preservation practices; strengthening the production of underutilized highly nutritious crops (e.g. laupele) and potential food crops (e.g. umala, kangkong cabbage) and are encouraging home gardening and small-scale livestock production.

97. This is to build resilience against the current circumstances with the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. The Scientific Research and Organisation of Samoa (SROS) has contributed significantly to agriculture production through scientific and technical research with the primary aim of adding value to local resources and services. There is great potential to build on their work to inform nutrition and security related policies, and more importantly to support the work of agriculture and other sectors to build community resilience. For example, following the COVI-19 pandemic lockdown, SROS continued research into alternative options for high demand imported foods such as flour, using local breadfruit that are also gluten free. They also used traditional knowledge to look at food security options and to support the Agriculture sector in looking at food preservation practices.

Interlinkages

98. Access to good quality and affordable healthy food is essential for a healthy and productive population. While hunger is not a challenge in general, the level of moderate food insecurity is still significant mainly due to cheaper imported and often lower quality and processed alternatives, unhealthy eating habits and preference for processed

convenient take away meals. Shifts in dietary patterns dictated by easy access, affordability and convenience are contributing to the Non-Communicable Disease crisis, in Samoa resulting in premature deaths, causing disabilities, and escalating costs for curative care.

99. While low in numbers, stunting and wasting has severe consequences for development and learning for children which will impact their learning outcomes and future employment opportunities.

100. The importance of the agriculture and fisheries sector not only to food and nutrition security but also to environmental resilience, economic growth, poverty alleviation and women empowerment; are acknowledged and prioritised in the Samoa Agriculture sector plans. Achieving the strategic outcome of the agriculture sector is a strong contribution to a healthier and more prosperous Samoan people.

To ensure food and nutrition security in response to COVID-19 lockdown, the agriculture sector encouraged home gardening, planting of crops and small scale livestock production.





SNAPSHOT:



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture



households identify agriculture as the main source of income



of households engage in agriculture



Less than
2.5% undernourished
4% wasting
5% stunting

Low levels of malnutrition



1/5 Samoans are food insecure



Samoans are concerned about accessing quality healthy food



Samoans are severely food insecure

Between 2013 & 2017 local food production increased

Beef		→	100%
Veges		→	62%
Fruit		→	48%

SDG 3



GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

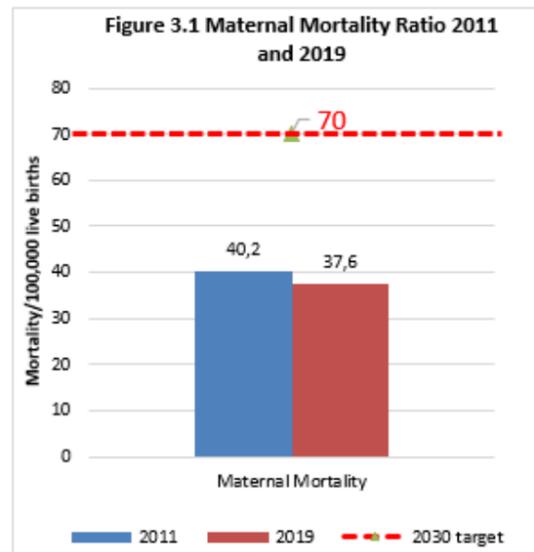
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
la maua le soifua malōlōina lelei o tagata uma

Generally, pre-measles and COVID-19, Samoa was on track to achieve most of its health targets and indicators particularly the Maternal and Child Health targets. There is increasing levels of physical exercise and reduction in tobacco use and alcohol use, access to antenatal care has increased and Total Fertility and Adolescent Fertility rates have decreased. Communicable diseases are generally under control. The key challenges for Samoa remain the high levels of premature deaths, illnesses and increasingly, disabilities from NCDs and the extremely high health care costs. The twin health crisis of measles and COVID19 highlight the added risks of health pandemics on the health and socio-economic situation in Samoa. Measles and COVID 19 are reversing the gains on SDG 3 and many other SDGs.

Samoa context – A Healthy Samoa

101. The vision for the Samoa Health sector is to ensure a healthy Samoa in order to improve the quality of life for its population. Some of the key challenges the health sector sought to address in its 2008 – 2018 plan were the rapidly increasing levels of NCDs; importance of reproductive, maternal and child health; emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and injury as a significant cause of death and disability.

102. The strategic focus to address these challenges included emphasis on lifestyle behaviours to tackle the risk factors of NCDs, improving primary health care, raising the quality of healthcare services and managing and responding effectively to natural disasters, disease outbreaks and other emergencies. In terms of climate change and disaster resilience every health development project is inclusive of resilience development. Four of the health organizations, the Ministry of Health (MOH), the National Health Services (NHS), the National Kidney Foundation Services (NKFS) and the Samoa Red Cross Society SRCS⁵⁰ have developed Disaster and Emergency Response Plans.



103. The vision for health and the priority given to it in the National Development Strategy provides direct input into the implementation of the SDG3 and other related SDGs.

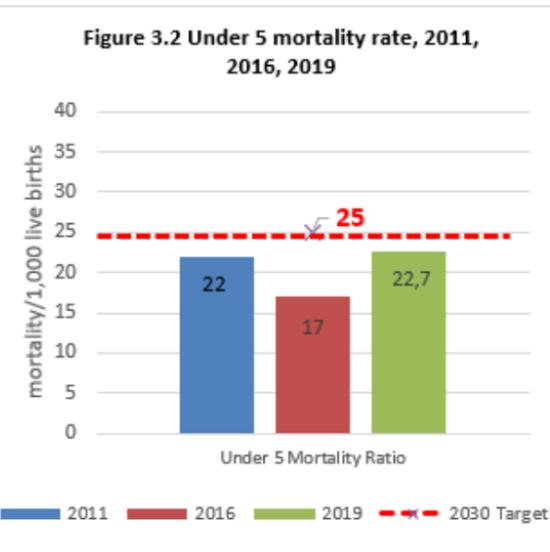
Status and trends

104. The health sector is one of the top three priorities of the Government of Samoa over the past two decades receiving the second or third largest allocation from government averaging around 17% of national budget in 2014/15. Health expenditure as a percentage of GDP increased from 5%⁵¹ in 2006 to 5.7%⁵² in 2014/15.

105. Generally, pre-measles and COVID-19, Samoa was on track to achieve most of its health targets and indicators. There is early achievement of targets for Maternal and Child Health; there is some good progress on health behaviour targets for NCDs prevention for the period 2002 to 2013 such as increasing levels of physical exercise (28.5%) and reduction in tobacco use (13.3%) and alcohol use(12.4%),⁵³ access to antenatal care and contraceptive services has increased and Total Fertility and Adolescent Fertility rates have decreased. Results for communicable diseases are generally positive with overall declining incidence and rates for HIV, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B. As noted in Samoa's final MDGs report, the biggest health challenge for Samoa remains the high levels of premature deaths, illnesses and increasingly, disabilities from NCDs.

Reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health

106. Samoa continues to make good progress against the unfinished business of MDGs targets and indicators for maternal and child health. Less mothers are dying from or as



a complication of pregnancy and childbirth. The rate of children dying at birth or 12 months after birth is also declining overall.

107. Maternal mortality ratio decreased from 40.2 to 37.6 /100,000 live births in 2011 and 2019 which is less than the global target of 70/100,000 by 2030.⁵⁴ Under 5 mortality rate has been reduced from 22 to 17/1,000 live births in 2011 and 2016 but rose in 2019 (22/1,000 live births). Nevertheless, it is still below the 2030 U5MR global target of 25/1,000 live births. But this will change once the post measles data is

made available. Neonatal mortality rate increased from 5/1000 live births in 2009 to 7/1000 live births in 2013 but reduced to 6.2/1,000 live births in 2019 which is below the global 2030 target of 12/1,000 live births⁵⁶. The proportion of births being attended by skilled health personnel increased from 81% in 2009 to 83%⁵⁶ in 2014 and now 94.1%⁵⁷ in 2019.

- The health sector is one of the top three priorities of the government of Samoa over the past two decades
- The prevalence of communicable diseases such as HIV/Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B are generally low.

108. There is improvement in access to sexual and reproductive health-care services with a 3% increase (from 36% in 2009 to 39% in 2014) of women of reproductive age who have their need for family planning satisfied. There is improvement in adolescent sexual and reproductive health with a decrease in the adolescent birth rate for women aged 15-19 years (from 39 per 1000 women in 2011 to 31 per 1000 women in 2016). In 2018, the Samoa Family Health Association which provides public sexual and reproductive health-care services opened its branches in Motootua and Savaii improving reproductive health access particularly for the rural communities. The contraceptive prevalence rate though has decreased from 29% in 2009 to 27% in 2014 necessitating renewed efforts to ensure access to Sexual Reproductive Health information and services. All public health facilities in Samoa provide family planning services, have providers trained in family planning service delivery, and have planning guidelines available.⁵⁸

109. Based on these results, so far Samoa is on track for global SDGs maternal mortality (SDG 3.1.1) and child health (SDG 3.2.1, 3.2.2) targets and indicators. Despite these early achievements, the national measles outbreak in late 2019 unfortunately resulted in the premature deaths of around 80 infants and children and will increase the under 5 and neonatal mortality rates. This also highlighted gaps in health systems such as low levels of immunization that require urgent attention.

110. In terms of proportion of target population covered by all vaccines included in national programme, it increased from 53% in 2014⁵⁹ to 95% in 2019.

111. While low overall, the proportion of 1 year old children immunized against measles increased by 24% from 40.35% in 2009 to 64% in 2014. Rates of coverage of MMR1 increased from 55.7% in 2009 to 76% in 2014 and MMR2 increased from 25% in 2009 to 52% in 2014. While low, the proportion of children fully immunized doubled between 2009 (25%) and 2014 (53%). After the nation-wide Mass Measles vaccinations programme in November 2019, with significant support from the international community immunization rates for infants is at 95% as of February 2020.

To address the NCDs crisis, the MOH's Package of Essential NCDs Interventions (PEN) Faa Samoa is improving early detection, referral and increasing public awareness especially in the villages. The programme highlights the critical role of communities in particular women's committees can play as they did decades before, in the promotion and delivery of critical health interventions.

CASE STUDY: MEASLES EPIDEMIC 2019 AND THE SDGS

Background

Since 2017, there has been a global resurgence of measles, including in several countries of the Western Pacific Region. The last declared outbreak of the measles in the Pacific occurred in 2014.

However, following recent large-scale outbreaks in neighbouring nations and the significant population movements between these countries and the Pacific, confirmed measles outbreaks have been reported in at least five of the Pacific countries and territories including Samoa.

The 2019 Samoa measles outbreak began in September 2019. As of 6 January 2020, there were over 5,700 cases of measles and 83 deaths, out of a Samoan population of 200,874. Over three percent of the population were infected. The cause of the outbreak was attributed to decreased vaccination rates, from 74% in 2017 to 31-34% in 2018, even though nearby Pacific countries had rates near 99%. Samoa's low vaccination rates were in part due to the deaths in 2018 of two children given a wrongly mixed vaccine and the resultant reluctance of some parents to have children vaccinated.

The measles epidemic will have direct impact on progress of SDG3 in terms of under 5 mortality rates and economic growth.

National response

A state of emergency was declared on 15 November and is the first public health emergency proclaimed in Samoa. Early closure of all schools, restricted mobility of children on public transport and discouraging their participation in public gatherings, as well as mandatory vaccination were ordered under the declaration of the state of emergency.

On the declaration of the state of emergency, the National Emergency Operations Centre was activated. With the Disaster Management Office as the secretariat for the Disaster Advisory Council, the coordination of response agencies and all logistical arrangements for the national response to the

measles epidemic under the NEOC institutional framework, came into play with technical advice and guidance from the Ministry of Health.

Local and International support: Mass vaccination

On 9 November the first medical team arrived from Australia. Thereafter, 45 Emergency Medical Teams rotations from 15 countries and organisations involving 549 personnel were deployed to support the national teams under the joint coordination of WHO and the Government of Samoa. The bulk of the total vaccines of 265,500 units as well as 100,000 IU of Vitamin D were procured through UNICEF. Some of the medical teams, provided supplies, of life-saving equipment and additional infrastructural space for negative pressure units and additional wards. A number of individuals from overseas also volunteered their services in their areas of specialisations crucial to the national response. The last medical teams of Samoan expatriate doctors left in March 2020.

Prior to the start of the door to door mass vaccination campaign held over two days, a national community awareness campaign began to promote the importance of vaccinations under the leadership of the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development in collaboration with the development partners and the private sector. The government then declared a national shut down from 5 - 6 December to facilitate the door to door vaccination campaign. All unvaccinated families were advised to display a red flag in front of their houses to indicate acceptance of the vaccination services. Close to 150 vaccination teams comprising 5 people each were mobilized for the mass campaign including both national and expatriate personnel from the medical emergency teams. A 70 plus team from the Hawaiian medical corps were flown in for one day, specially to assist with the mass vaccination campaign.

Several other key service providers were important to the mass vaccination and measles response work. The shipping services, with police to support overseeing operations and transport between the two main islands and uplifting of urgent supplies from American Samoa. The data collection was supported by the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and volunteers mostly from other government minis-

tries, higher learning educational institutions, the UN, MCIT and Samoa Information and Technology Association (SITA). The MWCSO led the community outreach programmes gathering data from approximately 25,000 households to determine vaccination status. The private sector, NGOs and CSOs also provided support to the service providers and affected families.

The Samoa Measles Appeal was launched by the Government of Samoa on December 6 to receive financial assistance from partners to support national

efforts to contain the outbreak, to effectively treat people who contracted measles, achieve herd immunity for long term protection of the population



Hundreds of volunteers get ready for a country-wide massive vaccination campaign.

5. Improved infrastructure for an emergency response looking at isolation wards and essential lifesaving equipment. These are more relevant now also with the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Timely and informed decision making was crucial to saving lives

Conclusions:

Addressing the gaps: The recovery period will be focused on identifying the gaps that were evident in the national response to the measles outbreak and prioritising the areas to be addressed as outlined in the recovery plan. The recovery plan will also look at the immediate and short-medium term needs and that the outcomes of such will add to long term planning to ensure much improved response should the need arise.

Sector wide approach : There is room for the Health sector to work with other sectors such as Community Development, Agriculture and Fisheries, Education, Communications and Statistics in order to address the important issues of data collection/analysis and records digitisation as part of the e health system, and the emerging needs that are a result of the impacts of the epidemic including community mobilisation for public health, addressing issue of food security and nutritional

status of the country as well as the implementation of the resultant legislation on school enrolments conditional on achieving vaccination.

Importance of partnerships: The development partners have provided valuable assistance in supporting the significant gaps in the operations of the hospitals with regards essential lifesaving equipment and facilities such as isolation wards. The importance of regular maintenance and adherence to standards is underscored. While new funding might be available from the international appeal, development partner funding, fund raising events and through the supplementary budget, the intention is that current available support can be integrated into ongoing as well as approved pipeline initiatives for the health sector.

Applying lessons learnt for COVID-19: The lessons learnt, and situation of the measles epidemic helped Samoa prepare better for the COVID-19 pandemic. Other than improving immediate emergency response all sectors have provided sector response plans to the COVID-19 situation looking at the inter-linkages also. This will become more important as we look at addressing the current socio-economic impacts of the measles and the COVID-19 on Samoa and on our progress for the SDGs.



Teams of medical professionals are deployed across the country to vaccinate the population



Teams of medical professionals are deployed across the country to vaccinate the population against measles.

as well as prevent regional migration. The Government had established dedicated accounts for the public to deposit donations including from outside the country and in particular from the diasporas all over the globe.

On 14 December, the state of emergency was extended for another 14 days until 29 December. By the end of the State of Emergency about 95% of the eligible population had been vaccinated.

Recovery Plan

The Measles Recovery Plan approved by Cabinet in early January 2020 provides for the gaps identified during the response period, addresses the extensive follow up work needed for those that were affected by the outbreak as well as the essential changes that must be implemented for a more effective, well-coordinated and well-resourced response in the future.

Lessons Learnt: The following priority lessons learnt are the bases for the Recovery Plan.

1. Placing the focus back on public health – this includes looking at facilitating community mobilisation, strengthening EPI management and SRH programs to be aligned with legislation including improved immunization information systems and also continuing provision of psychosocial support and institutionalisation of sustainable services. This also means strengthening disease surveillance.

2. Follow up and management of post measles cases – the recovery plan identified the need to prioritise follow up on the cases especially those who suffered complications. Look at required clinical care and nutritional and environmental care management.

3. Address human resource capacity gaps- the measles epidemic helped push the urgency of addressing some of the capacity gaps in health system especially for psychosocial mental health; emergency and acute Primary care centre Paediatrics; Medical; laboratory; surgery and public health.

4. Consider accelerating e-health system developments and encourage investment in an effective and efficient e-health system.

Communicable diseases

112. The monitoring and surveillance of communicable diseases and neglected tropical diseases have become more systematized. This led to the rapid elimination of the chikungunya outbreak in 2015 and dengue outbreak in late 2017. The compliance also of drinking water supplies with the national Drinking Water Standards has significantly improved. The prevalence of communicable diseases such as HIV, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B are generally low. Two new HIV infections were recorded in 2018 after 5 years of no recorded HIV cases bringing the cumulative total since 1990 to 26 with 13 having since passed away and 13 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and a new HIV infections rate of 0.01 per uninfected population. Similarly, incidence of tuberculosis and Hepatitis B have declined from 10/100,000 population in 2012 to 9.6/100,000 in 2019 for tuberculosis and from 3% of total population to 1.1% in 2019 for Hepatitis B in 2012 and 2019, respectively.⁶⁰

Non-Communicable Diseases

113. Samoa has one of the highest death rates (81%)⁶¹ and illnesses rates from NCDs (Cardiovascular - 34%, Cancers 15%, Chronic Respiratory Diseases 5%, Diabetes 9%, other NCDs 18%)⁶² in the world. An estimated 89.1% of Samoans are overweight and 63.1%⁶³ are obese. Between 2003 and 2013, there was increased prevalence of Diabetes (3.3%), hypertension (7.7%), overweight (3.5%) and 7.1% increase in obesity.⁶⁴ NCDs are responsible for 7 of the 10 premature deaths in Samoa.⁶⁵ A recent Care for Hypertension and other Chronic Conditions in Samoa Survey in 2018 found that the prevalence rates of NCDs remain high with 9 out of 10 of the survey participants to be overweight or obese. A key factor in the high rates of NCDs is poor and over-nutrition, unhealthy diets, and sedentary lifestyles.

114. The costs of tertiary care for the population with NCDs in the Samoa National Kidney Foundation or at overseas health facilities has increased exponentially. The Government of Samoa has over the past decades provided highly subsidised tertiary care for Samoans in New Zealand and Australia and more recently in India under the Government of Samoa and New Zealand Overseas Medical Treatment Schemes (OVT). The costs for OVT have increased from SAT\$0.3million in 1991 to \$SAT4.8 million in 2014/15 equivalent to 10% of the national health budget. A 2013 Health Financing for Samoa Report noted that the OVT scheme absorbed 15% of total public health expenditure in 2009/10, to the private benefit of less than 0.1% of the nation's population. In 2011, OVT budget allocation was higher than allocation to some ministries including the MWCSD, Office of the

Prime Minister and the Ministry of Communications, Information and Technology.⁶⁶

115. On the other hand, there has been positive progress in the reduction of alcohol (12.4%) and tobacco (13.3%) consumption and a significant 28.5% increase in physically active people between 2002 and 2013. In 2015, government introduced a 6.5% health levy for soft drinks and alcoholic beverages as well as a 5% excise tax on tobacco products.⁶⁷

Health systems and Environmental risks

116. There is an increase in the number of healthcare workers in various fields, through concerted efforts by the health sector to address workforce shortages by increasing opportunities for health targeted scholarships under the Samoa scholarship scheme, providing more training opportunities under health projects and WHO fellowships. Qualifications of all health workers are at the required standards and skills. There have been reports of improvement in waiting time in Emergency but still concerns with increase in waiting time at the general outpatient and triaging as compared to emergency.⁶⁸ There continues to be free of charge service for the standard age (0– 12 years) and free medical supplies for pensioners (65 years old and over). The expansion of the National Kidney Foundation of Samoa and the Samoa Family Health Association services to Savaii were key milestones for the health sector in terms of taking health services to the rural areas. The Health information systems though remain a challenge.

117. Key health organizations with Disaster and Emergency Response Plans, which are crucial to the response to natural disasters and the disease outbreaks that affected Samoa recently. With lessons learnt from the Measles epidemic, there is room for further improvement to risk management and response to disasters, emergencies, and climate change events.

Challenges and opportunities

118. The three most significant health challenges are; i) the still rising incidence of morbidity and mortality from NCDs with related exponential impact on health resources; ii) maintaining the good progress in child and maternal health in light of the Measles epidemic in late 2019; iii) and coping with and managing new and re-emerging communicable diseases including global pandemics such as the COVID-19. The recent Measles epidemic with high proportion of death rate among under 5 years old will significantly increase the infant and under 5 mortality rates undoing decades of good progress in this area.

119. While overall there are some positive maternal and child health outcomes and encouraging results in addressing the risks of NCDs, the challenges of managing the recent Measles outbreak in Samoa highlighted some gaps in health administration and service delivery. Despite the Health Sector and Ministry of Health receiving the highest or second largest national budget allocation annually, the health system still struggles with low numbers of health professionals, limited medical supplies and services. While low, the rates of health workers per 1,000 population in all cadres of health professional have increased slightly since 2011 with pharmacist and nurses showing the biggest increase. The rate for physicians has remained almost the same.

120. There are opportunities available through the measles recovery plan and ongoing sector partnerships to respond to the COVID-19 circumstances to help minimise the impact on the progress on SDGs and on the health of the population. The e-health project is an important investment that can improve the service delivery and effectiveness of the health sector to ensure a healthy Samoa.

Good practices

121. To address the high rates of deaths and illnesses from NCDs, the Package of Essential NCDs Interventions (PEN) Faa Samoa was introduced in Samoan villages in 2016 to improve early detection, improve referral and increase public awareness. The Care for Hypertension and other Chronic Conditions in Samoa Survey, 2018 found that communities engaging in the PEN Faa Samoa programme are more likely to be screened and receive treatment. This highlights the critical role communities in particular women's committees can play as they did decades before, in the promotion and delivery of critical health interventions. It is also an important way of ensuring that we leave no one behind.

122. Collaboration of the MOH with NGOs (such as Samoa Family Health Association, Samoa Faāfafine Association and Samoa Red Cross) and line ministries such as MWCSD is a contributing factor in the improvement of reproductive and maternal health service delivery and community engagement and awareness on SRHR. Utilization of family planning services has improved, the number of current family planning users increased from 1,552 in 2017 to 8,814 in 2018 and new users increased from 755 in 2017 to 953 in 2018.⁶⁹ Quality of contraceptive services also improved - 100% of facilities in Samoa provide family planning services, have providers trained in family planning service delivery, and have planning guidelines.

Interlinkages

123. Good health and well-being are critical for improved quality of life. The epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension is resulting in higher number of pre-mature deaths and illnesses from NCDs impacting the productive population, causing more disabilities, and lowering quality of life. Levels of malnutrition, stunting and wasting while low, will still impact children's learning capacity,

124. Access to health is important for all the other SDGs including SDGs 1,2, 5 10 and 16. For example, alcohol and drugs have been linked to family violence so the positive interventions through the health sector reducing the prevalence of alcohol consumption can complement the efforts to address domestic and gender based violence linked to SDG5. Rehabilitation programs in support of the Drugs and Alcohol Court are experiencing high intakes of mainly males for alcohol related offences.

125. In addition, survivors of family violence often suffer health consequences including forced/unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, physical and psychological injuries, and even death. In many instances, the health sector is the first entry point for survivors of family violence to seek support and referral to other multi-sectoral services contributing towards SDG 5. Similarly, the health sector ensures sexual and reproductive health and rights are realized for all, including youth helping to prevent early and unintended pregnancies to ensure young people pursue their educational goals to their highest potential.

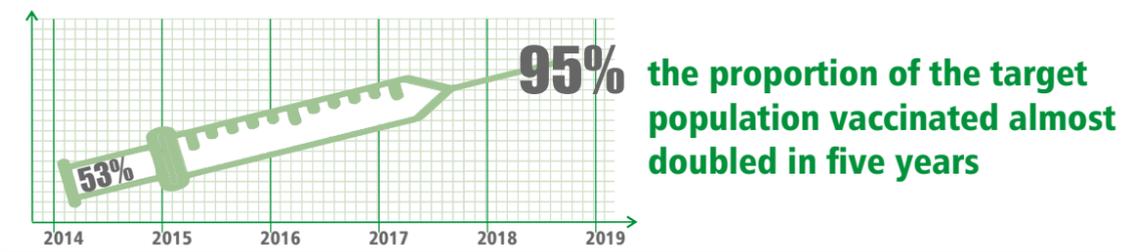
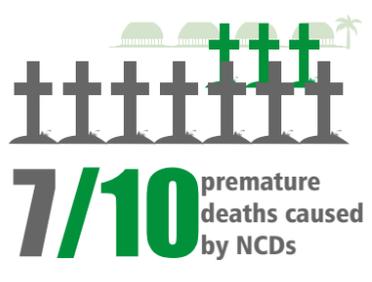
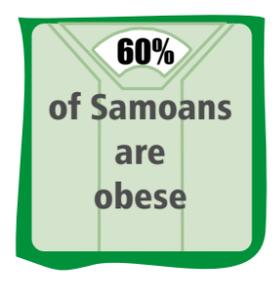
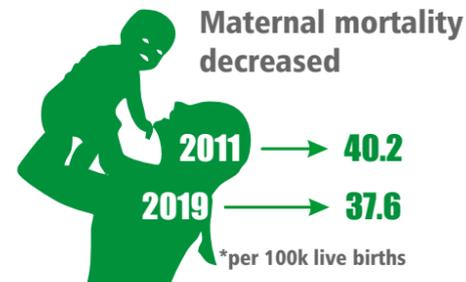
Proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods increased from 36% in 2009 to 39% in 2014.



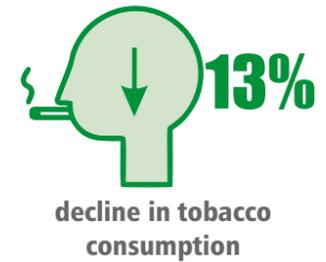
SNAPSHOT:



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Many Samoans are making positive lifestyle changes



*between 2002 and 2013



Adolescent birth rate declined



SDG 4



QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
la 'ausia le tulaga lelei o a'oa'oga

Overall, through compulsory and fee free primary and secondary education (up to year 11), there has been increased access to primary and secondary schools. For primary level in particular, there is universal access (100%), for secondary level, 72% enrolment. The inclusiveness of the education system is improving with increasing levels of persons with disability accessing mainstream education. The provision of key education facilities and supplies is around 90 and 100%. Access to early childhood education however is low and there are high drop-out rates at the end of primary and secondary school. However, there is increase in transition to and enrolment in Post School Education and Training Programmes (PSET).

Samoa is struggling with the poor quality of education outcomes especially with sharp declines in literacy for Samoan, English and Numeracy across all levels between 2012 and 2018. Of equal concern are; the significant decrease in the numbers of males attending school at senior secondary level, the low achievement scores in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Years 12 and 13, and the large gap between the higher achievement of females over males across all levels.

Samoa context - Improved access, equity for all and provision of quality educational opportunities

126. The government of Samoa consistently prioritized the education sector over the past decade and continued to allocate the sector the highest or second highest portion of the national budget, inclusive of external development resources. From 2010 to 2019, Samoa has allocated between 13 and 15% of its national budget to education which is within the Education 2030 Framework for Action target of 15 to 20% national allocation to education.

127. The Samoan education system is governed by three key entities; i) the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture with a mandate that covers Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary education; ii) the National University of Samoa which provides tertiary education including teacher training and technical and vocational education; and iii) the Samoa Qualification Authority responsible for regulation, accreditation and quality assurance in Post-Secondary Education and Training. The education infrastructure comprises a network of Early Childhood Education Centres (125), 170 primary schools, 42 Secondary schools, and 26 registered Post School Education and Training Providers (PSET) (includes 1 national tertiary institution, and international tertiary institutions).

128. Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary education are compulsory for children from Years 1 to 11 under the Education Act 2009 and Education Amendment Act 2019. In 2010, the Government with the support of Australia and New Zealand introduced the School Fee Grant Scheme (SSFGS) which enables 'fee-free' education for years 1 to 11. These funds are distributed to government and mission schools only covering tuition fees for all students enrolled at primary and since July 2013, also those at secondary level from years 9 to 11 as well as school operations expenditures. As well, an annual government grant is provided for all mission schools, private schools, ECE centres and special schools.

Status and trends

129. Through compulsory and fee-free primary and secondary education (up to year 11) there has been increased access to primary and secondary schools. For primary level, there is universal access. For secondary there is high level of enrolment also. While still developing, inclusiveness of the education system is improving with increasing levels of persons with disability access to mainstream education.

130. The provision of key education facilities and supplies is around 90 and 100%. Access to early childhood education however is low and there are high drop-out rates at end of primary school. There is increasing levels of transition to and enrolment in Post School Education and Training Programme (PSET).

131. Samoa is struggling with the poor quality of education outcomes at all levels with poor proficiencies in literacy, numeracy and for Mathematics and the Science subjects especially for boys.

Access to Early Childhood Education

132. Early Childhood Education is a vital stage of education of every child. The Education Amendment Act 2019 stipulates that all students at the age of four must attend an ECE Centre. There are currently 125 ECE centres (up from 102 in 2015) in Samoa managed through church and private providers. ECE is monitored overall by the National Council of Early Childhood Education for Samoa, Government provides annual grants for operations and infrastructural developments as well as assists ECE centres through curriculum and teacher support through MESC.

The School Fee Grant Scheme (SSFGS) has been a game changer in increasing access of Samoan children to primary and secondary schooling with universal access to primary education. Studies have shown that the scheme has also supported the Compulsory Education Act and has helped to address the problem of street vendors during school hours

133. Access to Early Childhood Education is low and fluctuates between 24 and 31% for gross enrolment rate and 22 and 24% for Net enrolment rate between 2015 and 2019⁷⁰ with the latest figures of 24% and 22% for GER and NER in 2019, respectively. This is low compared to other Pacific nations' ECE enrolment levels.⁷¹ The Samoa Early Human Capability Index report identifies, low prioritization, limited access, and costs as key factors for low ECE attendance. The same report also notes significantly better literacy and numeracy results for children that attended ECE compared to children that did not attend (0.61 versus 0.21). Based on the 8 dimensions of child development⁷² an overall SEHCI development score for 2-5 years old in Samoa was 0.51 on a score of 0 to 1 with 1 being the highest.

134. Overall, children in Samoa appear to be developing well in terms of their physical development, verbal communication, and approaches to learning. In contrast, they are not doing as well in reading, writing skills perseverance and cultural/spiritual knowledge.⁷³

Access to primary and secondary schools

135. The high level of sustained government investment in education has resulted in overall positive results in access to education especially in the primary and secondary levels with an average of 102% rate in primary level and around 72% for secondary level in 2017/2018.⁷⁴ There are similar enrolment rates for girls and boys in primary school but a 12% difference in secondary with higher numbers of girls in secondary schools. About 80% of children complete primary school in Samoa and the rate has remained consistent between 2012 and 2016 although there was a slight decrease from 80.2% in 2016 to 78.4% in 2018. There is high drop-out rate for years 11 and 13 ranging from 20 to 24% (Yr. 11) and 24 to 30% (yr. 13)⁷⁵ between 2015 and 2019. Net enrolment for secondary education increased 5% between 2016 (68%) and 2018 (73%).

136. The challenge is to keep the students in school with declining primary school completion rates and secondary schools transition rates. The secondary school completion rate declined between 2016 and 2018 for both years 12 (from 62.65% to 54.1%) and 13 (from 71.4% to 35.95%) for both males and females. The low completion rate for Year 13, a decline from 44.4% in 2016 to 35.95% in 2018 is concerning. Completion rates for females was higher than males in both years 12 and year 13. The transition rate from year 13 to Post-Secondary Education and Training (PSET) increased from 68% in 2015 to 69% in 2017/2018.⁷⁶

Access to affordable and quality TVET and tertiary Education.

137. Similar to the support provided for the primary and secondary levels, the Government of Samoa invests heavily, with the support of its development partners in the provision of affordable tertiary and TVET education in Samoa. The National University of Samoa, the Australian Pacific Training Coalition (APTIC), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and 23 other Post School Education and Training providers, mainly church mission TVET programmes offer options for tertiary or Post School Education and Training education in Samoa. The Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) registers and provides programme accreditation and qualifications registration for the PSET providers.

138. The Government of Samoa in partnership with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and China provided an estimated 625 international scholarships for overseas tertiary training for Samoans over the past five years. This is an average of around 125 annual scholarships for tertiary level studies and Institutions in New Zealand, Australia, Fiji (includes the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji School of Medicine), Japan and China.⁷⁷ In addition, the Government of Samoa also provided an average of around 170 general scholarships for tertiary in Samoa at the National University of Samoa (10 medical studies, 60 TVET, 50 NUS full scholarship, 50 NUS partial); and additional 80 scholarships at the University of the South Pacific (Alafua Campus – 60 for Science tertiary education for Samoan teachers and 20 for agriculture learning).⁷⁸ Furthermore, through the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, an average of between 50 and 80 targeted scholarships are awarded annually for teacher and nursing intakes at the Teachers and Nursing Faculties at the National University of Samoa to address the critical shortage in the teaching and nursing professions. These scholarships do not include other awards offered by the Commonwealth Secretariat tenable in New Zealand and the UK on an annual basis, Chevening (UK) scholarships and WHO awards for health-related study

There is strong partnership between the government, churches and private schools through the provision of grants to support an extensive network of educational facilities across Samoa.

programmes.

139. This high level of scholarship awards for tertiary education institutions in Samoa is reflected in increasing enrolment rates with formal PSET institutions (from 17% M and 10% F in 2015 to 20.5% M and 19.5% F).⁷⁹ Likewise, PSET graduation rates increased from 32.5% in 2016 to 38.8% in 2018.⁸⁰

Inclusive Education

140. Inclusive education that enables the participation of all including those with special needs is a priority of the Government. An Inclusive Education Unit at the MESC and the Inclusive Education (IE) Policy for Students Living with Disability 2015 provide a framework to improve educational opportunities for children living with disabilities. Teacher training have been conducted on the learning requirements for students living with a disability.

141. As a result, inclusiveness of education is improving especially at primary school level with a 40% increase in children with special needs or a disability attending regular schools between 2015 and 2019.⁸¹ Results for secondary schools was not as positive with only 12 and 9 students with disabilities in secondary school in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Students with special needs are attending tertiary institutions but the PSET are not adequately recording information on their attendance/participation.

142. Family Life Education was introduced in the Pacific in 2012 which enabled the MESC to prioritise the integration of human rights, rights of children and gender equality in the Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum. The Sexual Reproductive health (SRH) topics were categorized under Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum rolled out in 2006. Trainings were undertaken by the MESC in partnership with the Samoa Family Health Association and the Ministry of Health for Health and Physical Education teachers to build their capacities and confidence in delivering SRH and FLE content to students.

143. Samoa hosted the 84th Session of the Committee of the Rights of the Child in March 2020. The Government with the UN, CRC Secretariat and SPC Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) worked closely to ensure the participation of around 100 children in the week-long meeting. There were also around 50 civil society representatives, more than 100 government representatives and around 68,000 webcasts views. The school children used the opportunity to dialogue with the CRC Committee and learned about human rights and the Convention. They also engaged actively on different issues on rights of the child including topics of domestic violence, culture and their rights, information technology, climate change and right to health. The case study on the Measles outbreak was referenced to illustrate the application of individual versus communal rights and the subsequent decision for the mass vaccination campaign to secure herd immunity.

Education system and infrastructure

144. Overall, there are excellent results in terms of infrastructure for public and private sector schools. For instance, there is 100 % access to electricity, to basic drinking water, to single sex sanitation facilities and to internet for pedagogical purposes in Upper secondary; 34% computer laboratories in government primary schools and 91% in public secondary schools; and 97% and 100% access to basic hand-washing facilities in primary and secondary government schools respectively.

145. There are 2,855 teachers in ECE, Primary and Secondary levels against 64,114 students in 2019. This gives an overall teacher to student ratio of 1 to 15 for ECE, 1 to 30 in primary and 1 to 20 in secondary level. To improve the quality of primary and secondary school education outcomes, a key strategy is to improve the quality of teachers' qualifications guided by the National Professional Development Policy and Government Teacher Appraisal Policy and Sponsorship Policy. An in-service training programme offers opportunity for ongoing annual tertiary training including that for a Bachelor of Education degree. The number of primary and secondary school teachers with Bachelor of Education degrees increased from 120 to 217 and 89 to 141 between 2017 and 2018.⁸²

Quality of Education

146. The Review of the Samoa Education Sector Plan (2013-2018), December 2018 noted the overall sharp declines in literacy for Samoan, English, and Numeracy across all levels between 2012 and 2018. Of equal concern are; the significant decrease in the numbers of males attending school at senior secondary level, the low achievement scores in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in Years 12 and 13, and the large gap emerging between the higher achievement of females over males across all levels.

147. The Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level Test (SPELL) shows that females are outperforming males in all areas and the gender gap has now become significant. There has been a decrease in achievement in English proficiency at years 4 and 6 and that not only are both males and females in years 4 and 6 groups not meeting the minimum standards for level 3 numeracy but the achievement level has dropped sharply for both genders. The numeracy level for females at year 6 is low but stable and decreased for males with only 4 out of 10 male students showing proficiency in numeracy compared to 6 out of 10 for females.

- **Girls outperform boys at all levels of primary and secondary level.**
- **8 out of 10 primary school children complete primary school.**
- **Teacher to pupil ratio: 1 to 15 ECE, 1 to 30 primary, 1 to 20 secondary**

148. National year 12 examinations in FY 2016/17 in the sciences subjects reveal sharp declines in performance levels with low pass rates at 7% for Mathematics, 19% for Biology, 19% for Chemistry and 57% for Physics. Results for English and Samoan for Year 12 and 13 examinations show slight improvement between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 results. For English, Year 12 increased from 35% in 2016 to 40.5% in 2018 and Year 13 improved from 45.5% in 2016 to 51% in 2018. For Samoan, Year 12 improved from 62% to 67% and Year 13 declined slightly from 78.5% to 77%. Research into the underlying causes of these trends is urgently needed.

149. Overall, at all levels, females are more proficient than males in numeracy (59% to 39%) with similar results in English and Samoan with 81% of males compared to 64% of females considered at beginning, critical or basic level in English.

Good practices

150. The School Fee Grant Scheme (SSFGS) has been a game changer in increasing access of Samoan children to primary and secondary schooling with universal access to primary education. Studies have shown that the scheme has also supported the Compulsory Education Act and has helped to address the problem of street vendors during school hours.

151. The strong partnership between the government of Samoa and the church and private schools including the provision of government grants to provide an extensive network of educational facilities across Samoa is one of the strengths of the education sector.

152. The long term support of donor partners such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan and China for local and international tertiary education for Samoan students who meet certain academic criteria is arguably one of the most successful human development programmes in Samoa directly building capacity and skills of Samoan citizens to meet the Samoan labour market requirements.

153. The Community Sector also looks at supporting the achievement of basic education outcomes for the most vulnerable at all levels. The Sector encourages leadership especially of village councils and churches in increasing access to education and improving the learning outcomes for children. This includes addressing the issue of the number of boys dropping out of school.⁸³

Challenges and Opportunities

154. The most significant challenges for the education sector are the declining quality of education outcomes in terms of literacy, numeracy and also in the STEM subjects with overall sharp declines in literacy for Samoan, English and Numeracy across all levels between 2012 and 2017. Worryingly, 2016/17 Year 12 national examinations in the sciences subjects reveal very low performance levels with pass rates as low as 7% for Maths, 19% for Biology, 19% for Chemistry and 57% for Physics. The Samoa Primary Education Literacy Level Test (SPELL) show that females are outperforming males in all areas and the gender gap has now become significant.

155. Another challenge is the declining completion rates for primary schools and transition rates from primary to secondary and secondary to tertiary. Of all these challenges, the most pressing is the poor results for boys in terms of enrolment at secondary and tertiary levels and also the quality of education outcomes at all levels of education in particular in secondary level especially for boys.

156. Following the review of the current Education sector plans there are calls for more detailed analysis into the reasons behind some of the declining quality outcomes despite large investments into the sector. The sector in addressing this will have great impact on SDG 4 progress.

157. The measles and COVID-19 pandemic while it disrupted the school year for the students, provided an opportunity to better test and invest in the use of ICT to allow the students to continue with their education despite the lockdowns. Investing in the delivery of school lessons online and the use of e-learning materials is timely and must be pursued actively.

Interlinkages

158. An educated and skilled population is critical for a relevant and skilled workforce to meet the national development needs and requirements of the Samoan labour market. The consistently poor educational outcomes for boys will likely exacerbate already high levels of unskilled and unemployed youth and can have other consequences for their future overall development.

159. Infrastructural development for school must be inclusive as it is important to provide a safe and resilient environment for the children to be educated in, and to ensure no child is left behind. This includes investment in ICT for education to enable e-learning.

160. Family and Community solutions are being sought to improve mainstream school attendance, retention, and completion. Starting from early childhood would be vital in nurturing good citizens and preventing the occurrence of social problems. This links the community sector work with the education sector and health sector for example with direct impacts on SDG 3 and SDG4.



SNAPSHOT:



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

100%
enrolment rate
for girls and
boys in primary
education



Tertiary graduation
levels have doubled
for both males & females



Net enrolment
rates for early
childhood
education
are low



12%
more girls than
boys enrol in
secondary school



15%
of Samoa's annual
budget is spent
on education

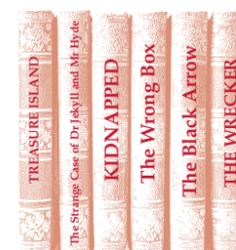
100%

access to electricity, drinking
water and single sex
toilets in all schools.



Increase in the number of children
with disabilities enroled in schools

2016-17: 140 → **2017-18: 270**



Sharp decline in
numeracy, as well as
Samoan and English
literacy between
2012 and 2018

425 Average total annual number
of local/international tertiary
scholarships awarded to Samoans



SDG 5



GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
la maua e tagata uma o avanoa tutusa

While much progress has been made in relation to SDG 5, there is still more work to be done. The level of women participation in national governance and policy making is increasing although more rapidly in managerial positions than in parliament. Women's economic empowerment is improving slowly with increasing levels of participation in the labour force, although women still make up a significant proportion of the unemployed (23%), informal (63%) and unpaid employment. There is positive development on sexual reproductive health and rights targets with no harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. However, many of these efforts and progress is being hampered by persistent high levels of violence against women and girls particularly by intimate partners and family members.

Samoa context –Empower women to lead inclusive development

161. Women and girls represent almost half of Samoa's population. They are often relied upon to perform a function known in the fa'asamoa as "pae ma auli". This literally means to properly lay and iron things out. For Samoa, it means in every family and community women facilitate peace and harmony.⁸⁴ In the Fa'asamoa, we have the practice of the 'feagaiga' – known as the covenant between brother and sister, wherein a brother is meant to respect and protect the honour of his female sibling. As a government, we have expanded that concept to promote the respect and empowerment of all women and girls in our nation as well as provide the means for a Safer Samoa. The Samoa Development Strategy integrates and mainstreams gender, human rights, with climate and disaster resilience across all sectors.

162. Samoa's commitment to empowerment of girls and women and enhancing their quality of life is reflected in Samoa's constitution which sets out fundamental rights to be enjoyed by every person: The right to life (Article 5), the right to personal liberty (Article 6) and that all persons are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection (Article 15). This guarantees equal rights for men and women in its constitution and national legislations including rights to resources and land.⁸⁵ Samoa was also the first country in the Pacific to ratify the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and has since implemented extensive national gender equality programmes and reported six times on CEDAW.

163. While the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development and the Community sector continues to lead on the implementation of SDG5, Samoa exercises a "whole of society" approach with the recognition that gender equality cannot be achieved by one ministry, one sector nor government alone.

164. In order to address some of the key gender equality issues, the sector has focused on improving inclusiveness through village governance and accountability; improving Inclusion of vulnerable groups especially for women and people with disabilities; promoting family and community safety particularly in sexual violence and ensuring resilience of communities to disasters and climate change.

Status and Trends

165. While much progress has been made in relation to SDG 5, there is still more work to be done. The level of women participation in national governance and policy making is

increasing although more rapidly in managerial positions than in parliament. Women's economic empowerment is improving slowly with increasing levels of participation in the labour force, although women still make up a significant proportion of informal and unpaid employment. There is positive development to SRH targets and confirm that Samoa does not have harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. However, many of these efforts and progress is being hampered by persistent high levels of violence against women and girls particularly by intimate partners and family members.

166. There is better progress in recent years, in terms of more open discussions on the issue of violence, gender equality and social inclusion. A significant development is the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and UN partners collaboration to identify and collect sex disaggregated data including, the collecting of some of the needed data on domestic and intimate partner violence for the first time in the DHS-MICS 2019 survey. Availability of data is crucial for the efforts to put a spotlight on the issue.

Equal rights and participation in political national and local government leadership

167. The 2013 Constitutional Amendment Act introduced Temporary Special Measures (TSM) to ensure at least 10% of parliamentary seats are reserved for women to enhance women's participation in political decision making. While low compared to global average of 22.1% and Pacific average of 15.7% in 2015, women representation in Parliament has increased from 6.1% in 2011 to 10% in 2016 with 1 of the women MP added through TSM. While an improvement, women representation in Parliament has remained low between 6 and 8% for 15 years from 2001 to 2016 and only increased to 10% in 2016 through Temporary Special Measures.

168. Percentage of female members of cabinet fluctuated from 7.7% in 2001 to a high of 23% in 2009 and then declined to 15.4% in 2016. Despite the low level of female representation in parliament over the past 15 years, the proportion of female parliamentarians that do end up in Cabinet is relatively high from a low of 33%(1 out of 3) in 2001 to 75% (3 out of 4) in 2009 and now 40% (2 out of 5) in the 2016 Parliament. Samoa also appointed its first female Deputy Prime Minister in 2016. Noting that one must be a Matai to contest the National Elections, in the 2016 Census 11% of matai⁸⁶ are women, which means a small proportion of women can contest the National Elections compared to male Matais. However, more recent data from the Ministry of Justice

and Courts Administration confirm that there is an increase from 13% of women with registered matai titles to 22% of all the registered matais. In 2019 there is 22% representation of women in the judiciary.⁸⁷

169. Governance at the community level is by the village councils supported by other village level committees such as the women village committees. The local government is represented by the Sui o le Nuu (Village male representative) and Sui o tamaitai (Village Women Representatives) who work closely with government on community development. In 2016, 121 out of 372 (32.5%) village representatives were women and in 2020 increased to 171 out of 390 (44%). Women continue to play important traditional leadership, advisory and supportive roles at the village and household level on all matters pertaining to health, education, social protection, and overall governance.

- 40% of current women MPs are also members of cabinet
- Increase from 13% in 2015 to 22% in 2019 women matais
- 4 out of 10 managers in Samoa are women.
- CEOs in SOEs increased from 9.5% in 2001 to 40% in 2018
- Female government CEOs increased from 27% in 2001 to 57% in 2019
- 28% proportion of women on SOE Boards.

170. The proportion of women in managerial positions across Samoa increased from 36% in 2011 to 40% in 2016.⁸⁸ Likewise, the proportion of women in government ministries and state-owned enterprises has also been increasing steadily over the past 20 years. For CEO level in the public sector, increased from 27% in 2001 to 31.25% in 2015 and then further increased to 57% in 2019. For CEO level in SOEs, increased significantly from 9.5% in 2001 to 40% in 2018.⁸⁹ Proportion of women in SOE Boards increased from 20% in 2009 to 24% in 2018 and 28% in 2020. At public sector middle management level, proportion of women increased significantly from 20% in 2001 to 61.7% in 2017 with a slight drop to 56% in 2019, however the proportion holding these management levels is still higher than men.

Ending violence and sexual and other types of exploitation of women

171. The incidence of women 20-49 years experiencing violence (some level of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse) in their lifetime is high, with increases from 46% to 60% for two Samoa Family Safety Studies (2000 and 2017). About 22% or one in five ever partnered women report violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months.⁹⁰ An estimated 86% of women who were respondents to the National Public Inquiry into Family Violence in Samoa have been subjected to kicking, punching and other forms of physical assault. Worryingly 9.5% of female respondents reported being raped by a family member.⁹¹ While there is some debate on how the figures were provided, what is clear is there is an increase in the number of reported cases. These findings are supported by the number of violence against women matters received by the Police Domestic Violence Unit which tripled from 200 in 2012 to 723 in 2015.⁹² The increase in the reports may be partly influenced by increasing awareness and availability of focused support services by the Samoa Police, Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), Ministry of Women Community and Social Development and other partners as well as more media reporting.

Improvement in availability of sex disaggregated data

172. Samoa continues to support Districts/Village led initiatives as well as faith based led programs looking at the root causes and consequences of family violence. This approach looks at scaling up prevention efforts in response to family violence in Samoa. The District Development Planning (DDP) program which was rolled out in 2017 has Ending Violence as a key component. It provides the opportunity for community leaders to discuss the issues and most importantly, determine what their role is in eliminating violence. As part of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence Campaign in 2018, the MWCSA Safer Families, Safe Villages campaign saw 30 villages and groups across Samoa participate in village-led initiatives to highlight awareness of domestic violence in communities with objectives such as changing mindsets and zero tolerance. While numerous government bodies and civil society organizations have devoted their efforts to empowering women and eliminating violence, and despite these valiant efforts, the problem continues to escalate in Samoa. New and innovative approaches are being developed to better address family violence and to change attitudes and behaviour of all age groups and gender. The

challenge remains very real and requires more targeted and strategic action.

173. The Consolidated Acts of Samoa 2008 and Marriage Ordinance 1961 set the minimum legal age of marriage at 19 for girls and 21 for boys. However, girls can marry at 16 and boys at 18 years with parental consent.⁹³ Around 0.7% of girls between the age of 20 – 24 were married at 15 years of age and 10.8% at the age of 18 years.⁹⁴ The median marriage age is 23 for females and 27 for males.⁹⁵ Samoa does not practice genital mutilation.

174. Women make up a large portion of the informal sector and around 60% of unpaid domestic care work. According to the Samoa Labour Force Survey (2017), there were 65,323 persons engaged in unpaid domestic and care work in 2017 of which the majority (60% or 39,194) were females. Most of the unpaid domestic and care workers are located in the NWU (35.2%) with almost a third (65.2 percent) having no formal qualifications (completed up to primary level) with 85 % from the rural area.⁹⁶

175. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2013(HIES), about 71% of the Samoan population use mobile phones, with 41.1% owning mobile phones. There was almost an equal proportion of mobile phone ownership between males and females with males 0.5% higher in ownership. More recent figures of 88% of people owning mobile phones in 2018 was provided by the Samoa Office of the Regulator. Unfortunately, there was no disaggregated data available. It is important to acknowledge that Information Communication Technologies have become important tools for the economic empowerment of women.

Strengthening policies and legislations for promoting gender equality; ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and climate resilience

176. The constitution as the supreme law of the land protects the equal rights of men and women. Samoa has enacted various key legislations to promote, implement and deliver on the rights of women and girls like the Family Safety Act 2013, the Labour Employment Relations Act 2013, Education Act 2009, and the Constitutional Amendment Act 2013. The National Policy for Gender Equality guides much of the national efforts on gender empowerment.

177. The Human Rights Working Group on Discrimination Against Women In Law and in Practice concluded that Samoa has made important strides in developing a legal framework that abide by its own Constitution's bill of rights and comply with its international human rights obligations,

particularly, over the past decade, with regard to the elimination of discrimination against women. The criminalization of domestic violence, the legal guarantee of equality between men and women in employment and the constitutional amendment for 10% women in parliament are important milestones.

178. The rights of women and girls to land, property and resources is protected by Samoa's constitution and legal system. Samoa's legislations that recognise customary land tenure, explicitly protects the land rights of women which provided for the supremacy of gender-equality and non-discrimination in case of conflict with customary law. Male and female surviving spouses and partners are entitled to equal rights to inherit a share of the deceased spouse's / partner's estate and likewise, sons and daughters have the right to inherit in equal shares including land.⁹⁷

179. Multiple national programmes to promote and implement initiatives to empower women and girls and ensure gender equality include; Healthy Homes Healthy Villages program that provides livelihood skills training for women to improve their skills in sewing, weaving the traditional arts and crafts and screen printing; Relationship building programs like Positive Parenting, Young Couples, and Social Protection Awareness Programs.⁹⁸

180. In order to address some of the key issues on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), the sector has focused on improving inclusiveness through village governance and accountability; improving Inclusion of vulnerable groups especially for women and persons with disabilities;



promoting family and community safety particularly from sexual violence and ensure resilience of communities to disasters and climate change.

181. On enabling universal access to reproductive health and reproductive rights, implementation is guided by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy 2017-2021, the HIV/STI Policy 2017-2021 and the National Inclusive Strategy on Reproductive Health. National programmes include; the Teen Mums Program, the Mothers and Daughters programme which address teenage pregnancies with a close link to gender based violence issues, discussion of cultural and religious attitudes associated with teenage pregnancy, school dropout and sexual and physical violence against women and children. Specifically, the Samoa Family Health Association (SFHA) provide a Youth Friendly Drop-In-Centre and a Mobile Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic that enable outreach to underserved youth and the population in rural areas.⁹⁹ The proportion of married women in the age group 15-49 who make their own health care decisions is high and increasing, from 90.3% to 93.2% between 2009 and 2014.¹⁰⁰

182. Women in communities also play a leading role in the coordination of District Development Plan (DDP) programs, a platform for districts and community leaders to guide, plan and coordinate their own inclusive sustainable development. The exercise also encourages community leaders to formulate practical development initiatives building on their experiences and statistics verified by government, especially in areas of health, education, peace and security, safety, and economic development. They also actively contribute to the CIM plans which help build community resilience against climate change.

Good practices

183. The District Development Plans were collaboratively developed by the community involving all stakeholders including women and youth. The development plans are the basis for current and future development in the villages and districts enabling coherent support by the government and all stakeholders. As of January 2020, 48 out of 49 districts have District Development Plans.

184. For the past 20 years, the Ie Samoa Programme has supported women's economic empowerment while preserving cultural treasures such as the Ie Samoa (fine mats). These fine mats are particularly important as they are exchanged as high value traditional gifts at important events such as weddings, funerals, bestowal of chiefly titles and are regarded as wealth and heirloom products. This programme

was started in 1995 by, Women in Business Incorporated (WIBDI) as a national revitalization project for the fine mats facilitated through, a sponsor-weaver scheme where weavers are sponsored by the buyer or sponsor and WIBDI is the bridge financier. Most if not all the sponsors were working women in partnerships with women weavers. The project was later supported by the Government of Samoa with the establishment of the Fine mat Steering Committee, hosted by the MWCSD and chaired by the Prime Minister.

185. The Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) plays a critical role in the promotion and implementation of national and targeted programmes to protect and support victims of violence and abuse. They work closely with the Ministry of Police and Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration and with funding and in-kind support from the government, development partners, the private sector and the community; the SVSG provides the only national shelter that houses women and children victims of violence and sexual abuse. SVSG also has village representatives that build the support network on this important service. They also implement the "Nofotane Project" which aims to improve the economic empowerment of women and to increase women's participation in domestic and community matters. This project has reached over 5,000 women across Samoa.

186. The National Human Rights Institution has developed and published four State of Human Rights in Samoa Reports since establishment in 2016 highlighting various human rights and women's rights issues including undertaking of the National Public Inquiry into Family Violence in Samoa in 2018. In May 2016, it was graded as an "A Status" in the GANHRI's Accreditation meeting in May 2016. This achievement has made the NHRI Samoa the first in the Pacific region to be awarded an "A status" and it means the Office of the Ombudsman/N.H.R.I is now able to engage with various human rights bodies and participate independently at the UN Human Rights Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Challenges and Opportunities

187. The most significant challenges for gender equality are the persistent level of violence against girls and women and consequences on girls and women's development and quality of life, low levels of women's participation in parliament despite affirmative action to improve it, and low levels of women's participation in formal employment.

188. The Samoa Women Shaping Development project (SWSD), supported by the Government of Australia, addresses women's empowerment and development through MWCSD and has led the way in the implementa-



UN Women Economic Scoping Studies. Fine mats are paraded as part of the 2015 National Fine mat Display in Apia.

tion of programmes directly related to economic empowerment, leadership and public life, addressing GBV and family violence. This project is entering its second phase and will build on the work of the last 3 years in all these areas. The EU Spotlight Initiative coordinated by the UN system will be critical to complementing Samoa's ongoing efforts to address GBV and IPV in Samoa. The NHRI remains actively engaged and works closely with the Government especially the MWCSO and the NMIRF to ensure a coordinated and whole of society approach to the VAW challenges. The statistics collected for the first time through the SBS surveys are an important step forward for Samoa's efforts on the issues of violence. The active involvement of villages, government and church leaders will be crucial.

Interlinkages

189. Women are strong agents of change and being half of the world and Samoa's population, their consideration in and contribution to all aspects of sustainable development and the SDGs must count. Women and girls cannot live quality lives if they are not safe from violence and are not fully engaged in decision making at all levels.

KEY ONGOING INITIATIVES

16 Days of Activism against Violence Campaign, MWCSO Safer Families, Safe Villages policy initiatives and campaign, Women In Leadership Project - EVAWG champions, NHRI Village Family Safety Committee Initiative, UN Women and NOLA "Toolkit to EVAWG with Disabilities in Samoa" UNDP - UN Women Transformational Leadership Development Program, Women in Leadership Advocacy, Samoa Women Shaping Development Project, Commonwealth Youth Awards - MWCSO, REACH Project, Supporting Samoa's Vulnerable Children Initiative - MWCSO, UN-EU-Samoa SPOTLIGHT Initiative, Government of Samoa Finemat Project, Samoa Victim Support Group initiatives, Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives, National Youth Week, International Week for Persons with Disabilities, International Women's Day, National Women's Day, Community conversations Samoa National Council of Women, Nofotane Project, WIBDI and Maua Virtual market, District Development Plans, Samoa Women's Association of Growers market.

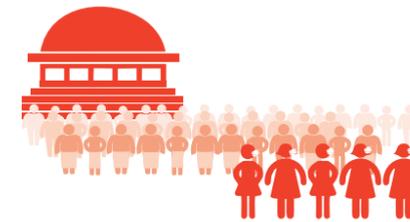
The national le Samoa programme is a sponsor weaver scheme that supports women's economic empowerment while preserving cultural heritage and heirlooms

SNAPSHOT:



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Women's representation in parliament increased

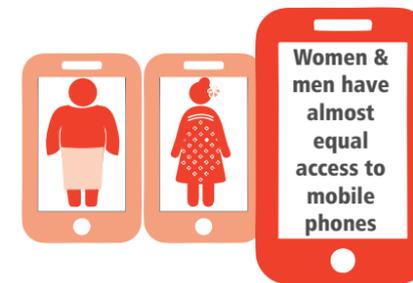


2011: 6.1% → 2016: 10%

The proportion of women managers increased

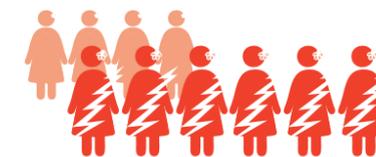


2011: 36% → 2016: 40%



Increase in women village representatives

2016: 32.5%
2020: 44%



6/10 women have experienced violence in their lifetime



Reported cases of domestic violence tripled between 2012 and 2015



SDG 6



CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

“la maua suavai mama ma tulaga uma ole tumamā”

Overall, Samoa is on track to meet the majority of the SDG 6 targets. Government and development partners’ extensive investment in water and sanitation infrastructure and services over the past 15 years has resulted in almost universal access to clean water (97.3%) and sanitation (97%). Investment in initiatives and policies to ensure water-use efficiency and to monitor levels of water continues. Despite this, there are pockets of the population that are covered by rainwater tanks and or untreated independent water supplies, limited water treatment facilities and challenges with the quality of sanitation facilities affecting ground water quality. So, there remains challenges with the quality of water and sanitation facilities.

Samoa context – Water for Life

190. The Water and sanitation sector's long-term goal is to ensure –reliable, clean, affordable water and improved sanitation within the framework of Integrated Water Resources Management; for a resilient Samoa, sustaining health and alleviating poverty.

191. The Samoa water and sanitation sector, which comprises a coalition of government, private and not for profit entities has been undergoing reforms over the past 15 years with significant funding and technical support from the government and development partners most notably, the European Union. This level of sustained partnership and long-term investment and collaboration guided by the Water for Life: Water and Sanitation Sector Plan Framework for Action 2016-2020 and governed through the Water and Sanitation Sector Coordination Unit and Steering Committee is reflected in generally positive results in the sector.

Status and trends

192. Overall, Samoa is making good progress to meet most of the SDG 6 targets. Government and development partners' extensive investment in water and sanitation infrastructure and services over the past 15 years has resulted in exceedingly high levels of population access to clean water (97%) and sanitation (97%). Investment in initiatives and policies to ensure water-use efficiency and to monitor levels of water continues. Despite this, there are pockets of the population that are covered by rainwater tanks and or untreated independent water supplies. Wastewater treatment facilities are limited. Further, poor quality septic tanks are impacting the quality of ground water. So, there remains challenges with quality of water and sanitation facilities.

Access to water and sanitation services

193. Overall, access to clean water using a safely managed drinking water services¹⁰¹ is high in Samoa with a rate of 97.7% (2009), 95.7% (2014)¹⁰² and 97.3%¹⁰³ in 2015 which is 6% higher than world average and 41% higher than Oceania's average in 2015.¹⁰⁴ Access to piped water in 2015 was 91.3%. Despite this, 7.4% of the population are using rainwater tanks as their main source of water and only 4% of the community managed 31 Independent water schemes (IWS) which cover 15% of the Samoan population met National Water Standards. Of the 25 registered water bottle companies in Samoa, 92% generally comply with National Water Standards. Water consumption in Samoa is 140 to 180 litres per person per day which is comparable with global average (150 – 200 litres/person/day). While provision of water is extensive, the quality of hygiene needs to be improved with

ongoing fluctuating levels of water-borne diseases such as typhoid and diarrhoea.¹⁰⁵

194. Similarly, access to improved sanitation (improved latrine/sanitation facility) is 94.7% (2009) and 97%¹⁰⁶ (2015) which is 27.6% higher than world average and 60.6% higher than Oceania average in 2015. The EU-Funded MDGs Initiative' which provided VIP latrines and rainwater tanks helped to contribute to high sanitation access in Samoa. About 98% of households were using improved sanitation facilities at the minimum of a VIP Latrine.

Improving water quality by reducing pollution, hazardous chemicals, and untreated water

195. Overall, while Samoa's basic levels of access to water and sanitation are comparable to those of developed countries, it still lags the developed world in terms of its hygiene standards; evident in the rates of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea and typhoid (endemic to Samoa)¹⁰⁷. While good progress has been achieved in providing access to improved and reliable water supply, the focus has shifted to further improving the quality of water, efficiencies of service, reducing water wastage and pumping costs, improving cost recovery and ensuring future levels of capital and recurrent expenditure are maintained.

196. Most of the sanitation facilities in Samoa (septic tanks) are privately owned and mostly used older designs which are resulting in direct discharge into and contaminating the water table. Water tests indicate significant impact of septic tanks on groundwater quality. The challenge now is to improve septic tank standards of design and build. Improved quality of sanitation facilities including septic tanks are part of the revised national building codes.

197. Samoa is still developing its wastewater treatment capacity with only one national wastewater treatment plant facility providing priority coverage for some businesses and the hospital generating hazardous wastes. There are 116 customers connected in the central business area in Apia town. Importantly, there is 100% compliance of the wastewater treatment plant with the SPREPs effluent discharge standards.

198. There is not enough data and information to provide an assessment on the ambient water quality but there has been recent research by the National University of Samoa and SROS in collaboration with the New York University on the quality of water in major rivers in the urban areas which will provide baseline information on this soon.

Implementing integrated water resource management (IWRM) and Increase water use efficiency.

199. Samoa is progressing well in terms of integrated water resources management implementation scoring Medium to High 70 out of 100 for the UNEP IWRM 2017 Baseline Survey. This is above the Oceania average of 38 and the global average of 49. Samoa scored 73 for Enabling Environment (policies plans and laws to support IWRM); 69 for Institutions and participation (capacity, participation and coordination at all levels); 70 for Management instruments (Instruments to monitor and manage water resources and ecosystems); and 68 for Financing (budgets and revenue raising for IWRM and infrastructure).

200. The Samoa Bureau of Statistics calculated a baseline for change in water-use efficiency over time using its water accounts which currently stands at \$25.86/m³ of GDP to produce 1 cubic meter of water.

The use of mobile wallets through telecom companies for payment of water bills have increased revenues for reinvestment in the water sector and enhances convenience for consumers.

201. Level of water stress is monitored closely by MNRE and SWA through the 40 boreholes across Upolu and Savaii. This includes ground water profiling to determine stress in water aquifers. While MNRE issues water extraction permits, SWA has carried out an assessment of the level of salinity of the boreholes. The recommendations include drilling further inland given a few affected (20% of the boreholes have varying levels of salinity) by saltwater intrusion; and decreased pumping hours and let the aquifer recharge.

202. Engagement of the local communities in water management is extensive. The government and the Samoa Water Authority through EU funding provide significant capacity building including financing support to district and village communities that manage their own independent water schemes. There are 31 Independent Water Schemes (IWSs) managed by district and village communities across 63 villages covering 15% of the Samoan population¹⁰⁸. However, only 4% of the IWS meet the National Water Standards. IWS are community managed water supply schemes which are gravity fed from either a river or a spring source and are not treated.

Flooding and climate resilience

203. The water sector plays a key role in drainage management especially for the Central Business District (CBD) which continues to suffer from severe flooding with economic costs to the many businesses. Upgrade of drainage systems that took place contributed to an overall reduction rate by 34% of flooding incidences within the CBD. This is also important for ensuring safe and resilient water supplies. Further support is being extended to develop a Flood Water Storm Strategy and an Apia Integrated Sewage System Feasibility assessment which will assist the upgrading of drainage systems in areas of the CBD located within the Vaisigano catchment under the Green Climate Fund Flood Control and Management program. Flood studies are also being conducted in three other watersheds of the Apia Urban Area under the Economy Wide Adaptation on Climate Change (EWACC) programmes.

Good practices

204. The Samoa Water Sector Coordination (SWAP) mechanism is one of the most well developed and successful development coordination mechanism across all sectors. The mechanism brings together a diverse range of development partners investing in the sector with the providers of water services in government, private sector and district and village communities.

Challenges and Opportunities

205. Samoa's water sector and infrastructure has been significantly supported over the past 15 years by development partner support, in particular the European Union. Once EU fully withdraws or completes its assistance, it will be a challenge to continue financing a sustainable service delivery system that SWA currently provides as well as the capacity building and subsidization of some of the Implementing Agencies of the Water sector programme.

206. A key challenge for water quality is the degradation of land in the upper catchments. The GCF programme looks at developing ecosystem responses upstream through zoning, protection, rehabilitation, and a scheme of payment for ecosystem services for the Vaisigano River catchment that provides water for the Apia Urban Area and beyond.

207. Saltwater intrusion is a reality impacting water sources thus needs close monitoring and better management as suggested in the latest salinity report.

208. Investment in better water efficiency management through increase in metered water and ICT access can only improve quality water access for all and reduce wastage.

Interlinkages

209. Poor quality water and sanitation have health consequences and impact on overall productivity of any office or family affected. Poor sanitation infrastructure is impacting ground water causing contamination.

210. Similarly, sea level rise caused by climate change is causing drinking water sources such as boreholes to become saline. The SWA has reported rising salinity in some of the Samoa Boreholes requiring the closing down of boreholes in the coastal areas and drilling of new boreholes inland. This is costing millions of dollars.

- Overall, access to clean water using a safely managed drinking water services is high in Samoa at 97.3% in 2015.
- Access to improved sanitation increased from 94.7% (2009) to 97% in 2015.
- About 98% of households were using improved sanitation facilities at the minimum of a VIP Latrine.
- There is 100% compliance of the wastewater treatment plant with the SPREPs effluent discharge standards.
- The focus has shifted to further improving the quality of water, efficiencies of service, reducing water wastage and pumping costs, improving cost recovery and ensuring future levels of capital and recurrent expenditure are maintained.

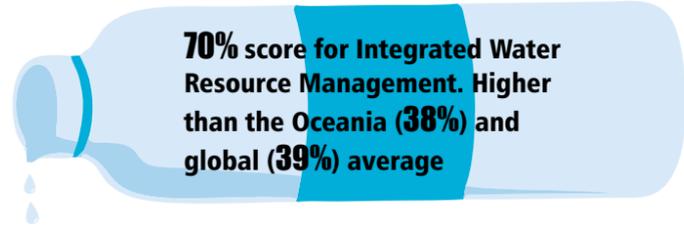
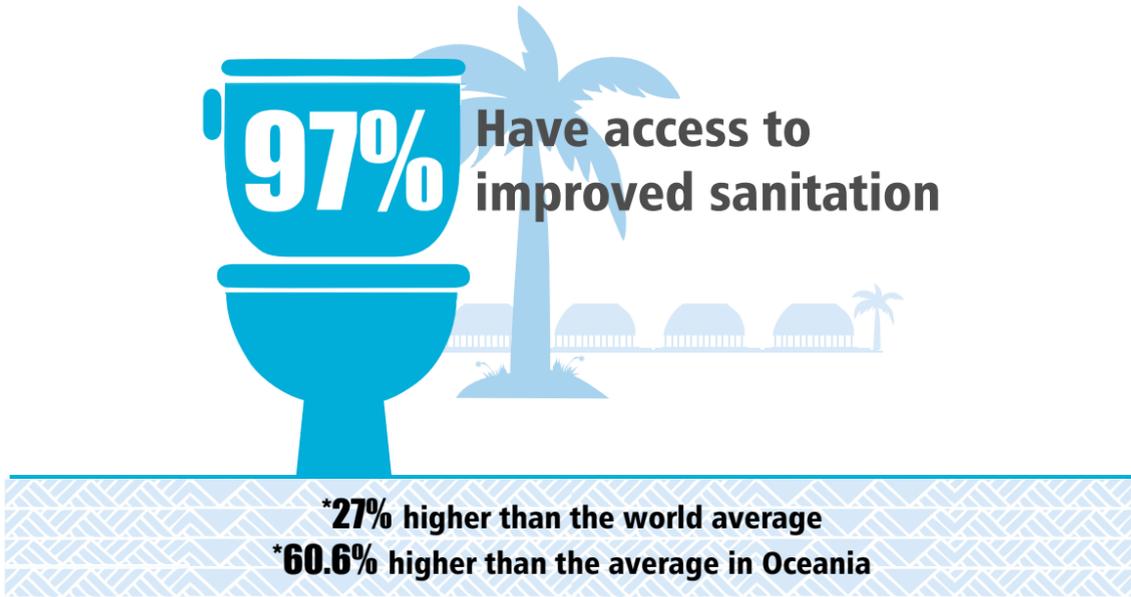
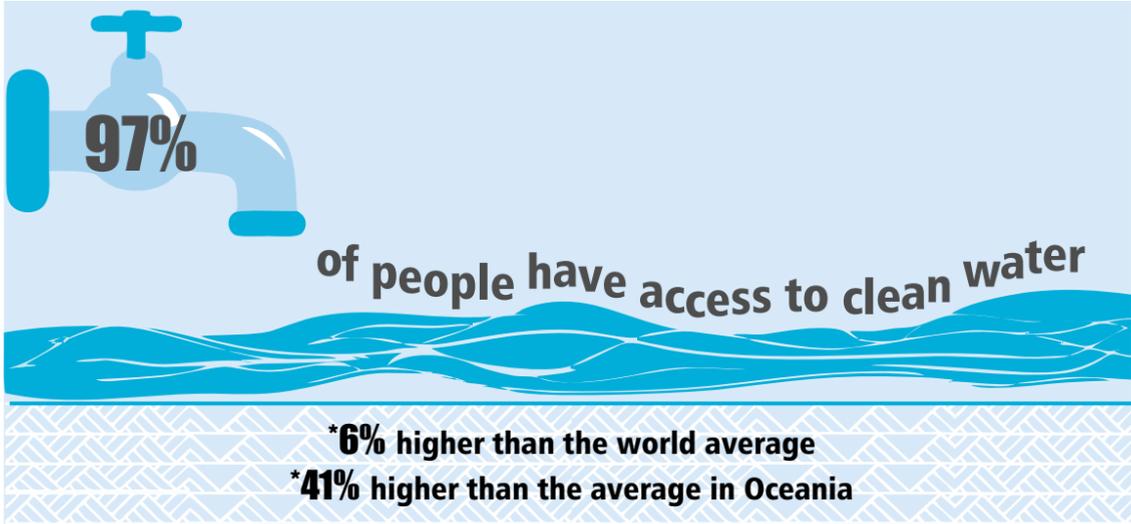
There is improved climate and flooding resilience through upgrading of drainage systems within the CBD contributing to overall 34% reduction of flooding incidences This is also important for ensuring safe and resilient water supplies. Further support in upgrading of drainage systems in areas of the CBD located within the Vaisigano catchment under the Green Climate Fund Flood Control and Management program.



SNAPSHOT:



Ensure access to water and sanitation for all



ENSURING THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS CAN ENJOY PROSPEROUS AND FULFILLING LIVES AND THAT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS OCCURS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE.

“IA AUSIA E TAGATA UMA SE SOIFUAGA MANUIA MA IA O GATASI LE ATIINAE MA LE PUIPUIGA OLE OLA FAANATURA”

211. The Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) pursues prosperity for all its people especially in line with the SDGs 7, 8, 9 and 10 through its 4 priority pillars and its key outcomes on macroeconomic resilience; tourism and private sector development; strengthening social institutions; ensuring access to quality energy supply, improved transport systems, networks and affordable country wide ICT. These are critical to ensuring progress in terms of socio-economic development, and addressing disparities and issues related to population living in hardship yet maintaining a resilient environment.



SDG 7/8/9/10

PROSPERITY

SDG 7



AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
la maua malosiaga toe faafouina ma taugofie.

Samoa is making good progress in the SDG7 with universal access to electricity (99%) with the remaining 1% given a simple solar system by the Samoa Electric Power Corporation. The island of Apolima is 100% powered by renewable energy and the 2019 figures show that 40.49% of electricity is generated from Renewable Energy, increasing from 32.4% in 2016. The main renewable energy sources are wind, solar, biomass and hydro. There is a continuous decrease in the amount of electricity generated from diesel since 2014, and a marked increase in households that rely on clean fuels and technologies for cooking.

212. The Energy sector is critical to Samoa meeting its INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity sector. Increased investment in RE projects and for the four year period 2016-2019 SAT\$85million worth of ODA went to the Energy Sector. Increased investment in RE projects and for the four year period 2016-2019 SAT \$85million worth of ODA went to the Energy Sector. There is a continuous decrease in the amount of electricity generated from diesel and a steady increase in the use of various sources of renewable energy since 2014. Latest 2019 figures show Samoa is at 40.49%¹⁰⁹ of electricity generated from Renewable Energy with one of its islands Apolima at a 100% powered by renewable energy.

213. There is also a marked increase in households that rely on clean fuels and technologies for cooking and lighting. Major projects and key initiatives are underway to improve access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy for all (SDG7). For example, the IMPRESS project invests in additional RE such as biomass, and solar systems while reducing GHG emissions. The project also involves the development of the draft Energy Management Bill with provisions for transport and energy efficiency. Electric vehicles have been introduced such as the six (6) e-scooters used by the Lands Transport Authority. There are also efforts to look into a Model Green Building for Samoa using the Pacific Climate Change Centre as an example. There are also ongoing distribution of solar street lights and energy efficiency light bulbs to churches schools and local communities as demonstrations of energy efficiency and alternative energy sources to fossil fuels. The Energy Efficiency Act encourages the use and importation of more energy efficient appliances such as refrigerators, air conditioning units and lights. With the aim for more ambitious climate action, the newly established “Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions Plan” (NAMA) focuses mainly on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the Transport Sector.

AFOLAU 750KW BIOMASS GASIFICATION PLANT

Samoa remains committed to implementing the Paris Agreement and its “Nationally Determined Contribution” (NDC) pledge of generating 100% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2025. Meeting this commitment together with the various ongoing mitigation and adaptation efforts demonstrates local action to reduce climate change impacts. The IMPRESS project aims to improve the performance and reliability of renewable energy power systems in Samoa’ from 2017 to 2022 including improving sustainable and cost-effective utilization of indigenous renewable energy resources for energy production in Samoa. Developing renewable energy based technologies is key to this project which led to the construction of the Afolau 750 kW Biomass Gasification Plant. This technology is the first of its kind in Samoa as it utilizes biomass resources such as local invasive trees to generate electricity making it the fourth (4th) national renewable energy source for electricity production while addressing the invasive species concerns. The four invasive tree species to be used for the gasifier are African rubber tree (pulu vao), Mexican rubber tree (pulu mamoe), batai (tamaligi pa’epa’e) & African tulip (faapasi). The use of our own locally available resources is deemed crucial during these times of uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic..

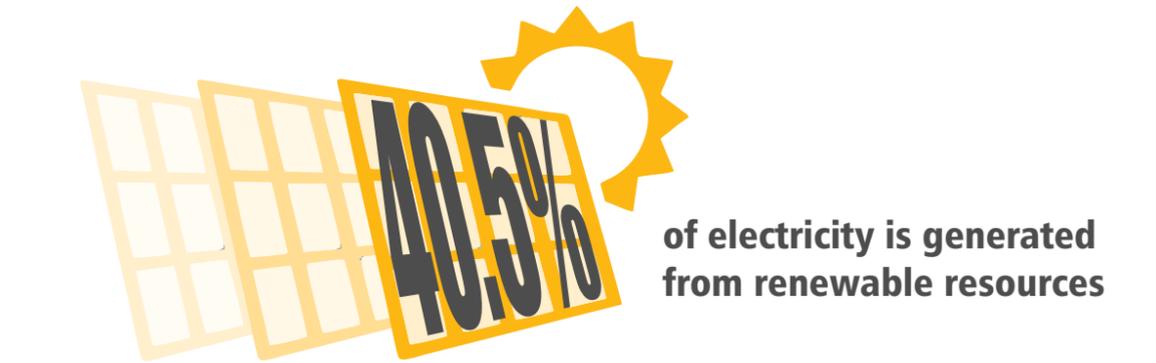


Afolau 750kW Biomass Gasification Plant on STEC lands at Mulifanua.

SNAPSHOT:

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



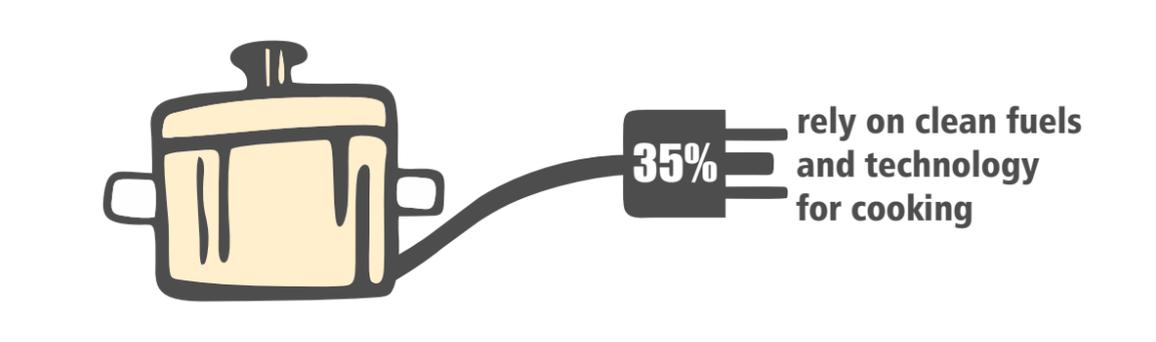
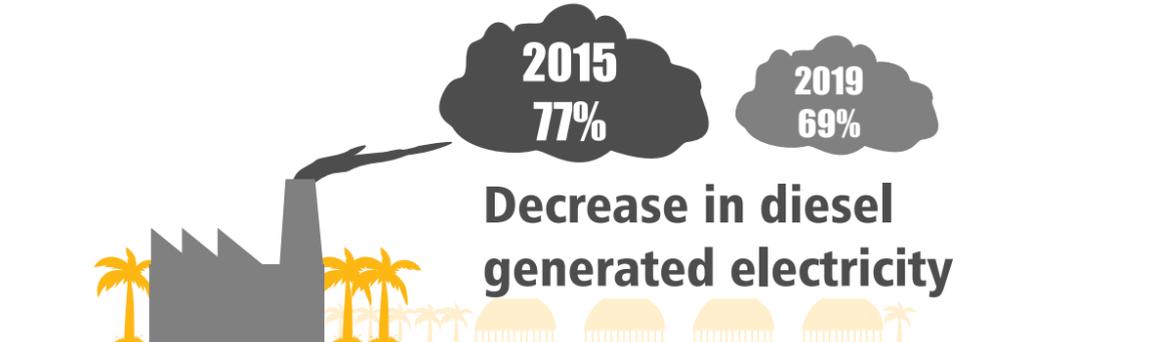
Increased investment in renewable energy

\$85 million ODA invested between 2016-2019

*SAT

99% access to electricity

100% access to renewable energy on Apolima Island





DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Atiinae faaletamaoiga e mau ai e tagata uma o galuega lelei.

Overall Samoa's progress for SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth is mixed. Government has achieved one of the targets on national compliance with labour rights but has missed the 2020 target for reducing the number of youth not in school or employment and is trending below its annual national GDP growth target. Unemployment rates are rising especially for youth and women and despite government legislation and efforts, there are incidences of child labour and income inequality. Notwithstanding this, Samoa has shown resilience in rebounding back from multiple external and natural shocks and showing generally positive economic growth trends supported by strong recoveries in the tourism and remittances sectors. Good progress is also being made in financial inclusion efforts. The recent Measles Epidemic and current Covid-19 is already affecting employment, income and will have severe repercussions on national efforts on employment and reducing inequality.

214. Samoa was considered one of the best performing economies in the Pacific growing at 4.3% between 1998 and 2008. However, since then, Samoa's macroeconomic performance was greatly hampered by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and frequent natural disasters. Since 2015 real GDP per capita annual growth ranged from 3% in 2015 to 1.7% in 2018 and 3.5% in 2019. However, GDP for December 2019 decreased by 3.7% compared to December 2018. This negative performance reflects the impact of the measles epidemic in 2019. Likewise, there is a 0.3% decline in formal employment for December 2019 compared to December 2018.

215. The Supply-Side Survey by CBS, notes that Samoa has a relatively higher number of bank branches per capita compared to other PICs,¹¹⁰ and that there are more women in Samoa banked than men compared globally. Formally employed adults are more likely to be banked than those who are informally employed.

216. The government has achieved one of the targets on national compliance with labour rights and has an active tripartite forum that has a good representation of women. The SNTF is an important forum to consider and effectively improve national employment policies, advancing worker's rights, ensuring adequate employment in pursuing decent work.

217. Despite these positive shifts, Samoa has missed the 2020 target for reducing the number of youths not in school or employment and is trending below its annual national GDP growth target of 3.5%. Unemployment rates are rising (14.5%) especially for youth (31.9%) and women (21.3%) and despite government legislation and efforts, there are incidences of child labour and income inequality. The recent Measles Epidemic and current COVID-19 crisis are already affecting employment, income and will have severe repercussions on national efforts on employment and reducing inequality.

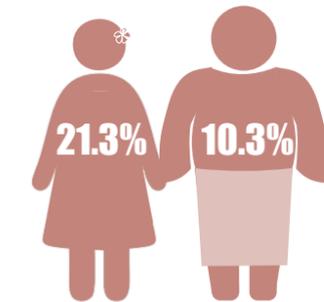


SNAPSHOT:

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH **Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all**

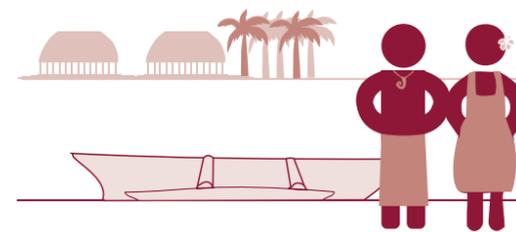


Unemployment is increasing



Unemployment rates are twice as high for women

**Youth unemployment doubled
2012: 16.4% → 2017: 31.9%**



Annual GDP growth rate between

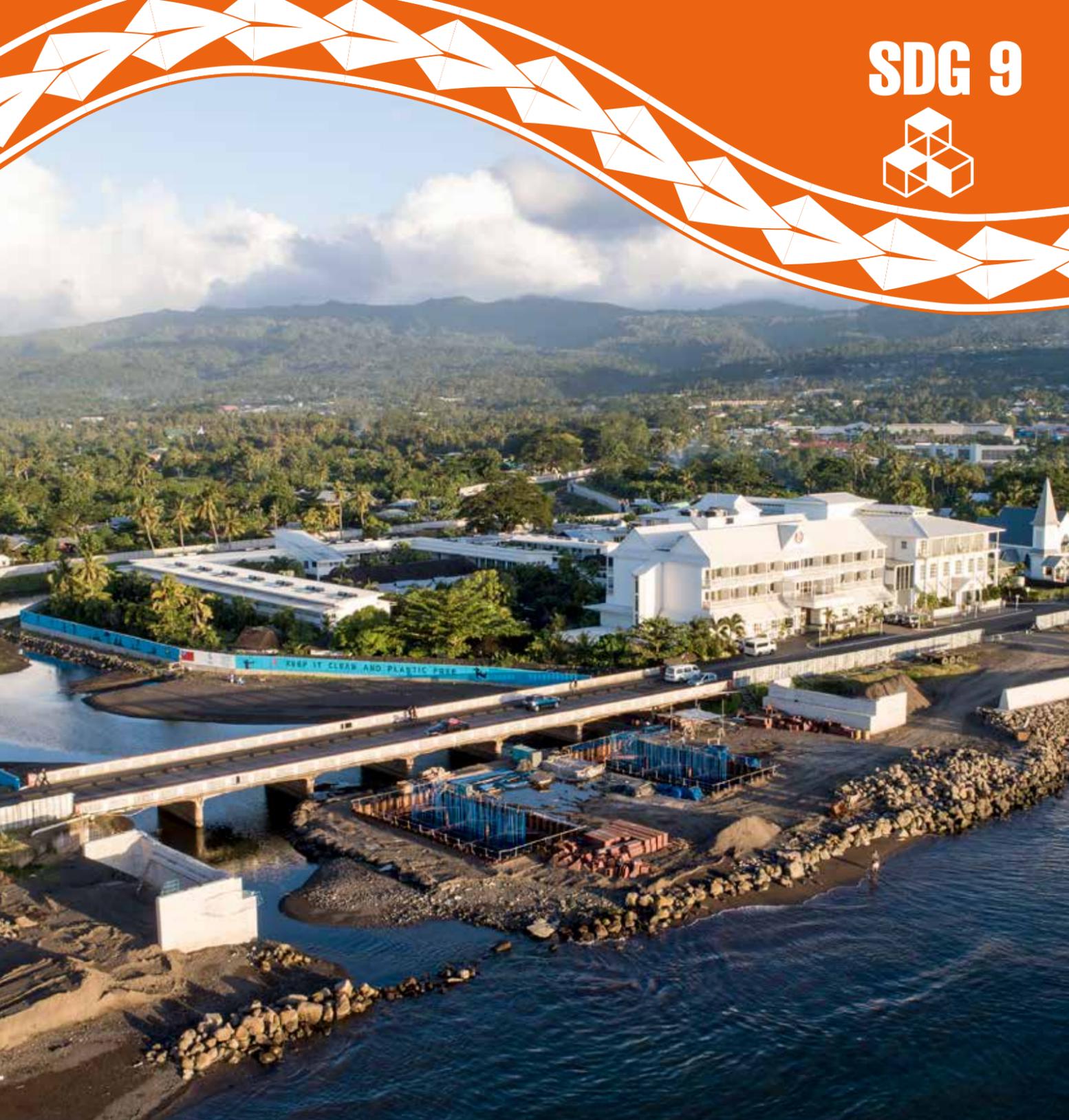


over the last five years

The Samoan National Tripartite Forum plays an active role in pursuing decent work for Samoans



SDG 9



INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

la fausia atiinae tetele e anagata ma u'una'ia le ola sogasoga.

The last ten years has seen significant investment and improvement in building resilient infrastructure for Samoa including upgrades to the Faleolo Airport and all ports including the Apia wharf; launch of submarine cables; rebranding and launch of the national airline; investing in clean energy technologies and ensuring resilient road networks throughout the country. While there are some positive results on manufacturing targets, the industry is very vulnerable to natural disasters, external shocks and the current COVID 19 situation. The closure of the biggest manufacturing company (Yazaki) in 2017 had significant impact on employment and exports. More therefore needs to be done to promote sustainable industrialisation and innovation through research and development.

218. Access to basic and essential health, education, water, electricity, sanitation, and roads is near universal and access to mobile technology, internet and financial services is rapidly improving. In terms of infrastructure especially transport systems, 98% of the total population have direct road access.¹¹¹ Compliance with international standards and enhanced capacity and improved infrastructure and facilities at airport and ports support trade, tourism, and connectivity. The last ten years has seen significant investment and improvement in infrastructure in alignment with the National Infrastructure Strategic Plan which set out an investment plan for upgrading the main economic corridor for the country namely Faleolo Airport and all ports including the Apia wharf; launch of submarine cables; rebranding and launch of the national airline; investing in clean energy technologies and ensuring resilient road networks throughout the country. Development partners came to realise that without sustainable infrastructure there can be no real development. Therefore, substantial finances have been allocated to the transport and infrastructure sector especially from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Australia, China, and Japan. Overall, 86% of the transport network system is climate resilient. This helps improve access to clean energy, transportation, and connectivity to markets to accelerate socio-economic development. Infrastructure remains one of the four priority outcomes of the SDS. Samoa continues to invest in its manufacturing industry which provided for 7.5% of all employment in 2017.

219. The manufacturing sector is dominated by food and beverage industries and contributed about 8.1% to the GDP in 2015. Its contribution declined to 5.8% in 2018 due to the closure of Yazaki Samoa, the largest manufacturing company in Samoa. Soon after the closure of Yazaki, two New Zealand companies Fero Samoa auto wiring and Sleepwell Samoa established plants at the former headquarters of Yazaki. Fero Samoa was proud of the team it had acquired which comprised of former staff of Yazaki; hugely experienced in wire harness manufacture and highly trained in lean manufacturing techniques that ensure high levels of quality and productive delivery. The two companies hired over half of the 700 staff who had worked for Yazaki. Samoa's manufacturing exports are dominated by primary and agro-processed products. Focusing on improving manufacturing industry and investment in research and development especially through Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa will be critical for innovation and for SDG9 progress.

HIGHLIGHT: SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ORGANISATION OF SAMOA (SROS)

SROS was set up in 2016 to provide scientific and technical research, and develop technologies which provide benefit to Samoa's industries, economy, communities and governments efforts to improve the quality of life for all . SROS contributes to the work of the agriculture, trade commerce and manufacturing, health and environment sectors. While it is difficult to provide data to the global indicators on research and development, the work of SROS highlights the important contribution of research and innovation to Samoa's sustainable development efforts.

SDG3: The Biodiscovery Centre under SROS was launched in October 2019 and it focuses on developing local cures for serious diseases. SROS plans to use the Centre to explore the potential for plants' biochemistry to develop solutions to health problems. Current research undertaken also include examining plant extracts and observe their effects on cancer cells; and type two diabetes research and antibiotics program whereby plants have been identified for future experiments.. SROS is also currently procuring a Polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) machine to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Health for corona virus and swine flu testing. All the scientists at the Biodiscovery Centre are locals.

SDGs 8 and 17: To date, SROS has created more than 20 products through research and development. SROS-produced commercial goods including avocado oil, Taro whiskey, soap, lemongrass repellent, gluten-free bread-fruit flour, cocoa, and local herb tea to name a few. A key focus is on producing local products to substitute some of the highly imported items.

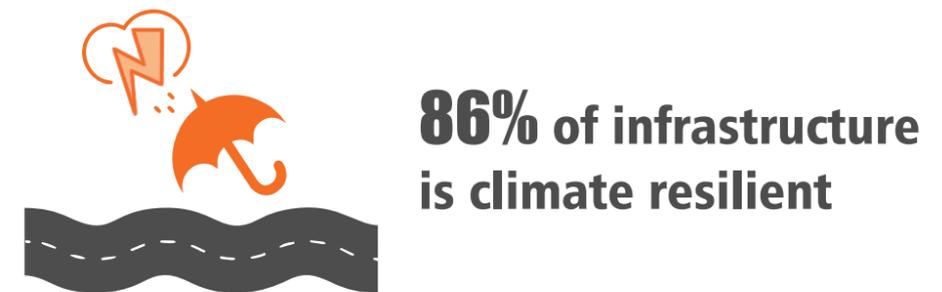
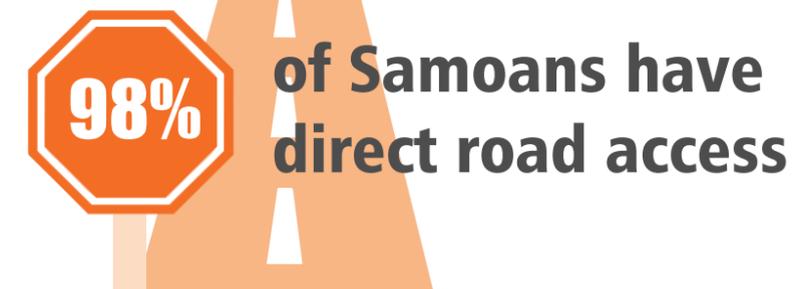
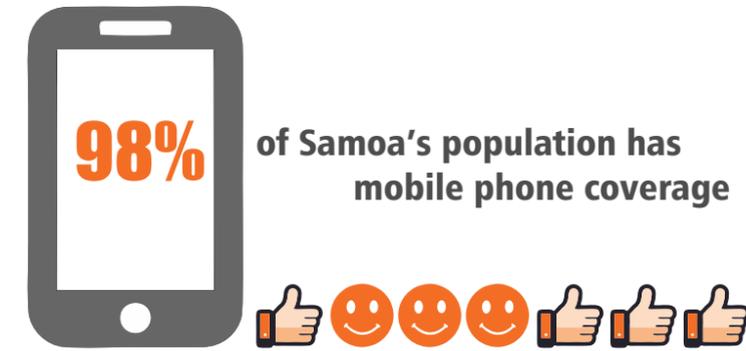
Environment goals: SROS is looking at supporting the national ban on the use of single-use plastic bags, by producing bags from bio-polymers. These can be produced from organic wastes which are available locally such as banana and cocoa crops as well as invasive creeping plants threatening Samoa's agriculture production. The work SROS undertakes supports efforts for environment friendly technologies and options.

One of the key challenges is continuity of their projects and sustainable financing.

SNAPSHOT:



Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation





REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequalities within and among countries

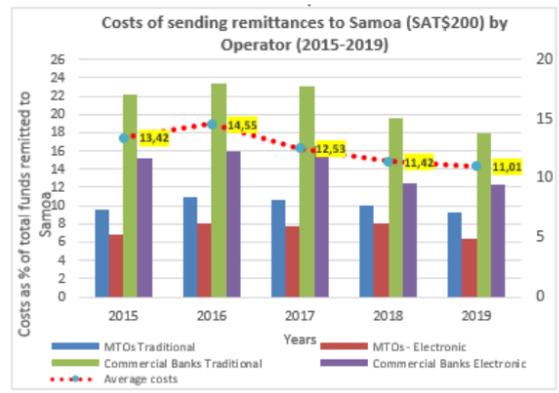
la faaititia le va o tulaga i le tamaoaiga ma le saolotoga

Several national surveys and reports highlight that inequality exists in Samoa and that certain proportions of the population are more vulnerable to inequality than others. The 2013 HIES highlighted that poverty and hardship was higher among the unemployed and individuals working mainly in the informal sector. Overall Samoa's progress for SDG 10 on reducing inequality is uneven, and proper assessment hampered by availability of more recent data.

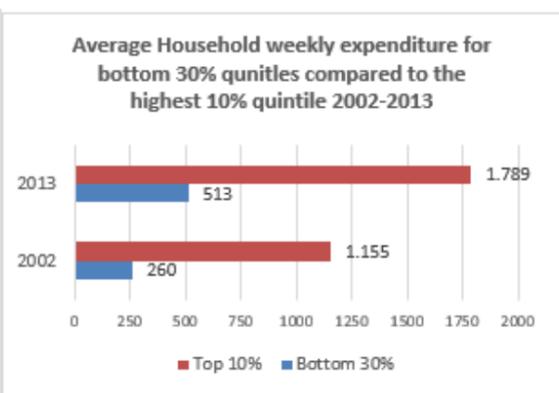
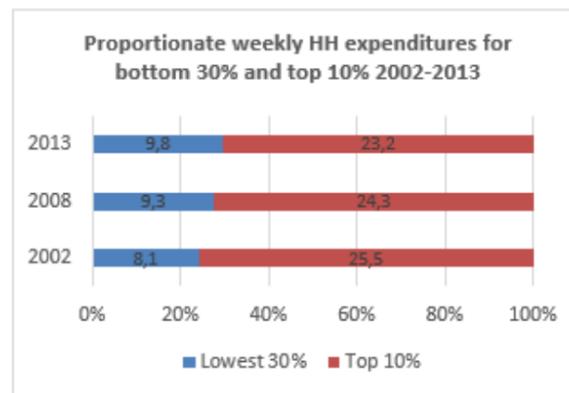
Samoa has achieved one of the targets on the existence of national legislation and migration policy, procedures and protections for migrant workers; is making some progress on the growth rates of household expenditure for the bottom 30% of the population. Foreign Direct Investments are increasing and ODA levels remain stable. However, the level of inequality as measured by the HH Gini co-efficient increased from 0.47 in 2008 to 0.56 in 2013 and the gap between the weekly household expenditure of the highest and lowest quintile households is still significant. Noting the importance of remittances as a key income for many of the poor households, the high costs of sending money to Samoa is concerning.

220. Despite efforts to provide equal opportunities for all and generally positive economic growth and increasing expenditure for the bottom 30% of the population, challenges remain in reducing inequalities. For example, the gini co-efficient increased from 0.45 to 0.56 suggesting greater inequality with high income individuals receiving much larger percentage of the total income of the population. Additionally 37.3% of the employed population work mainly in the informal sector. Monthly wages of persons with disabilities was above the national average. As well, total average yearly wages received in the year ended March 2020 showed females had the highest average yearly wage of \$ 24,542.

221. Poorer households¹¹² depend more on remittances and they make up the majority of the households with informal employment and unpaid work thus, high average costs of sending money to Samoa (11% in 2019), is a concern. While gradually decreasing over the years, it remains at almost four times the 3% 2030 global remittance transaction target This overall cost is largely driven by commercial banks' remittance costs, more than outweighing the relatively lower costs offered by Mobile Money Transfer Operators (MTO) and electronic channels. Regional central bank collaboration on this area is forthcoming, which may support further reductions in remittance costs in the years ahead. Foreign Direct Investments is volatile but still increasing, and ODA levels remain stable which is important for a SIDS like Samoa.



222. To improve prosperity, communities have shown significant leadership in partnership with government, external and national development partners. For instance, the Poutasi Development Trust is an integrated district led development initiative that encourages sustainable livelihood generation. Key components include participation in the Recognised Seasonal Employer (NZ) and Seasonal Worker Programme (Australia) and building skills and capacity in handicrafts production, organic farming, fishing and vegetable gardening for subsistence and sustainable income generation. A key feature of the Falealili District Seasonal Programme is the significant orientation programmes organised by the village for the Seasonal workers which includes; numeracy, literacy and basic financial management skills and a boot-camp to help get their mind-sets prepared before they leave. There is also orientation on return to Samoa including financial counselling and training with the Samoa Business Hub to invest earned income in small businesses or in existing ventures and/or farms. Uniquely, this also includes tree planting to offset their carbon footprint from their travels to Australia and New Zealand.



SNAPSHOT:

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequalities within and among countries

For the bottom third of Samoans, challenges remain in reducing inequality

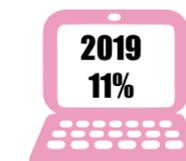
Inequality is increasing



Foreign investment levels are increasing, & overseas development assistance is stable



37.3% of employed Samoans work in the informal sector



Average cost of sending remittances has declined but still high



Average female wages are higher than the national average



**“TO SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.”
“IA MAFAI ONA LAGOLAGOINA MANAOGA OLE ASO MA LE LUMANA’I O TUPULAGA FAIMAI”**

223. Samoa is among the nations with the highest level of vulnerabilities to natural and anthropogenic changes, particularly the impacts of climate change. Samoa recognises that we live in a planet with finite resources and that our environment and climate impacts the quality of lives for all Samoans. The past decades and recent of loss of lives, homes, businesses and infrastructure from hazards, climate induced and natural disasters underscore the critical role that our environment plays in all development efforts.

224. Enhancing environmental sustainability and climate and disaster resilience is one of the four priority outcomes for Samoa’s national development strategy. Delivery on this priority is through the environment sector with a vision for Samoa’s natural and built environment to be well protected and resilient to natural and human-induced hazards and supporting a sustainable and healthy human population. Progress and successful implementation of the SDGs 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are integral to the work delivered by the environment sector. A healthy and resilient environment is critical for the survival and livelihoods of the Samoan people and communities.

225. The Government with the support of multilateral (ADB, GCF, GEF, WB) and bilateral partners have and are investing close to USD100 million over the past few years into environmental management, biodiversity protection multi-sectoral management of critical ecosystems, economy-wide integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management to reduce climate vulnerability of communities in Samoa by building resilience.

226. The qualitative nature of the planet goals for the SDGs and issues related to data availability makes it difficult for countries like Samoa to measure achievements on these goals specifically for the provided global indicators. Some do not yet have global methodologies for measurement. However, given the commitment and investment Samoa has put into the sustainable use of its environment, there is evidence of improved environmental, climate and disaster resilience with lessons learnt and investments over the past decades for a healthy and resilient planet.



SDG 11/12/13/14/15

PLANET

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT SECTOR PLAN 2017-2021

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

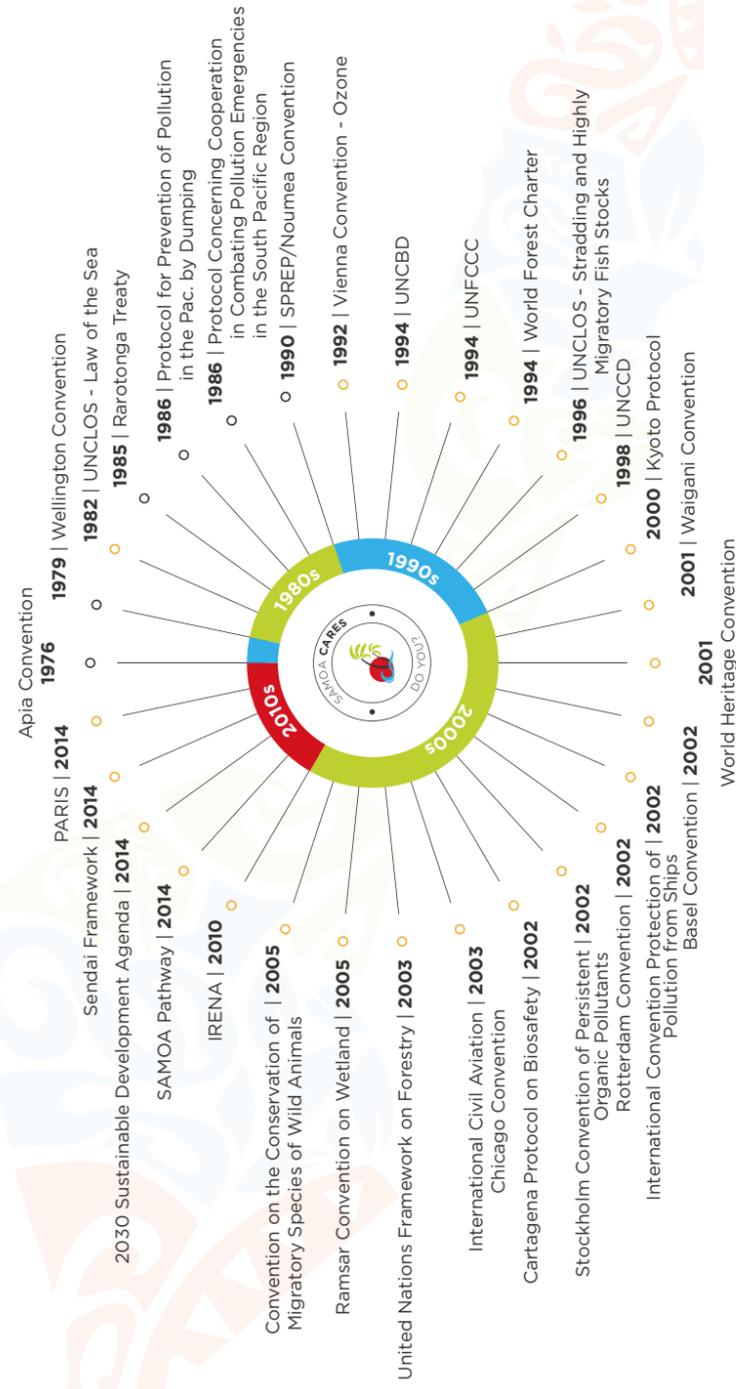


"WORKING WITH YOU FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SAMOA"



ADOPTED AND/OR RATIFIED MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

TIMELINE



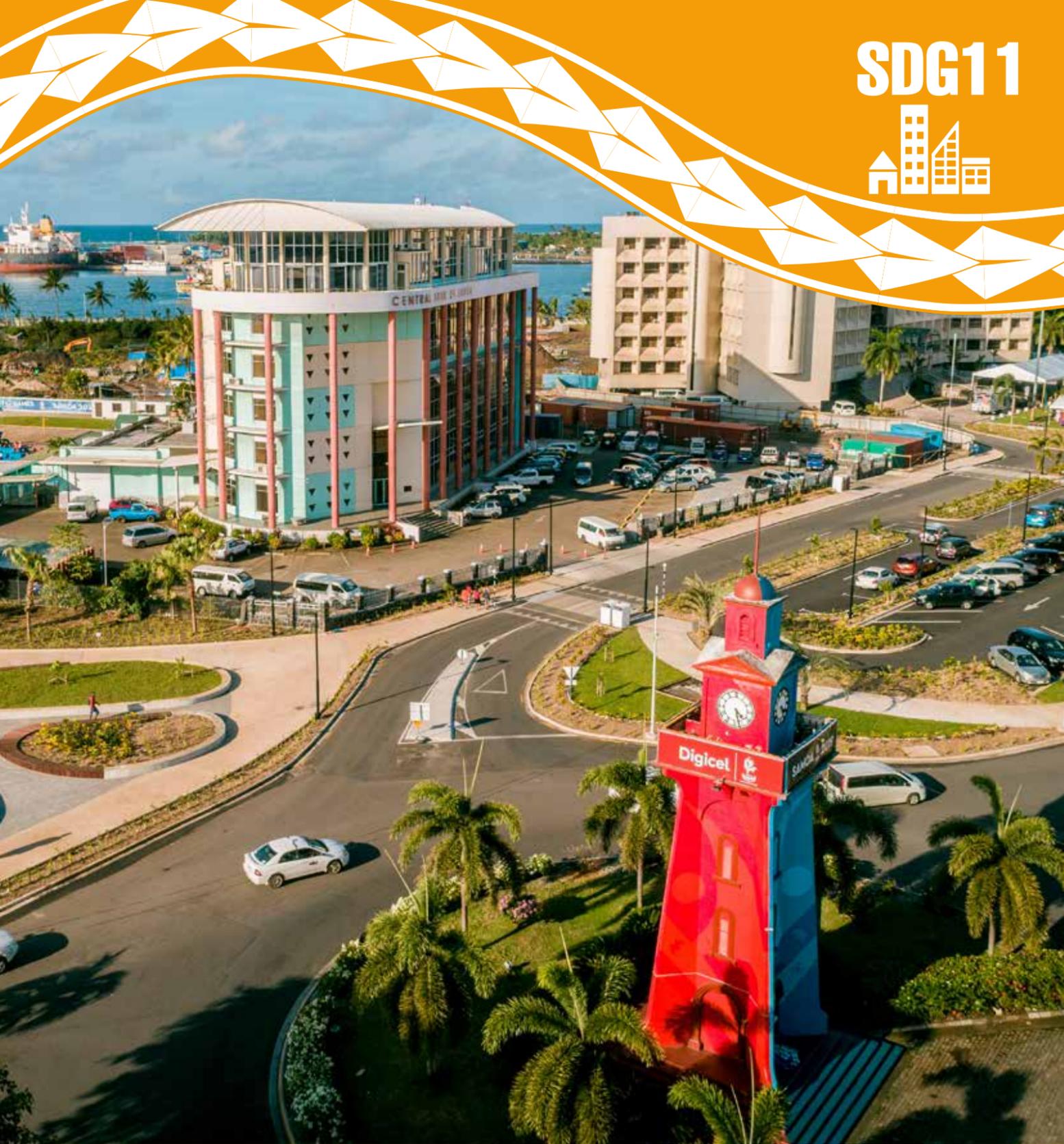
KEY: ○ Regional MEAs | ● International MEAs



"WORKING WITH YOU FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT SAMOA"



SDG11



SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
la fausia taulaga ma 'a'ai fou e saogalemu ma gafataulimaina.

Despite difficulty in providing exact data to measure progress for SDG 11 implementation, available information indicates that there is overall positive progress. There are no slums in Samoa as per the international definition and the majority of the households in Samoa own their dwelling/home. Samoa's urban population have convenient access to open public spaces and good-quality air. There are also eight nature reserves located in and surrounding Apia (township) which are open to the public, and Waste management and collection is provided free of charge.

227. Generally, there are no slums in Samoa as per the international definition, with a few informal settlements mainly in small pockets in urban and semi urban areas. Housing, house ownership and land tenure in Samoa is very secure. Around 94% of Samoan households own their dwelling/home, and the road networks provide good access for communities in terms of connectivity. Around 58% of households use public transportation¹¹³ such as buses and taxis and 44% own a vehicle while 7.8% use both public and private transportation.

228. Proportion of urban area covered by waste collection contractors was an average of 67% of set collection route; with ongoing plans for waste recycling and proper disposal of problematic waste streams such as plastic, chemical and hazardous waste. Key examples that contribute to making Apia and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable as specified by intentions of SDG11 are the: 'City' Development Strategy; existing community

level development and environment plans with stakeholder consultations factored in; the eight nature reserves located in and surrounding Apia (township) which are open to the public and a climate resilient building code that facilitates access for persons with disabilities.

229. There are 8 nature reserves located in and surrounding Apia which are open to the public. These are all on government lands and are integrated into the infrastructure scenery around the township area, with trees to enhance biodiversity and open space for recreational use

230. Cyclone Evans in 2012 caused a lot of damages in Apia town totaling USD210.7 millions or 28% of the 2011 GDP million undoing years of economic gains in infrastructure development including flooding of a major hotel in Apia causing it to close for years. This led to the current major projects to build more resilient infrastructure and ensure a sustainable city..



SNAPSHOT:

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable

94% of Samoan families own their own homes

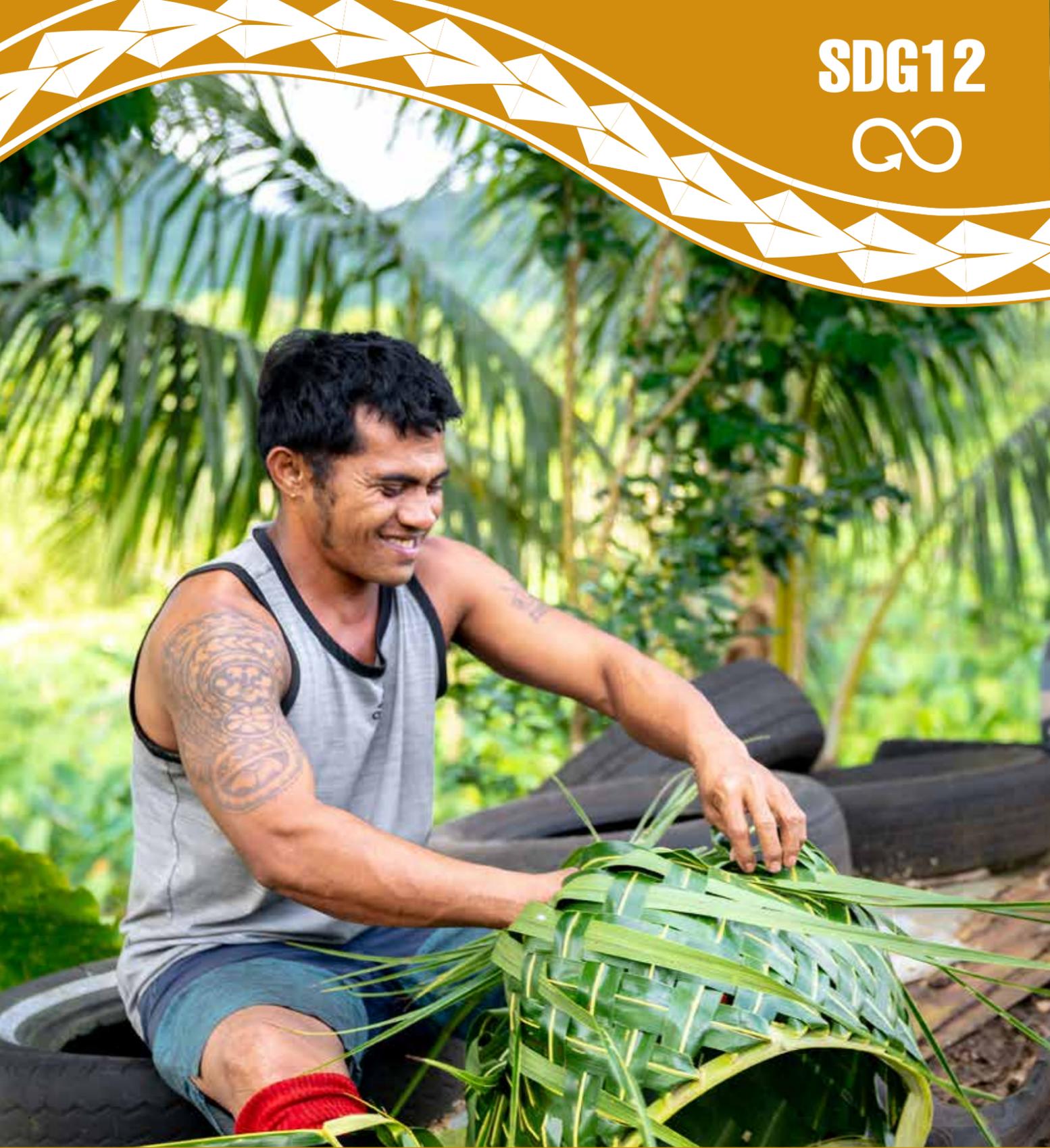


67% of waste collection routes are covered by contractors

58% use public transport



SDG12



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
la fuafuaina lelei le fa'aogaina tatau o punaoa faanatura.

Samoa's progress for sustainable consumption and production targets are generally on track despite data availability issues related to the global indicators. Samoa is party to a number of Multilateral Environment Agreements that aim to encourage more responsible production and consumption such as: the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Montreal Protocol and other conventions such as the Minamata and Waigani conventions. Waigani convention bans the Importation of hazardous and radioactive wastes into Pacific Island Countries and to control the transboundary movement and management of hazardous waste within the Pacific region. Implementation of these obligations through numerous policy and legislative frameworks in place are key to helping Samoa meet the SDG 12 goal. The VNR consultations enabled the stakeholders to better understand the goal and reflect how to improve consumption and production patterns. Many policies plans and legislations are in place to manage use of resources and to ensure environmental resilience and improve resource efficiency. Much effort has been placed on waste management and encouraging sustainability across all sectors and at all levels including at the community level.

231. In connection with SDG 11, Samoa has made positive progress and major efforts to decouple economic growth from unsustainable resource use and improve the management of hazardous substances and waste. These are through key legislation and policies in place such as the Environment Impact Assessment regulations, National Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2018 - 2023 which also addresses chemicals and hazardous waste; and a number of other related forest, fisheries, water, biodiversity and land management legislation strategies or policies. These together with Samoa meeting its commitments to multilateral environmental agreements especially on hazardous waste, and other chemicals all contribute to improving consumption and production patterns (SDG 12) that do not exacerbate stresses on the natural environment.

232. Samoa's efforts to deliver on its global commitments made through Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEAs) has yielded positive results including: Samoa being the first country in the Pacific to develop a Mercury Level Inventory; achievement of its zero CFC consumption target; and is currently phasing-out 80% of HCFC targeting total phase-out by 2040. The Energy efficient Act 2017 encourages import of more energy efficient appliances and the Waste (Plastic Bag) Management regulations 2020 has seen the effective ban on single use plastic bags effective January 2019 and now a Styrofoam plastics ban will be effective from June 2020. Samoa continues to demonstrate environmental leadership by addressing the rising waste problems, particularly plastics. Despite taking on the hosting responsibilities for the 2019 Pacific games late, Samoa still delivered a 'Green' Pacific Games with the provision of water fountains, use of biodegradable plates and utensils and planting of trees by athletes to offset their air travel. Other partnerships also such as the Moana Taka public private partnership between the Government of Samoa, SPREP and the Samoa Recycling Waste Management Association (SRWMA) and SWIRE shipping is addressing recyclable waste through the shipment of waste to overseas recycling centres.

233. More work is needed to address the issue of food loss and waste. Hazardous waste and lack of recycling facilities on island is also difficult to address. Data collection remains an issue for national authorities.

GREENING THE PACIFIC GAMES 2019

Was an excellent international platform to address waste management and sustainability issues within the Pacific region

Samoa banned single use plastic and plastic water bottles for the PG2019.

Over 3000 athletes planted 3,235 trees to help offset carbon emissions.

Thousands of athletes, spectators as well as games officials utilized reusable water bottles and water filling stations at each of the games venues. Plastic take away food containers and straws were also prohibited, with caterers and vendors asked to use biodegradable options for food distribution.

This has become a success story reflecting a whole of country and society approach to deliver a successful green games which is now the new standard for future major sporting events in the Pacific.

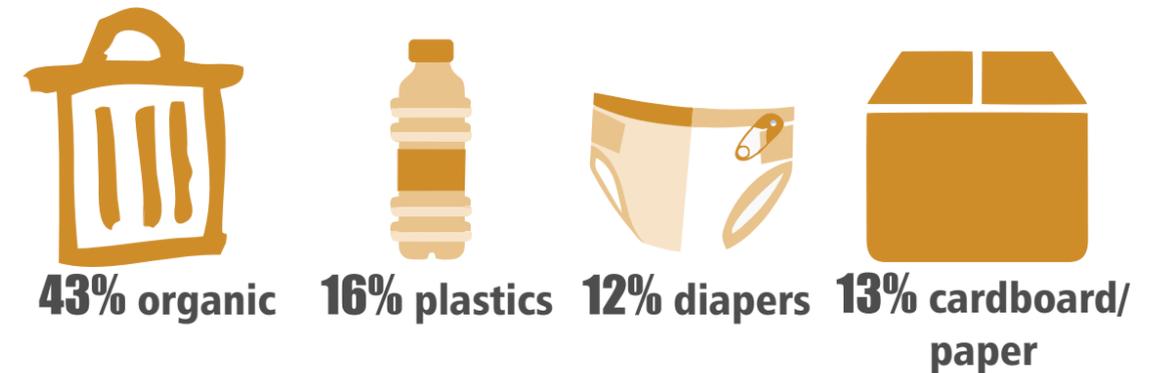


SNAPSHOT:

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Waste comprised of:



A single use plastic ban was introduced in 2019

Styrofoam cups and plates will be banned in 2020



CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
la vave ona faamautu le tali atu i suiga o le tau.

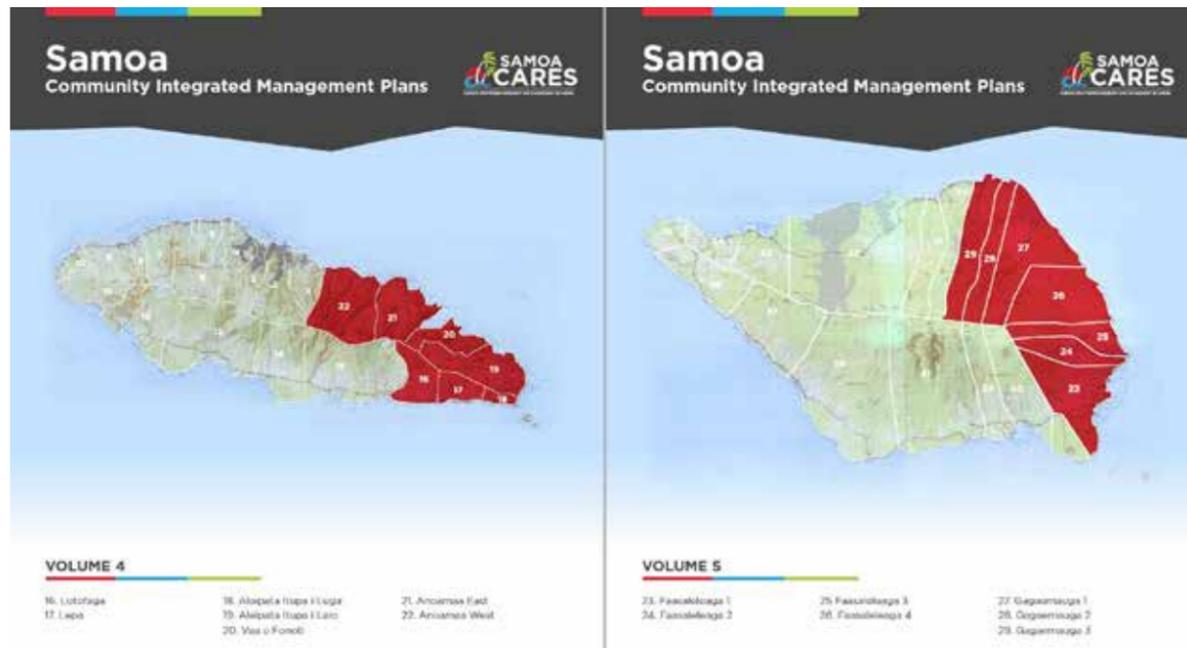
With rising global greenhouse gas emissions, climate change is occurring at rates much faster than anticipated further escalating threats of its adverse impacts on SIDS like Samoa. While Samoa contributes little to the rising Green House Gases, we remain committed to implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in ambitious climate action. Decades of committed climate action and investment in adaptive capacity for planning, response and recovery has helped strengthen resilience against risks and occurrences of climate induced and natural disaster events. Samoa continues to benefit from climate finance, and is confident in its efforts to meet its nationally determined contribution commitments. Climate and disaster resilience remain a high and cross cutting national development priority issue for the sustainable development of Samoa.

234. Given the ongoing vulnerability of Samoa to the adverse impacts of climate change and the continuous setbacks to socio-economic development due to these impacts and other external shocks, building climate resilience has remained a high priority. Decades of committed climate action (SDG 13) and investment in adaptive capacity for planning, response and recovery has helped strengthen resilience against risks and occurrences of climate induced and natural disaster events. For example, the establishment of a Multi Hazard Warning System will improve the quality and the timing of disseminated information to the public, and also the construction of the National Emergency Operation Centre to better coordinate our efforts in preparedness response and recovery. There are less recorded deaths from disasters since 2009 and there is continued impact on people and the economy with negative growth recorded after TC Evans in 2012 and TC Gita in 2018. Despite this, the economy and Samoa still manage to recover eventually by building back better.

235. Samoa is aiming to meet its nationally determined contribution (NDC) for 100% electricity generation from renewable energy in 2025. With significant investments in major renewable energy projects for example on solar energy, hydro and biogas, Samoa is confident it can meet the target. There have been marked improvements in terms of climate proofing all infrastructure and improved early warning systems, which help build adaptive capacity. Samoa has a comprehensive national disaster and risk management planning system in place and has successfully embedded disaster risk management into local governance. There are 94 Community/Village Disaster and Climate Management Response Plans and 41 Community Integrated

Management Plans that are key to building resilience. Climate resilience has been mainstreamed across all sectors including having it as part of the school curriculum from ECE to secondary level including a Disaster and Energy Climate Change course at the National University Samoa, with certificates on sustainable energy and climate change and disaster risk management. Climate Change Report Cards (provides more regular information on renewable energy, reforestation/mitigation, meteorology, and natural disasters; climate change adaptation projects, policies and reporting) are a fixed item on the CDC meetings chaired by the Prime Minister. Samoa have a National Climate Change Policy and a Climate Change Bill which are critical to ongoing efforts to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Furthermore, Samoa is now preparing its Third National Communication and First Biennial Update Report, which are key to the fulfilment of its obligations under the United Nations Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). Samoa has already met 4 out of the 8 SDG 13 indicators and is on track to meet SDG 13. But the key challenge remains of vulnerability and having little control on the causes of climate change and its adverse impacts.

236. Samoa has over the past 15 years benefitted significantly from multilateral and bilateral development financing to help build government systems, communities and infrastructure. Significant financing from the GEF, World Bank, ADB, DFAT, MFAT, SPREP and recently through the Green Climate Fund (USD 65million) is helping respond to climate induced events including building capacities in disaster risk management, mitigation and adaptation.



SNAPSHOT:

13

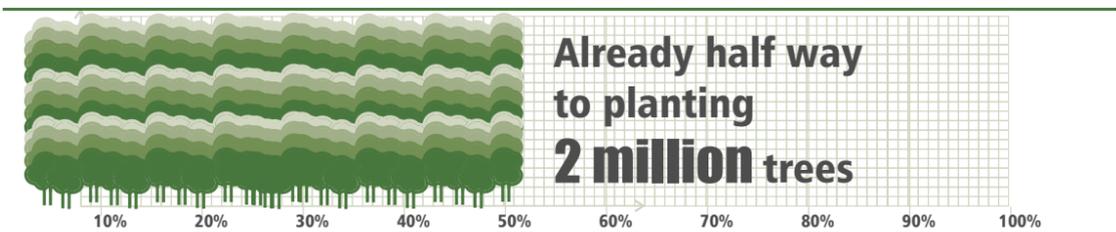
CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

There are 94 community disaster & climate management response plans - & 41 Community Integrated Management Plans in place.

Samoa is on track to generate **100%** of its electricity with renewable energy by 2025

Climate resilience is part of the school curriculum



4/8 of the indicators for SDG 13 have been met by Samoa



SDG14



LIFE BELOW WATER

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

la puipuia ma pulea lelei punaoa, ma ogasami mo se atinae gafataulimaina autu mo atinae eseese.

Samoa remains committed to implementing SDG 14 through decades of investment in the conservation, management and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. Despite concerted global efforts, it is still insufficient to combat the adverse effects of overfishing, growing ocean acidification due to climate change and worsening coastal eutrophication. Samoa's current institutional capacity makes it difficult to collect the required data to effectively measure progress using the global indicators however, a review of key national efforts show that Samoa continues to contribute positively to the implementation of SDG14.

237. While Samoa and the global community struggle with finding the right data to measure progress on the Ocean goal, Samoa can confirm that at the national level it has for decades invested in the conservation, management and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources (SDG 14). On ocean acidification, at the national level Samoa is investing in climate action and continues to call for urgent global climate action. Capacity building and technology transfer is being pursued to allow marine ocean acidification measurement with the help of development partners and international organisations. Reducing marine pollution is effectively being addressed through several waste management efforts as directly linked also to SDG 11 and 12. River health monitoring and clean-up projects through the IWRM and Ridge to Reef programmes carried out by the MNRE all contribute to improving ocean health. Opportunities from recent studies for example by the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), New York University (NYU), visiting research vessels and other regional and international organisations will help further the work on this target and across SDG14, including links to Samoa's first Ocean Strategy to be launched this year. The strategy will also help meet Samoa's commitments made at the UN Ocean Conference 2017 to support SDG14 implementation.

238. Despite having the smallest EEZ, Samoa has yet to complete the negotiation of its maritime boundaries. In relation to sustainably managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, Samoa's efforts have resulted in:

- Approximately 0.1% of the EEZ under integrated protected area or the equivalent of approximately 14% of the total inshore reef area;¹¹⁴
- Marine spatial planning is underway for 100% of the EEZ by 2023;
- 100% of the EEZ is a marine sanctuary for key marine species such as sharks, dolphins, and turtles;
- 41 District wide Community Integrated Management Plans completed and active, which contribute to encouraging and supporting healthy and resilient marine and coastal ecosystems.¹¹⁵

239. A total of 23% of Samoa's total inshore reef area are marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA). The KBAs capture key habitats for 6 of the 17 vertebrates and 6 of the 48 coral species currently classified as threatened on the IUCN Red

List. These are priority areas for establishment of future integrated protected areas to meet SDG 14 targets but also to extend MPA cover to reach 30% protection of EEZ by 2025 as per goal outlined in the Ocean strategy.

240. The over 100 villages that have established Fish Reserves with management plans show positive impacts with improved catch rates recorded compared to villages without fish reserves. This is an important contribution to nutrition security and improving livelihoods. The main commercial tuna fishing activities in Samoa's EEZ is managed in accordance with the conservation and management measures adopted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission that takes into account the precautionary approach and ecosystem considerations. In terms of fish stocks, the status of the Pacific Bluefin tuna and striped marlin are of concern, however the rest of the tuna resources and other pelagic species important to Samoa are within biological sustainable levels. Samoa remains committed through national, regional, and global initiatives to tackle illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and is also keen to effectively implement the Ports States Measure agreement it has ratified. FAO data notes that the degree of implementation of IUU international instruments range between band 3 and 4 which is between Medium and High implementation of applicable instruments.

241. In terms of improved collection of data and technology, Samoa used LIDAR data for mapping the whole country at 0.5m intervals elevation and bathymetry depth down to 60 meters. This data is critical for maritime boundaries delimitation work, natural disaster modelling, maritime mapping, and ocean management.



SNAPSHOT:



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



FAO rates Samoa as having "very high compliance" for enforcing the rights of small scale fisheries

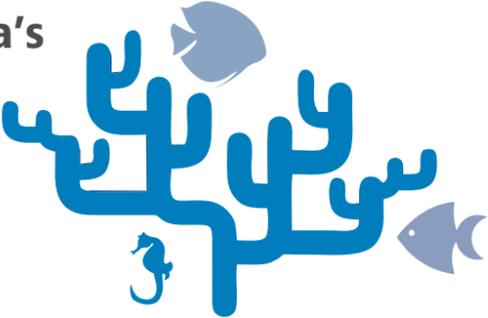


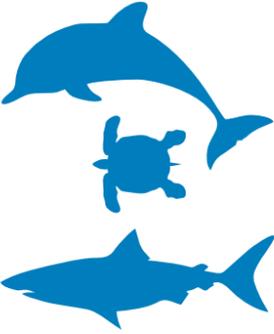
0.01%

of Samoa's Exclusive Economic Zone is under integrated protected management

55%

of all Samoa's threatened species are coral





100%

of the Exclusive Economic Zone is a marine sanctuary for sharks, turtles and dolphins

23%

of total inshore reefs are priority sites for conservation. This is higher than the 10% AICHI target.

SDG15



LIFE ON LAND

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss

Ia puipuia ma palea lelei puna'oa mai le vaomatua ma
le lau'ele'ele mo se atiina'e gafataulimaina

Overall, for life on land (SDG 15) Samoa has made a lot of progress towards the global target on conservation of biological resources through a growing number of protected areas (PA) over the years. Samoa has done well in reducing the rate of deforestation and promoting restoration. Total forest cover remains stable. Upland habitats are largely intact and undisturbed by human activities . However, significant proportion of the remaining forest cover is non-native. Despite efforts there is increased loss of biodiversity with the real risk of the extinction of Samoa's national bird, the Manumea. There are ongoing efforts to address invasive species, implement CITES and contribute towards the Aichi targets. There are credible multi-partner multi-sectoral partnerships and efforts to address the challenges, but the efforts are often fragmented, ad hoc and unsystematic with limited and unsustainable funding mostly by development partners.

242. Overall, for life on land (SDG 15) Samoa has done well in reducing the rate of deforestation and promoting restoration through the 2 million trees planting campaign and ongoing ecological and water catchment and restoration programmes. Total forest cover remains stable at 60.4% according to FAO figures with upland habitats largely intact and undisturbed by human activities, especially on Savaii. The main threat though is the spread of the aggressive invasive plants including the vine *Merremia peltate* (fue lautele), with estimates showing 24% of all forests impacted by invasive plants including upland forests.¹¹⁶ The total land area identified as priority conservation sites is higher than the global Aichi target of 17% for terrestrial. Regrettably, despite efforts there is the decline in Samoa's Red List Index indicating an increased threat to native biodiversity. Ongoing efforts focus on strengthening invasive species management, raising awareness of the importance of native species, supporting rainforest conservation, supporting implementation of CITES and contribute towards the Aichi targets. The Environment Management Conservation Bill makes provision for Access and Benefit Sharing and there is ongoing work on community protocols related to ABS.

243. Samoa has progressed with the development of its Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Report for submission to UNCCD. The UNCCD-GEF funded SMSMCL project has considerably contributed to the achievement of national sustainability goals through restoration and rehabilitation initiatives using SLM practices throughout the country targeting local community farmers. Other key initiatives include financial support provided to community-based tree planting programs, biodiversity assessments and restoration of degraded critical land areas around the country.

SAVE THE MANUMEA CAMPAIGN

Samoa's national bird, the Manumea, is a scientific curiosity, a key player in a healthy Samoan rainforest and a cultural icon for Samoa. Unique to Samoa, it is also highly threatened and at risk of extinction in our lifetimes with perhaps only 200 birds left. The Save the Manumea Campaign introduces enforceable and sustainable measures needed to reduce threats to the bird, in particular the hunting, trade and consumption of native pigeons in Samoa (which also affect the Manumea). The USD\$135K campaign is led by the Samoa Conservation Society and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) which included the joint Launch by the Samoa Deputy Prime Minister and Prime Minister of New Zealand of the National Manumea murals initiative; the painting of the Manumea on national buildings including the Samoa Museum and the New Zealand High Commission in Apia. Importantly, the campaign includes engaging villages in banning the hunting of pigeons (also affect the manumea) and conserving forests that are habitats of the Manumea.



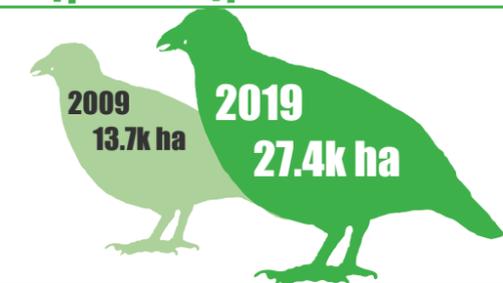
SNAPSHOT:



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems



Terrestrial protected areas have doubled, but management is inconsistent

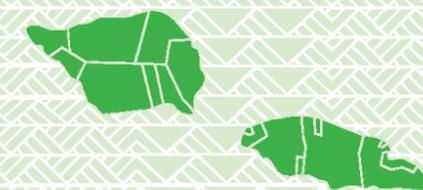


93 native species are classified as threatened



22% increase in threatened species in Samoa between 2009 and 2018

Total land area identified as priority conservation sites (Key Biodiversity Areas) is higher than the global AICHI target of 17%





SDG 16

PEACE, JUSTICE AND EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS



PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

Ia u'una'ia le maua o le filemu ma le fa'amasinoga
amiotonu mo tagata uma

Samoa through its Law and Justice Sector aims to “promote a safe, fair and just Samoa.” Overall, at the national level, Samoa is generally considered a peaceful, stable and secure society relative to other societies in our region. However, violent crimes and assaults do occur, with alarming levels of violence predominantly within domestic situations impacting mainly women and children. Continued investment in initiatives and policies to advance just, peaceful and inclusive societies remain a high priority for Samoa. Samoa has a free press and there are continuing efforts to ensure access to public information. Samoa’s public sector and financial management systems are fairly robust with medium to high public satisfaction of public services and high levels of public perception of safety in public spaces. In May 2016, the National Human Rights Institute of Samoa became the first in the Pacific region to be awarded “A status” by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).

244. Advances in ending violence, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to justice are crucial to a human rights approach to sustainable development and the achievement of all the SDGs including Sustainable Development Goal 16. Peaceful societies and secure communities are some of the fundamental ingredients of a quality life. The Law and Justice Sector that leads on the implementation of SDG16, aims to “promote a safe, fair and just Samoa.” The key outcomes include, ensuring safer communities through crime prevention and crime management strategies, improving access to justice through fairer and more responsive justice systems and maintaining good governance of the dual justice system.

245. Samoa is a strong democratic Christian country built on its strong cultural identity and inherent principles of the rule of law. It remains committed to implementing its international human rights obligations. Samoa’s first security policy launched in 2019 included categories of threat most critical to Samoa which included the traditional security threats but also natural disasters, climate change, and human security particularly gender-based violence and NCDs. Samoa’s recent ratification/accession of the UNCAC and UNCAC signal the importance placed on addressing corruption, strengthening the rule of law and administration of justice, facilitating effective law enforcement, and producing safer and professionally managed prisons. Furthermore, Samoa does not have a military force nor an armed police force. Thus, strict observance of the rule of law is critical to ensuring a safe and peaceful Samoa and meeting our international governance, justice, and peaceful society obligations.

246. Importantly, the Samoan cultural institution of the fa’a-matai and traditional village system of governance built on the principles of mutuality, reciprocity, communal social protection, and security are key to maintaining peace and stability in our country. This system has served us well for over three thousand years. The Women Peace and Security Summit hosted in Samoa in 2019 recognised that women are can play transformational roles in addressing the non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, human security, food security and especially at the community level. The role of traditional village systems in responding to any threats were also highlighted.

247. Samoa is currently reflecting on the duality of its legal systems, one premised on human rights as defined in the Constitution and the other premised on traditional customs and culture and deciding whether they should merge or remain separated but in coexistence.

248. Overall, at the national level, Samoa is generally considered a peaceful, stable, and secure society relative to other societies in our region. Safety and security from public violence and external conflict factors is comparatively low. The focus is on public safety which is generally maintained with the exception of pockets of sporadic public conflicts amongst schools (normally sports related), in public places (normally involving males and alcohol related) or family and village disputes (normally over land or domestic violence). However, violent crimes and assaults do occur with alarming levels of violence predominantly within domestic situations impacting mainly women and children.

249. The rate of homicide reported by the Samoa Ministry of Police almost doubled between 2017(3.5per 100,000 population) and 2018 (6.5 per 100.000 population). The perpetrators are mostly male and young between 20 and 40 years old. Sexual Violence reports also increased between 2017 and 2018 and an NHRI inquiry reported that six out of ten women have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime.¹¹⁷ Worryingly, the two national reports on violence and Samoa’s most recent national report on CEDAW record troubling levels of violence against children. These reports have triggered a call for whole of society approach to address the issues of violence against women and children, persons with disabilities and to link with implementation efforts on HR obligations.

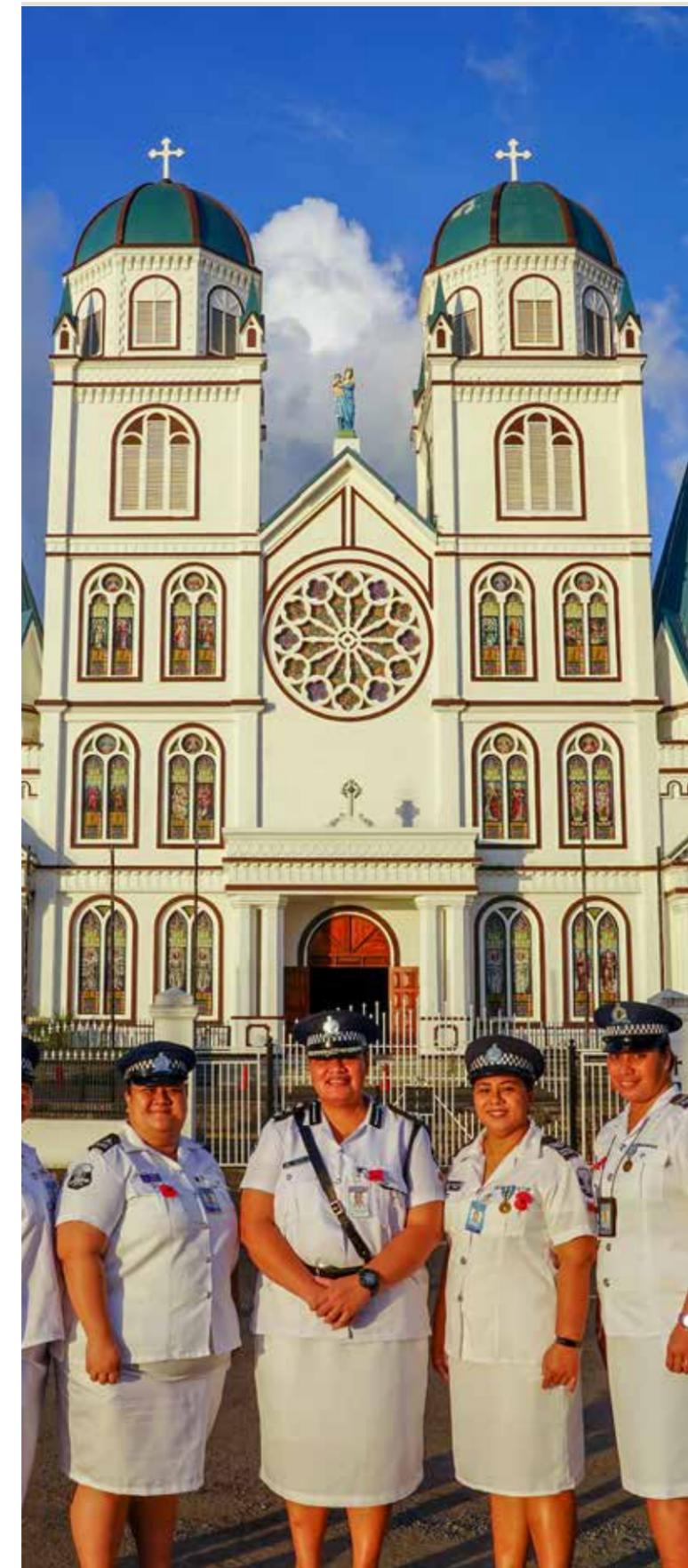
250. Criminal offences reported and investigated increased by 21% between 2017 and 2018 and by 10.2% between 2018 and 2019.¹¹⁸ There has been an improvement in police visibility in Apia town area and availability of police outposts to provide immediate community support when needed. Victims of crimes are now more confident to report matters to the police. Community Perception Surveys conducted for the Police showed public perception of safety in public places has increased between 2010 and 2013 from 74% to 85% (daytime) and from 49% to 77% (night-time).¹¹⁹ The gun amnesties in 2015 and 2018 were successful in the confiscation of 322 and 72 firearms respectively and a recent Arms Trade Treaty project which included an Arms Tracker to help track small arms and light weapons.

251. Samoa is in the process of finalising next steps for a proposed Freedom of Information Bill providing the necessary legislative framework to guarantee public access to information. Furthermore, Samoa has a highly active media community and in terms of the 2020 world press freedom index, Samoa is ranked 21 out of 180 countries and second only to New Zealand from the Pacific. Two public sector satisfaction surveys were conducted in 2014 and 2017 noting

65% satisfaction, 6% neutral and 11% dissatisfied with 18% nonresponses for 2014. Samoa does not currently monitor data on public sector corruption including incidences of official bribery. However, with Samoa’s recent accession to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), bribery in any form is strongly emphasized as one of the most important breaches under the Convention. Although the prohibition of bribery in the public service is not specifically identified in the Public Service Act 2004, carrying out such action by a public servant is seen as a breach of the code of conduct and not upholding the values of public service of being honest and transparent in the execution of public service.

252. The Government of Samoa has introduced and established numerous legislations, institutions, programmes, and initiatives to address human rights violations in particular violence against women. With a human rights approach to SDGs implementation, Samoa embeds SDG 16 implementation in line with its human rights obligations under conventions it is a party to including the CEDAW, CRC, CRPD, UNCAC, CED and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). While Samoa has no recorded cases of human trafficking and people smuggling, the existence of the multi-agency Transnational Crime Unit, National Security policy and committee and Guidelines for the Management of the Transnational Crimes of Trafficking and Smuggling contributes significantly to advancing Samoa’s counter trafficking agenda.

253. Samoa also established the NHRI in 2013 and in 2016. It became the first in the Pacific region to be awarded an ‘A’ Status from GANHRI. Since establishment, the NHRI has prepared four National State of Human Rights Reports. These include the violation of the rights of women and children, the rights of persons with disability (PWD), rights of prisoners, profound issues of climate change and a National Public Inquiry into Family Violence. These have important opportunities for national and community dialogue especially for action to address human security and safety issues to promote protection of human rights.





SNAPSHOT:

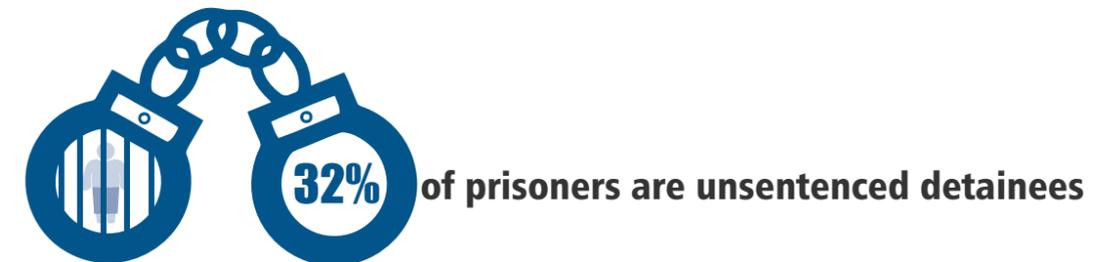


Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions

Increase in victims of physical violence



NO recorded cases of human trafficking or smuggling



The Samoa National Human Rights Institution granted 'A' status in 2016 by the GANHRI





SDG 17

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Ia u'una'ia faiga fa'apa'aga e fa'atino ai sini mo le atina'e
gafataulimaina

Financing for Samoa is stable. Domestic financing is increasing mainly through taxes. ODA and FDI levels while fluctuating are overall increasing with ODA contributing on average 12.5% to GDP. Export earnings fluctuate between SAT\$478.5 and SAT\$828.4 million and the trade deficit continues to increase. Debt is high but sustainable. Remittances and tourism earnings contribute on average 20 to 22% of GDP. Digital transformation is increasing with high coverage of mobile phone network, high mobile phone usage enabling economic transactions, e-learning and improving financial inclusion. Samoa's national planning, budgeting, monitoring and financial management process and systems are assessed as strong. Development partner alignment with Samoa's national planning and monitoring frameworks is high but use of Samoa's PFM systems decreased from 81% in 2016 to 57% in 2018 and the share of development co-operation subject to parliamentary scrutiny decreased from 100% in 2016 to 86% in 2018. Samoa has joint government and development partner financing facilities for civil society and private sectors. Samoa's monitoring and data management systems and capacities have improved with a National Statistics Development Strategy in place, regular national surveys and significant administrative data, annual sector reviews and SDS progress tracking. Management and sharing of government data amongst government ministries is an ongoing issue.

Overview

254. The 2030 Agenda and the S.A.M.O.A Pathway emphasise the necessity for a transformational approach to development if prosperity, equality for all and a protected environment are to be achieved. This includes, strengthening policy and financing coherence, forming and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships, more effective access to and use of public and private finance, stronger trading relationships, effectively harnessing and adopting science and technology and investing in improved data collection, analysis and utilization for informed policy making.

255. Acknowledging the structural, geographic, capacity and economy of scale and limited capacity issues that are inherent to Small Island developing nations, partnerships for development and strengthening national ownership, leadership, institutions, and capacities have underpinned Samoa's development approach for the past two decades. A key ingredient of strong partnerships is ensuring credible, strong and accountable capacities and systems are in place to enable mutually respectful and equal partnerships based on trust and robust public financial management systems. Strengthening systems and capacities to plan, deliver, account and report on national development resourcing and results has been a key objective of Samoa's ongoing structural and public sector reforms since the 1990s.¹²⁰

256. Samoa has played a strong leadership role globally and regionally in strengthening country systems, sustainable development, and development effectiveness efforts. Samoa is one of only two Pacific Island Countries (PICs) that participated in the global evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2010. Since then, Samoa has participated in subsequent global and regional aid and development effectiveness efforts with other PICS including through the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GEPDC) monitoring and High Level Conferences in Accra (2008), Busan (2011), Mexico (2014) and Nairobi (2016) and also the Pacific Forum Compact monitoring and peer review process of development effectiveness in the Pacific Islands Countries and region from 2010 to 2015. Through the Forum Compact, Samoa has undertaken three Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Assessments (PEFAs) since 2010, served on the peer review teams of seven¹²¹ Pacific countries and two donors (peer reviewer for NZ and the study country for Australia) and hosted south-south, peer to peer learning with an additional seven¹²² Pacific Countries. Samoa also participated in the DAC review of New Zealand in 2015 and it was the first time that a partner country was invited to participate in the review

257. Between 2011 and 2014, Samoa served as the representative for the Asia-Pacific region in the global Steering Committee for the GPEDC. Since 2016, Samoa has served along with Fiji as the Pacific's representatives on the UN's Inter-Agency Experts Group on the SDGs Indicators Framework, and in 2018, the Central Bank of Samoa's Governor was appointed to the UN Taskforce on Digital Financing of the SDGs. Between 2016 and 2018 Samoa represented SIDS on the Green Climate Fund Board (GCF); and Samoa also chaired the Pacific Sustainable Development Committee (PSDC) responsible for tailoring the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Pacific and putting together the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development 2016-2030 and the 1st Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2018.

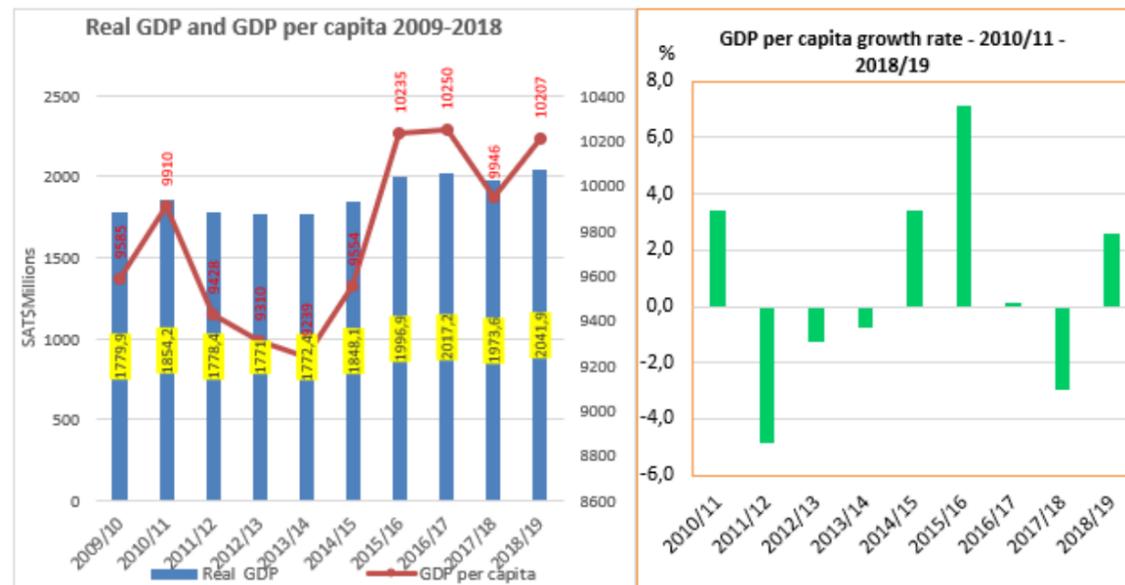
258. In 2019 the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes carried out a peer review of Samoa. The Global Forum rated Samoa overall Largely Compliant with the international standard on transparency and exchange of information on requests and that they have addressed several deficiencies, by enhancing the supervision of the international financial sector.

Status and trends

Financing for development in Samoa

259. Samoa is a lower middle-income country and a SIDS thus any sizeable external shock will have disproportionate national consequences and socio-economic impact. Samoa's GDP contracted during and after the 2008 Global Economic crisis, the 2009 Tsunami and recently after the 2012 Cyclone Evan and 2018 Cyclone Gita and closing of the biggest manufacturing company Yazaki in 2017.

260. In the past, as a means of last resort, borrowing for recovery after each major natural disaster or external shock has added to increasing national debt levels which are now higher than the national threshold of public debt to GDP ratio of 45%.¹²³ Samoa's debt levels increased from 32.3% in 2007 to 50.3% of GDP in 2018 but declined to 48% of GDP in FY2019.¹²⁴ According to the IMF Article IV 2020 Mission, Samoa's debt is sustainable but remains at high-risk of distress, given the country's high vulnerability to natural disasters. Debt servicing as a proportion of exports of goods and services increased from 5.1% in 2009 to 8.6% in 2018/19 and is stable.



Building financing resilience, Taxation, ODA, Remittances and Tourism

261. Despite regular climate induced and natural disasters impacts over the past years, nominal GDP per capita has generally been positive growing from SAT\$ 9585 per capita in 2009/10 to SAT\$10,207 per capita in 2018/19.¹²⁵ In building financial resilience, the government is mobilising more domestic financing in addition to external resources including increasing VAGST from 12.5% to 15% in 2006, building a national reserve through an annual allocation of 3% of the national budget for use during national states of emergency; accessing the multilateral agencies disaster response financing;¹²⁶ accessing funds from the Pacific Catastrophic Risk Assessment Facility (PACRAFT) and improving the administration of taxation and in particular revenue collection.

262. Domestic resource mobilization efforts and result-shave improved. The 2017 Revenue Review recommended amendments to the Income Tax and Excise Tax rates which

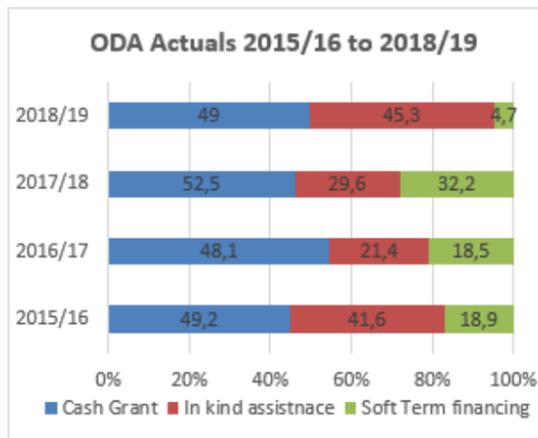


were passed by Parliament in May 2017. The government is currently rolling out an electronic Tax Invoice Monitoring System (TIMS) to improve tax compliance and revenues.¹²⁷ Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP increased from 28.6% (taxes 23.8%, grants 2.1%, other nontax revenue 2.7%) in 2015/2016 to 31.4% (25.4% taxes, 2.0% grants, 4% other revenues) in 2018/2019. The proportion of government budget funded by domestic resources/taxes increased from 26.3% in 2015/16 to 29.4% in 2018/2019.¹²⁸

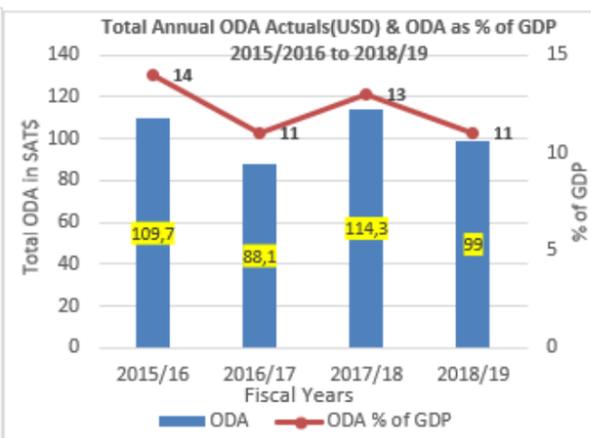
263. Similar to other Small Island Developing States, ODA and external financing have played and continue to play an important role in Samoa's development, response to and recovery from national and external shocks and resilience building. ODA to Samoa has been rising overall over the past five years, from USD 94 million in 2015 to USD130 million in 2017.¹²⁹

264. The Samoa Ministry of Finance figures reflect actual ODA (cash grants, soft term financing and in-kind assistance) received noting fluctuating but overall high levels between USD109.7/SAT \$279 million (FY 2015/16) and USD 99/SAT \$252 million in FY2018/2019 with a total of USD 411.1 million/SAT \$1.048 billion over four years.¹³⁰ Eighty two percent of total ODA was Cash Grants and in-kind assistance amounting to a total of USD 336.7 / SAT \$857 million combined for FY2015/16 to FY2018/19.¹³¹ Cash grant as a percentage of government revenue and GDP ranged between 18% and 14% in 2015/2016 and 15% and 11% in 2018/19 of Government revenue and GDP respectively.¹³²

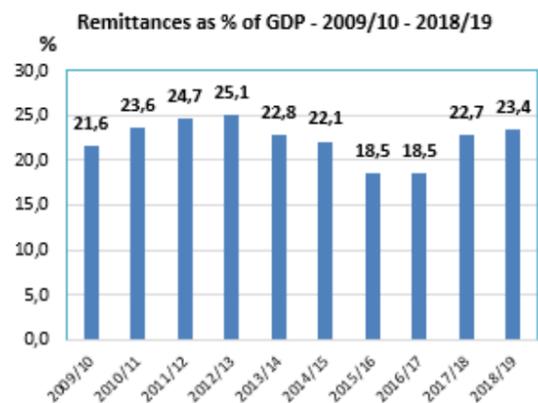
265. Samoa has a Foreign Investment Advisory Committee that advises government on foreign direct investments



Source: Samoa Ministry of Finance



guided by the National Investment Policy and facilitated by the Samoa Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour. National Foreign Direct Investment figures are incomplete and show significant fluctuations over a five year period from SAT \$9.71million in 2015 to SAT \$39.22 million in 2016 to SAT \$11.4 in 2019. Higher OECD figures which might include all ODA show an increase from USD 204.36 million in 2015 to USD 271.07 million in 2018.



266. Remittances is an important source of national income. Remittances as a percent of GDP in Samoa in 2014 was 20.7% which is above the 8.6% Pacific Island Countries average and the 5.9% SIDS average and 4.9% Low income Country average and the 0.7% global average.¹³³ Recent figures show remittance proportion of GDP has further risen from 21.65% in 2015/2016 to 23.4% in 2018/2019 FY.¹³⁴ The increase in remittances is linked to the participation of Samoan workers in the temporary labour schemes of Australia and New Zealand. There were around 3,000 Samoan RSE workers in Australia and New Zealand in FY2018/19.

267. Tourism is another key source of income for Samoa's economy contributing up to 22.7% of GDP in 2017. Since 2015, tourism has contributed on average 20% to GDP increasing from 18.06% in 2015 to 23.4% in 2019.¹³⁵

Information Communication Technology

268. Geographic isolation and distance from markets is a reality in the Pacific resulting in substantial economic disadvantages. Samoa recognises the importance of ICT as an enabler to transform socioeconomic development and was one of the first countries in the region to liberalize its ICT sector in 2003. With the support of the World Bank and ADB, government has since increased its wholesale internet access capacity with the American Samoa to Hawaii (ASH) submarine cable in 2009; launched a government-wide area network called the Samoa National Broadband Highway (SNBH) in 2015 and the Tui Samoa Cable in 2019. A National ICT Steering Committee (NICTSC) chaired by the Hon. Prime Minister directs the implementation of the Samoa Communications Sector Plan 2018-2022 led by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), the Office of the Regulator (OOTR), and Samoa Post Company Limited.



269. Reaping the results of almost two decades of investment in the ICT sector, Samoa now enjoys one of the highest rates of mobile phone coverage (97%) in the Pacific region. Usage of mobile phones is 88% and user mobile phone ownership is 64% in 2018,¹³⁶ an increase from 71% and 41%

in 2013 respectively.¹³⁷ People owning a smartphone with internet access is 64% but access to internet other than on a mobile phone is low at 6%.¹³⁸ Internet usage has increased considerably from 13% in 2013 to 64% in 2018 and primarily on mobile phones. This indicates the importance of mobile phones in terms of access to information and services including in times of disasters and emergencies. Furthermore, the introduction of mobile wallets, mobile banking and payment of water and electricity bills, checking bank balance as well as online shopping and delivery apps such as Maua and Seki Eats on mobile phones; and the sending and receiving of money to and from overseas on mobile phones is further driving the use and ownership of mobile phones and internet/mobile data. This in turn, is improving financial inclusion of a considerable proportion of the population that is currently unbanked. All of this is being driven by strong competition between the tele-companies offering less expensive mobile data and phone packages.

270. In 2015, there was a total of 4,148 fixed internet subscriptions with the majority, 2,084 (50%) connected at high speed access to the public internet (a TCP/IP connection) at downstream speeds equal to or greater than 256 kbit/s, there were 1,413 subscriptions to downstream speeds equal to or greater than 2 Mbit/s and less than 10Mbit/s, 644 with fixed broadband subscription with downstream speeds equal to or greater than 256 kbit/s and less than 2 Mbit/s; and 7 with fixed broadband internet subscriptions with downstream speeds equal to or greater than 10Mbit/s.

Capacity Building

271. Samoa continues to benefit from north-south and south-south cooperation bilaterally or facilitated multilaterally at an estimated value of USD 31.4million in 2016.¹³⁹ Since 2011, senior officials from the Samoa Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs participated in the Forum Compact South-South Peer Review of Pacific Islands Country systems, serving on seven Pacific Peer Review teams for the Cook Islands, Niue, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.¹⁴⁰ In addition, Samoa also served on the peer review processes for two of the Pacific's key development partners Australia and New Zealand (jointly as part of New Zealand's OECD/DAC peer review). Between 2013 and 2015, Samoa hosted over 30 senior Pacific finance, finance and aid management officials from seven Pacific Island Countries¹⁴¹ for a period of two weeks each time for south-south and peer to peer capacity building learning for systems and institutional building on national planning, budgeting, public financial

and aid management. Samoa also extended the same peer learning for Pacific officials with attachments in the Samoa Bureau of Statistic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Ministry of Police.

272. Importantly, in 2019, along with Papua New Guinea, Australia and a Pacific CSO representative, Samoa served as peer reviewer for the first Pacific Islands Forum and first ever global Peer Review of a Voluntary National Review Process for SDGs implementation undertaken for the Government of Vanuatu.

273. Capacity building across all sectors are also key components of the sector plans and are built into project planning and programming. This is crucial for SDGs implementation including the need for analytical capacity to also improve identification of synergies and a more coordinated response to the SDGs.

Trade

274. Samoa has a limited number of tradeable sectors and the merchandise export base has not diversified much in the last ten years. There are only six major export commodities, of which fish represents almost half of total exports, followed by nonu juice, beer, taro, coconut and virgin coconut oil. Emerging export products include bottled spring water, cocoa products (pods and beans), cigarettes, scrap metal and bananas. The vulnerability of fisheries and agricultural-based production and trade-related infrastructure to natural disasters are reflected in contractions in exports following natural disasters. For example, exports fell in 2013 by some 30% following Cyclone Evan in 2012. The main export markets are American Samoa, New Zealand, Australia, the USA, Tokelau, Japan, Fiji and China.¹⁴²

275. Despite this, trade continues to play an important role in Samoa's development earning significant revenues (goods and services) ranging from SAT\$478.5 (SAT\$43.4 goods, SAT\$435.1 services) from 2009/2010 to SAT\$828.4 (SAT\$130.9 goods, SAT\$697.4 services) in 2018/19 representing a 57.7% increase over ten years. Between 2017 and 2019, Samoa's total exports to its top five destination countries increased by 3.3% (73.8% to 77.1%). The proportion of Samoa's trade with trading partners changed with trade to New Zealand dropping from 23.7% in 2017 to 15.9% in 2019, trade to Australia dropping from 17.3% in 2017 to 8.9% in 2019. On the other hand, trade increased with American Samoa (from 18% in 2017 to 26.6% in 2019), and with the USA from 10.15 in 2017 to 23.1% in 2019.

276. The WTO Trade Policy review for Samoa in 2019 recognised that the economy proved resilient in the face of the devastation caused by cyclones and closure of the country's largest manufacturing plant in 2017. However, the review also highlighted the persistent challenges in achieving higher economic growth and attracting more investment, due to vulnerabilities as a small island developing state.

Coherent policies and systems and multi-stakeholder partnerships

277. Samoa has a well-developed national development planning, budgeting and accountability system and coordination mechanisms in place. The Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS 2016-2020) and extensive network of fourteen sector plans and strategies linked to Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks provide the integrated national policy and financing framework for development. The National Policy Coordinating Committee consisting of Chief Executive Officers of government and public enterprises help guide overall policy advice to government through the Cabinet Development Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. The National Development Cooperation Policy sets out clear expectations for government leadership, respectful and long-term partnerships, mutual accountability for joint results and use of country systems. This is critical to development partner engagement and support to Samoa.

97% mobile phone coverage.

From 71% to 88% usage of mobile phones

From 41% to 64% mobile phone ownership

From 13% to 64% internet usage

278. The 2013 Forum Compact Peer Review of Samoa's national institutions, systems and capacities noted that Samoa has some of the strongest planning and public financial and aid management systems in the Pacific with some good practices now replicated in some Pacific countries. The GPEDC 2018 global monitoring assessed the strength of Samoa's national planning, budgeting and monitoring process as 80% compared to 71% for SIDS; that is, it defines priorities, targets and indicators, aligns to the SDGs, is regularly reported on but budget and costing information needs improvement. Development partner alignment with Samoa's national planning framework and using national statistics and data was assessed at 78% with good alignment with indicators and data but less participation in joint evaluation and using national objectives.¹⁴³

Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

279. Samoa's engagement with its development partners both external and national is institutionalized and embedded into its national planning and accountability processes. Relationships with development partners is long term, systematic and inclusive through regular annual High-Level Policy Dialogues and convening of joint quarterly meetings with all its external development partners to discuss strategic progress and challenges in programme implementation. All development partners especially those resident in Samoa are also encouraged to participate in the relevant 14 sector coordinating steering committees including through annual Sector reviews of sector progress against the sector plans/strategies. At the highest level, the Cabinet Development Committee and Aid Coordination Committee make strategic policy decisions on development programming including with development partners.

280. The SDGs have also been mapped against the priorities of international partners based on their ongoing support and projects. The SIDS partnership platform launched during the 2014 SIDS Conference in Samoa and the 2017 UN SDG 14 Conference, currently lists 80 partnerships (including 12 voluntary SDG14 commitments) that have or are providing some support to Samoa. A Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2016 and 2018 review of the SIDS partnerships note that global reporting and monitoring has been sporadic with limited awareness and accountability at the national levels.¹⁴⁴ For Samoa, the partnerships specific to national initiatives are monitored annually when reviewing the implementation of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway. Additionally, SDG14 commitments are linked to the Samoa Ocean Strategy as well as implementation efforts under other the relevant sectors.

281. Samoa has also introduced innovative ways (considered as best practice in the Pacific) to better manage multiple development partner transactions including the introduction of Joint Policy Action Matrices (JPAMs) for joint monitoring and accountability with multiple development partners usually linked to budget support; requests for 6 monthly Agency Mission Schedules and Mission free periods during budget preparation times and other special events that the government has given prior commitment to in that year. The JPAM is a high-level policy results matrix that allows for joint government multi-development partner dialogue, joint results monitoring and evaluation in return for budget support. This lessens the transactions burden on government with multiple development partners reporting jointly to the one reporting framework. As part of the JPAMs

and Samoa's own public sector reforms, Samoa has been implementing a series of public sector financial management reforms focusing on procurement, audit, revenue management and financial reporting. The JPAMs now include climate resilience and disaster management in other sectors like health, infrastructure and the environment.

282. The GPEDC 2018 monitoring assesses Samoa's Public Financial Management (PFM) systems as strong with significant progress since the 2016 GPEDC monitoring in budgeting, procurement, auditing and financial reporting. The GPEDC 2018 monitoring also assesses Samoa's mutual accountability mechanisms as excellent scoring five out of five for having a comprehensive policy framework for development cooperation; having country level targets for governments and development partners; having regular joint assessment of progress; assessments are inclusive and involve non-state actors; and results of assessments are made available publicly in a timely manner. Development partners' use of country systems to deliver co-operation lowers transaction costs as well as accelerate the strengthening of such systems.

283. Despite the strengthening of PFM systems, use of Samoa's country PFM systems decreased from 81% in 2016 to 57% in 2018. Further, legislative oversight of the budget has decreased and the share of development co-operation recorded on budgets subject to parliamentary scrutiny decreased from 100% in 2016 to 86% in 2018.¹⁴⁵ Annual predictability of development cooperation is high (90%) with 90% of cooperation disbursed as scheduled. Medium predictability is lower (65%) for three year forward looking plans.

284. Recognising the important role of the private sector and civil society in supporting Samoa's economic growth and delivery of public and social services and programmes, the Government established mechanisms for support and engagement such as; the Public Private Partnerships Framework, the Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) and the Private Sector Support Facility (PSSF). In addition to these mechanisms, they are also involved in budget negotiations and discussions on new bills and legislations. Samoa is one of the few Pacific countries with specific financing for the private and civil society sectors.

285. The Ministry of Public Enterprise regulates and manages the implementation of the Public Private Partnerships Framework (PPPF) governed by the PPP Steering Committee. The establishment and roll out of PPPs are supported through ADB assistance totalling USD468,000 between 2018 and 2019. Samoa has recorded some

successful PPPs such as the Pacific Forum Line Group (PPP between Government of Samoa and the Neptune Pacific Line), the Samoa Submarine Cable company (PPP between three financial SOEs and three private telecom companies), as well as various Independent Power Producers for the generation of electricity.¹⁴⁶

286. In 2010, Samoa established the CSSP and the PSSF specifically as structured mechanisms to enable joint coordinated government and development partners' support to strengthen capacities of CSOs and private sector entities. The CSSP programme has helped to provide direct grants to communities, provide support for operation capacity building and advocacy support to implement community income generating, health, education and environment conservation initiatives and also to support the setup of small businesses. The second phase of the CSSP programme totals AUD\$4million from 2016 to 2020.

287. The GPEDC 2018 monitoring assessed Samoa's engagement with the private sector as mixed with government and large firms noting effective engagement and small to medium enterprises and 'trade unions' noting engagement to be weak. For civil society engagement, government assessed the CSO enabling environment to be moderate and the CSOs assessing it as basic.

Data Monitoring and Accountability

288. Samoa believes in evidence-based policy making and has over the past decade with the support of UN agencies and all development partners investing significantly in building a strong National Statistics Office and national statistics system across government ministries. For instance, funding for the Samoa Bureau of Statistics increased from SAT 4.2million in 2015 to SAT\$4.6million in 2019 and staffing levels increased from 77 to 89 between the same period. Samoa has also since 2016 been the Pacific's representative on the Inter-Agency Experts Group on the SDGs Indicators Framework and has built capacity in developing indicators specifically on monitoring SDGs indicators.

289. Samoa has a Statistics Act 2015 and Samoa's Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2011-2021 (SSDS)¹⁴⁷ which is in its final two years of implementation aimed at establishing an efficient statistical system providing relevant, quality statistics for the benefit of Samoa.¹⁴⁸ As part of the SDS, two Population and Housing Censuses, two Household, Income and Expenditure Surveys, two Demographic Health Surveys, two Labour Force Surveys, two Agriculture Censuses have been completed or in the process of being completed. These surveys have provided a wealth of infor-

mation critical for monitoring of the national development plan, sector plans including the SDGs and other global and regional commitments.

290. Importantly, the new DHS 2019, HIES 2018 incorporated questions for many of the SDGs indicators for the first time and most of the data is now disaggregated by sex, location and for persons with disabilities. Based on this 2nd VNR data collection and validation process, it is estimated that about 35% of the SDGs indicators can be sourced from the Samoa Bureau of Statistics surveys, as well as the various accounts they manage including the National Accounts, the Water Accounts and the Tourism Accounts.

291. This second VNR process also helped Samoa to identify the wealth of administrative data that the sectors and ministries collect and are already in Samoa's national reports of various global commitments that are not necessarily part of the 'official' set of national information held at the Samoa Bureau of Statistics but are critical to national monitoring, reporting and policy making. Samoa is also looking at innovative ways to help collect data and information for inter-linked processes. The use of other tools such as the SADATA for example, which is a public website that uses IMPACT Open Source Software technology to coordinate and track implementation of human rights and link to the SDGs and national development priorities.

Good practices

292. Strategic, well-coordinated multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical to emergency response situations and when effective, it saves lives. The united response by the Government of Samoa and all its international and national partners demonstrated the power of genuine partnerships and collective efforts. Over a period of two days (5th and 6th December 2019), Samoa executed a mass measles vaccination campaign resulting in 95% herd immunity. Close to 150 vaccination teams including both national and expatriate personnel from medical emergency teams and volunteers from the private sector. This included members of the SITA who provided E-forms and a platform for real-time tracking of the teams and vaccination numbers. The village councils, women's committees, the village representatives through the MWCSO were also critical in the successful implementation.

293. The 2019 OECD-New Zealand mission noted that Samoa's effective role in coordinating and managing development co-operation creates ideal conditions for joined-up SDG alignment and measurement by all stakeholders. This is coupled with development partners' good alignment to

national policies and participation in country coordination mechanisms.

294. The SOEs for Measles and then not long after the COVID-19; meant that altogether Samoa had as of end of May been under SOE conditions for a total of 16 weeks equivalent to four months since November 2019. The COVID-19 SOE included a month long restriction of international and domestic travel including between the islands, temporary closure of national transportation (buses) and shipping routes, reduction of business hours including a ban on vendors selling on the streets and reduction of food market opening hours over two months. This impacted all businesses especially small businesses including women farmers and artisans especially in the rural areas and Savaii island.

295. To help generate income for these vulnerable groups within the social distancing requirements, the Maua App, (an e-commerce platform developed by a Samoan owned company – SkyEye Pacific) in May 2020 partnered with the WIBDI to help the rural farmers, fishermen, artisans to access buyers in the urban areas through an online 'Virtual Market'. The market included 30 vendors with up to 150 different products that were 'pre-sold' online using mobile phones. Products ranged from seagrapes, seafood, to handicrafts, mats, baskets and body oils. A total of SAT\$3,200 worth of goods were sold and delivered through Maua delivery services to buyers in Apia and the rest of Samoa. Importantly, the market included products from the Poutasi Development Trust based in Falealili district, the Samoa Victims Support Group and mostly produced by women inclusive of victims of violence. The virtual market ensured that women made money while saving time and money. They produced only what is already pre-paid, they did not have to travel to Apia, or sit at the side of the road or in a market the whole day, so there was less wastage of time and goods/products. The virtual market is now a regular monthly activity demonstrating the power of local partnerships and the use of innovative technology to adapt to changing circumstances including during COVID-19 lock downs to ensure vulnerable groups can still generate income while maintaining social distancing requirements.

Challenges and Opportunities

296. Samoa is not short of plans, policies and legislation to guide implementation. Neither is Samoa short of willing and well-meaning development partners both external and national to support national development efforts. Decades of investments into building institutional systems and

capacities has helped with overall strengthening of development systems that have aided our development progress. The challenge now is to improve the execution and delivery of the plans, policies and systems in a coherent, efficient and effective manner that harnesses the collective strength of government, private sector, civil society and our external partners with the end goal of improving the quality of life for all while leaving no one behind. This requires a public sector that engages in ongoing honest review of processes and systems with a mindset of constant improvement. This also requires development partners both external and national to play their part in ensuring partnerships are genuine, mutually respectful, uses country systems and accountable for joint results.

297. The regression by some development partners of progress for use of country systems especially public financial systems is concerning and need to be addressed. On its part, the government will endeavour to continue to provide the space and enabling environment for more systematic and institutionalised engagement of national partners in implementation and monitoring of national results. More commitment also to better coordination and data sharing will be crucial.

298. The VNR process and the SDGs provides an important opportunity and platform to bring together all stakeholders, encourage better alignment for more efficient and effective use of limited resources to deliver the implementation of all national and international obligations for a better quality of life for Samoans.

299. Partnerships and non-monetary contributions are equally important means of implementation as financing and more effort to pursue strategic partnerships will be transformational.

Interlinkages

300. All the best laid plans cannot happen unless there is adequate financing, resources and capacities to implement. The SDGs are ambitious and for a SIDS like Samoa with its inherent challenges and limited resources, better coordination, identifying synergies and interlinkages is key. Implementing all the SDGs will rely on effective means of implementation through a sector wide and whole of society approach.

301. Credible and accountable national institutions, systems and capacities are critical to national development planning, implementation and monitoring. Equally important is the critical role of key development partners such

as the international community, the private sector and civil society, communities in supporting the government to deliver on national, regional and international priorities across all the sectors.

302. The current national development emergency generated from the two national health crises, is impacting the ability of businesses including small businesses, farmers and artisans to sell their goods and products to earn a living and also closed schools for two months. Innovations in technology in the ICT sector helped to transform learning and business models, by helping to provide access to online learning, connect the remote and vulnerable communities online to domestic and international markets expanding economic opportunities.

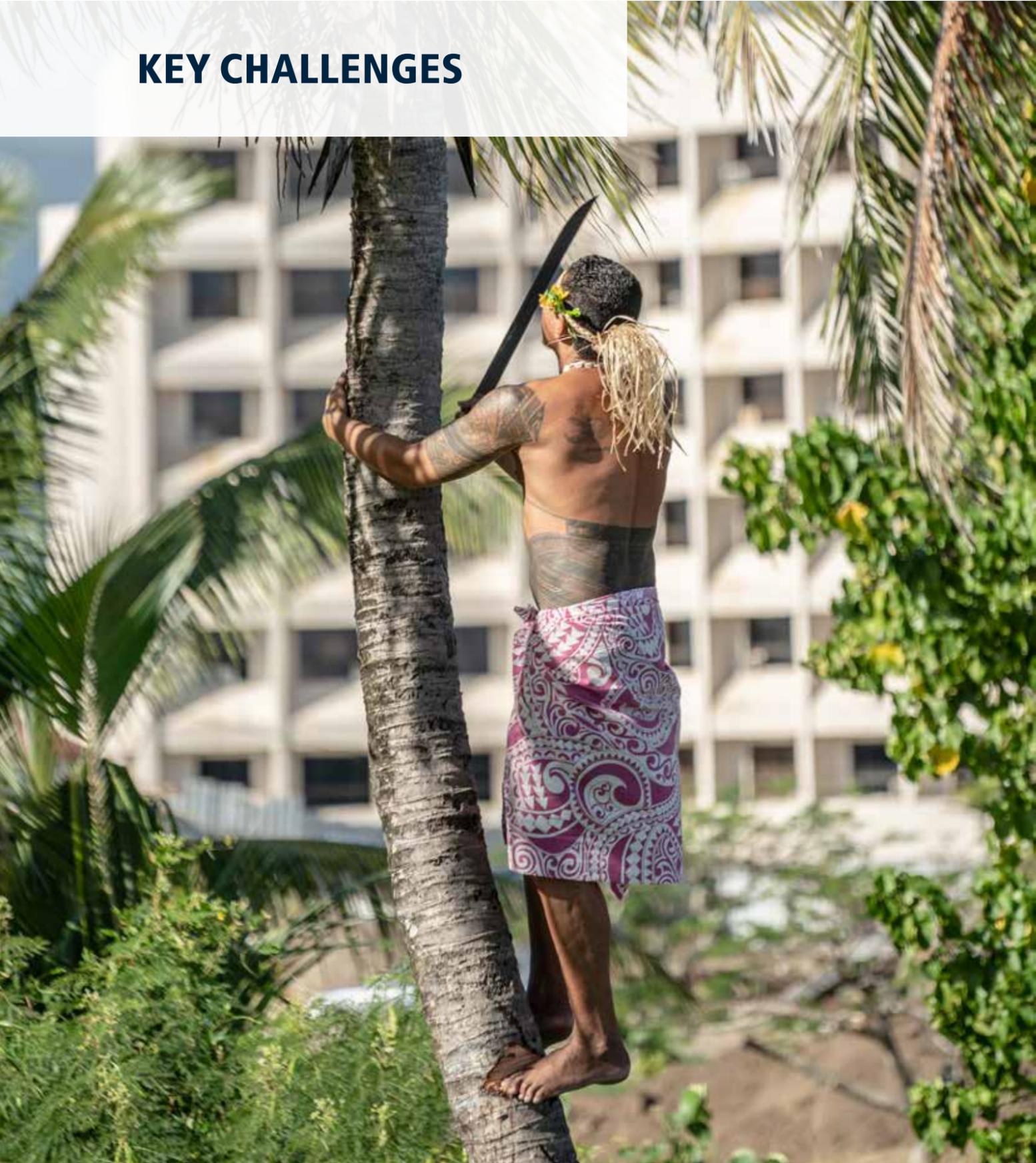
303. The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in the return of nearly 1,000 seasonal workers. Samoa could explore the opportunities available to hiring this concentration of workers with experience in horticultural and other agricultural practices to be employed on agricultural production utilising available land.

304. While Samoa can be proud of development progress made since the MDGs, many challenges remain in our overall national development and SDGs implementation journey.



“We continue to face persistent challenges; some have increased in intensity and volume but we will continue to find solutions to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations”

KEY CHALLENGES



Limited capacity particularly in data analysis and management

305. The issues of limited human resource capacity (both in numbers and capabilities) is an ongoing concern for a SIDS like Samoa especially when looking at implementation, data analysis and management. While significant effort and relative success has been achieved in better integrating the SDGs into the sectors and relevant policies and mechanisms, more capacity building is needed across the board to ensure the sustainability and improvement in data analysis to inform policies and actions for accelerated progress. This will also mean getting experts to think outside their own area of expertise, ministry and sector when looking at the SDGs and related actions as well as reflect on the indivisibility of these Goals.

Uncoordinated SDGs support efforts

306. Linked to limited capacity, it is important that partners work closely and consider the human resource constraints of SIDS like Samoa when they plan engagement on SDGs be it data collection surveys, consultations, introduction of a new tool or related project. The Samoa SDGs Taskforce aims to centralise requests for all SDGs specific data so that there is no duplication of effort and improve consistency. There are times the taskforce is faced with numerous requests for data from different agencies that champion certain goals or indicators stretching already limited capacity. The Samoa Taskforce is working on a system to better coordinate and ensure the partners observe country systems including donor coordination, data and information management mechanisms in place to reduce the burden on officials and facilitating a coordinated approach to SDG implementation.

Complicated or irrelevant indicators

307. Samoa in its commitment to the SDGs wishes to ensure that the data and information provided allows for a clear measure of progress of its efforts on each of the SDGs. While we have been successful in collecting as much of the data to meet global indicators, including providing national indicators based on data we can collect, there are a number of indicators that Samoa feels do not properly reflect how we see the target or goal. In these instances, we have opted to use our local indicators. The real challenge is that some of these targets are important for us but the metadata is not always available or overly complicated that it is hard to collect, interpret and report on. For instance, some critical indicators for Samoa on SDG 14 are either difficult to measure or requires the specific expertise required to measure these that we do not have. There will be still some Tier 3 indicators that we will not be able to put a measure to.

Vulnerability to natural disaster and external shocks

308. While Samoa may have graduated from LDC to lower middle-income status, it will not graduate from being a SIDS. The inherent vulnerabilities therefore will continue to be a challenge to our SDG implementation efforts. From progress reports, we have shown resilience over time, however it does not lessen the impact every time we are hit by natural disasters, and we anticipate increasing frequency and impact of external economic shocks given the current COVID-19 situation.

Measles and COVID-19 socio economic impacts

309. This is perhaps the biggest challenge of all at this stage. Samoa has weathered many shocks to its economy in the past either from natural disasters or from the Global Economic Crisis and Food and Oil Price Crisis in 2008 and 2009. However, global projections predict a more severe global economic downturn worse than GEC due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic downturn in neighbouring trading, remittances and tourism source countries such as Australia and New Zealand will have significant impact on Samoa's socio-economic development in the coming years. Samoa's economy was projected to grow 3% in 2019/2020, however, growth for Samoa is now expected to be -3.3% for 2019/2020 and predicted growth for 2020/2021 is -2%.¹⁴

310. Total government revenue for 2020/2021 is projected to decline by 5% including a 12% decline in tax revenue, and fiscal deficit is expected to be 2.3% of GDP.¹⁵⁰ Fortunately, Samoa's development partners continue to provide support with total grants expected to increase by 9% in response to COVID-19.¹⁵¹

311. Government's next steps are taken within the context of an uncertain and unpredictable future and global economic environment. What is clear is that the impacts of COVID-19 will exacerbate the economic slowdown due to the Measles epidemic and has already resulted in loss of jobs from many tourism businesses especially hotels. This is a volatile cocktail within the current situation of an already; high proportion of the labour force in informal employment, high unemployment, increasing proportion of the population already living in hardship situations, high proportion of people vulnerable to falling into poverty, and generally low wages and high disparity of earnings between the bottom 40% and top 10% of the employed population.



Government COVID-19 Response

Government responded quickly to COVID-19, and so far, Samoa has zero cases. The lessons learnt and experience from the measles epidemic helped officials and government but also the Samoan people to adapt to the situation.

National State of Emergency

The National State of Emergency was declared on 21st March 2020 and international borders were closed on 24th March. The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) was activated soon after and quickly prepared quarantine centres for incoming passengers before total shutdown. Sector wide preparedness and response plans were submitted to cabinet for approval on 23 March. Extensive community engagement awareness programs began early March and the emphasis was on preventative measures as key to the control of any disease outbreak and are also aligned to the Orders of the SOE. During the SOE, the only travels that were allowed were for repatriation flights as requested by countries and medical evacuations. Ports remained open to cargo and supply ships but with quarantine conditions applied.

In late April government arranged for weekly cargo only flights to allow for the shipping of essential and medical supplies, particularly those to help build testing capabilities. On May 29th, the first passenger flight landed starting the repatriation of close to 2,000 Samoans that have been stranded overseas.

With schools closed, on the 1st of April MESC and SITA launched the first ever ECE, primary and secondary school e-learning platform.

Government 1 & 2nd Phase Stimulus Package

On 7th April, government launched the Phase 1 of its Stimulus Package totalling SAT\$66.3 million focusing on health, private sector, food security in the agriculture sectors, securing the purchasing power of people; and a multisectoral programme. SAT\$40.8 of the SAT\$66.3million was secured from development partners. While some have flagged fears of rising debt, Samoa's approach similar to past disasters, is that borrowing is only as a last resort when there are no other options.

On 26 May, the 2nd Phase of the Government's Stimulus Package was announced totalling SAT\$32 million with more targeted support for social protection measures to the vulnerable groups. These included for the first time ever, provision of 'unemployment' subsidies for those who have lost jobs or have reduced hours because of the COVID-19. Other notable features include, SAT100 additional one off cash support to Senior Citizens and a SAT\$15 tala increase bringing monthly cash benefit to SAT \$160; release of funding directly to 'vulnerable groups' organisations such as the Home for the Elderly, several Disability Organisations and schools and a mental health respite care home; increased financing to schools and extension of support for reduced water and electricity rates for households and businesses.

312. The Government of Samoa is working with the UN system and partners to provide analysis on the current situation especially on the socio-economic impacts to best inform the short medium and long term plans to respond to COVID-19. There is already evidence that some of the positive progress reported in this review will regress due to the impacts of COVID-19. The reallocation also of funds will have impact on progress for some of the goals. Overall, government will focus on targeted assistance to the informal sector in particular the recently unemployed; invest in current employment initiatives in the agriculture and informal sector while building food security. There will be efforts to look closely at the national social protection framework and implement the social protection programme. The community engagement and food security considerations continue, including also addressing the issues of violence against women and children given the increase in reported cases.

313. The challenge is; while with cyclones we can at least predict strength, when it will hit and when it will leave, but with the current COVID-19 situation, there are significant uncertainties that will impact the effectiveness of the national response.

"These are exceptional trying times and circumstances but our vision remains for sustainable development and improved quality of life for our people"



NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS



Build on the momentum of the VNR process

"Ia soo ula ini fautuaga mo le au i luma"

314. The VNR process has been recognised as an important platform to enforce the sector wide approach and stimulate conversations about more strategic approaches and actions in order to do better. The data collection exercise and analysis from the VNR process needs to continue to feed into the next key national planning and review processes and help finalise more regular national reporting on SDGs progress. The aim is to create a network of SDGs stakeholders for each goal and across the goals, to keep the momentum built during the VNR process.

Review to feed into the SDS, 2040 vision and other reports

315. The VNR report, the data and analyses will feed into the review of the SDS and finalisation of the new SDS for the next five years. This review report will be crucial also to shaping the Samoa 2040 vision and in finalising the continued response to the COVID-19 situation.

316. Samoa is also in the process of finalising its first report to the ICCPR, CED and CRPD, so the VNR process has been an important platform for those reports including the next Universal Periodic Report for Samoa in 2021.

Accelerate implementation

317. For Samoa, the review and presentation to the HLPF was never the intended end. The review was considered important to help us measure whether we are indeed improving the quality of life for all Samoans as well as an opportunity to assess where our strengths are, and what weaknesses need to be addressed. The key next steps will involve each of the sectors to reassess and accelerate implementation of the goal (s) they lead on. There is still unfinished business also on the indicator matrix.

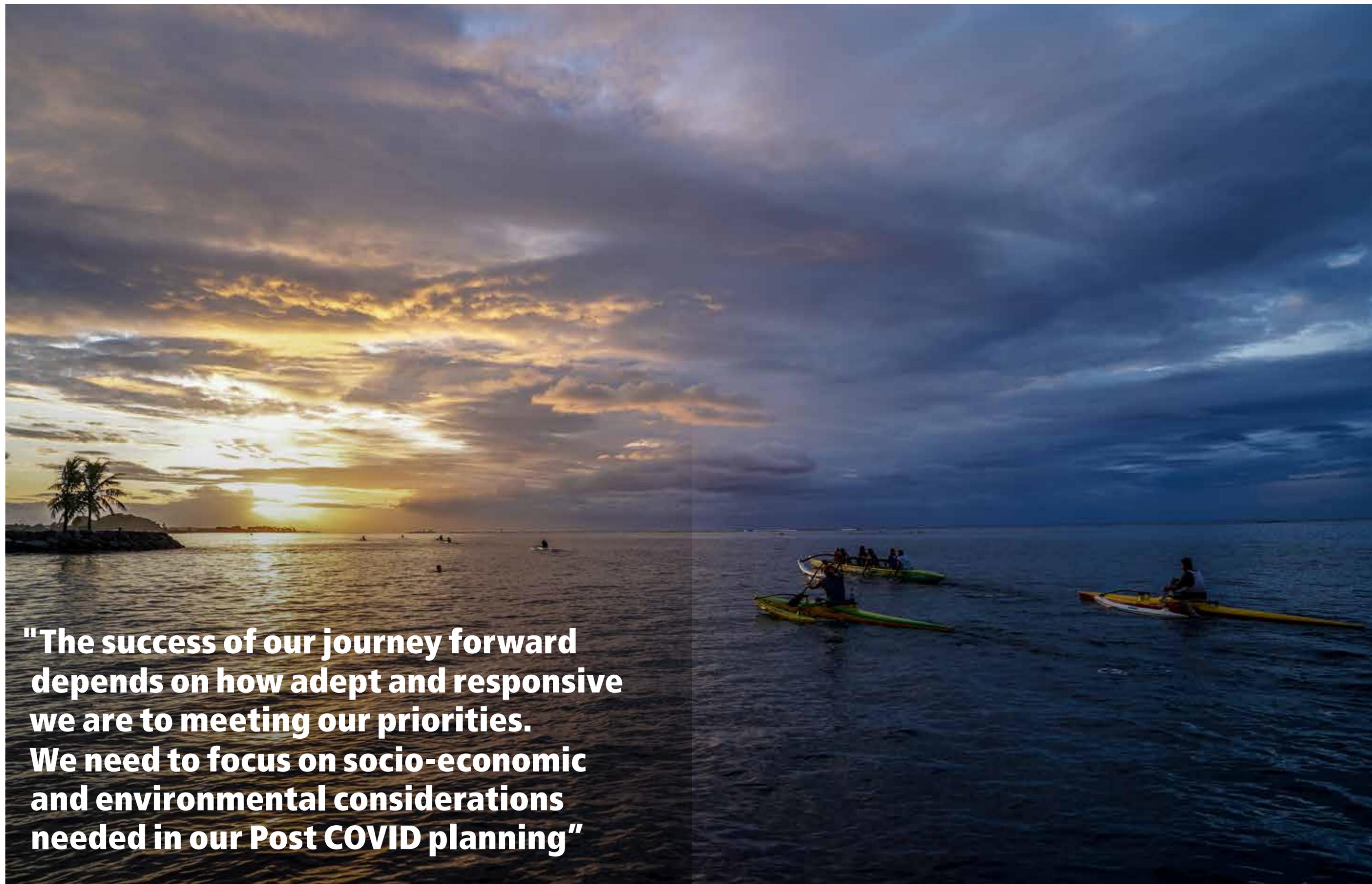
318. Finally, Samoa is not short of plans, policies and legislation to guide implementation. Neither is Samoa short of willing and well-meaning development partners both external and national to support our national development efforts. Decades of investments into building institutions, systems and capacities has helped with overall strengthening of our development systems and aided our development progress.

319. The challenge now is to improve the execution and delivery of the plans, policies and systems in a coherent, efficient and effective manner that harness the collective strength of government, private sector, civil society and communities with the end goal of improving the quality of life for all Samoans ensuring no one is left behind. This requires a public sector that engages in ongoing honest review of processes and systems with a mindset of constant improvement. This also requires development partners both external and national to play their part in ensuring partnerships are genuine, mutually respectful, uses country systems and accountable for joint results.

Conclusions

320. In conclusion, overall Samoans in past 30 years have experienced an improved quality of life in terms of better access to basic needs and means for improving livelihoods, maintained strong cultural systems, increased opportunities for all, exposure to new and improved technology and the strengthening of its economic and environmental resilience. Nevertheless, there are still increasing inequalities, serious socio economic concerns to be addressed, the continuous threat of more severe natural disasters and now COVID-19.

321. Samoa's experience highlights the following key take-aways; i) the importance of strong and decisive national leadership, systems and capacities; ii) government cannot do it alone. It is important to have constructive, mutually respectful and accountable partnerships at all levels using existing country systems and processes; iii) effective management of significant amounts of national data and reports supported by data analysis capabilities, and process to be informed by all stakeholders for effectiveness, easy to follow, encourages coherence, reduces duplication of effort and embraces inclusivity iv) recognising and engaging the vulnerable groups meaningfully is critical to success.

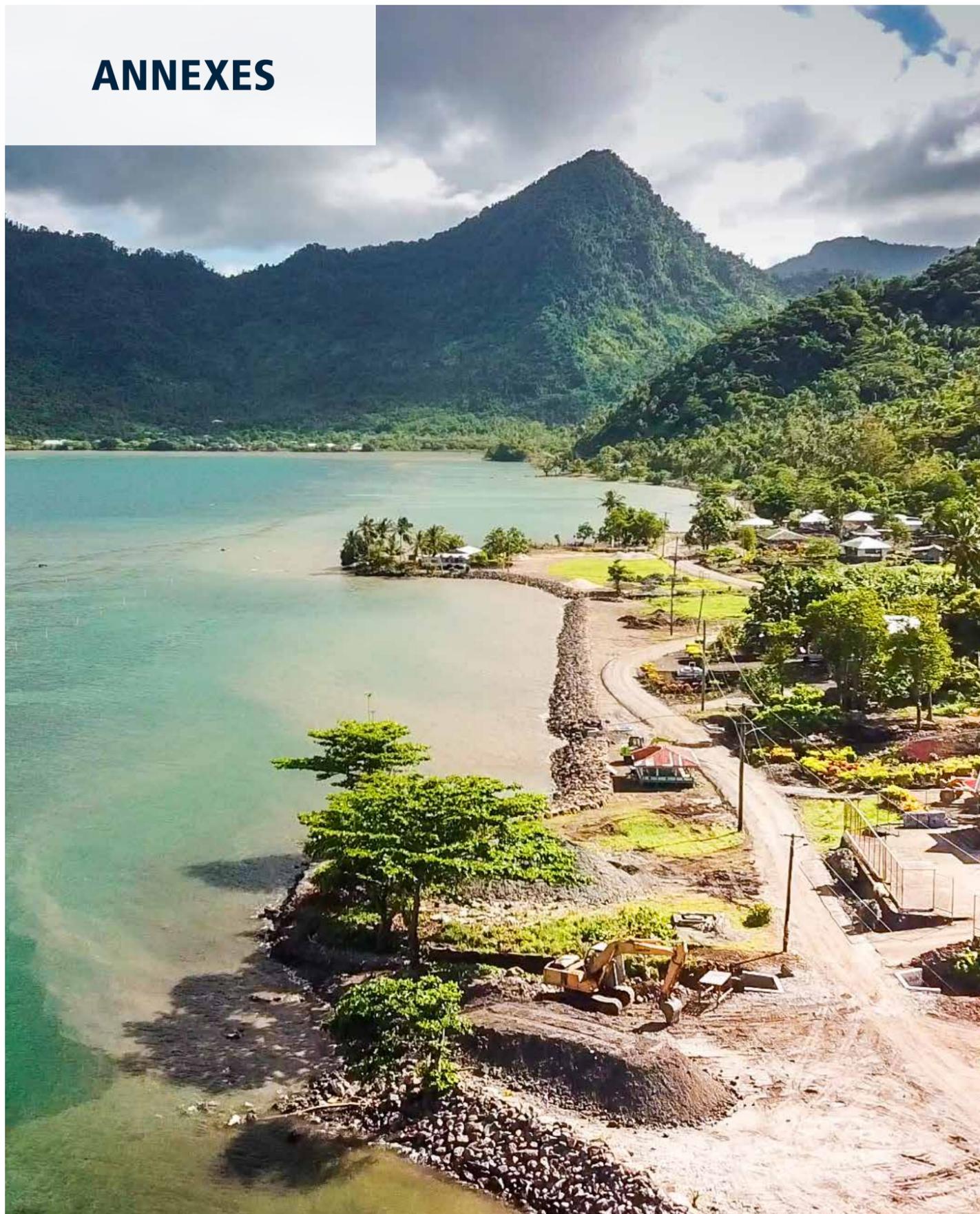


"The success of our journey forward depends on how adept and responsive we are to meeting our priorities. We need to focus on socio-economic and environmental considerations needed in our Post COVID planning"

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ANNEXES



Annex 1; UN Resident Coordinator Report to the UN system on the Samoa VNR process

Annex 2: Samoa's SDGs Indicators Matrix (<https://rebrand.ly/SamoaSDGIndicatorsMatrix>)



To: Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, UNSDG Chair

Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of UN ESCAP

Mr. Achim Steiner, Under Secretary-General, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

From: Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator for Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau

**Samoa's Second Voluntary National Review submission to the High-Level Political Forum
July 2020
Process, participation and the contribution of the United Nations**

I. Samoa's institutional approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The Independent State of Samoa (Samoa) was the first Small Island Developing State among the 22 countries that presented a Voluntary National Review (VNR) report at the first High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting in 2016, demonstrating the country's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.. As the country noted during the 2016 process: "Samoa, in being the only small island developing state and a Pacific member country to be part of the initial voluntary review process, is hopeful that it can provide a SIDS perspective to the discussions and also encourage other Pacific SIDS to follow suit."

In the summary report to be presented to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2020, the Government of Samoa reflects on the progress to date on achieving SDG targets with a focus on the unfinished work under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely SDG 1 to 6.

The VNR Report also highlights major challenges, risks and lessons learned in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report summarizes steps taken by the

Government to translate SDGs targets into local action and results while integrating relevant development indicators. Additionally, the Government presents a thorough assessment of the extent to which the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) 2016/2017-2019/2020 aligns with the SDGs and serves as an integrated framework to enable progress monitoring and delivery of results.

In order to ensure a systematic process was in place for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, a dedicated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Task Force was established under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and comprising key government ministries including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Health. Thematic sectors and dedicated sector plans have been established in line with the key priorities of the SDS to help strengthen coherence of governmental action and reporting against the SDGs. With the support of the United Nations Development Programme through the SDG Localization project launched in 2015, the Government developed the [Samoa Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework \(SMERF\)](#) using national indicators mapped against relevant SDG indicators.

Furthermore, to ensure the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action agenda adopted at the 2014 Summit in Samoa (known as the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway) remains central to the efforts of the Pacific SIDS to achieve sustainable development while also aligning with the [Framework for Pacific Regionalism](#), the Pacific Leaders adopted the [Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development \(PRSD\)](#) in September 2017 under Samoa's chairmanship. The PRSD offers an integrated framework to reduce the burden and improve the quality of reporting. A joint UN – Pacific Island Forum Secretariat SDG Task Force meeting followed in November 2017 in Apia to discuss implementation of the PRSD and forms of reporting. The PRSD enabled a unique regional progress review titled the [Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report](#) (2015-2018) which was presented at the SDG Summit in September 2019 alongside the 74th United Nations General Assembly.

In its efforts to ensure implementation of the 2030 Agenda remains at the heart of national development strategies, plans and investments, Samoa's multi-year fiscal strategies and annual budgets systematically reflect allocations appropriated to priority areas linked to the SDS and the SDGs. Ranking high in the adoption of the [Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation principles](#), Samoa's management of development cooperation has excelled in transparency and close engagement with donors and partners as reflected in the results of the [2018 Third Monitoring round and country profile](#).

The stability of the donor engagement in the Pacific and the predictability of funding they provide are two important factors defining development cooperation effectiveness in the

Pacific and in Samoa most particularly, laying out great prospects for the implementation of 2030 Agenda despite fragility of context and multidimensional vulnerability.

Aligning sectoral planning with the SDS, further refinement of sector specific indicators to link to the SMERF and remain relevant to the SDG indicators have been ongoing efforts following the first VNR in 2016 under the leadership of the Government of Samoa's SDG Task Force.

The UNCT in Samoa has systematically supported the data collection process through project and programme data as well as through direct support to the SBS on country wide surveys including the Demographic and Health Survey – Multiple-Indicator Cluster Survey (DHS-MIC), Labour Market Surveys, UN Global Pulse data analytics and others.

Very importantly, to ensure no one is left behind (LNOB), the Government of Samoa developed a tracking system that links progress on the human rights agenda with relevant SDGs in alignment with the Universal Periodic Review recommendations. The system is called [SADA](#) and operates as a real-time monitoring of human rights-led progress to the LNOB commitment.

Preceding the development of the second VNR, a revision of the SDG Framework was supported by the UN ESCAP Office for the Pacific who deployed a statistician for a two month engagement with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics in October-November 2019. The arrangement was agreed upon with UNDP during the first Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission to Samoa in October-November 2018 led by Riad Meddeb, Senior Principal Advisor for SIDS. UNDP provided financial resources for this engagement.

II. Second Voluntary National Review – data validation and reporting

Samoa's second VNR has been finalized and formally submitted to the HLPF on 12 June 2020. The presentation of the report at the HLPF is scheduled for 10 July 2020.

To secure a high quality VNR Report, the Government of Samoa conducted a multi-stakeholder consultation process that involved line ministries, civil society, private sector, the United Nations and other development partners through a week long (5-12 May 2020) data validation workshop and a joint review of the report. A consultant was contracted by the United Nations Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO) to develop the VNR and additional support has been provided by the UNRCO and UNDP in the preparation of the VNR presentation at the HLPF meeting on 10 July 2020.

While the VNR report that Samoa will present at the upcoming HLPF draws primarily on national indicators and sources of data, international data sources have been used and referenced in accordance with the metadata files available for relevant SDG indicators.

Custodian organizations of various SDG indicators have been consulted in the preparation of the VNR through their regional offices in the Pacific and their respective Headquarters in New York, Paris, Nairobi, Vienna and Bangkok.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator Office wishes to express its appreciation and gratitude to all members of the Joint Pacific UN Country Team who assisted in this exercise, as well as to the non-resident UN organizations who contributed to the development of the VNR Report.

Special thanks go to the **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Results Team, RREDI, Development Co-operation Directorate** for the assistance extended to the Government of Samoa at the invitation of the UN RCO and the data provided against indicators under OECD custodianship.

A full list of contributors to the VNR process is included in the report.

The United Nations Country Team in Samoa acknowledges with appreciation the dedicated work of the Government of Samoa under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the elaboration of the country's second VNR report and its successful submission to the July 2020 High-Level Political Forum.

Table : List of contributing professionals and organizations to the development of Samoa's second Voluntary National Review report to the July 2020 HLPF

#	NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
UN Country Team, Samoa MCO			
1.	Simona Marinescu	UN Resident Coordinator for Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau United Nations	UN Resident Coordinator Office
2.	Klem Ryan	Head of the UN Resident Coordinator Office	
3.	Latoya Lee	Data Management, Results Monitoring & Reporting	
4.	Oleksiy Ivaschenko	Senior Economist	
5.	Elisapeta Kerslake	Partnership and Resource Mobilization	
6.	Iosefa Maiava	Head of the Pacific Office	UN ESCAP
7.	Christopher Ryan	Statistician	UN ESCAP
8.	Eriko Hibi	Sub-regional Coordinator for the Pacific,	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
9.	Rasmiyya Aliyeva	Statistician	
10.	Jorn Sorensen	Resident Representative	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
11.	Yvette Kerslake	Assistant Resident Representative, Climate Change & Environment	
12.	Christina Mualia-Lima	Assistant Resident Representative, Governance & Poverty Reduction	
13.	Salote Meredith	Senior Economist	
14.	Alanna Mapu	Programme Manager, Women in Leadership in Samoa (WILS)	
15.	Sara Faletoes	Programme Analyst, Global Fund	
16.	Annika Wythes	Programme Manager, Pacific Region Anti-Corruption Project	UNODC
17.	Nisha	Director of the Office and Representative to the Pacific States	UNESCO
18.	Dr. Rasul Baghirov	Head of Office Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue & Tokelau	WHO

19.	Sefanaia Nawadra	Head, UN Environment Pacific Office	UNEP
20.	Sandra Bernklau	Representative, Fiji MCO	UN Women
21.	Mele Maualaivao	Country Representative	UN Women
22.	Sheldon Yett	Representative, Pacific Island Countries,	UNICEF
23.	Tupepepa Esera Aumua	Country Representative	
24.	Thomas Huneke	Regional Representative for the Pacific,	OHCHR
25.	Jennifer Butler	Director, Pacific Sub-Regional Office	UNFPA
26.	Ibironke Oyatoye	Country Representative	
27.	Matin Karimli	Director, Office for Pacific Island Countries,	ILO
28.	Tomasi Peni	Country Representative, Samoa	
UN Secretariat, UNDS HQs, non-UN HQs			
#	NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
29.	Monica Nogara	Senior Adviser/Focal Point for Resident Coordinators Support Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations	UN DESA
30.	Alessandra Alfieri	Chief of Environmental Economic Accounts Section, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations	UN DESA
31.	Leonardo Souza	Chief of Energy Statistics Section, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs	UN DESA
32.	Serge Kapto	Chief Statistician Policy specialist assigned to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) in charge of the SDG framework	UNDP HQ
33.	Jillian Campbell	Chief Statistician-SDG indicators	UNEP HQ
34.	Riad Meddeb	Senior Principal Advisor for SIDS, Bureau for Policy and Program Support / Global Policy Network	UNDP HQ

#	NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Member of SIDS Inter-Agency Consulting Group			
35.	Ingrid Eno	Policy Specialist, Governance United Nations Development Programme	UNDP HQ
36.	Alejandro Guerrero-Ruiz	OECD DAC Results Community Reviews, Results, Evaluation and Development Innovation Division Development Co-operation Directorate	OECD
37.	Chantal Verger	Head of Unit, Results Team RREDI, Development Co-operation Directorate	OECD
38.	Yasmin Ahmad	Head of Aid Statistics	
39.	Yuko Suzuki Naab	Global Policy Advisor- Effective Development Cooperation Effectiveness Group	UNDP HQ
40.	Abdul Riza	Data Analyst International Aid Transparency Initiative	UNDP HQ IATI Consortium Secretariat



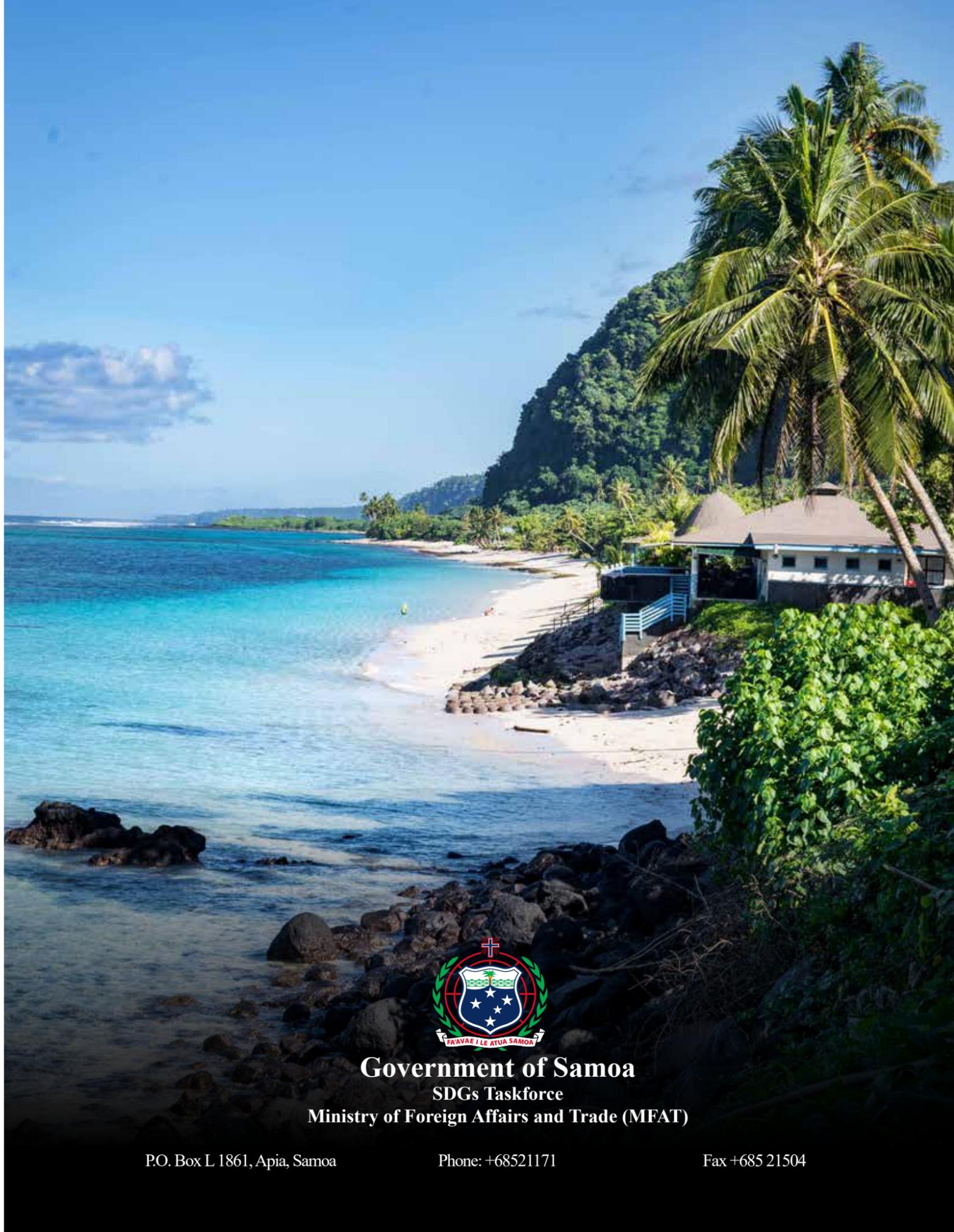
Core Members of Samoa’s SDGs taskforce, VNR working group that coordinated and compiled Samoa’s Second VNR Report 2020, taken in front of Parliament.

Core members in photo: Front row from right to left: Mr Leasiosiofaasisina Oscar Malielegaoi, CEO Ministry of Finance; Mr Agafili Shem Leo, CEO Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Mr. Jorn Sorensen, UNDP Resident Representative, (Chair) Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi, CEO Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Ms. Afamasaga Faauga Mulitalo, CEO Ministry of Women Community and Social Development; Ms. Aliimuamua Malaefono Taua, Government Statistician; and Mr Klem Ryan, RCO Chief & Senior Strategic Planning Officer UNRCO

Core members and Observer missing in photo: Mr Ulu Bismarck Crawley, CEO Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ms Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator and Observer Member Mr Fuimaono Afele, Chief Auditor

SDG taskforce VNR Working Group in photo: L-R Rapture Pagaialii, Papalii Benjamin Sila, Matilda Bartley, Anna Main, Charmina Saili, Francella Strickland, Marissa Toomata, Leिताua Henry Ah Ching, Lilomaiaava Samuel Ieremia, Terrance Su’a (Missing: Frances Reupena, Susan Faoagali, Taiaopo Faumuina, Aliielua Leota Salani, Edith Faola, Oceanbaby Penitito, Jennifer Key, Asiata Gerard Anapu)

Special acknowledgement of all the working group Members of the SDG taskforce and its Secretariat, especially the UN consultant that supported the data collection and report writing Ms Charmina Saili; Mr Alvaro Hoyos Ramos for report design and layout and Mr Damien Kean for infographics.



Government of Samoa
SDGs Taskforce
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)