

SAMOA



STATEMENT BY

**THE HONOURABLE TUILA'ÉPA SAILELE MALIELEGAOI
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND TRADE OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA**

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**Madam President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished delegates,**

Forty four years ago, Samoa became independent, and when we joined the United Nations, it was a re-affirmation of our support for the principle of multilateral cooperation which the United Nations embodied. It was also our statement that all states matter, that none was too small and weak that it cannot be represented in the United Nations on equal terms with the large and strong nations of the world. These sentiments underpinned Samoa's belief in the United Nations as an expanding global family and its member states the custodians entrusted with the future of our world and generations to come. In essence, lasting peace and sustained prosperity of the world depended on harmonious co-operation and effective global partnership amongst all nations.

These were the ideals that motivated us to be part of the united family of nations, and these continue to remain relevant and valid for our country.

Madam President,

A year ago, we met here in an act of solidarity to chart a new course for our organization aligned to meet the emerging challenges confronting our world today. Our Summit Outcome Document was not just a roadmap to guide the work of our organization. While it mirrored the inter-governmental nature and diverse membership of our organization, the document, ultimately, was a reminder of the co-operative and shared interests we all have on issues vital to the United Nations and its Member States. It brought to bear also the importance of global partnerships in these times of interdependency for the achievement of sustainable development and peace and security for our peoples.

In less than twelve months, we have transformed "rhetoric" into "reality". Solid progress has been made in the implementation of the Summit Document. The Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission are now operational; credible reforms in the Secretariat and Management had been implemented; a Central Emergency Response Fund has been set up; and a Global Counter-terrorism strategy was unanimously adopted. But as we well know, this is just the start, the real work lies ahead. In our view, it is imperative that even at the early stages of their work, these bodies must immediately adhere to the guiding principles of respect, integrity, credibility and professionalism to ensure that the objectives of relevance, efficiency and transparency envisioned for the Organization are indeed delivered

Madam President,

Development, security and human rights are the three pillars of the United Nations. All are mutually reinforcing. The United Nations commitment to the

achievement of these particularly for Least Developed Countries and developing countries are set out in a number of internationally agreed initiatives such as the Brussels Program of Action for Least Developed Countries, the Johannesburg Plan of Action, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States.

These development frameworks provide for global partnerships for the achievement in small and vulnerable economies of economic growth, sustainable development and the resilience to endure external shocks. Samoa looks forward to the implementation of the partnerships indicated in the development frameworks approved by the United Nations. In Samoa's case, the implementing framework for the partnerships of the Government with the donor community, the civil society and the private sector are designed to address the development priorities of our country as set out in the Strategy for the Development of Samoa. It is through such partnerships that we look to for the effective delivery of programs that address major health challenges such as HIV AIDS and the potential threat of the Avian Bird Flu. Similarly is the collaborative work with our partners to support the empowerment of our women.

On security, in the specific context of stability and harmony within communities, I cannot over emphasize the importance of global actions to control and limit the availability of small arms weapons. These weapons in the hands of the wrong people can easily destabilize communities and plunge small nations into deadly conflict. We therefore renew our call for the early implementation of the Program of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Madam President,

During the review of the Brussels Programme of Action this week, I shared with member states the challenges that continue to confront Samoa. Samoa is both a Least Developed Country and a very Small Island Developing state. The United Nations has received a proposal for Samoa to be graduated from the list of LDCs. However, the vulnerabilities and the fragility that characterizes our small island economy as reflected in Samoa's poor ranking under the Economic Vulnerability Index have not gone away.

Working closely with our traditional development partners, we have tried our best to develop and manage our economy, and have made good strides in improving the welfare of our people. But we know very well from grim past experience that it takes just one devastating disaster to wipe out our modest achievements and set back the economy for years. Our request therefore is for Samoa's graduation from the list of LDCs to be deferred and reconsidered when Samoa has met the graduation threshold for the Economic Vulnerability Index.

Madam President,

Last week we broke new ground with the discussion for the first time in the UN context of the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development. The enthusiasm to mainstream migration and development in the United Nations agenda was well supported. The concrete outcomes that emerge from this initiative will ultimately depend on the willingness of the source countries and the destination countries to work out imaginative and humane arrangements beneficial to both.

The significance of international migration, whether permanent or temporary, as a development option for our region has not escaped the attention of Pacific Leaders. It is also an option that raises issues, many of them not easily resolved, as they touch on the welfare and humanitarian treatment of the migrants, as well as sensitive considerations on the part of receiving countries.

Madam President,

In just six years into the millennium, it has become more and more evident that many of the challenges we face have significant global dimensions. They are borderless, do not discriminate between developed and developing countries and have no respect for national sovereignty. These global concerns, imaginatively phrased as "problems without passports" include climate change, epidemics, humanitarian concerns, conflict containment, security concerns, and terrorism. By their very nature, the successful resolution of these challenges requires collective and concerted effort of the whole United Nations membership because no one country or group of countries is capable of tackling them alone.

Madam President,

Terrorism, in its various forms and manifestations, is responsible for the horror and fear that has gripped the world's attention in recent years. No country is immune from the reaches of terrorism, and we are all affected in varying degrees.

We must continue to be resolute in our resolve. Let us reiterate in the strongest terms possible that terrorist acts committed under whatever pretext or purpose can never be justified as morally acceptable. Equally, countering terrorism does not confer immunity from the rule of law, nor the abandonment of the principles of a civilized society.

The unanimous adoption of a UN Global Counter-terrorism Strategy two weeks ago was both a condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, and a commitment by member states to take concrete preventative measures, collectively and individually. The work ahead is to turn commitment into implementation.

Madam President,

The Middle East conflict continues to defy attempts to usher in a new era of trust and hopeful beginnings for the region. Sustainable peace remains an elusive goal, permanently out of our organization's reach as long as the root causes of the problem are not addressed. Too much is at stake. Let's not forget the voiceless majority unwillingly caught in the crossfire of the conflict who yearn for a lasting peace. We therefore should not be judgmental or partisan in our approach. For ultimately, the Palestinian people need a permanent and an independent state, living in peace, with a secure Israel.

The Security Council by responding decisively to recent developments in the Lebanon/Israeli conflict gives us hope that perhaps an eventual resolution of this long-drawn out conflict is finally within sight.

The humanitarian and security situation in Darfur is a cause for concern. The recent resolution by the Security Council, we hope, will be agreeable to all the parties with a genuine desire to expeditiously resolve this issue.

We continue to hope that the elected governments of Iraq and Afghanistan will ultimately succeed in achieving conditions that will allow their peoples to live meaningful lives and consolidate the democratization of their societies.

Many other countries in different parts of the world are also still mired in tragic conflict and look to the United Nations and its stronger members for peacekeeping arrangements to give time for these communities in strife to reestablish and find lasting solutions. Samoa, despite our small size, will continue to support this important work, and presently contributes police personnel for the United Nations Missions in the Sudan, Liberia, Timor Leste and in the Solomon Islands.

Madam President,

Climate change issues remain a priority for the Pacific region. In our small islands, natural catastrophes are capable of destruction that devastates the entire country. They bring great pain and upheaval to the lives of our people as well as set back the national economy for years. We know this from repeated past experience. The need therefore for good early-warning systems for natural disaster alerts in our Pacific region is a priority. The willingness of our partners to assist and share expertise in this area is very welcomed.

The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund recently replenished for the fourth time demonstrates very well the joint partnership between the developed

and developing countries in implementing programs to address environmental problems.

Samoa continues to strongly support international and regional efforts to combat global warming and environmental degradation. In our view, the evidence of global warming and its causes are well established. Apportioning blame and point scoring should no longer be allowed to deflect efforts at effective and collective responses. We now know that concerted action should have been taken much earlier and further delays would simply make the size of the problem greater and the solutions more costly.

Madam President,

Good progress has been achieved in the efforts to reform our organization. I would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan for his inspirational work in balancing the interests of member States that did not always coincide, and his influence which made possible agreement to be reached on the reform agenda. I thank the Secretary-General for his courage and leadership, that even in the face of great controversy, the United Nations remained relevant to the crises and challenges that our world and the Organization faced during his 'watch'.

Thank you.