

SAMOA



STATEMENT BY

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PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF THE
INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING
OF THE SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

"2005 WORLD SUMMIT"

New York, 15 September 2005

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Co-Presidents,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Five years ago at the dawn of the new millennium, we, the leaders boldly declared a shared commitment to stronger global efforts to ensure all people have a right to live in dignity, free from want and fear. These were not just visionary goals or mere aspirations. They were basic human needs achievable within our lifetime.

Our optimism was rooted in a culture of shared responsibility and in the belief in man's decency. After all, as members of the global family, we share triumphs and tragedies, hopes and setbacks and our interests, mutually interdependent.

This is a historic occasion, and a unique opportunity. We come together for an honest self-appraisal of our performance over the past five years. Our task is not to lament lost opportunities, or to pass judgment on the performance of some of our fellow members or to blame others for our failures - NO, we come together to retied on the past, to take stock of the present and to move forward in unity of purpose.

We must rise above the dictates of narrow national interests and work to benefit from the diverse perspectives of our membership. Name calling and intransigent positions have no place in our review. Instead, we shall re-commit ourselves both in deeds and in words to honour the letter and spirit of the Millennium Declaration.

The verdict is out. The review has revealed some successes and also unmet expectations. There is understandable panic and anxiety in some quarters, just as there is reason for guarded optimism that the Millennium Declaration will be implemented in full. Let's remember that there is no universal prescription and no magical formula to induce a desirable outcome for all member states, if countries are not willing to put their own houses in order first.

Co-Presidents,

Samoa believes in the Millennium Declaration and its global commitments to enhance the future of humanity in the 21st century. The 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that resulted from the Declaration are practical and time-bound benchmarks necessary to track our progress in the critical implementation phase.

We have adopted an integrative approach through our National Development Strategy, inclusive of other international protocols, in order to realize these goals. Some MDGs, like on health, have been localized to reflect Samoa's immediate concerns and priorities.

As part of our commitment to the Millennium Declaration, we submitted earlier this year our progress report on the Millennium Development goals. We have also presented our consolidated report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Our report on the Status of the Rights of the Child is completed and will be handed over to the UN in the next few days

My government remains confident of meeting the majority of the MDGs within the proposed timeframe. There however remain challenges which are being addressed through policy and legislative initiatives and the creation of innovative partnerships with the donor community and civil society.

But Samoa cannot go it alone. Achieving the MDGs will not be easy without the support of our development partners. Sustainable development requires sustained effort and commitment. Partnerships with the donor community require mutual trust and understanding.

As a Small island developing state (SIDS) and a least developed country (LDC), Samoa reaffirms the continuing validity of the *Mauritius Strategy* and the *Brussels's Programme of Action* as the comprehensive approaches to meet the specific threats and challenges faced by these groups. But agreed Programmes of Action without additional resources to complement members' efforts, could easily blunt the drive of SIDS and LDCs to meet the challenges of poverty reduction.

Co-Presidents,

The world has witnessed in recent time outbreaks of most devastating natural disasters unprecedented in the 60 year history of our organization. Tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes and floods have resulted in countless loss of lives and untold sorrow and suffering. These extreme events demonstrate the awesome power of nature. But the overwhelming response by the international community to help the victims attest to the immense depth of human compassion. My own country, within its limited resources, has endeavored to contribute what it can in support of these efforts.

Changes in global climate patterns and the frequency of extreme weather events have increased the threat of natural disasters. Natural disasters do not discriminate between poor and rich countries, yet those most *affected* by the immediate consequences of climate change are usually the vulnerable and

marginalized. Yet paradoxically, the majority of them make no direct contribution to the causes of climate change.

Small Island Developing states concern for their continued survival against the effects of climate change is real and urgent. We appeal for a change of heart of those with the capacity to make a difference to heed our plea and to take bold action to address this imminent threat.

Co-Presidents,

The leaders in their reflective wisdom reaffirmed their faith in a strengthened and reformed United Nations as a vital multilateral institution to respond effectively and ably to the challenges of the 21st century and to deliver on the millennium declaration.

Samoa supports an enlarged Security Council in both membership categories to reflect contemporary geo-political realities. The case for democratic and transparency in the Council's procedures and working methods to facilitate a more engaged and effective relationship with the General Assembly remains a compelling one. The Assembly on the other hand must work hard to re-gain the confidence of the world in its status as the highest deliberative and representative decision making body of the organization.

Meaningful management reforms must include the Secretariat. Its accountability and management structure should be re-aligned to reflect its mandate and today's realities to make it effective and responsive. The Secretary-General should be given flexibility and the resources necessary for him to lead a strengthened UN, in exchange for greater transparency and accountability.

Recognizing that development, security and human rights constitute the 3 pillars of the United Nations, Samoa supports the creation of a Human Rights Council. It is hoped that elevating the status of human rights within the UN hierarchy will give the Council greater visibility and status to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights.

The proposal to establish a Peace Building Commission within the UN system to give greater support to states emerging from post conflict situations towards recovery and reintegration, is another positive aspect of the overall reform which we support and hope will materialize soon.

Co-Presidents,

As current Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Samoa supports a stronger more formalized relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations.

A Pacific Plan to be approved by the Pacific Islands Forum later this year sets the framework to strengthen regional and national capacities to pursue the MDG targets. Co-operation with the United Nations through mutually beneficial partnerships with regional organizations of the Pacific is a key pillar in attaining the goals of the Pacific Plan.

Co-Presidents,

Samoa places great faith in international law and justice and the vital protection that the law offers to all States, especially to the weak and small. We welcome therefore the entry into force of the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court and the important work it is currently engaged in, as part of its contribution in securing a more peaceful and just world.

Co-Presidents,

The outcome document of our Summit meeting will provide the agreed roadmap to hasten the attainment of the MDGs and to implement the reform programme for a revitalized United Nations.

We know that actions would inevitably lag behind commitments made. But we take heart from experience that despite setbacks, we still made progress when we managed to work cooperatively. This is why our coming together, as the United Nations, remains so vital to the future of our world.

Thank you.