



**Statement  
by  
Samoa Head of Delegation  
Tilafono David Hunter  
CEO, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries  
at the  
42<sup>nd</sup> Council Session of the FAO Conference**

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Your Excellency, Chair of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Council Session of the FAO Conference,  
Director General of FAO,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

These uncertain and unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous stress of the agriculture food systems from loss of biodiversity and climate change; call for bold, ambitious and transformational action to address our food system challenges, and the environmental and socio-economic impacts we currently face. Samoa remains committed to the efforts of FAO and the member states to transform and ensure sustainable agri-food systems, to push for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life.

Excellencies,  
Our development strategy is grounded on genuine partnerships with our stakeholders and development partners to help achieve our agriculture and fisheries sector objectives of enhanced food security and nutrition, increased import substitution and export market opportunities for our people's well-being and economic prosperity.

Our land and the surrounding ocean are important natural resources for our overall development, and we are committed to utilize them effectively and sustainably, as part of our economic recovery in the current unpredictable COVID-19 environment.

In our recently presented Second Voluntary National Review report on the implementation of the SDGs, we worked closely with FAO on some of the key indicators. Our report highlighted that for SDG 2 on “Zero Hunger” overall, there is low level of extreme hunger and undernourishment in Samoa, but nutrition security is a concern. We also reported an increase in agriculture’s share of government expenditures and improved agriculture productivity including a growing proportion of small scale farmers engaging in sustainable organic and commercial farming.

Samoa’s recent national dialogue on Food Systems in preparation for the UN Food Summit this year, provided an important opportunity for key stakeholders in the Samoa Food Systems to discuss and identify some of the challenges, and to focus on transformational solutions.

Excellencies,

For Samoa we face real challenges due to dietary changes and our high dependence on food imports. The reliance on imported food coupled with our people’s increased consumption of processed, high calorie, high sodium and low nutrient content foods, have contributed to the increased level of health risks associated with non-communicable diseases.

To address this trend, Samoa promotes the consumption of locally produced nutritious foods especially fruits and vegetables. Our recent efforts to stimulate fruit and vegetable productions is gradually paying off as we now see a significant increase of locally produced fruits and vegetables being sold in domestic food markets and supermarkets. The support of our development partners to provide appropriate technologies for greater production and a range of varieties is acknowledged with appreciation.

We continue to work with our development partners on agricultural and fisheries incentives to encourage our young people to return to farm their land for income generation purposes and for a fulfilling way of life. We are determined to engage our young, educated and skilled people to pursue agriculture as a viable and respected occupation to increase import substitution, expand our export markets of niche products and contribute to ensuring food and nutrition security.

Our agriculture is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as frequent and extreme rainfall events, longer dry spells and drought events, rising sea levels, extreme winds, and occasional tropical cyclones, and variability will continue to challenge our resolve in elevating the agriculture and fisheries sector as a major driver of our economy. To mitigate these challenges, we are working with our development partners

to ensure our agricultural and fisheries resource management practices are in place, and that our climate resilience and risk mitigation efforts are strengthened and enhanced.

Exotic pests and diseases are a real concern for Samoa. The immediate threats of the African Swine Fever and the Guam strain of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle are examples of incursions that would do irreparable damage to our economy. Therefore, preventing, managing and eliminating these biosecurity threats is vital to maintaining and advance our economic and social wellbeing.

Excellencies,

Samoa's inshore and coastal fisheries are important for our food security and nutrition but we have restricted potential for increased production due to the limited areas within the reef and vulnerability to over harvesting due to increasing fishing pressure and uncontrolled fishing practices. We have a responsibility to address IUU fishing, effective management of our fisheries, conservation of our marine ecosystems, and development of our small-scale fisheries within the confines of our meagre resources. In this regard, we are partnering with some of our development partners to respond to these challenges.

In closing, I would also like to thank the Director General of FAO, and the Secretariat for all the initiatives and technical assistance provided to Samoa, and other Pacific member states, via the Sub-regional Office for the Pacific. These have contributed positively and will continue to support the achievement of outcomes delivery for the agriculture and fisheries sectors especially in these challenging and trying times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also look forward to the UN FAO SIDS Solutions Forum 2021 to further discuss some of the SIDS specific solutions to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you