

Statement
By
Honourable LeMamea of Agriculture and Fisheries
Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa
at the
Second Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)
(Rome, 19 to 21 November 2014)

Honourable delegates, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of Samoa, I am privileged to have this opportunity to speak to you on the subject of nutrition as it affects our country.

In June 2013, Samoa was one of 18 countries who received a FAO Millennium Development Goal Award: such award was received with pride as it was an acknowledgement by the international community of Samoa's efforts in the area of food security and the resultant alleviation of hunger in our small island nation.

However, despite this great achievement, Samoa faces a problem present in many small countries, that is, while there is an abundance of food, a large percentage of food available fails to meet proper nutritional standards. Accordingly, Samoa is now tackling the double burden of over-nutrition and under-nutrition. Of particular concern is the issue of calorie-dense and nutrient-poor foods which is now being consumed by our people. This is a consequence of aggressive marketing strategies by big food companies which target

people in small nations like ours. Easy access to nutrient-poor foods in terms of cost and accessibility has created a dependency on the same. Records show that for the period 2009-2013, the percentage of food imports has increased from 30% to 40%. Where previously food security was achieved through sustainable agriculture via traditional food crops and fishing practices with imported food products acting only as a supplement to excess demand, the noted increase in the import of global food products reflects a change in societal preferences referred to earlier.

In light of this reality, the Government of Samoa has put in place clear policy goals in an effort to combat this problem. Included in its Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2012-2016, the Government has prioritized the re-invigoration of the agriculture sector over the long-term. At the sectoral level, the Agriculture Sector Plan 2011-2015 adopts a broad approach focused on strategies aimed at establishing sustainable food sources, subsistence farming and fishing activities, processing and marketing, regulatory framework and better lifestyle and nutrition. Our commitment to the health of our people has seen huge investment in our agricultural sector and in particular the encouragement of organic farming and farming nutrient rich foods for consumption. Coupled with these efforts is an educational and awareness campaign led by our health sector on the importance of nutrition and traditional food sources to address growing incidences of non-communicable diseases related to poor nutrition.

The issue of nutrition is not a new one. As the world progresses and new food products are developed, nutrition will continue to be at the forefront. From Samoa's perspective, we note that in our efforts to address the issue of nutrition, what is apparent is that the solution

must be a multi-faceted solution championed by not one but a number of governmental agencies working in collaboration with relate organizations. As we continue to look as ways to combat this issue, we are mindful that the solution must be a long term solution tailored to ensure continued relevance in our ever-changing world.

As the representative for Samoa, I am therefore thankful that our country has been given this opportunity to be included in important discussions with regard to this issue. Our commitment to any international efforts has been confirmed. Samoa like many small nations in the Pacific is not equipped to fight this battle alone and we will continue to work with our development partners (such as FAO) carrying out any programs required at the national level.

Thank you and God bless.