

**STATEMENT BY
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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA
AT THE ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
03-06 JULY 2018
ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA**

Chairman
Distinguished Guest
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to congratulate the Government and the people of Mongolia for hosting this important regional conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

I wish to acknowledge with appreciation the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation.

The secretariat and everyone involved is commended for the excellent arrangements and preparations of this conference.

Chairman,

The people of the Pacific islands are amongst the most prone to disaster and climate risks, such as tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones, landslides, floods and even droughts. These natural calamities have devastating impacts on livelihoods, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable people. Their small sizes, remoteness, and fragile biodiversity makes them exceptionally vulnerable to natural hazards, with low capacity to manage the resulting risks.

A single disaster event has the potential to erode many years of economic development gains by damaging critical infrastructure and diverting resources away from development spending. In the South Pacific region, as reported by the World Bank in 2013, the average annual direct losses from natural disaster events were estimated at \$US 284 million.

The tsunami that struck Samoa in 2009, took 150 lives and affected homes of about 2.5% of the population. The cost of restoring infrastructure, maintaining access to basic social services, providing social safety nets to the affected population, and investing in disaster risk reduction, was around US\$120 million, which is 22 percent of GDP during the following three to four years. The damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Evan in 2012 was about USD 203.9 Million. This was equivalent to 28% of the total value of goods and services produced in the country in 2011.

Chairman,

Climate change will affect disaster risks through changes in weather and climate hazards, as more extreme weather events are likely to increase in the future. It will increase the vulnerability of communities even to the existing levels of hazards through ecosystem degradation, impacts on water supply and food security, and changes to livelihoods. In the future, climate-related disasters are likely to increase in number and scale. Disaster risk reduction and management are hence critical issues that must be addressed to avoid derailing development progress.

The Pacific leaders have endorsed regional strategic frameworks to address the adverse impacts of natural hazards and climate change at all levels of engagement. These include the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific.

Particularly important to the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) is the SAMOA Pathway. The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway was adopted in 2014 at the UN Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (the SIDS Conference), as the overarching SIDS framework for guiding global, regional and national development efforts. It builds on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) the Mauritius Strategy and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Recognizing Disaster Risk Reduction as critical to achieving sustainable development, the SAMOA Pathway calls for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Sendai Framework 2015-2030, its successor, continues to build on these Global and Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction by forging partnerships, ensuring the timely assessment of progress on implementation, encouraging opportunities to share best practices and knowledge on disaster risk, informed policies, programs and investment; and the integration of disaster risk management in all relevant sectors.

Chairman,

Samoa has aligned its national policy settings with these platforms which has informed our National Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2016-2020 with its overarching theme of "Accelerating sustainable Development and creating opportunities for all". Furthermore, Samoa's efforts under the Sendai Framework, has developed its National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management 2017 - 2021 which support efforts towards sustainable development through the inclusion of disaster risk reduction and awareness across all activities.

The Disaster Management Plan 2017 – 2021, provide a policy framework that promotes a whole of government and a whole of society approach to disaster risk management at a local, national and regional level. It enables a coordinated national response of pre and post disaster requirements.

The Disaster Risk Management Mainstreaming Guidelines 2017 provides a mainstreaming tool in integrating/incorporating Climate change and Disaster Risk Management across all sectors which engages public, private sector, NGOs, civil society and communities. A Monitoring and Evaluation Tool has also been developed in line with the mainstreaming guidelines and intends to assess sector plans for streamlining Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change. The damage and loss database that is currently being formulated will be critical for monitoring and evaluation of the progress and implementation of the Sendai Framework come 2030.

To conclude, we would like to acknowledge the vision which establishes this biennial Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction which enables governments and stakeholders to exchange experiences on successful practices and sound innovative approaches to prevent, reduce and manage disaster risk. However, we would like to see a more clear engagement of the Pacific in this important regional conference in the future as natural disasters and climate change has defined our position as SIDS due to our vulnerability and therefore reduction of risk is critical.

We are reminded that natural disaster respects no one and its impacts worsen when it catches us unprepared resulting in the loss of lives and assets .

We look forward to the outcome of the conference which shall inform us all on the progress of the implementation of the Sendai Framework since the past 3 years and particularly to guide us on transformative actions. More importantly accelerating these actions through national and regional strategies for resourcing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

Thank you.