



**STATEMENT BY  
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PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA  
AT THE  
GENERAL DEBATE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SIXTY-EIGHT SESSION  
NEW YORK, 27 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Mr. President,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr. President, I congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this General Assembly. I wish also to thank you for your continued strong support for Small Island Developing States issues you have championed for many years and again demonstrated this week in the process and lead up to the UN 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on SIDS to be held in the Pacific next year.

Mr. President,

From economic woes to outright poverty, from social instability to acts of violence and ethnic or religious conflicts, and from the devastation of natural disasters to deadly acts of terrorism, no country is spared or completely shielded. The events in Kenya, Iraq, Pakistan and here in the United States over the last week demonstrate the multiple risks we face in today's world. Our commiserations are with the governments and people of those countries and our deepest condolences go out to those who lost family and friends in these tragic events.

Mr. President,

While our organization continues to grapple with various serious problems that need collective UN-led action to resolve, perhaps the greatest threat we face today is climate change.

Climate change is a security risk of far greater proportions than many people are prepared to admit. For some of the low lying Pacific island countries, climate change may well lead to their eventual extinction as sovereign states.

The singular importance and urgency of climate change to our region was given added prominence today when Pacific Forum Leaders met with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The President of the Republic of Marshall Islands as our Chair presented to the Secretary-General the "Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership" which is an effort by our region, the first most likely to be worst affected by climate change, to spark a new wave of more determined leadership across the world to accelerate the reduction and phasing down of greenhouse gases pollution in the world before it is too late.

Mr. President,

The root causes of climate change and the solutions to address them are widely known. We know already in the Pacific as would many other parts of the world from bitter and harsh experience what the consequences of climate change are and these will only become more severe if not enough is done.

Sadly, what is evident to us in the climate change negotiations is the continued triumph of vested interests in preventing and delaying the action that must be taken.

In a diverse world of different capacities and capabilities, and being the least able to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, we look to member states in leadership roles to rise to the challenge and lead by example – to ensure that the post-2020 climate change Convention currently being negotiated will effectively address the mounting fears of countries like mine on the catastrophic impacts of climate change if not tackled collectively with determination. The responsibility to fashion a new agreement that will reassure low lying islands that we have their interests and priorities at heart, is ours as world leaders to discharge. Let's rise to the occasion and be part of the solution.

Mr. President,

In June this year, during the historical signing event of the Arms Trade Treaty, Samoa announced that it would sign the treaty at the highest political level during the UN Treaty Event of the present UNGA. We kept this promise and I signed for Samoa during a special signing ceremony two days ago. We welcome the fact that more than 100 nations, including the United States have now signed the treaty.

For small island countries like Samoa, it only takes a few small arms and light weapons in the wrong hands, to cause instability. Indeed within our own Pacific region, these so called small arms have fuelled conflicts and disrupted the lives of communities and impeded development of countries. The Arms Trade Treaty, when fully implemented will greatly assist the efforts of small island states like mine in sustaining the security and stability of our communities.

Our signing the ATT is also further testimony to our firm commitment to "general

and complete disarmament, as it will contribute significantly to saving lives, stop human rights abuses, avoid crises and is an important step to reduce and eventually eliminate altogether , the human cost of conventional arms.

Mr President,

Samoa remains fully committed to the peacekeeping work of the United Nations, one of the organization's most effective and successful mandates. Samoa has been contributing civilian police officers to the peacekeeping operations for more than ten years in countries such as South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Liberia, Sudan and in the Pacific to the Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Islands.

We will be in a better position to increase our contribution to the peacekeeping Missions after a UN Selection Assistance and Assessment Team (SAAT) has completed an assessment of eligible officers of our Police Force planned to take place before the end of 2013.

Mr. President,

Samoa looks forward to the High level Meeting on Migration and Development next week. International migration provides both challenges and opportunities to the countries of origin, transit and destination. Thus its contribution to the sustainable development will ultimately depend on the willingness of the source and destination countries to work out imaginative and humane arrangements beneficial to both countries and the migrants as well.

Samoa is working closely with New Zealand and Australia through their seasonal workers schemes to ensure that these important initiatives result in mutual benefits to both the sending and receiving parties in these arrangements.

Mr. President,

The High-level meeting yesterday on Nuclear Disarmament highlighted yet again the urgent need to have a treaty banning nuclear weapons given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.

Such weapons represent the great paradox of our time. While nations desire peace and talk of peace, far more of the national wealth goes towards the development and acquisition of ever more sophisticated and destructive weapons of mass destruction.

Our Pacific region was the scene of a great deal of nuclear testing with some islands still bearing the scars of these tests. Our regional response was the creation of the Rarotonga Nuclear Free Zone Treaty to ensure that nuclear testing in the Pacific will

be a thing of the past.

Samoa re-affirms its continued support for a nuclear test-free world. Early agreement must be reached to ban nuclear testing and to cease the manufacture and creation of more nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

We place great faith in the rule of law and the vital protection it offers to all States, especially to weak and small countries like mine with no armed force and not affiliated to any military grouping. The International Criminal Court is an important part of the architecture of world peace based on the rule of law and we are pleased at being the second state party to ratify the 2 Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute last year. With the deposit yesterday of the 9<sup>th</sup> Instrument of ratification, we hope that the Kampala Amendments will come into force soon and the ICC will become the first court since the International military tribunals in Nuremburg and Tokyo to hold individuals responsible for crimes of aggression.

Mr. President,

The UN needs to adapt to the changing contemporary international environment or risks being by-passed in favor of institutions and groupings that are more responsive to the needs of member states.

The High-level Political Forum is one such welcome reform and Samoa is pleased to have participated in its inaugural meeting this week.

Still more fundamental reform is required to address the existing imbalances in the current power structure of the Security Council through the enlargement in both categories of membership and improvements to its working methods to reflect the realities of the present time and to enhance the Council's role and effectiveness.

Mr. President,

The renewed efforts and great courage to restart the stalled Middle East Peace Plan for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples has our strongest endorsement. It gives hope that the two states solution, which is the only option with realistic prospects for lasting peace can still be achieved.

Mr. President,

The areas of tension and trouble spots around the globe are escalating and getting deadlier. The availability of weapons of mass destruction and now their use in Syria is unnerving.

The untold sufferings brought about by the Syrian crisis has touched many hearts, and the latest episode as we watched in utter disbelief the use of chemical weapons to kill indiscriminately defenseless victims and even children is incomprehensible.

We welcome therefore the joint proposal by the United States and Russia and the willingness of Syria to have its chemical weapons destroyed under the competent UN authority and we expect total compliance for this initiative to succeed. While weapons of mass destruction such as chemical weapons continue to exist, some megalomaniac will sooner or later resort to their use with deadly consequences for the world.

The ultimate safeguard is of course the destruction of all such weapons whether chemical, biological or nuclear.

Mr. President,

The Rio+20 Conference called for the convening in 2014 of a 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Small Island Developing States to remind the international community that SIDS face unique challenges and vulnerabilities requiring dedicated support to address them and to help build their resilience.

Samoa is honoured to host this conference in September 2014 on behalf of the Pacific Small Island developing countries. The Barbados interregional meeting endorsed "The sustainability development of Small island developing states through genuine and durable partnerships" as the overarching theme of the conference. Renewed global partnership will help SIDS manage multitude risks so that they can pursue inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability.

Samoa has also proposed to utilise the conference as a platform to launch specific and concrete SIDS partnerships as the most effective means of implementation of some of the group's challenges and as a legacy of the conference.

In progressing SIDS development agenda, the Samoa conference strategically provides a window for SIDS as a group to agree on its priorities and to consolidate its positions ahead of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Leaders summit on climate change in 2014, the post-2015 UN development agenda under discussion and the negotiations for a successor climate change treaty post-2020 in progress.

Let me conclude by conveying our gratitude to all our partners, developed and developing, big and small, government and NGOs, civil society and the private sector for your dedicated support which helped Samoa to reach a new threshold in its journey as a UN member state. The future of our new status as a Non-Least developed country

beyond January 2014 can only be sustained with the support of Samoa's truly genuine and durable partners.

Thank you. Soifua

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Samoa's future is bright and full of hope. We are confident that with the support of our partners, we can build a better future for all Samoans.

Thank you for your support and partnership. Soifua

