

# SAMOA



**STATEMENT BY**

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**PRIME MINISTER OF THE  
INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA**

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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***Please check against delivery***

Mr. President  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The value of the United Nations to humanity has not diminished with the passing of time. Our organization remains relevant today as it was sixty-four years ago at its establishment. Its status as the world's preeminent body will be diminished if we as leaders do not accord it the respect and observe the etiquette our organization deserves.

Recent crises not only validated our global sustainability but highlighted our interconnectedness and interdependence. From crises in food and energy security, to global recession and a health epidemic, these adversely affected every member state in varying degrees. Although caused by the decisions and actions of a few, the impacts had not differentiated between developed and developing countries or between the rich and poor.

Mr. President,

The costs in human suffering and social upheaval of these crises have been considerable and have justifiably required the collective and concerted global action that now seem to work with a good degree of success. In such context, these crises are imminently solvable and short term, when compared to the great and grave threat the world faces in environment degradation and climate change.

This week's summit of AOSIS and the Secretary General's high level meeting both underscored the predominance and urgency of the climate change challenge. And their core messages were unambiguous.

Climate change is not a future phenomenon. It is real and already occurring in Pacific countries and low-lying islands elsewhere. It is no longer a question of when, but rather the severity of the magnitude of the impacts and the full cost to society.

Climate change is not a small island developing states concern only. Our vulnerability to climate change should not absolve those responsible for its causes then, and now. Nor should it be used to shift the burden of leadership and responsibility away from the main carbon emitters. Developed and emerging economies will all be affected one way or another. Sadly, the human and financial costs will be borne disproportionately by small island developing states.

A Copenhagen climate pact is therefore a must. It requires a new brand of cooperation and broad outlook. The narrow pursuit of self interests, the use of

economic and political expediencies should be set aside and must not be allowed to de-rail the goal of concluding an ambitious and binding agreement.

Climate change is also everyone's job. While acknowledging "historical responsibility" is legitimate, allowing it to get in the way of making decisions to reach a comprehensive agreement would be a grave mistake.

A Climate change agreement is therefore a test of multilateral solidarity. Time is running out. The impacts of climate change are getting worse daily. Playing the "blame and shame" tactics, or "waiting to be led but not willing to lead", are no longer options. For no single nation, no single group of nations, and no single organization on its own can win the war against climate change. The divergent, yet inextricably linked interests of member states demands that we "seal a deal" in Copenhagen.

Mr. President,

The cost of adaption and mitigation at the national level can be prohibitive. Because most of our people and infrastructures are found along the coastal areas, to relocate them inland will be costly due to the rough and rugged terrain and the number of people involved.

But this has not deterred us. Using our resources and by partnering with the international community, we continue to support the global effort to build our resilience against climate change. Our plantation access roads' programme is one such initiative. It facilitates relocation and helps boost agricultural production – a response measure to climate change and to food security.

Mr. President

The shadow of the financial crisis envelops us still. Like climate change, most developing nations were victims forcibly drawn into the maelstrom of the crisis through the consequential impact on the global economy. Although remote from the epicenters of the crises, our small and vulnerable island economies were not spared. Indeed, it has been acknowledged by the G.20 that the global recession impacts disproportionately on the vulnerable and poorest countries. Very importantly has also been international acceptance of the collective responsibility to provide assistance to help these countries mitigate the impact of the global recession.

This undertaking to provide assistance is simply quite critical for small and open economies like that of my country. The global recession has contracted our small economy and our narrow government revenue base has taken some hard

hits which have made it impossible on our own to provide the kind of stimulus package that would meaningfully mitigate the impacts of the recession, let alone the re-ignition of growth in the economy. In the circumstances, effective assistance needed by our economy at this time is "direct budgetary support". This budgetary support should only be necessary for the short term to sustain expenditure and allow us breathing space to re-balance our finances and put the economy back into the path of growth. We acknowledge with appreciation the readiness of our development partners and the international financial institutions, the World Bank and the ADB, to sympathetically consider our requests in this regard.

Samoa will graduate from the LDC list in December 2010. The intervention of the financial crisis was unknown and not taken into account when the decision was made to progress Samoa to the transitional period. An extension of the transitional period is therefore both necessary and justified.

Mr. President,

The Millennium Development Goals will be reviewed next year. Our scorecard on all 8 goals gives us guarded optimism, though meeting everyone of them in the timeframe allowed remains a challenge.

Our needs are not matched by the resources at our disposal. Hence why central to our efforts to realize the MDGs is the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Millennium objective: "achieving durable global partnerships for development".

But some aid donors either take their time to respond, or do not at all. This is cause for justifiable alarm. Because if they are not forthcoming with relatively modest resources to achieve the MDGs, then the prospects of an effective global response to climate change is all but vanished.

Mr. President

The Pacific is a region of relative peace. We have been spared the scars of war and conflict, and nature has gifted us the sea and land for our livelihood. While we have challenges and differences, these tend to be localized. Our development needs, individually and regionally are modest by world standards. But belying this tranquility is our acute economic vulnerability.

With credentials as a region of relative stability with needs that are not as large compared to other parts of the world, one would expect the international

Individual actions by states cannot in themselves provide a solution. We must shoulder our responsibility to act together to meet the threat through concerted multilateral action which underpins the spirit of our organization.

Wars are futile and serve no useful purpose. They would not end unless disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the illicit small arms and light weapons are brought under effective control. The task of building peace lies with every nation and that is why we welcome the United States decision to move forward with the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. We remain hopeful that the Treaty will enter into force soon.

Mr. President,

The United Nations cannot survive unless it constantly adjusts and adapts to changing times. The Security Council reform has finally entered the "inter-governmental negotiating process" for the first time after eighteen years. Samoa continues to support the expansion of the Security Council membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. Countries like Japan have the credentials to assume permanent member status.

Mr. President,

The UN peacekeeping operations around the world have brought relief and hope to victims in conflict areas. Samoan civilian police officers are presently serving in 3 peacekeeping missions side by side with officers from other member states.

In our region, Samoa also contributes to the Pacific Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands under the umbrella of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by wishing you well in the formidable challenges facing your presidency. When nations stand united and firm in the pursuit of our organization's charter, the world can look to the future with confidence.

Thank you.