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SAMOA



Samoa UN Country Team Highlights

2023

Contributions to the development
priorities of the Government of Samoa

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Acronyms

1. AOSIS: Alliance of Small Island Developing States
2. CHOGM: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
3. CRVS: Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
4. CROP: Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific
5. FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
6. GHG: Greenhouse Gas
7. ILO: International Labour Organization
8. IOM: International Organization for Migration
9. JEE: Joint External Evaluation
10. LF MDA: Lymphatic Filariasis Mass Drug Administration
11. MAF: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
12. MCO: Multi-Country Office
13. MFAT: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
14. MNRE: Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment
15. MoF: Ministry of Finance
16. MVI: Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index
17. MWCSO: Ministry of Women Community and Social Development
18. NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution
19. NESP: National Environment Sector Plan
20. NHRI: National Human Rights Institutions
21. OHCHR: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
22. SBS: Samoa Bureau of Statistics
23. SDG: Sustainable Development Goals
24. SOE: State of Environment
25. SPREP: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
26. SROS: Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa
27. UNCDF: United Nations Capital Development Fund
28. UNCT: United Nations Country Team
29. UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
30. UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme
31. UNESCAP: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
32. UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
33. UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
34. UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
35. UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
36. UNSDCF: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
37. UNOPS: United Nations Office for Project Services
38. VNR: Voluntary National Review
39. WFP: World Food Programme
40. WHO: World Health Organization



Introduction

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Samoa comprises 29 UN entities, with 15 having a physical presence in the country. Non residents UN entities support Samoa from their regional offices and headquarters.

The UN Resident Coordinator (UN RC) provides strategic leadership to the Samoa UNCT and engages with the Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Additionally, the UN Samoa Multi-Country Office (MCO) serves the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau.

The Pacific Regional UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 (UNSDCF) guides the UN's planning and implementation of development cooperation in the Pacific region. In Samoa, the UNSDCF is operationalized through Country Implementation Plan co- signed by the Prime Minister, Afioga Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa and the UN RC.

The Samoa UNCT aligns its support with global commitments, regional and national development priorities as outlined in the SAMOA Pathway, 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Pathway for the

Development of Samoa 2021-26 emphasising the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This report provides key highlights of UNCT progress in Samoa in 2023. While the UN primarily partners with the government to support national development priorities, various interventions are implemented through multistakeholder partnerships which include civil society organisations, the private sector and the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP). UN entities collaborate closely with these partners to design, implement, monitor, report, and evaluate programme interventions at the national and community level, some of which are highlighted in this report.

The UN RC and the Samoa UNCT extend their gratitude to the MFAT, the main government interlocutor facilitating the UN's work in Samoa, as well as various implementing and funding partners whose generous support make the work highlighted in this report possible. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Government of Samoa in 2024.

UN SYSTEM

highlights

1. FAO: Enhancing Agriculture, Climate Policy, and Food Security

Samoa-Specific Projects

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) executed various projects tailored to Samoa's specific agricultural needs showcasing FAO's commitment to fostering sustainable agriculture, addressing climate change, and promoting economic growth and food security in Samoa and the broader Pacific region.

❁ **Promoted digital innovations for inclusive, gender-sensitive rural development and sustainable agrifood system transformation supporting Agenda 2030:** Partnering with the ITU, FAO created seven digitally smart islands, including one in Samoa. In Samoa, 50 women were trained in digital literacy, enabling them to manage finances, access new markets, and boost village digital capacity.

❁ **Policy Support for Agriculture & Fisheries Climate Change Policy:** FAO provided valuable support to Samoa in formulating an 'Agriculture & Fisheries Climate Change Policy.' This strategic policy document outlines Samoa's direction in addressing climate change in the agriculture and fisheries sector for the next five years (2023/24 – 2027/28).

❁ **Koko Market Day:** As part of FAO's One Country One Priority Product initiative, Samoa organized a transformative 'Koko' Market Day. This event brought together farmers, processors, researchers, and policymakers and was graced by the Prime Minister, HE Fiame Naomi Mata'afa. The day marked the beginning of a journey to revitalize Samoa's cocoa industry through innovation and development.

❁ **Tautai Samoa Association Roadmap 2023-2026:** FAO collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) to support the development and launch of the Tautai Samoa Association Roadmap. The roadmap outlines the association's commitment to sustainable management, capacity building, market access, and effective collaboration for food security and economic growth.

❁ **Forest Reference Level Development:** FAO supported Samoa in developing its Forest Reference Level, serving as a benchmark for performance in mitigating emissions.

❁ **Training in Poultry and Honey Production:** FAO conducted training sessions for farmers in Samoa, focusing on poultry and honey production.

Regional Initiatives Involving Samoa:

❁ **Pacific Action Plan for Biodiversity:** FAO played a pivotal role in supporting the development of the Pacific Action Plan, fostering cohesive action on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors in the region.

❁ **Strengthening SDG Indicator Data Collection:** FAO hosted a training session on SDG data collection, enhancing the capacity for data collection in Samoa.

❁ **Regional Workshop on Fall Armyworm:** A regional workshop involving Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu was conducted to share lessons and build national capacities in managing Fall Armyworm, a challenge reported in some Pacific countries.

❁ **Pacific Forest Sector Outlook Study 2023:** FAO in collaboration with Pacific countries, supported the development of the Pacific Forest Sector Outlook Study.

*** Capacity Building on Ciguatera Poisoning:**

FAO in collaboration with the Institut Louis Malardé, built capacity on Ciguatera Poisoning (CP) in Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga. This included the procurement of laboratory equipment, online training on CP epidemiological and environmental surveillance, development of a shared regional database on CP, and the creation of CP awareness materials.



UN SYSTEM *highlights*

2. ILO: Enhancing Samoa's labour force.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has contributed significantly to Samoa by helping to combat child labour and improve labour policies and interventions.

Alliance 8.7 Path Finder Recognition

✿ Under the guidance of the ILO, Samoa has achieved the prestigious status of being designated an Alliance 8.7 Path Finder country on Child Labour. This recognition places Samoa at the forefront of global efforts to eliminate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour, aligning with the ambitious SDG Target 8.7.

✿ Alliance 8.7 serves as a vital global partnership facilitating immediate and effective actions, offering a platform for partners to collaborate, share information, exchange promising practices, and showcase progress.

Successful Completion of the Labour Force Survey:

✿ ILO supported Samoa to conduct and complete the Labour Force Survey. The completion of the survey marks a significant milestone in understanding and addressing the dynamics of Samoa's labor force. The insights gained through the survey, offer a foundation for informed policymaking, strategic interventions, and targeted initiatives to enhance the overall labour landscape in Samoa.



3. IOM: Supporting Border Management and Mobility Dynamics

Upgradings Samoa's Border Management Information System:

✿ The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has successfully commenced the work to upgrade Samoa's Border Management Information System. With improved security features and integrated operational functions, the upgraded system will enable immigration officers to monitor those entering and exiting the country, and to examine and assess visa and permit applications more effectively. The upgrade will also allow the Samoan government to have a more comprehensive understanding of mobility dynamics and characteristics, contributing to improved

border control and law enforcement operations, migrant protection and evidence based policy making.

Enhancing Samoa's Border Security:

✿ IOM jointly organized the National Consultation workshop on the implementation of the United Nations Countering Terrorism Travel Programme which assists Member States in building their operational and technical capacity to prevent and detect the movement of terrorists and criminals through the collection and analysis of passenger data in line with obligations established under United Nations Security Council resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017), and 2482 (2019), as well as international standards and recommended practices, relevant privacy laws and human rights principles.



UN SYSTEM *highlights*

4. UNCDF: Spearheading Financial Inclusion

Successful Launch of the Second National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS 2):

✿ The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) through its Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP team), in collaboration with the Central Bank of Samoa, achieved a significant milestone with the launch of the Second National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS 2) and Complementary Digital & Financial Literacy Survey (DFLS) Report. NFIS 2, spanning the next four years, aligns with Samoa's development goals, aiming to drive inclusive economic growth. The strategy sets a clear target of increasing the number of adults with access to formal financial services by 40,000 in 2025/2026, with a specific focus on achieving gender balance, targeting at least 50% women.

The launch event saw the participation of high-level dignitaries, including the Minister of Finance, Hon Lautimuia Afoa Vaai, and representatives from Australia DFAT and New Zealand MFAT.

Advancement of Digicel Samoa's Agent Network:

✿ UNCDF, through its performance-based grant modality, successfully collaborated with Digicel Samoa to support the expansion of their agent network, with the aim of fostering increased adoption of mobile financial services.

Leadership in E-commerce Strategy Implementation:

✿ UNCDF demonstrated leadership implementing the E-commerce strategy 2023-2027, working in close partnership with the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labour (MCIL). The collaboration, based on a letter of engagement from MCIL, underscores UNCDF's commitment to fostering the development of e-commerce in Samoa.



Introduction of Innovative Parametric Insurance with Samoa Surety:

✿ UNCDF, in collaboration with Samoa Surety, achieved a groundbreaking milestone with the introduction of the first Parametric insurance in Samoa.

This innovative insurance model empowers smallholder farmers and fishers, offering protection against tropical cyclones' impacts. Funded through Pacific Insurance and Climate

Adaptation (PICAP), the project addresses the vulnerability of these communities to climate-related risks, enhancing their resilience.

5. UNDP: Accelerating Climate Action and Sustainable Development

The UN Development Programme's (UNDP) strategic initiatives in Samoa underscore its commitment to help the Pacific Island Countries and Territories advance their sustainable development priorities. In 2023, made a significant investment of USD 10 million to support Samoa's UNSDCF targeted outcomes under the Planet, Prosperity, and Peace Pillars. Additionally, UNDP partnered with the Government of Samoa to further the targets of Samoa's Enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Roadmap and Action Plan.

Updated Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Biennial Update Report:

✿ Samoa successfully developed an updated national Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory, a crucial tool launched at COP-28. This inventory forms a part of Samoa's First Biennial Update Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), enabling the government to effectively

manage national emissions. The GHG data serves as a foundation for informed climate policies across all levels. UNDP played a pivotal role in this achievement.

✿ Additionally, UNDP contributed to the development of the National Climate Change and Gender Strategy, integrating gender considerations into climate change initiatives for informed policy-making and sector planning.

Decarbonization of Land and Maritime Transport Sector:

✿ UNDP, building on previous support for Samoa's NDC secured USD 15.3 million from Japan to address decarbonization in the land and maritime transport sector. The funding helps to accelerate the achievement of Samoa's emissions reduction target and reduces its dependence on costly import of fossil fuels costs by supporting the transition to sustainable energy practices.

UN SYSTEM *highlights*

Solar Street Lights in Apia's CBD:

❁ Over 40 solar streetlights installed in Apia's Central Business District (CBD) parks are benefiting approximately 2,000 people weekly. Apart from providing direct illumination, these solar streetlights contribute to climate benefits, representing a tangible outcome of UNDP's investment in energy transition.

Highlights of UNDP support in other areas:

❁ UNDP partnered with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) in developing the prototype of a new open-source interoperable Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system solution. Also, a digital mobile application was co-developed with the Samoa National Provident Fund (SNPF), facilitating access for 35,742 people to information and distribution of their social protection benefits.

❁ The development, review and reform of key policies and legislations in partnership with the Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC), Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration (MJCA) and Public Service Commission (PSC) contributed to progress on SDG 5 and 16.

❁ In partnership with Nuanua Ole Alofa, a pilot tool called the Women with Disability Stigma Inventory was adapted for Samoa and piloted with 130 Women with Disability (WwDs), to capture insights on their lived reality of stigma, discrimination and violence to inform policy and legislation. Building on the insights, a Referral Pathway for WwD to access justice services was developed.



6. UNEP: Safeguarding Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services

Joint SDG Fund Project Completion

✿ In collaboration with key stakeholders, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) spearheaded a transformative Joint SDG Fund project, “Building forward better by Safeguarding Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services,” with a budget of US\$710,000 allocated for the fiscal year 2022-2023. This groundbreaking initiative, undertaken in partnership with the Government of Samoa (specifically with MNRE and MoF), National University of Samoa (NUS), UNESCO, UN-ESCAP, and South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), has yielded significant outcomes, reinforcing the nation’s commitment to sustainable environmental practices.

Under this project, the MNRE is set to unveil the National Environment Sector Plan (NESP) 2022 – 2027. The NESP outlines a comprehensive roadmap for environmental conservation and sustainable development.

MNRE was also supported to prepare the State of Environment Report (SOE) 2023 which also provides a comprehensive overview of Samoa’s environmental status, reflecting the latest data and analyses.

This project further facilitated the successful execution of terrestrial and marine surveys. Terrestrial surveys encompassed comprehensive data collection efforts, focusing on flying foxes, birds, butterflies, and reptiles. Concurrently, marine surveys involved field data collection on dolphins and whale species across Samoa’s main islands.

The project diligently compiled, analyzed, and documented data related to climate change, waste management, and targeted ocean ecosystems, contributing to a robust understanding of Samoa’s environmental landscape.

A core aspect of the project’s ethos was the active promotion of inclusivity, ensuring balanced gender participation throughout its implementation.

Pacific Island Countries (PIC) Ozone Officers Meeting

✿ In tandem with these achievements, UNEP, in collaboration with the Government of Samoa, convened a significant event— the Network Meeting of the Pacific Island Countries (PIC) National Ozone Officers. This gathering, held in Apia, Samoa from 4-9 September 2023, brought together 41 participants from 14 Pacific Islands Countries, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Commitment to Environmental Justice - Samoa Supreme Court Participation

✿ Samoa’s commitment to environmental justice was underscored by the active participation of the Samoa Supreme Court of Justice (2 Supreme court judges) in a Working Group Meeting held in Fiji during October 2023. This meeting, organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), explored the potential feasibility, scope, and possibilities for a regional environmental dispute mechanism (REDM) in the Pacific. The Working Group’s establishment stems from a joint initiative aiming to enhance judicial capacity in the Pacific, thereby promoting sustainable economic growth and access to justice in environmental matters.

UN SYSTEM *highlights*

7. UNESCAP: Capacity Building and Environmental Initiatives

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's (ESCAP) multi-faceted collaboration with the Government of Samoa in 2023 has not only resulted in tangible outcomes but also laid the groundwork for sustained progress in public investment, environmental accounting, statistical capabilities, and high-level diplomatic engagement.

Public Investment Planning Workshop

✿ UNESCAP in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance hosted the regional capacity-building workshop on Public Investment Planning and Management. Over 50 participants including representatives from Ministries of Finance and Planning from the 14 island countries of the Pacific region attended. Valuable insights and experiences were shared, fostering cross-country collaboration. A comprehensive guidance note on public investment planning and management was published, facilitating the application of best practices in the participating nations.

Ocean Account Methodologies Collaboration

✿ UNESCAP collaborated with the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MNRE), Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS), Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Conservation International (CI) on ocean account methodologies to set up, compile, and organize ocean and ecosystem accounts. Practical advice and guidance were provided on setting up and organizing ocean and ecosystem accounts.

Statistical Capacity Support on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Inequality Assessments

✿ UNESCAP provided technical support for the Central Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in conducting inequality assessments. Inception, technical capacity building, and closing workshops were conducted. Preliminary findings revealed delayed birth registrations, emphasizing the need for strengthened data collection, especially on total deaths. A final report, compiling findings, will guide recommendations in 2024 for improved CRVS in Samoa.

Executive Secretary's Visit and High-Level Meetings (2023)

✿ A notable highlight was the visit to Samoa by the ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) Executive Secretary, involving meetings with the Prime Minister, Ministers, MFAT, SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme), and the Samoa UNCT. UNESCAP expressed gratitude to Samoa MFAT for facilitating the Executive Secretary's visit, strengthening ties and cooperation.



8. UNESCO: Fostering Cultural and Educational Advancements

World Cultural and Natural Heritage

✿ The UN Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) supported Samoa in implementing the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions through the launch of the Quadrennial Periodic Report.

Quadrennial Periodic Report Launch

✿ UNESCO facilitated a dialogue platform for civil society and the government, allowing the opportunity to assess progress in protecting and promoting cultural diversity and identify opportunities for the development of the creative economy.

ICT in Education Project

✿ UNESCO also implemented the ICT in Education Project and Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative, enhancing access to quality education through training, access to ICT devices and online resources. The initiatives implemented promoted inclusive utilization of ICT for quality education and increased public access to information.



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UN SYSTEM *highlights*

9. UNFPA: Empowering Reproductive Health and Education

Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy

- * The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the development and launch of Samoa's Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategy. The strategy is expected to drastically reduce the incidence of cervical cancer and improve overall health outcomes for Samoan women and girls by increasing access to HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening programmes and access to early treatment.

Health Facilities Readiness & Services Availability Assessment

- * UNFPA completed Samoa's 2nd round of Health Facilities Readiness and Services Availability Assessments, providing crucial baseline data and ensuring the availability of essential reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health services at all health facilities in the country.

Family Planning (FP) and Family Life Education (FLE) Initiatives

- * Ensured 100% availability of at least 3-5 modern Family Planning methods in primary, secondary, and tertiary health facilities. More than 6,500 women received FP services in 2023 reflecting prominent levels of access to FP services in Samoa.
- * Successful implementation of the FLE through in and out of school programs resulting in Samoa being recommended for study visits from other UNFPA programme countries. More than 1,000 young people reached with FLE in 2023 in both in school and out of school programs.

Knowledge and Capacity Enhancement

- * The Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) staff underwent comprehensive training on violence against women through the kNOwVAG data course. Additionally, 12 SBS officers successfully completed data analysis training on the Domestic Violence (DV) module from Demographic and Health Survey - Multiple Indicator Clusters (DHS-MIC), enhancing their expertise in handling related data.

Humanitarian Support amid Natural Disaster:

- * UNFPA collaborated with Samoa Red Cross to distribute 100 dignity kits tailored for women and girls, with a specific focus on those with disabilities, that were affected by heavy flooding in Savaii.

Strengthening Reproductive Health Supply Chain:

- * UNFPA is instrumental in the supply chain of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) commodities. UNFPA has trained warehouse staff and nurses from outer health facilities on the Tupaia e-system, resulting in a substantial improvement in monitoring and ordering processes.

Contraceptive Distribution and Impact:

- * Through the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, Samoa received consistent support in the form of reproductive health commodities, ensuring a diverse range of contraceptive choices for Universal Health Coverage. From 2018 to 2023, UNFPA donated about an average of USD 24,000 worth of commodities per year. By the end of Q3 in 2023, contraceptives distributed by Samoa's pharmacy warehouse had a significant impact, protecting a total of 3,446 couples. This resulted in preventing 719 unintended pregnancies, averting 4 maternal deaths, and preventing 75 unsafe abortions, highlighting a remarkable 11-fold return on investment and total savings of USD 87,286.

10. UNICEF: Advancing Healthcare, Early Childhood Development & Child Protection

Strengthening Immunization Programs

- * The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has achieved measles vaccine coverage beyond 80%, a milestone in the last 15 years.

Regional Early Childhood Development (ECD) Forum & Pacific Regional Council for ECD (PRC4ECD) Meeting

- * UNICEF organized forums in Fiji with key participation from Samoan Ministers of Health, Women, Education and Finance. The high-level political participation reflected Samoa’s renewed commitment to Early Childhood Development.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Experience Sharing Worksho

- * UNICEF in collaboration with the Pacific Community and the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) convened the regional workshop on implementing recommendations with representatives from 12 different countries given the opportunity to share experiences and challenges to course-correct on CRC implementation.

Malu I Fale Campaign

- * UNICEF launched a multimedia campaign and positive parenting sessions under the Spotlight initiative to eliminate violence against children, women, and other vulnerable populations.

Strengthen Child Protection Legal Frameworks

- * UNICEF also completed the review of Child Protection legal frameworks and Access to Justice for Children. Stakeholder interviews and data collection process completed to inform further steps to strengthen legal frameworks.



UN SYSTEM *highlights*

11. UNOHCHR: Upholding Human Rights

Collaboration with NHRI (National Human Rights Institutions)

✿ The UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (UNOHCHR) strengthened collaboration with the Office of the Ombudsman/National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) to promote human rights awareness among children and youth, and to engage with international human rights mechanisms.

Human Rights 75th Side Event at the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting

✿ UNOHCHR organised an event during the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Cook Islands to commemorate the 75th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This event featured a compelling discussion on the value and role of NHRI in promoting people-centered development and gender equality as set out in the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy.

Distinguished participants included the Prime Minister of Samoa, Cook Islands Member of Parliament Hon. Akaitiiti O Te Rangi Puna, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Hon. Jack Ading, who acknowledged the development and pledged to establish and strengthen such institutions. Other panelists included the Ombudsman of Samoa, Ombudsman of Cook Islands, representatives of NHRIs from Australia and New Zealand, and the UN Resident Coordinator.



UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Follow-up Visit and Regional Workshop (November 13-22)

✿ Supported by OHCHR, UNICEF, and SPC, the visit included three country visits by members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, including the Cook Islands to follow-up in the status of implementation of recommendation on child rights made in 2020, followed by a regional experience-sharing workshop in Samoa. The workshop, attended by 12

Pacific Island Countries, fostered discussions on strengthening implementation of the Committee's recommendations on crucial issues such as corporal punishment, domestic violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, and establishment of child justice systems. The Pacific launch of General Comment No.26 on children's rights and the environment, with a special focus on climate change, featured active participation from over 60 children from Samoa.

12. UNOPS: Advancing Health Infrastructure & Biosafety

Biosafety Laboratory and Health Care Waste Incinerators Project 2024

✿ The UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) collaborated extensively with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to meticulously craft a groundbreaking project aimed at bolstering the capacity of the health system. This innovative initiative focused on enhancing biosafety measures through the establishment of a state-of-the-art laboratory and the procurement and installation of innovative incinerators dedicated to healthcare waste.

✿ Through this collaborative effort, the MOH and its partners aim to establish a resilient healthcare infrastructure that is well-prepared to handle the challenges posed by infectious agents and ensure the highest standards of biosafety.

UN SYSTEM *highlights*

13. UN WOMEN: Creating Safe and Inclusive Marketplaces

Markets for Change Programme.

- ✿ The Markets for Change Programme in Samoa is dedicated to transforming marketplaces in both rural and urban areas, fostering environments that are safe, inclusive, and free from discrimination especially for women. This comprehensive initiative entails substantial improvements in infrastructure and market spaces, with a focus on cleanliness, enhanced access to services, and heightened environmental sustainability.
- ✿ With a strategic investment of just over \$4 million WST, this programme aims to create safer and greener spaces for approximately 1,500 market vendors across Samoa. Notably, 80% of these vendors are female, highlighting the program's commitment to addressing gender disparities in market-related activities. The funds allocated contribute to the implementation of measures that not only ensure the well-being of market participants but also promote sustainability by incorporating environmentally friendly practices. Through this initiative, the Markets for Change Programme seeks to elevate the overall quality of marketplaces, making them more conducive to economic activities while concurrently fostering social inclusivity and environmental responsibility.

Contribution to National Violence Prevention Framework and Action Plan

- ✿ Dedicated to fostering a safer and more secure societal landscape, a substantial investment of \$350,000 USD has been directed towards the initiation, design, and development of the inaugural National Prevention of Violence Framework and Action Plan. This pivotal endeavor is being undertaken through the impactful Spotlight Initiative, a global, multi-year partnership between the United Nations and the European Union.
- ✿ The funding injection is strategically deployed to lay the foundation for a comprehensive framework that addresses and mitigates various forms of violence within the national context. By focusing on prevention, the initiative aims to create a robust and sustainable strategy that proactively combats violence at its roots. The development process involves thorough research, stakeholder consultations, and the integration of evidence-based practices to ensure the framework's effectiveness.
- ✿ The National Prevention of Violence Framework and Action Plan, shaped by this substantial financial commitment, is envisioned not only as a blueprint for curbing violence but also as a dynamic tool for fostering societal change. Through this investment, the initiative seeks to catalyze a transformative impact on the community, fostering an environment where individuals feel secure, protected, and empowered to contribute to a violence-free society.

14. WFP: Enhancing Food Security and Market Assessments

Establishment of WFP Office

✿ To deepen and expand the breadth of its partnership with Samoa Government and key partners including the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), the World Food Programme (WFP) opened an office in Apia to coordinate and oversee WFP activities in Samoa as well as in Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau.

Data Collection for Food Security

✿ WFP in the Pacific supports Government partners, and other stakeholders through increasing the availability of data and evidence-based analysis of the food security situation to support decision making, policy and programme development. In close collaboration with MAF, WFP, through the mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) tool collect data bi-annually from 1,200 households in Samoa on livelihoods, food consumption, nutritional quality, livelihood based coping strategies, multi-dimensional deprivation index, remittances, and debt to monitor food security and nutrition conditions. The mVAM bulletin provides an overview of the food consumption patterns, diversity of diet and coping strategies used by households to minimise the negative effects of shocks and disasters, and other important information on food security and nutrition conditions of Samoans.

Assessment of Markets Across Samoa

✿ In partnership with the University of South Pacific (USP) and with the support of MAF, WFP undertook a Market Functionality Index (MFI) assessment to measure the capacity and functionality of markets in Samoa, contributing to potential interventions for vulnerable populations. The MFI measures the cost for an average household to meet their food and non-food essential needs, assess the ability of markets to meet households' demands, and determine whether households have the economic capacity to meet any rise in prices.

Social Protection Analysis

✿ Following WFP's publication of the Scoping Study on Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition and Managing Risks and Shocks in Asia and the Pacific through Support to Social Protection Systems: Samoa, WFP developed a social protection knowledge product for Samoa outlining priorities and the way forward for social protection, based on the country context and WFP's vision in social protection.

UN SYSTEM *highlights*

15. WHO: Strengthening Health Policies and Capacity

In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) in Samoa demonstrated substantial accomplishments in fostering health policies, healthcare capacity, and emergency response. The following highlights showcase the outcomes achieved by WHO.

Health Policy, Standards and Guidelines

✿ WHO actively supported the Ministry of Health to review and develop crucial health policies, guidelines, standard operating procedures and action plans. These included the Nursing and Midwifery Standards; The Patient Safety Practices and Guidelines for Primary Health Care (PHC); The Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines for Primary Health Care; The National Medicines Policy; and The National Plan of Action on Antimicrobial Resistance.

Human Resources for Health

✿ WHO played a pivotal role in building health care capacity through various modalities.

• Fellowships

Three persons graduated in 2023 including with a Bachelor of Radiology, Bachelor in Dietetics, and a Diploma Zoology/Environmental Health. Nine (9) Midwives are currently enrolled in the Fellowships programme and will graduate in 2024 with Post-graduate Diplomas in Midwifery from the National University of Samoa.

• Trainings

More than 300 Health officers were trained, and their capacity built and skills updated in various fields such as dentistry, nursing, midwifery, and paediatric life support via various training

including: The Pacific Island Operating Room Nurses Association (PIRONA) Conference; The International Conference for Nursing; and the Pacific Island Dental Association.

Forty-nine (49) Rural midwives were trained in basic ultrasonography to improve gestation determination and the detection of abnormalities during pregnancy. A total of 1152 ultrasound exams were performed; 261 (23%) high-risk mothers identified; and 62 (25%) earlier referrals made to the main hospital and high-risk clinics.

• Vaccines and immunization technical support

Three WHO contractors assigned to the Ministry of Health supported improvement of cold-chain storage, vaccine management, and data and logistics management. Thirty-six persons were also trained on vaccine surveillance. Immunization coverage for the second dose of a measles containing vaccine increased to 76%, up from 45%, in 2023.

Lymphatic Filariasis Mass Drug Administration (LF MDA)

✿ WHO provided technical and financial support for the implementation of the Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) Mass Drug Administration (MDA), overcoming delays caused by the measles epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign resulted in 80 percent of eligible persons receiving medicines to eliminate LF.

Joint External Evaluation (JEE) and Health Security

✿ WHO coordinated Samoa's first Joint External Evaluation (JEE). This is an integral voluntary process assessing the country's capacity under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005). It helps countries to understand the gaps and weaknesses in their national health security systems.

WHO 75th Anniversary Celebration:

- ✿ The Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa acknowledged the global leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO) in her keynote address at the WHO 75th Anniversary Celebration held on 13 July 2023.
- ✿ In particular, she referenced the eradication of small-pox and a polio-free Western Pacific since 2000 as two major achievements made possible through the collaboration of countries worldwide with WHO's support.



SDG ACCELERATION AND COMMITMENT TO HIGH IMPACT *initiatives*

The 2023 SDG Summit provided the impetus for countries and the UN to review challenges and progress on their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the halfway point, the UN Secretary-General's latest report noted significant backsliding on the SDGs, owing to the impact from the Global Coronavirus Pandemic, better known as COVID-19.

In the Pacific, the UN MCO for Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau coordinated the UN system in Samoa to assist the Samoa Government with Summit preparations.


A key part of this process involved assessing Samoa's SDGs' progress and challenges, in consultation with key stakeholders including Samoa's SDGs Taskforce, government Ministries, the private sector and civil society.

The joint UN analyses - with contributions from UNESCAP, UNDP and UNRCO - contained in the 2023 UN SDGs Policy Briefs provided the Samoa government a unique perspective on their SDGs progress and challenges, whilst also contributing to their discussions on where to place their SDGs' investment between now and 2030.

In her address at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mataafa reaffirmed Samoa's commitment to multilateralism and emphasized the importance of international cooperation in addressing global challenges. Highlighting priorities such as combating climate change, protecting biodiversity, addressing non-communicable diseases, and promoting sustainable ocean management, the Prime Minister of Samoa called for urgent action and collective effort.

Acknowledging the devastating impact of climate change, Samoa emphasized the need for concerted efforts to reduce emissions, invest in clean energy, and protect natural resources. The country stressed the importance of operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund and urged commitments to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Samoa also emphasized the interconnectedness of climate change with biodiversity loss and marine pollution, advocating for stronger measures to protect ecosystems and combat plastic pollution. Addressing non-communicable diseases as a priority, Samoa outlined initiatives to promote healthier lifestyles and strengthen healthcare systems.



Additionally, Samoa highlighted the vulnerabilities faced by small island developing states (SIDS), particularly in terms of debt and cybersecurity threats. The country called for the implementation of a multi-dimensional vulnerability index (MVI) to assess eligibility for concessional finance and emphasized the importance of cybersecurity measures to safeguard infrastructure and financial institutions.

Expressing concerns about ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions, Samoa underscored the importance of international cooperation, diplomacy, and adherence to the rule of law in promoting world peace. Emphasizing the role of the UN in conflict resolution and governance, Samoa further reaffirmed its commitment to the organization calling for greater understanding, respect, and collaboration among member states. Samoa reiterated its commitment to the UN and highlighted the importance of mutual and sustainable partnerships in building a better future for all.

Following the UN supported local SDGs consultations and the government's subsequent commitment to SDGs acceleration delivered at the 2023 Global SDGs Summit, the Government of Samoa has requested the Samoa UN Country Team's (UNCT) assistance with SDGs acceleration.

Outlined are the four key areas of required support: climate change; non-communicable diseases (NCDs); gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV); and sustainable economic development.

Within the context of the UNSDCF and the Government of Samoa's development priorities over 2023-2027, and as advised by the UN's six transitions for SDGs acceleration, the Samoa UNCT's objective is to deliver on selected High Impact Initiatives (HII) for marked and attainable progress on these four areas by 31 December 2024.

Coordinated by Government of Samoa and the Resident Coordinator (RC), delivering SDGs acceleration for Samoa will be achieved through the pooling of the UN's resources, capitalizing on existing partnerships (E.g., PIFs) and processes (E.g., UNSDCF and 6 SDGs transitions), and by redirecting Samoa UNCT's collective energies towards the government's four key areas of interest.

Note that the HIIs will be identified through an analysis of challenges, existing UN programmes and mechanisms, and by pinpointing those issues which provide the best opportunity for advancing progress given the available UN collective mechanisms and resources, and within the one-year timeframe.

MARKING INTERNATIONAL *days*

UN Day Celebrations:

The UN Day Commemoration held on Tuesday, 24th October 2023, at One UN House in Tuanaimito, was a vibrant and insightful event celebrating the United Nations. The program featured a range of engaging sessions where guests had the opportunity to explore various UN booths displaying the organization's work and impact. The event showcased a harmonious blend of cultural celebration, insightful speeches, and a commitment to fostering a brighter future for Samoa and the Pacific region.

Programme Highlights

- Tour of the UN Exhibition, where booths were open to all guests and students.
- A prayer was delivered by Pastor Vui Sebastian Mariner.
- Welcome remarks were given by Themba Kalua, Resident Coordinator for Samoa Multi-Country Office (MCO).
- Keynote Address was delivered by Prime Minister Hon. Fiame Naomi Mataaafa.
- A message from development partners was delivered by HE Trevor Matheson, High Commissioner of NZ
- Entertainment featured the Tamaitai Anofale Leadership & Mentorship Programme – Class of 2023.
- Young Voices on UN Day were presented by Miss Samoa 2023, Moemoana Safa'atoa Schwenke, a youth advocate for climate change, women's empowerment, and cultural heritage.
- The celebrations continued with lunch, and booths remained open for all guests and students.



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Key Messages from the Prime Minister of Samoa

- Reaffirmed Samoa's continued commitment to the UN Charter and commemorated Samoa's 47-year commitment to the UN system.
- Highlighted progress in advancing women's, children's, and people with disabilities' rights.
- Emphasized challenges faced due to the 2019 measles outbreak, the 2020 COVID pandemic, and the triple planetary crisis.
- Urged international support for climate change action and commitment to human rights.

Key Messages from UNRCO (UN Resident Coordinator Office)

- Acknowledged the UN Charter's vision for peace and justice and the importance and relevance of the UN despite global challenges, complex conflict crises including climate change affecting Samoa and other Pacific Island nations.
- Acknowledged Samoa's partnership with the UN that continues to gain strength through hosting

UN offices and demonstrating commitment to the UN mission.

- Appreciation for stakeholders, recognizing various stakeholder's including the Prime Minister , government ministries, civil society organizations, and development partners for their contributions to UN initiatives.
- Emphasized the need for collective efforts to ensure human rights for all and a call for collective action to promote peace, prosperity, equality, and justice, emphasizing that everyone has a role to play in driving progress and change.

Key Messages from Miss Samoa 2023-2024

- Advocated for youth engagement in critical areas like climate change and women's economic empowerment.
- Stressed the importance of arts and culture in preserving traditions.
- Encouraged inclusivity and collaboration with youth for a prosperous future.



MARKING INTERNATIONAL *days*

World Food Day

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) joined forces to commemorate FAO World Food and Animal Day 2023 and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' Open Day.

It is the first time that these two events have been held simultaneously, with the Minister of MAF in the forefront of promoting local food production and food security in Samoa.

The World Food Day commemoration on October 19, 2023, was a significant event attended by esteemed guests, including Hon. La'aulialemalietoa Polataivao Fosi, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and representatives

from various ministries, enterprises, and the diplomatic corps.

In his remarks, Hon. Minister Laaulialemalietoa acknowledged the FAO Sub-Regional Office (FAO-SRO) for the Pacific as a key technical partner providing critical technical and financial assistance to Samoa's agriculture sector.

Additionally, he recognized the finite nature of water and acknowledged everyone's duty to preserve it without compromise. In confronting the intricate hurdles posed by climate change, Hon. Laaulialemalietoa reminded all to bear in mind that the prosperity of our society and the sustainability of our farming and fishing industries are intertwined with our ability to safeguard and effectively manage this invaluable resource.



The day-long commemoration began with an enlightening series of talks highlighting the initiatives undertaken by the MAF and FAO, all aligned with this year's World Food Day theme - Water is Life. These discussions brought to light the pivotal connection between water management and food security, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts.

Mr. Themba Kalua, the UN Resident Coordinator (UN RC) for Cook Islands, Samoa, Niue, and Tokelau, delivered remarks on behalf of the UN system.

Mr. Kalua underscored the need for sustainable agriculture practices, including digital solutions, to address water scarcity. He recognized the crucial role of agriculture, responsible for 70% of global freshwater consumption, and the collaborative efforts with Samoa to transform food systems and enhance water management.

Acknowledging the contributions of farmers, fishers, and food handlers, he emphasized the importance of their roles in ensuring food security.

Highlighting the significance of partnerships, Mr. Kalua stressed the need for collaboration with various stakeholders and assured ongoing UN system support in advancing national food systems transformations in Samoa with the FAO-SRO at the forefront of this critical support.

Mr. Kalua expressed gratitude to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and his team for organizing the event and acknowledged the presence of all stakeholders.

The event also featured a vibrant exhibition of stalls and the distribution of planting materials, pig fencing, and grab bags to celebrate World Food and Animal Day 2023.



16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence

Samoa commenced its annual campaign for the 16 days of activism from the 25 November to 10 December. The theme for the international campaign, 'UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls,' aligned with Samoa's theme, 'Respect is a shared responsibility.'

The Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSO) spearheaded the launch of the campaign with technical and financial support provided by the UN system through UN Women and UNICEF including support provided through the EU-UN funded Spotlight Initiative programme.

The Hon. Minister of MWCSO, Mulipola Anarosa Molioo acknowledged this support through her keynote address.

Hon. Mulipola also reminded stakeholders and partners of the alarming statistics in the Pacific region having one of the highest rates of violence against women and girls globally, with significant numbers experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Additionally, the economic cost of family violence in Samoa is substantial, estimated at 6%-7% of GDP underscoring the urgent need to prioritize efforts to end violence against women, girls, and children, not only as a social issue but also as an economic burden. She urged stakeholders to recognize the importance of social statistics alongside economic indicators in addressing gender-based violence.



© Government of Samoa

Mr. Themba Kalua, the UN Resident Coordinator for Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau, delivered remarks on behalf of the UN system. He expressed gratitude to the MWCSO for leading the campaign and highlighted the alarming statistics on violence against women and children in Samoa as evidence of the continued need for support from the UN entities to the Government of Samoa and its efforts to address GBV.

Mr. Kalua emphasized the UN's support in responding to and preventing GBV, citing initiatives like the Inter-agency Essential Services Guide. He stressed the need to address root causes, particularly gender inequality, and highlighted the UN's commitment to awareness programs through the Talanoa Toolkit and the National Prevention Framework and Action Plan.

Mr. Kalua acknowledged the progress made through the EU-funded Spotlight Initiative and proposed three key actions: a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, increased investment in women-led organizations, and the engagement of men and boys in the fight against GBV. He addressed men directly, urging them to reject violence and promote environments of respect and equality.

As the 16 days of activism culminate on Human Rights Day, Mr. Kalua called for a recommitment to the principles of equality, freedom, and justice. He commended the Government of Samoa, development partners, and civil society organizations for their efforts and called for collective action to create a Samoa free from violence, where every woman and girl can thrive.



Human Rights Day

OHCHR collaboratively organized with the Office of the Ombudsman and UN Resident Coordinators Office (UN RCO), the commemoration of Human Rights Day centered around the right to education. Participants included the Ministry of Education, UNESCO, UNICEF, and civil society representatives, creating a platform for meaningful discussions on human rights, education, and ensuring access to education by those who are often left behind, including children with disabilities.

The Human Rights commemoration speech was delivered by the UN RC Mr. Themba Kalua, at the Lava Hotel in Apia on Thursday, 7 December 2023.

The UN RC expressed delight in participating in the event coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). He highlighted the enduring significance of the UDHR in guaranteeing fundamental human rights for all individuals, emphasizing its relevance amid current global challenges. Mr. Kalua called for a renewed commitment by all states to uphold international law and agreements, emphasizing collective action to advance a common good for all. He mentioned the United Nations' encouragement for states to make pledges for meaningful human rights action, noting Samoa's upcoming pledge submission during the High-Level "Human Rights 75" event in Geneva.



The chosen theme for the event, “revitalizing human rights awareness with a focus on the right to education,” was highlighted as crucial, aligning with Article 26 of the UDHR.

Mr. Kalua emphasized the role of individuals in promoting and protecting human rights. He urged leveraging Samoan cultural values to create a society where every individual’s rights are protected and upheld, emphasizing the importance of respect, compassion, and justice.

He also acknowledged persistent challenges, particularly gender-based violence, underscoring the need for collective efforts to address barriers hindering the full enjoyment of human rights for all.

Mr. Kalua stressed the importance of upholding human rights principles, promoting education as a fundamental right, and fostering collective action to address ongoing challenges with an emphasis on the role of individuals, governments, and stakeholders in advancing human rights and supporting human rights defenders.

The event concluded with a prizegiving event for the winners of a Tik Tok and poetry competition on ‘what the right to education means to young people’ which commenced a few weeks earlier.



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UN HIGH LEVEL OFFICIAL VISITS TO Samoa



In 2023, the Assistant Secretary General/ UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Kanni Wignaraja made her inaugural visit to the country. The visit aimed to strengthen ties between the UN System, UNDP, and the Government of Samoa.

Ms. Wignaraja held meetings with key government officials, including the Prime Minister (PM), Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These engagements facilitated discussions on UNDP's contributions to Samoa's development priorities, focusing on climate change, energy transition, access to affordable development finance, gender equality, and social cohesion.

Hon. PM Fiame Naomi Mataafa highlighted the importance of meaningful dialogue, evidence-based decision-making, and mutual respect in strengthening partnerships. Ms. Wignaraja reiterated UNDP's commitment to supporting Samoa in achieving its development goals, including the Pathway for the Development of

Samoa 2021/22 - 2025/26 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Wignaraja also engaged with development partners, the Samoa UNCT, and civil society representatives to discuss development opportunities and challenges for Samoa. She emphasized the value of partnership and collaboration with various stakeholders in contributing to Samoa's national priorities.

During her visit, Ms. Wignaraja witnessed community-led development initiatives focused on environmental sustainability and ending violence against women and girls. Her final engagement involved a policy dialogue on leveraging the Blue Economy for Gender Equality, co-hosted by UNDP and the National University of Samoa, followed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions.

Ms. Wignaraja expressed appreciation for the trust and partnership with the Government of Samoa and local communities, highlighting the importance of collaboration in advancing development efforts.

UN HIGH LEVEL OFFICIAL VISITS TO Samoa



In 2023, the Government of Samoa warmly welcomed the visit of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana.

This visit marked a significant engagement between ESCAP and the Samoan government. The visit focused on strengthening collaboration on sustainable development initiatives, enhancing regional connectivity, and addressing critical issues such as climate resilience, economic development, and social inclusion.

ESCAP's priorities in Samoa include promoting sustainable infrastructure, advancing digital connectivity, supporting climate action, fostering inclusive economic growth, and enhancing the collection and use of SDG data to drive evidence-based policymaking.

During the visit, the Executive Secretary met with the Samoa UNCT and held high-level discussions with the UN Heads of Agencies in Samoa to explore opportunities for joint initiatives.

These interactions aimed to explore ways to support Samoa's development priorities and advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This visit underscored ESCAP's commitment to supporting Samoa and other Pacific Island countries in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth through improved SDG data management and utilization.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

Looking forward to 2024, Samoa is set to embark on several significant initiatives, each aimed at advancing its development agenda and strengthening partnerships with international development partners.

VNR support to Government of Samoa

The Government of Samoa, will present its third Voluntary National Review (VNR) on progress of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2024. Samoa has been a leader in ambition on the SDGs and is one of few countries in the world that will prepare and submit three VNR. As part of its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs it has established a SDG Taskforce comprising of key ministries to coordinate the implementation, follow-up, and reporting of SDGs.

Having previously presented its VNR in 2016 and 2020, Samoa intends to present its third VNR in 2024, aligning with the theme of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on reinforcing the 2030 Agenda amidst multiple crises.

The Government of Samoa is at the forefront of the VNR development process. The Samoa UNCT through the UN Resident Coordinators Office (UNRCO) is committed to provide integrated support to the process and stands ready to provide assistance at the request of the Government.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)

In the week of 21 October 2024, Samoa will be the first Small Island Developing State (SIDS) in the Blue Pacific to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which will see 55 other English-speaking countries from across the world's regions descend on Samoa for a set of various high-level meetings and side-events. Samoa will have the privileged opportunity to craft CHOGM's agenda which has the theme Commonwealth "Aiga," or Samoan

way of life, exemplifying collective responsibility, encapsulating values such as respect, dignity, love, protection, and service.

CHOGM will focus on key issues such as resilience, finance, data, human capital, and gender-based violence. The CHOGM will host four forums: the Commonwealth Business Forum, Women's Forum, People's Forum, and Youth Forum. In response to the government's request for assistance, the Samoa UNCT, through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), will provide technical support to the Women and Youth Forums. Additionally, the Samoa UNCT is prepared to offer any other necessary assistance to ensure the success of the CHOGM.

CHOGM is a unique opportunity for Samoa to showcase its culture and development progress, and to effect change in the global agenda. The summit will have attendance from other SIDS, including from the Caribbean, Asian and African region, which share many of the same vulnerabilities in the Pacific.

SIDS Conference/Workshop

Samoa assumed Chairmanship of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) in 2022, and together with Antigua and Barbuda, the previous Chair of AOSIS, is leading the charge of the next SIDS agenda coined SIDS4. Samoa was the third government globally to host the prestigious SIDS conference which gave way to the SAMOA Pathway commitment.

The SIDS conference is the forum where SIDS collectively devises and adopts a plan for strengthened resilience, development, and sustainability. Preceding the global SDGs, the SIDS agenda is in many ways seen as a SIDS specific SDGs implementation plan, highlighting, and putting into laser focus the issues and challenges of importance to SIDS.

Samoa as Chair will host a preparatory technical meeting in Samoa during 11-13 March facilitated by AOSIS, UN DESA and UN ESCAP. From there the discussions will go to Antigua and Barbuda during 27-30 May for the fourth International Conference on SIDS themed “Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity”.

Not all UN Agencies will travel to Antigua and Barbuda but the upcoming preparatory technical meetings in March will provide UN Agencies in the Pacific the opportunity to further contribute to the formulation of the SIDS4 framework. The UN system in the Pacific engaged with the SIDS4 agenda last year in Tonga, during the regional preparatory meetings which took place 16-18 August 2023. On this occasion, given the UN’s presence in Samoa, the UN system in the Pacific will be better positioned to engage in a more substantive and coordinated fashion, facilitated by the UNRCO.

This represents another key UN-Samoa opportunity to strengthen cooperation and to place front stage the issues of importance to Samoa, both technically and politically.

Renovations of One-UN House

The Government of Samoa is taking a proactive role in the renovations of the One-UN House.

Anticipated to be completed by the end of 2024, this refurbishment will accommodate all UN agencies in Samoa.

It symbolizes the Government’s commitment to fostering a conducive environment for collaboration and development efforts. We also express our deep appreciation for their steadfast support and partnership.

UN Efficiency Agenda

The UN Efficiency Agenda aims to optimize operations and resource utilization by enhancing collaboration and reducing redundancies across UN agencies.

Implementing the Business Operations Strategy (BOS), the Samoa UNCT streamlines operations through common services such as efficient management of shared office spaces, coordinated security measures, and streamlined procurement for supplies and services.

The Operations Management Team (OMT) is expanding to include catering and conference services. Regular reviews track performance, cost savings, and gather feedback for continuous improvement.

The updated 2023 Country Common Premises Plan (CCPP) on the UN-Info platform provides comprehensive data on the status and utilization of common premises and efficiency projects.

Joint programmes on accelerating the SDG

Following the Government of Samoa’s commitment to accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at the 2023 Global SDGs Summit, the Samoa UNCT stands ready to provide essential support in this area.

The Samoa UNCT foresees developing joint programmes on four key priorities namely: Climate Change, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Gender Equality and Gender-based Violence (GBV), and Sustainable Economic Development.

The Samoa UNCT aims to finalise a high-level roadmap for collective action and coordination, aiming to deliver high-impact initiatives for significant progress in these four priorities by December 2024.

The approach involves pooling UN resources, leveraging existing partnerships and processes, and directing efforts towards these priorities under the guidance of the Government of Samoa.

UNCT COMPOSITION

IN *Samoa*



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
(FAO)



IAEA
International Atomic Energy Agency
(IAEA)



International Fund for Agricultural
Development
(IFAD)



International Labour Organization
(ILO)



International Organization for
Migration
(IOM)



International Trade Centre
(ITC)



United Nations Capital
Development Fund
(UNCDF)



United Nations Children's Fund
(UNICEF)



United Nations Conference on
Trade and Development
(UNCTAD)



United Nations Department for
Safety and Security
(UNDSS)



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

United Nations Development
Programme
(UNDP)



United Nations Economic and
Social Commission for Asia
(UN ESCAP)



United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)



United Nations Environment
Programme
(UNEP)



United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights
(OHCHR)



United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees
(UNHCR)



United Nations Human Settlement
Programme
(UN-HABITAT)



United Nations Industrial
Development Organization
(UNIDO)



United Nations Joint Programme
on HIV and AIDS Secretariat
(UNAIDS)



United Nations Office for Disaster
Risk Reduction
(UNDRR)



United Nations Office for Project
Services
(UNOPS)



United Nations Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
(OCHA)



United Nations Office on Drugs
and Crime
(UNODC)



United Nations Population Fund
(UNFPA)



United Nations Volunteers
(UNV)



United Nations World Food
Programme
(WFP)



UN Women
(UN Women)



World Health Organization
(WHO)



World Meteorological Organization
(WMO)



UNITED NATIONS
SAMOA

