

Address by the Samoan Delegate to 39th Session of FAO Conference

Mr Chairman,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Samoan Delegation, I wish to reiterate our sincere thanks and gratitude to the Conference for the confidence entrusted to Hon. Minister Le Mamea as Chair of the 39th Session of the FAO Conference. This is indeed an honour and a privilege for Samoa and the wide Southwest Pacific family.

Let me also use this opportunity to congratulate High Chief Tagaloaletoa o le Malae o le Toto Graziano da Silva for his well-deserved appointment as Director-General for a second term. We have every confidence in your capable leadership and vision to steer the ship and take our Organization to the next level. Samoa looks forward to continuing building on the close relationship and cooperation we have established and enjoyed with FAO during your first mandate.

Samoa commends and challenges your Director-General to continue with your decentralization policy for we are convinced that this is the right path to travel in our collective efforts towards real and lasting sustainable development for all our communities especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, including women and youth.

As an adopted son of a SIDS country Director-General, we look to you to assist us in streamlining and moving the SIDS agenda in the work programme of FAO. We further invite you and Members States to consider the lead taken by the ACP Group in establishing a SIDS Forum within FAO. The upcoming Conference on Financing for development in Addis Ababa in July, the Summit in New York and COP21 in Paris later in the year provide windows of opportunity to continue pushing the SIDS Agenda in particular the Samoa Pathway outcome and recommendations.

The Pacific is an ocean continent. As such, fisheries is one of the few resources we possess and we must ensure that the region benefits and receive a fair economic return to assist in the creation of employment opportunities for our people. Samoa looks forwards to FAO`s assistance in this area. It is also timely and necessary to work with relevant international organizations to seriously examine the nexus between trade, food security and the incidence of NCDs.

Strengthening partnership between FAO and SPREP and SPC in our region is essential to enhancing and improving FAO`s vision and activities in the Pacific.

In conclusion, as a Samoan High Chief, it is customary for you Director-General to make regular visits to your adopted country and region and we look forward to welcoming you again and I hope, not in a too distant future.