

**STATEMENT BY THE
HONORABLE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, SAMOA
H.E. TAGALOA TUALA SALE TAGALOA**

**UNFCCC COP 9 Round-Table Discussions on
Climate Change, Adaptation, Mitigation & Sustainable
Development**

Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to see you Minister Lameto chairing this roundtable along with your co-chair. First of all let me through you, on behalf of my delegation, thank the Government of Italy for the excellent arrangements for the meeting and for its warm welcome since our arrival to this beautiful city of Milan.

Allow me, sir, to preface my statement with a general comment on behalf of the Small Island Developing States. As you are all aware, the Small Island Developing States are among the most vulnerable countries. This situation is exacerbated by the adverse impacts of climate change. We are therefore most concerned to note the continuing increase in the greenhouse gas emissions by Annex 1 countries. We urge all parties to take more positive measures to reverse this trend. We also ask all parties to contribute and participate in the upcoming review of the Barbadoes Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States in Mauritius next year.

Samoa, like all the other Small Island Development States, continues to experience the adverse impacts of climate change. In recent months Samoa has suffered a severe shortage of drinking water and ^{has had} bushfires due to long periods of drought. We also live under the threats of tropical cyclones - nine are predicted to hit our Pacific region during this next

four months. Our smallness and extreme vulnerability as a Least Developed Country places us in a truly worrisome situation.

In spite of its limited resources, Samoa has developed some initiatives to address its climate change priorities. With support from the World Bank we have developed coastal hazard zone maps for the whole country, focusing on the problems of erosion, flooding and landslips. Based on these maps we are now preparing coastal management plans to address the threats due these hazards.

Parallel to the technical work on coastal hazard assessment is the development of an institutional framework that integrates national policy, land-use planning, disaster management and sustainable development. The ultimate goal in the coastal sector is to improve the resilience and preparedness of our local communities through the implementation of suitable adaptation measures against coastal zone hazards.

✱ Earlier this afternoon we shared with many delegates a side event of our experience on a project we are currently implementing in Samoa as part of a regional programme, assisted by the Government of Canada. Working with local communities we are implementing two pilot projects in the coastal and water sectors. The main objective of these pilots is to strengthen and improve the capacity of local communities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change in those two sectors.

Samoa as a Least Developed Country is currently developing its National Adaptation Programme of Action, in response to the current and anticipated adverse effects of climate change, including extreme events. This initiative will provide a framework to guide the coordination and implementation of adaptation initiatives in the country, with a specific priority programme of action for adaptation to climate change.

Mr. Chairman as we try to play our part in the implementation of the Convention and the lead up to the coming into force of the Protocol we are faced with two major constraints – one is the limited information available to us on the impacts of climate change on the other key sectors like water resources, agriculture, health and environment, and the other is the limited resources for the implementation of adaptation measures.

While the development of Samoa's National Adaptation Programme of Action and its Second National Communication would go some way into addressing ~~this~~^{the} information gaps, considerable technical support is still required from the Convention expert groups or other sources to provide the necessary understanding and knowledge of the impacts of climate change in other key sectors, specifically in Small Island Development States.

But for the implementation of adaptation projects, much still remains to be done. While we welcome the expansion of the Global Environment Facility Small Grant Programme to new recipients including Samoa, which could provide funding for community-based adaptation initiatives,

It is most encouraging, however, that assistance is now forthcoming for adaptation pilots. 4
we really would like to see the extension of its Medium Grant and other Programmes to include climate change adaptation measures. And we hope that the Special Climate Change Fund will target community-based adaptation projects with assistance to be available as soon as possible.

Finally Mr. Chairman, Samoa's experience favours the implementation of community-based adaptation initiatives. We see support for community projects dealing with appropriate solutions that local stakeholders can manage themselves, as the key to future success in our fight against the adverse impacts of climate change.

Thank you