

Investing in Sustainable Food Systems to End Hunger by 2030
Governing Council 2020 – Forty-third session
Statement by the representative from Samoa
Honorable Lopao Natanielu Mua

Your Excellency, Chairman of the Governing Council of IFAD, President of IFAD, Director General of FAO, Honoured Governors, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. Talofa Lava!

It is an honor for me to attend the forty-third session of IFAD's Governing Council in my capacity as Samoa's Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Let me foremost convey to the Governing Council warmest greetings from the Government and the people of Samoa. I was present in the forty-second Governing Council held last year and it is encouraging to see the partnership between Samoa and IFAD strengthen over the years.

Samoa is no different to other Pacific Island Countries when we talk about the challenges faced in the development of the agriculture sector. And we thank IFAD for holding such forums as this to highlight the needs of our small island developing states and to give us the opportunity to voice our struggles. As a small island developing state, Samoa's agriculture sector continues to face a set of complex factors which continues to create a decline in agricultural production. Perhaps one of the most complex and pressing factors to date is the impact of climate change. Currently Samoa is listed as one of the top ten most vulnerable countries in the Pacific Island regions to the impacts of climate change. These impacts are profound - rising temperatures, rising sea levels and severe cyclones. Climate change impacts are exacerbated by existing food and nutrition insecurity.

As three-quarters of Samoa's population is heavily dependent on agriculture for sustenance, these impacts need to be addressed to build sustainable communities. The theme of this year's forum is a call to invest more in creating sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030. Sustainable food systems not only involve food and income, but it is an investment in our cultures through our traditional knowledge. Essentially, it is an investment in the survival of the Pacific Island people.

IFAD has over the years supported Samoa in building sustainable farming systems through innovative technology, finance support, participatory approaches, and IFAD expertise to build the resilience of the vulnerable smallholder farmer. IFAD first provided its support through the Livestock Development Project followed by a Rural Activation Project. Through its

financing to the Pacific Community (SPC)/POETcom, IFAD assisted our Women in Business Development Inc. (WIBDI) in establishing a Pacific Organic Standard, and applying Participatory Guarantee Schemes for organic branding, and also supported our national stakeholder's forum in 2016 on the development of our agritourism plans. These are all linkages needed to create an enabling environment for the inclusion of our traditional knowledge and farming practices back into the lives of smallholder farmers.

Our recent re-establishment of this partnership with IFAD through a joint intervention with the World Bank known as the Samoa Agriculture & Fisheries PROductivity and Marketing (SAFPROM) Project will continue to benefit vulnerable smallholder farmers. SAFPROM project focuses on empowering the vulnerable farmers; particularly the women and youth. This intervention aims to increase productivity and market access of selected agricultural producers and to improve management and climate resilience of productive natural resources. This intervention will see the support of resilient and sustainable farming systems through mixed-cropping, mixed-farming as well as agroforestry practices. It will support market linkages and create an enabling environment through improvements to plantation road access and facilities to support the export potential of the local farmers. The intervention is farmer-driven and empowers the smallholder farmer to build systems which merges traditional and scientific knowledge to create sustainable farming systems. These systems are needed to address the impacts of climate change but also that of food and nutrition insecurities we face.

As one of the founding members of IFAD in 1977, Samoa acknowledges and appreciates IFAD's support to our most vulnerable members of society and we would like to emphasise our commitment to IFAD in whatever small way we can. It is only through the establishment of these long-lasting partnerships that the visions that we have of building resilient and sustainable farming systems for our small island developing states can truly be realised. We wish the council well in its deliberations and thank you for this opportunity

Thank you and we wish all participants a safe return home at the end of our meeting. *Soifua ma ia manuia.* God bless.