

Statement by the representative for Samoa

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

These are very difficult times with the pandemic creating many limitations on travel. However, we can be thankful for technology which allows us all to stay in touch and to continue to share ideas and ways to keep moving forward. With that being said, it is my honor to attend this virtual forty-fourth session of IFAD's Governing Council in my capacity as Samoa's Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. Talofa lava and warm greetings from the Government and the people of Samoa.

Samoa acknowledges and appreciates that IFAD interventions support inclusive rural transformation so rural people can achieve sustainable livelihoods via the provision of financing and technical support. This is especially important for small island developing states like Samoa as IFAD interventions target smallholder farmers and marginalized groups and help them become more resilient, integrate into supply chains, access to nutritious food and gain access to services, technologies and finance.

Like other small island development states, our agriculture sector is constrained by a mix of policy and institutional factors, which have combined to impede the productive potential of our smallholder farmers and agribusinesses. Agriculture in Samoa is also very vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, which manifests itself in more frequent and extreme rainfall events, longer dryer spells and drought events, rising sea levels, extreme winds and high air and water temperatures. The effects of climate change and variability will make agricultural production more challenging.

IFAD has been working in Samoa since the early 1980s with the financing of the Livestock Development Project from 1982 to 1987, followed by the Rural Activation Project from 1993 to 1996; both on highly concessional terms. 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 stakeholders forum in 2016 on the development of our agritourism plans.

Currently, IFAD is co-funding with the World Bank a 5-year intervention which aims to increase production and productivity for farmers and fishers in Samoa. IFAD's focus is on the most vulnerable community members such as the small holder farmer, women and youth. The intervention seeks to empower vulnerable communities and strengthen capabilities of their farmers' organizations; deliver improved technical packages to

growers (e.g. mixed farming, horticultural and post-harvest practices), with emphasis on improving coconut and cocoa farming in agroforestry systems. Empowering communities through the establishment of Participatory Guaranteed Scheme (PGS) for organic agriculture is one aspect of the intervention, which actively brings together relevant NGOs, farmers, consumers and the local technical advisors. The intervention also works with the communities to upgrade farm infrastructure, and road access to ensure farmers improve their productivity and allows them to become efficient participants of the value chain and have access to the financial services they need to expand their business. Collectively, these interventions shall empower communities as self-driven agents of development, broker partnerships with agribusinesses and private sector, and expand smallholders' sales to domestic and niche export markets.

I wish all participants a fruitful virtual session of the Governing Council.

Thank you and God Bless!

Hon Lopaoó Natanielu Muá

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries

SAMOA