

**HONOURABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER REMARKS  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI CORRUPTION DAY 2022 FORUM  
TANOA TUSITALA HOTEL, 9 DECEMBER 2022, 9.30AM  
Theme: “Uniting the World Against Corruption”**

Father Moea’iseu Raymond Betham,

Heads of all government agencies

Representatives of the New Zealand Government

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

A pleasant good morning to you all.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December each year, countries around the world pause to recognize the international day earmarked for anti-corruption. We pause to reflect on our efforts and integrity initiatives; we pause to recognize the damage that corruption has done to our societies, and we pause to re-evaluate and reposition ourselves to do better in the fight against corruption.

Samoa acceded the UN Convention Against Corruption in April 2018. Our accession was the culmination of years of hard work and lessons learned in the anti-corruption and integrity space. It signaled the government’s commitment to strengthening public trust and citizen confidence in government systems, processes and laws.

In 2018, the Public Service Commission together with several integrity agencies developed a Readiness Report which highlighted Samoa’s intention to accede to the UNCAC. The Report notes that the term Corruption is not defined in Samoa’s Crimes Act 2013. The Act however contains extensive provisions that criminalize corruption in its different forms. The UNCAC also does not provide a specific definition of corruption; this is for each jurisdiction to decide. Corruption, as defined by the anti-corruption non-governmental organization Transparency International and the World Bank, is the use of public office for private gain. While limited in scope, it does offer a basic idea of what corruption is.

The National Assessment Report identified several reasons as to why Samoa should consider accession. I will speak to my top 3;

- Accessing to the Convention meant we would have an opportunity to further strengthen **public confidence and trust** in Parliament, Government, institutions and individuals with authority. While we already had the legal and policy frameworks in place which were largely in line with the requirements of the Convention, accession signalled the Government’s commitment to building citizen trust and confidence in our systems and processes, our leadership class, and our decisions.

It was an opportunity for us to work on our relations with the public, whether it be our image as a trustworthy and ethical public sector, or how quickly we can respond to public policy challenges that come up from time to time.

- Secondly, accession meant an opportunity to further enhance our **existing culture of integrity and honesty**. Corruption spreads quite quickly, and because employee behaviours and attitudes can change quickly as well, corrupt practices may become a norm and form part of the organizational culture. Therefore, having the Convention in place proved an additional mechanism by which organizational culture would be positively influenced by anti-corruption initiatives put in place to comply with UNCAC.
- And finally, accession meant an opportunity to **further strengthen Samoa's national, regional, and international reputation**. Reputation is an important part of public institutions, if not one of the most important. It is how we are perceived from the outside, whether it be at the national level, or otherwise. Before Samoa acceded in 2018, it was one of a few Pacific Island countries that had not signed up to the UNCAC. It could've been because we weren't in a position to readily accede, as well as government priorities at the time. But following our accession, Samoa joined other regional and international countries in fighting corruption locally and internationally, including holding our people who might commit UNCAC crimes outside of Samoa accountable for their actions. But it all starts from us – our people, our internal systems and processes, our laws and policies, we must all sing the same tune; that of integrity and high ethical standards.

Under the Public Administration Sector Plan, the government has made a commitment to develop an Anti-Corruption Strategy. The UNCAC Coordinating Committee is taking the lead on this important work. Making a commitment is one thing; seeing it to action is another. Your Government have made a commitment to reinforce the ethical culture of the Samoa public sector, and this shall be reflected in the abovementioned Strategy. The public deserve honest, impartial and ethical public servants. The Government will therefore continue to promote the Values of the Public Service and provide constant reminders of the 'Code of Conduct', to deter unethical and corrupt behaviors.

The Government through the Commission continues to offer training and development opportunities for employees who wish to become part of the cohort of investigators in the service. Part of our commitment is ensuring that the right skills and mindsets are at hand for our anti-corruption work. Therefore, should any Office require investigation training and support, please do reach out to the Commission. I would like to see the public service and the public sector in general, leveraging off each other's strengths and skillsets. The PSC is only one component in Samoa's anti-corruption framework, alongside other integrity agencies such as the Samoa Audit Office and the Office of the Ombudsman; in saying that, I call upon our integrity offices network to renew our commitment to building ethical institutions, and to garner public support and confidence so they have the courage to report any suspected wrongdoing.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that as human beings, we often fall short when it comes to corrupt practices because of innate nature and temptation. Therefore, fighting corruption is and will continue to be a work in progress; it will become complicated, and will require more sophisticated resources and knowledge. But if we coordinate our efforts well, maintain frequent communication, and share data and

information to aid each other's investigations, I am confident that Samoa's integrity agencies will rise to the occasion in an evolving operating environment.

I thank the United Nations for your unwavering support and for making today possible with your financial assistance; I thank you all for being here today, and wish you well for the remainder of your day.

Soifua ma ia manuia.