



**Permanent Mission of the Independent State of Samoa
to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva**

Mr Chair,

Samoa would like to congratulate you on your appointment and the way you have conducted the plenary of our meeting. We also express our condolences to the Peoples Republic of China on the passing of Hon. Jiang Zhemin.

Mr Chair,

We note with concern the increasing frequency of natural disasters and climate-related devastations witnessed around the world from floodings in Costa Rica and Pakistan, to droughts in the Horn of Africa. The Pacific is all too familiar with such climate change realities as we deal with rising sea-levels in the face of the ever-present threat of natural disasters. In fact, Samoa was affected by up to 9 natural and climate induced disasters over the past 12 years. With a population of 200 thousand people, the impact is significant on loss of life, homes, businesses, infrastructure, livelihoods and overall economic and development. The 2009 tsunami [killed 143 people, affected 7,663 per 100,000 people,] led to the relocation of entire villages inland away from their coastal locations resulting in loss of livelihoods and incurring millions of new infrastructure and utilities. Cyclones Evans in 2012, Gita in 2018, resulted in temporary displacement of [approximately 7,500] people and devastated livelihoods and assets, causing damages [totalling \$480M (USD 210.7)], undoing years of economic gains in infrastructure development. 60% of Samoa's population reside 1km from the coastline. We have seen first-hand the grave effects of climate change through the degradation of environment, displacement of families, and food insecurity to name a few in a long list of loss and damages that we as SIDS must bear.

Mr Chair,

From a Pacific disaster preparedness and response perspective, climate mobility is inevitable with the existential threat of sea-level rise and the complete loss of territory, statehood and sovereignty. From the lens of economic and climate/disaster resilience, climate mobility is synonymous with external labour migration. Labour Mobility is a Key Priority Area of the Pathway for the Development of Samoa. The important role of remittances from Samoa's diaspora population to community and national development has been given a significant boost through the employment and economic opportunities from the seasonal work programs by Australia and New Zealand; and have become important in the socio-economic recovery efforts from COVID19. However, we recognize that the migration of young

skilled and unskilled persons impacts development across all sectors of the economy and therefore important to have a balanced approach in national development planning. There is also the need to address the rising social challenges associated with the separation of family units; and ensuring the welfare and safety of migrant workers in receiving countries continue to be a priority, as well, the reintegration of returning workers into the community.

Mr Chair,

Pacific island countries attach profound importance to our ocean, holding cultural significance, our history as navigators, and high economic value of Pacific marine resources that have sustained our communities and livelihood for generations. Our food system is vulnerable to global shocks as we have seen with the impacts of COVID-19, war and aggression, and climate extremes.

As such, climate ambition must be translated into concrete action in order to address the migration, food security, and environment issues we are confronted with in our everyday lives.

There is an urgency to scale up action and support in order to secure the future of SIDS, and future generations. We believe that can be achieved with collective action, and meaningful cooperation.

I reiterate the call by the Hon. Prime Minister of Samoa at COP27 *“for development partners to walk with us in determining the best recovery strategy that fits our vulnerability and economic potential”*

Finally, Mr Chair, with the Permanent Mission of Samoa now established in Geneva, we hope to increase direct and meaningful engagement with IOM and development partners to ensure targeted and needed support is mobilised.

I thank you

1 December 2022