



GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

WORLD STATISTICS DAY (20th October 2020)

Honourable Prime Minister of Samoa's Keynote Address

Taumeasina Island Resort

SUSUGA REVEREND MAAUGA MOTU

HONOURABLE MINISTERS OF CABINET

EXCELLENCIES FROM DIPLOMATIC CORE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

LET ME FIRST ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE THE **UNITED NATIONS** FOR MAKING THIS DAY, **the 20th of OCTOBER**, AS THE **WORLD STATISTICS DAY**, TO BE COMMEMORATED AT EVERY FIVE YEARS.

THIS IS THE **THIRD YEAR**, AND SAMOA IS PROUD TO BE PART OF THE 2020 CELEBRATION, AS RECOGNITION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT STATISTICAL SERVICES IN SAMOA, AS WELL AS STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS. WE ALSO APPLAUD THE THEME OF "**CONNECTING WITH DATA WE CAN TRUST**".

EVERYDAY, **DATA INFORMS AND CONNECTS US** TO THE PROGRESSES WE ARE MAKING IN OUR HEALTH SYSTEMS, EDUCATION PROGRAMS, ENVIRONMENT SITUATION, THE CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, LAW AND ORDER, AND, ALL OTHER DEVELOPMENT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE FEEL VERY DELIGHTED WHEN **DATA SHOWS ACHIEVEMENTS** IN OUR DEVELOPMENTS. BUT WHEN **DATA SHOWS LITTLE PROGRESS**, WE FEEL VERY DISAPPOINTED! THIS MEANS, DATA PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE FOR US TO LEARN LESSONS, RE-ADJUST PLANS OR PROJECTS, AND THEN KEEP MOVING FORWARD, BECAUSE TIME NEVER COMES BACK.

AS THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE, IT IS ESSENTIAL **TO COMPILE DATA WE CAN TRUST WITH STANDARD METHODOLOGIES AND GOOD PRINCIPLES**,

TO ENSURE THAT DECISION-MAKING, POLICY-DEVELOPMENTS AND NATIONAL PLANNING, **ARE EVIDENCE-BASED AND NOT BASED ON PEOPLE'S OPINIONS.**

AT TIMES, THE **DATA DO NOT REFLECT THE REALITY IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT BECAUSE OF STANDARD METHODOLOGIES.** WE ARE GRATEFUL THEREFORE THAT SAMOA HAS BEEN ELECTED RECENTLY TO THE **UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION** FOR THE FIRST TIME AS A COUNTRY AND ALSO FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS. WE HOPE THAT OUR PARTICIPATION WILL BRING FORWARD THE REALITIES AND CHALLENGES OF THE PACIFIC NATIONS THAT WE FACE IN COMPLIANCE TO STANDARD METHODOLOGIES FOR OUR DEVELOPMENTS.

AS WE CONTINUE TO ENCOUNTER THE GLOBAL IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19, THE **DATA FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)** PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN INFORMING US ON A DAILY BASIS, ABOUT THE NUMBER OF COVID-DEATHS, THE SURVIVORS, AND, POSITIVE CASES FROM AROUND THE WORLD. THIS INFORMATION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT **DATA** FROM THE RESPECTIVE MEMBER STATES. IT IS A CLEAR EXAMPLE THAT **THE WORLD IS CONNECTED BY DATA.**

WE ARE TRULY THANKFUL TO THE GOD ALMIGHTY THAT SAMOA AND A FEW OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS ARE STILL **COVID-FREE.** HOWEVER, **DATA INFORMS US** THAT WE MUST NOT BE COMPLACENT, BUT STAY VIGILANT AND BE PREPARED, AS WE OPEN OUR BORDERS FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND SHIPPING SERVICES.

AS PART OF TODAY'S CELEBRATION, WE ARE LAUNCHING THE FIRST-EVER **GENDER AND YOUTH MONOGRAPH REPORTS FOR SAMOA.** THESE REPORTS COMPRISED **EVIDENCE-BASED DATA** FROM THE SAMOAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES. THE DATA WILL HELP TO **STRENGTHEN ON-GOING** SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BY THE GOVERNMENT, NGOs AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, IN THE PROMOTION OF **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION** FOR ALL MALES, FEMALES, AND, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF SAMOA, IN ALL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS.

SECONDLY, THE SAMOA BUREAU OF STATISTICS (SBS) IS **ALSO OFFICIATING TODAY** IT'S SHARE OF THE PROJECT ENTITLED AS **"STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE OF PACIFIC ISLANDS STATES THROUGH UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION"** IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS ESCAP, AS PART OF THE 2030 AGENDA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

AS ALL NATIONS STRIVE TO ELIMINATE POVERTY AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, AND LESSEN THE IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19, THIS INDICATED THE MORE **URGENT NEED FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO MANAGE EXISTING SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS OR TO DESIGN NEW ONES.**

TO NAME A FEW SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN SAMOA, THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN PLACE THE **OLD AGE PENSION** FOR ALL CITIZENS 65 YEARS AND OVER; THERE IS **FREE EDUCATION** FOR ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS; **FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT** FOR ALL PERSONS BELOW 15 YEARS AND ALSO PENSIONERS; THERE IS **FREE OVERSEAS TREATMENT** FOR COMPLICATED HEALTH CASES FOR ALL AGES; AND, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO ALLOCATED **ANNUAL GRANTS** FROM THE NATIONAL BUDGET FOR **SELECTED COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN ALL VILLAGES, CIVIL SOCIETIES, CHURCHES, DISABILITIES, NGOS, AND, OTHERS.**

WE DO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE EXISTING SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS ARE **FRAGMENTED AND NOT LINKED TO ANY NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION FRAMEWORK.** THEREFORE, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MONITOR AND TRACK THE BENEFICIALS AS WELL AS THE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES INVOLVED. WE HOPE THAT A CENTRAL SOCIAL PROTECTION DATA FRAMEWORK WHICH SBS WILL WORK ON WITH UNESCAP AND STAKEHOLDERS TODAY, WILL INFORM THE GOVERNMENT WHETHER THE POOR AND THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE, MAINLY THE CHILDREN, ELDERLY, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND. IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S GOAL TO BRING EQUALITY AND EQUITY OF PROSPERITY TO ALL PEOPLE OF SAMOA TODAY AND TOMORROW, AND, WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE RESULT OF THIS SOCIAL PROTECTION DATA FRAMEWORK.

ON THAT NOTE, I WISH TO THANK ALL OUR **DATA STAKEHOLDERS, OUR DEVELOPMENT AND DONOR PARTNERS, WHO ARE HERE WITH US TODAY,** AND ALSO THOSE WHO ARE **JOINING FROM A FAR,** FOR SUPPORTING OUR STATISTICAL SERVICES IN SAMOA.

LET US CONTINUE TO CONNECT AND BUILD MORE DATA WE CAN TRUST.

HAPPY WORLD STATISTICS DAY, 2020

SOIFUA AND GOD BLESS

