



Statement by
Mr. Perelini Perelini
PSC Commissioner and Representative of the Independent State of Samoa
at the
Tenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations
Convention against Corruption
11-15 December 2023, Atlanta, United States

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa with a smile and Good morning.

I wish to congratulate the Government of the United States of America for the extensive effort to ensure this important gathering takes place. I also congratulate the United Nations and all signatories, on the 20th Anniversary of the Convention – while there is much to be celebrated, there is still much more work to do.

Samoa was the 1st Pacific Island country to gain its independence in 1962. We are considered a small island developing state in the Blue Pacific; and like other SIDS, Samoa's unique vulnerabilities place us at a disadvantage, particularly with the disproportionate impacts of the climate change emergency and biodiversity loss, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and Middle East, as well as the energy and cost-of-living crises. And then there is 'corruption'. Corrupt behavior erodes trust. In Samoa, our government is committed to preventing just that.

Samoa acceded to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption in 2018. Although our democratic strength and rule of law

was tested during the 2021 Constitutional Crisis after our General Election, our country has since made notable democratic strides.

The Public Service Commission as the focal point for the Convention led the development of our first national anti-corruption Policy, in line with Article 5. We are anticipating an early 2024 launch. This is part of our national strategy, the Pathway for the Development of Samoa 2021 – 2026 and will provide a roadmap to further strengthen good governance and integrity in Samoa.

With the support of the UNDP and UNODC, we continue to provide training to promote a high standard of professionalism in line with our Public Service Act 2004. It aligns well with our commitment at the Commission to further strengthen the integrity and quality of leadership, performance and ethical behaviour, as well as good governance in government. Citizen participation is central to our democratic processes, especially in creating a platform for dialogue with vulnerable groups such as youth, women and people with disability.

We continue to pursue opportunities to further upskill our officials, particularly in the fields of forensic accounting, and specialized anti-corruption, money laundering, drug trafficking, fraud investigation, and financial and operation audits.

We are also cognizant of the important role of the media industry in holding government accountable for their actions, and inactions.

Samoa has completed its first country review with assistance from the UNODC UNCAC team and reviewing countries Oman and South Sudan, and our second review is in progress, with a country visit from UNODC and reviewers Papua New Guinea and Mongolia proposed for 2024. As a result of our first Review, our Crimes Act 2013 is now under

review to reflect the recommendations. In September 2023, we were one of two reviewing countries for Tonga's first review, of Chapter III and IV.

Samoa remains committed to fully realizing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. These are linked to our national and regional efforts to implement the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the SAMOA Pathway and the Paris Agreement amongst other commitments. Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, through the *Teieniwa Vision*, recognizes "that all of our progress and aspirations for a peaceful, harmonious and prosperous Pacific cannot be realised unless we address corruption". We could not agree more.

Distinguished delegates, leadership by example is the simplest and most effective way to achieve all our aspirations being talked about here. We do not need to look to anyone else - condoning corrupt behaviours and practices begins with all of us.

We have made it this far with 20 years of achievements and challenges. Let us aim for another 20 years of collective commitment and implementation so that this Convention does not remain a piece of paper.

Thank you, and I look forward to welcoming some of you to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that Samoa is hosting in October 2024. Soifua.