



KINGDOM OF TONGA

**STATEMENT BY HON. MR. SAMIU KUITA VAIPULU,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, GOVERNMENT OF
THE KINGDOM OF TONGA**

AGENDA ITEM 1(F): GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

**AT THE 10TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATE PARTIES OF
THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

ATLANTA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

11 – 15 DECEMBER 2023

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Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates and Representatives,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is indeed an honor for me to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Kingdom of Tonga and I bring warm greetings from His Majesty Tupou VI and the Hon. Prime Minister, Hu‘akavameiliku.
2. At the outset, I wish to congratulate you Mr. President on your election as the President of the 10th Session of the Conference of the States Parties and also other elected members of the Bureau.
3. I wish to convey our sincere appreciation to the host Government, the United States of America for the warm hospitality and arrangements we have received.
4. Allow me also, to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the Secretariat for the hard work undertaken in the preparations for the conference and the ease of communication and arrangements.

Mr. President,

5. This marks the Kingdom of Tonga's first Conference of the State Parties since becoming a Party to the Convention in 2020. We are indeed pleased to be present at this Conference and contribute to the discussions and solutions to addressing corruption.
6. Combating corruption and promoting good governance is fundamental to the rule of law, peace and stability of a country and its sustainable development. Tonga recognizes that addressing corruption is a key component in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 noting corruption as a major obstacle for the achievement of any other SDGs. The Kingdom's Strategic Development Framework II 2015 – 2025 sets out « responsive and good governance » as one of its « national Outcomes ». The laws of the Kingdom have always regulated issues of corruption through the Criminal Act, which later transpired in to the Anti-Corruption Commission Act in the year 2007.
7. Prior to Tonga acceding to the Convention and becoming the 187th State Party, steps were already taken to combat corruption in terms of strengthening existing integrity agencies in Tonga with assistance from UN-PRAC, (through UNODC and UNDP); initiating a local chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption, and further creating a Standing Committee on Anti-Corruption tasked, to employ domestic measures to assist implementation of the UNCAC.
8. Nonetheless, Tonga's accession to the UNCAC came into effect on the 6th of February, 2020 and measures to be taken post-ratification includes a comprehensive legal review of legislations to ensure compliance with the

Convention. In that sense, development partners, such as UNODC and UNDP have supported Tonga with this process.

9. Since becoming a member, the Kingdom of Tonga was able to complete the First Cycle of Implementation Review Mechanism on the last week of September 2023 and we wish to thank the Secretariat and the Reviewing Countries of Chad and Samoa for availing your time to undertake this important task. At present, the Kingdom is awaiting the completion of the Report for endorsement and subsequent publication. This provides us with the opportunity to determine areas which require further strengthening and reform to combat corruption within the Kingdom. The Kingdom looks forward to working on its Second Cycle under the implementation review mechanism.

10. At a regional level, the Kingdom supports the Teieniwa Vision which is an important outcome of the first ever Pacific Leaders Summit on Anti-Corruption titled as “Pacific Unity against Corruption” hosted by the Government of Kiribati. The Teieniwa Vision aims at establishing a network on anti-corruption in the Pacific region with countries sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practices in their collective efforts to curb corruption. Additionally, it also recognizes the importance of strong leadership and building political will to stand and unite against corruption. With assistance from UNODC and the Pacific Islands Forum, Tonga was able to contribute to the establishment of a Teieniwa Vision Taskforce in June in Fiji.

Mr. President,

11. As expected, financial resources will be required for further implementation activities since Tonga has ratified UNCAC. Noting the

Secretariat's agenda document No. 10, Analysis of technical assistance needs emerging from the country reviews and assistance delivered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption: Note by the Secretariat, and the establishment of nine regional platforms elsewhere in the world, perhaps it would be opportune for UNODC to establish a funded platform for the Pacific through our Teieniwa Vision Implementation Plan which has similarly identified funding needs for the 14 Pacific UNCAC signatories.

12. We thank all our partners, UNODC, UN-PRAC and development partners in the ongoing assistance to develop good governance within the Kingdom of Tonga and we look forward to further collaboration on this front.
13. I wish to conclude with the emphasis that we are committed to delivering on the objectives of the Convention and contributing to the important discussions this week.

I thank you Mr. President.