



Samoa's Statement:

Delivered by,

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EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN WOMEN

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My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the statement by Maldives in respect of the Alliance of Small States and Nauru for the Pacific Small Island Developing States.

Madam Executive Director,

I thank you for your comprehensive statement on the progress of the work of UN Women and we commend your efforts and that of your staff in the work of the entity.

Madam President,

In terms of national implementation, I would like to share with you some recent developments:

Samoa hosted earlier this month a country visit from the United Nations Human Rights Council Independent expert group whose mandate was to assess the country's performance on the issue of discrimination against women. The Mission's report on their findings and recommendations will be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2018.

Some of the initial findings of the visit shows that Samoa has made progress with its 10% quota for the Legislative Assembly introduced through Constitution Amendment Act 2013 is a first step forward for women's meaningful participation in the political arena.

Samoa has high literacy rate for both women (98.8%) and men (99.1%). Female students receive 60% of Government scholarships due to their high-level performance. Merit-based education opportunities have played a significant role for the advancement of women in all aspects of life.

Women head more than 60% of the small businesses. Women business leaders has played a central role in making the Samoa Chamber of Commerce an inclusive model for the Pacific region, catering for small farmers and business as much as for large corporations.

With these successes we also need to acknowledge that there is much work needed to be done in the development of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls in order to realize the full enjoyment of their human rights.

One of the most important steps in addressing the root causes of violence against women involves creating a surge of mind-set change about women and their place in society and the involvement of the society as a whole in this discussion is a start.

Madam President,

This session is important as we have an important task at hand of finalizing the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to ensure that relevant priorities for ALL are reflected and supported so that the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda are realized and achieved and that no one is left behind.

We need to ensure that UN Women will effectively respond to requests for support from Member States according to their national priorities based on national development plans and strategies, and supporting national capacity development as a key strategy for sustainable development; with full respect for the sovereign right of each country, the various religious and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.

Samoa is happy to note that the new Strategic Plan is guided by key intergovernmental norms and standards including the CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development as well as the review and the lessons learned from the implementation of the previous strategic plan.

For us, the goal is to have a Strategic Plan that responds effectively to the requests on issues that are of importance and relevance to Samoa and the Pacific. The smallness in size and difference in development priority of the Pacific SIDS does not mean that our priorities are less important therefore we urge UN Women to increase its presence in the Pacific and as called for by the **QCPR OP10 and 11**, "...which requests the UN Development systems to continue to support developing countries and to address within existing resources and mandates the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries." We know the Pacific is most vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and the displacement of women and children due to effects of climate change warrants special attention to the situation of women in these conditions.

Thank you