Mr. President,
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government and people of Samoa, it is my privilege and honor to place on record our deepest appreciation to Your Excellency, President of our General Assembly for your sterling and considerate leadership in providing an avenue in our Assembly's busy agenda to facilitate the adoption of the SAMOA Pathway. To all Small Island Developing states, to our partners and to the whole membership of our organization, we thank you for your support and understanding as evidenced in today's adoption by consensus of our Outcome Document. And the Bureaus of the Preparatory meetings and the Conference proper, deserve special mention for steadying and guiding our deliberations efficiently and with professionalism.

But no "thank you", will be complete without mentioning the unwavering support of our Secretary-General Mr. BAN Ki-moon who is always advocating for SIDS issues and leading by example. And our conference would not have achieved the success it enjoyed, if it wasn't for the steadfast leadership of the Conference Secretary-General Mr. WU Hongbo and the supportive Secretariat he ably led. And to all who contributed to turn the SAMOA Pathway to what it is today, you have our deepest admiration.

Mr. President,
The adoption by the General Assembly of the SAMOA Pathway is a momentous occasion and a high point in Small Island developing states' enduring efforts to focus world attention on their sustainable development needs as a UN recognized group with special circumstances and inherent vulnerabilities, not of their choice but due to factors completely outside of their control.
But every journey in life has a point of reference.

Today, we are celebrating another chapter in SIDS’ evolving existence that began 29 months ago, when the Rio+ 20 outcome, “The Future We Want”, called for the convening in 2014 of the Third International Conference on Small Island developing states. A call that was not lost on Samoa’s Prime Minister who, in his statement to the Rio conference on 22 June 2012, offered Samoa to host the SIDS conference.

According to his vision, “to host a global conference will be a rare privilege that comes once a decade. But the real honour and motivation would be the opportunity for the spotlight of international attention, to fall on SIDS challenges and realities and the sharing with the international community, of Samoa’s story about the primacy and importance of successful partnerships firmly rooted on mutual trust and respect which are the foundational pillars in Samoa’s journey as an island nation for over five decades.

It was also important to demonstrate that being a SIDS and a least developed country should not discourage poor and vulnerable nations from stepping forward to achieve economic, social and political progress.

Mr. President,

When we started this process, it was a leap of faith in uncharted waters. Useful signposts along the way included the UNGA resolution in December 2012 welcoming Samoa’s offer to host the conference, the General Assembly decision in May last year on the dates for the conference, the subsequent endorsement in December 2013 of the modalities resolution, and the approval of the outcome document by the preparatory Committee in July 2014, 7 weeks before the conference. And to cap it all, the Conference adopted the SAMOA Pathway outcome document in Apia on 4 September.

At times, these milestones appeared untenable, far-fetched and unachievable. Some of us at home began to question whether we made the right decision to host the conference in the first place. And there was always the lingering doubt whether we had the perseverance and determination to pull this national undertaking of.

But Mr. President,

Persevere we did.

Determined we were.

Compromise we practiced;

Flexibility became the norm;

But being resolute and principled became our moral compass.

For true to our collective sense of obligation to Pacific countries for their trust in us as the host for our region, to our SIDS constituency for their continuous support and to our partners for
their confidence by rallying and rendering every assistance imaginable to ensure no one feels let down, we continued to navigate our way through and tell our story as truthfully as we see it, untroubled whether people thought foul of us and our motive.

But then there was no ulterior goal at all other than to share the truth with the rest of the world about our special case, our challenges and realities and the imperative to build and enhance our overall resilience.

After all, some of our islands have the high moral ground to insist on having their stories told from the lens of their experience, untainted by power politics, world agendas, misplaced assumptions and unfounded concerns.

Mr. President,
Looking back now, any doubts we might have had about a successful outcome is truly water under the bridge. For action speaks volume than words.

Through the unanimous adoption of this resolution, you, the General Assembly has rewarded SIDS’ resolve with your trust, and repaid our fortitude with your confidence and faith. For those partners who believed and stood by us from day one, through the thick and thin of the negotiations, and the almost endless logistical preparations, no reward suffices, because none was expected. In you, Samoa and SIDS, have found genuine and a durable friends.

Mr. President,
Today’s resolution is very brief, but it belies the level of detailed discussions necessary to arrive at this outcome. The SAMOA Pathway is a finely balanced intergovernmental agreement that has the zeal and stamp of approval of the UN membership. It is the blueprint for SIDS sustainable development for now and the immediate future.

We hope that the increased understanding and appreciation of SIDS issues and challenges gained at the conference will not be forgotten or relegated in priority due to competing agendas of more influential member states.

The international community has a very full agenda. The follow up to the SIDS conference will be part of that agenda and we hope that, amidst all the demands, political, economic and other, that the realities of SIDS, so clearly spelled out in the SAMOA Pathway are able to retain the attention of the wider international community. We took seriously the commitment of given for SIDS at the conference and we will remain deeply mindful of how those commitments are turned into actions.

So as we approach the new Post-2015 Development agenda, we must ensure that while a one Framework approach is important - this does not equate to a “one-size-fits-all” for purposes of
implementation and monitoring and evaluation. It is important that the agreed Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Development agenda take into account groups like SIDS to ensure that indicators developed are applicable to their situations also. Similarly we want the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction next year in Japan and the Lima and Paris climate change conferences to use our SAMOA Pathway as an authoritative source to draw inspiration from for their respective outcomes.

I can’t resist but re-state what my Prime Minister said at his closing remarks during the SIDS Conference in Apia, and I quote “I hope the SAMOA Pathway will not be viewed as an end in itself to be used only as a reference point for convenience or until the next SIDS conference. Much investment in genuine goodwill by SIDS and their partners went into agreeing to the SAMOA Pathway as the blueprint for SIDS sustainable development for now and the immediate future”.

We need a comprehensive review of the SIDS specific UN institutions responsive and supportive to SIDS in our collective efforts to address their sustainable development aspirations in the post 2015-development agenda and beyond.

We also call for the establishment of a robust global monitoring system that will strengthen the accountability at all levels and ensure adequate and timely analysis and update of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

As composer of the Conference theme song “There is Hope” I appeal to all of you to please help us turn “SIDS island voices” into “Global choices” so that there is indeed hope for SIDS today, tomorrow and the future.

Let me reminisce with you and admit that Samoa will never be the same again, because we invited close to 4,000 delegates to our shores, and at the end we had to say good-bye to 4,000 genuine friends of Samoa.

And an enduring momento that will live on forever with our people is that when the UN Secretary-General arrived, he was Mr. BAN Ki-moon, yet when he left, he was bestowed the Samoan princely title of Afioga TUPUA Ban Ki-moon.

To conclude, for all those who made it to Samoa, our people were privileged to be your host for the SIDS Conference. We continue to treasure the memories of your presence in our small paradise, and it is my sincerest wish that your memories of your brief sojourn in my country were as pleasant as ours.
Thank you all and God bless.