

Hon. Faumuina Tiatia Liuga
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

International Biodiversity Year 2010, Global theme is:
“Biodiversity is Life- Biological Diversity is Our Life:

Salutation

**Lau Susuga i le Taitai o le Sauniga,
Deputy Prime Minister (if there), Ministers of Cabinet, Associate Ministers,
Members of parliament (if there), Members of the Diplomatic Corp, Ladies and
gentlemen, children.**

**It is with great pleasure that I am able to address you this morning, on this
occasion of the commemoration of our (Samoa's) National Biodiversity Day.**

Background

**The United Nations has proclaimed 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity.
This was chosen to coincide with the biodiversity target agreed by world
leaders in 2002. The IYB's goals are to raise awareness of the importance of
biodiversity, highlighting the fact that it continues to be lost, and to celebrate
novel solutions being carried out around the world for its conservation and
sustainable use, and the equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of
genetic resources.**

**During this Year scientists will report scientific information to reflect on global
trends of biodiversity (which are mostly negative) to be published this month.**

On the basis of this scientific information, countries will over the year evaluate what actions will be needed in the next decade to reverse or at least slow down such trend, and will set the vision for the next 30 years. That is why this year is very important in our national efforts for the sustainable management of our Biodiversity.

As the world prepares to celebrate the International Year for Biodiversity, events will also be held in every region of the world.

Today we are also part of this global commemoration, and the theme for Samoa is “VALUE THE BIODIVERSITY OF SAMOA – IT’S OUR LIFE”

Achievements

Samoa ratified the Convention on Biological diversity in 1992, and following from the 8th Conference of the Parties (COP 8), the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010, the year of biological diversity.

- 1. 14 Pacific Island Countries are contracting parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Samoa is one of only three in the pacific (Tuvalu and Niue) that have completed the 4th National Reports for the CBD. The other PICs are at varying stages with the preparation of their reports.**
- 2. Samoa has been promoting the conservation and sustainable management of biological diversity since becoming a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity.**

Specifically, Government has, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, in collaboration with its development partners and various funding agencies, has also completed a number of studies, and has put in place national strategies and policies for the protection of biological diversity in our country.

Also at the national level, studies and surveys have been completed of the various biological diversity species close to extinction and endangered. These include studies of the;

- 1. Butterflies of Samoa**
- 2. Bats and Flying Foxes**
- 3. Samoa Freshwater Species**
- 4. Samoa Lizards**
- 5. Cetaceans (Whales and Dolphins)**

And many others which are addressed in the 4th National Report for Samoa. Samoa also has its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan. In our 4th National Report for the CBD, we have reported an increase in Samoa's land area coverage under protected area management, as well as an increase conservation programmes for the marine ecosystems and the protection and conservation of watershed areas and water causes.

These initiatives would not have been possible without the assistance of many contributors whom I wish to acknowledge. They include the Global Environment Facility and its Implementing Agencies particularly UNDP, the SPREP, Conservation International (CI), NZAID, AUSAID, JICA, for the programmes.

In today's programme you will hear from the MNRE, SPREP and CIs presentation on issues that the government of Samoa has prioritised in their efforts to meeting the obligations towards the Convention on Biological Diversity. You will also witness the outcomes of our Tsunami Coastal and Marine Clean Up Poster Competition, and the My Bag Art Design Competition. On that notion I would like to acknowledge the support of AUSAID and our own local companies such as Digicel, Farmer Joe, Frankies and Lucky Foodtown, towards these two competitions.

Our government through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is now implementing a 1 million tree campaign, which all the stakeholders and communities are asked to contribute and work with the government in replanting of all the tsunami affected areas.

As part of the efforts by the government in cleaning up the beach front and inshore reef areas of tsunami affected areas, this coming Saturday 22nd May 2010, the villages of Lepa and Saleapaga will be conducting this clean up with the government in promoting conservation efforts for the marine environment of these villages.

In doing so, the communities are adding value to the marine life biodiversity for the increase of corals and fish stocks for the generations to come.

At last but not the least, I would like conclude by highlighting two important points.

- **Firstly, that while biodiversity loss is continuing at various levels globally, and that many countries report that the 2010 biodiversity target has not been achieved, Samoa continues its efforts despite this biodiversity loss and some gains have been achieved so far.**
- **Secondly, while we are celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity and preparing for a high-level Summit on Biodiversity of the UN General Assembly in September as well as CBD COP 10 in October this year, Samoa will continue to maintain its efforts in conservation and sustainable management of biological resources at the national level and does not need to be told of the lessons learned after years of experience in biological diversity conservation.**

Having said that, I am pleased to officially launch Samoa's 4th National Report to the CBD, and declare open the commemoration of the International Year of Biological Diversity 2010.

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