



**Independence Day Address by the Head of State
Afioga Tuimalealiifano Vaaletō'a Sualauvi II
03 June 2024, Mulinuu, Apia Samoa**

Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to greet you all this morning on this auspicious occasion of the commemoration of the 62nd anniversary of our Independent State of Samoa.

Our gathering at Mulinuu today is our acknowledgement of our God's favour upon Samoa and our forefathers who championed our independence, thereby elevating our status in the Pacific Region in becoming the first sovereign and independent nation, in 1962.

In that year I was among the proud group of students from Aana District school who marched with many other schools and organisations from Apia to Mulinuu, to participate in the grand raising of Samoa's flag as a new sovereign state. That was some 60 years ago. At that time I never dreamt that I would one day be standing before you to continue the role that our esteemed former heads of state carried so graciously. But I know the feeling of awe and sense of pride that overwhelmed our Samoan people and young students from the villages, who were present at such a memorable celebration of our freedom and sovereignty, as an independent state. I still treasure that memory.

I thank you all for your presence today, because this occasion is not just a celebration of another anniversary of our sovereignty. Foremost, it is a day of thanksgiving to our God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit upon whom our Independent State of Samoa is founded, He has been the shield and fortress of our people, and was the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that led and protected our forefathers' in their quest for independence. We remember with love their toil and tears and we thank our Almighty God for the blessings that their lives have brought upon us all. May their sacrifices plant seeds of loyalty and determination among us all to continue working in unity as a nation, stronger in resilience, and unwavering in commitment to the pillars underpinning our Constitution, which is based on Christian principles and Samoan customs and traditions.

On this occasion of the 62nd anniversary of our independence, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the Hon Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Honourable Chief Justice and Justices of the Courts of Samoa, and the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly. I thank you all for your leadership and service to our people which have been pivotal in steering our national developments, creating opportunities to advance the development of our communities, strengthening partnerships regionally and internationally, upholding the rule of law, and making invaluable contributions to the legislative process and the development of laws to maintain good governance, peace and harmony in Samoa.

I acknowledge with appreciation the special assistance of our development partners and their continued support and collaboration in many facets of our development. Together we have achieved remarkable milestones that have enhanced the wellbeing of our people, and we are stronger to advance our efforts to safeguard our blue Pacific, our borders and make our region safe, peaceful and prosperous for our peoples.

I thank our villages and districts for their important role in maintaining peace and order in our communities, and support for all government initiatives and programmes over these past twelve months. Our resilience, solidarity, and unity in what we do will produce greater accomplishments for our generation and create bigger opportunities for generations to come.

I acknowledge our Samoan diaspora and thank you for your notable contributions in various fields, especially your continuous support and dedication to our families in Samoa. Congratulations are due to many of you who have excelled in various professions, especially at the world stage. You have done us proud as you represent not only your country of residence but your Samoan heritage and connections. In the spiritual sector, it is uplifting that as you settle abroad, you have spread your Christian Faith, and many Samoan Congregations and churches have been established. Thank you for your promotion of the Good News of Christ.

In looking towards the future, let us remain united in our commitment to addressing pressing challenges such as climate change, security, and health. Together, we are stronger in our collective response to these obstacles and build a brighter tomorrow for future generations.

As our government prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Apia in October, it is essential that we come together in solidarity and

cooperation to bring out the best of Samoa for this prestigious event. It is a unique opportunity for Samoa and the Pacific to showcase our culture, heritage and warm hospitality on the global stage. I pray that we work hand in hand to ensure its success.

I thank our clergy, our prayer warriors, and all brothers and sisters in Christ for your intercession for our nation, our leaders and our people. We are blessed indeed by our Christian faith, and I encourage our families and children to seek God first, don't leave Him out till all fails. Our Lord has the answers, he has the solutions, and we are more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us.

May the grace of God bind us all as we chart our course to the future.

Happy independence Samoa, and may God bless you all.

SOIFUA.