



Minister's Speech for the Official Opening of the Samoa Agribusiness Incubation Centre (ABI), Friday 06 September 2024 @ 10.00 a.m. at the SROS Headquarter, Nafanua.

Rev. Letupu Faauuga Matautia,

Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament,

Members of the Diplomatic Corp,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure, that we are here today, to officially open, the Samoa Agribusiness Incubation Centre (ABI), which is a key part of the, Sustainable Transformation of Domestic Agrifood Systems project, or STODAS project, in Samoa. Today, we also have the honor of launching, the Pacific Agri-Innovative Business Plan Competition.

The STODAS project, funded by the European Union (EU), and implemented in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Business Assistance Fiji (BAF), and the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS), represents a major investment, in the future of Samoa's agriculture. We rely on agriculture for our food security and nutrition, but our food security is also highly reliant on imported food. This means that, there is

room for improvement for us to be food secured. The STODAS project is set to transform our domestic agrifood systems, by promoting innovation, business, and sustainable practices across our agriculture sector.

The Pacific Agri-Innovate Business Plan Competition, is a key initiative of the STODAS project. It is designed to empower young business people and farmers, to develop innovative solutions, to the challenges facing our agricultural sector. Through this competition, FAO and SROS aim to identify, guide, and support agricultural enterprises, with high potential to expand market opportunities, and strengthen Samoa's agrifood ecosystems. I am confident that this competition, with its robust mentoring and training programs, will inspire new ideas, and develop a vibrant and dynamic agricultural ecosystem in Samoa.

The ABI Centre will serve as a dedicated space for innovation, training, and collaboration, offering a wide range of services that our aspiring business people need to succeed. These include technical assistance and training, in various areas of research and agriculture. By helping research and innovation, the Centre introduces new technologies, and practices that boost productivity, and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

The opening of the Samoa ABI Centre, and the launch of the Pacific Agri-Innovate Business Plan Competition, marks a significant milestone in our journey, towards a more successful, and sustainable agriculture sector.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all our partners, who have made this important project become a reality. The collaboration between SROS, FAO, BAF, and EU, is proof of the importance of partnership, and I look forward to future partnerships of this nature, to help Samoa improve its agriculture sector.

To all the business people, innovators, and farmers present today, I offer my heartfelt encouragement and support. The future of Samoa's agriculture, lies in your hands. Embrace this opportunity, leverage the resources available at the ABI Centre, and let your creativity and innovation lead the way.

Together, let us work towards creating a successful agriculture sector, that not only sustains Samoa through improved food security and nutrition, but also empowers our communities, encourages our people, and build a brighter future for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention.

Soifua ma ia manuia.