



Government of Samoa

**Oceania Renewable Power Summit
17-18 September 2024, Auckland New Zealand
Statement by the Honourable Toeolesulusulu Cedric Pose Salesa
Schuster
Samoa's Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Lands
and Pacific Political Climate Champion for Mitigation**

- Honourable Stuart Smith
- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Talofa and warm greetings from Samoa

Acknowledgements

The UNFCCC COP 28 decision to transition away from fossil fuels, although did not go as far as we the most vulnerable countries wanted, it is the beginning of the end for Fossil Fuels.

The doubling of energy efficiency and tripling of renewable energy as part of the COP 28 decision, we hope will turbo charge the transition with financial flows to the needed private and public sector, innovation and availability of efficient technology, policy changes to support affordability and accessibility of such goods and services to the general public, and more importantly, in keeping the 1.5% temperature goal alive and help to stop us from signing our people and planet's death certificates.

Transitioning away from dependence on fossil fuel is a key priority for Samoa and for the Pacific as a whole. It has been the Pacific and small island developing states biggest concern since the signing of the UNFCCC in 1992, for even back then, we had already witnessed first-hand the impacts of climate change on our islands, economies, and people.

So it is quite encouraging to be part of this summit and to hear from experts in the sector, the practical aspects that we need to be addressing, the solutions that we need to be elevating, so that we are not too far off from what my country and our region have been asking for – a cleaner and sustainable development pathway.

Global Level

My attendance here is an opportunity for me to share views from the various ‘hats’ Samoa wears, which are very much interlinked to the discussions today. Samoa is currently the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), so in that capacity, Samoa is responsible for amplifying the voices of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from around the world. Samoa is also the Pacific Political Climate Champion for Mitigation consolidating the Pacific voices across all relevant forums including the UNFCCC and opportunities like this.

As small island developing states, we are very clear that phasing out fossil fuels is necessary to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This is a scientific fact. More importantly, it is about ensuring that the future of our nations remain secure. So these summits where we showcase practical solutions to this issue that continues to be debated at the global level, is critical. It highlights that the solutions are there and instead of ‘talking’ we need to be actioning them.

Regional Level

At the regional level, our Leaders aspire to a Just and Equitable Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific. Given the diversity of our region, they also acknowledge that the pathway to achieving this is not immediate nor is it one-size fits all.

The discussions today and tomorrow is something that I am very much looking forward to. It looks at the full spectrum of issues that need to be considered in order to harness the potential opportunities renewable energy presents. We are hearing from practitioners who have gone through the trials and errors that we can learn from and inform our vision of a fossil fuel free Pacific.

Though this summit only focuses on the Electricity sector, it is the innovation and the problem solving that is important and has the potential to be replicated across other sectors. For the Pacific, the transportation

sector is one of the largest sectors highly dependent on fossil fuel and presents a potential opportunity for more efficient and greener models.

National Level

In the context of electricity – the Pacific presents a diverse landscape. Access to electricity can be as low as 12% of the total population for some of our countries and up to more than 95% for others. Not all of our countries have hydro and wind power capabilities. Ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC) could present potential opportunities but is very much untried and the economics is still very risky. Solar energy is common across the region, but even this can be a challenge for small motu or coral atolls with limited land. But in presenting these statistics, the opportunities to work with the Pacific is immense.

Some of our countries have set a goal of 100% renewable by 2020 while others have set their goal to 2030. For Samoa, we have an energy sector plan that will be implemented over a five-year period and currently is up to 2028.

We have explored different kinds of renewable sources including wind, biomass, solar and hydro. Petroleum products make up 70% of Samoa's total energy supply of which the transport sector accounts for 60% while the electricity sector accounts for 25%.

Samoa's Pathway for sustainable development 2022 – 2026, sets a target of 70% of renewable energy use by 2031 with the aim to provide affordable, reliable, safe, and clear energy supply for all in the long term.

However, we note the transition to renewable energy is not without its challenges. Samoa like other Pacific Islands, is uniquely challenged in its decarbonization efforts given its geographical isolation, financial and technological constraints, and high vulnerability to climate impacts. To address these challenges, Samoa is committed to collaborating closely with international partners and interested investors to develop robust policy and regulatory strategies as well as upgrading of these infrastructures.

Samoa's Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure, and Sector is leading the implementation of the Pacific Green Transformation Project in Samoa which aims to decarbonize the transport sector, a priority action under our Low Emissions Development Strategy (LEDS).

I am also pleased to share that our Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is scheduled to launch its Renewable Energy Rebate Scheme this year with the aim to accelerate decarbonization of the transport sector, the tourism sector and community sector through schools and community centres with the support of the New Zealand Government.

Moreover, a National Carbon Offset Programme is also in the pipeline and will provide for an innovative financial avenue to promote green and renewable energy projects at the community level as part of our campaign to create sustainable communities in the long term.

On raising awareness around renewable energy and its contribution to climate change mitigation. Every year, Samoa celebrates Renewable Energy Day in December to showcase our government's commitment to accelerate sustainable energy transition for our people. This annual event brings together our Energy sector stakeholders, partners and communities to reflect on the importance of renewable energy on our fight against climate change.

Like the rest of the Pacific, Samoa is doing its part to increase its ambition, to meet the urgency of the climate crisis, despite our negligible global emissions. In this regard, Samoa's 3rd Nationally Determined Contribution or NDC will continue to enhance emissions reductions and renewable energy adoption towards a low carbon economy. More focus will also be on adaptation approaches as we consider also including Loss and Damage as part of our NDCs.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you again for the opportunity to be part of this summit. I look forward to learning more over the next 2 days and I do hope that this conversation continues and involves more of our Pacific islands. And more importantly finding partners that can help us accelerate our transition to clean energy.

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