Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank the Secretariat for the documentation provided to inform discussions on this agenda item. For Samoa, we reported during our Second VNR report last year, that there was already evidential regression of some of the positive progress reported in our review due to the impacts of COVID-19.

The next steps in accelerating SDG implementation, is determined against the context of continued threat of natural hazards and climate induced disasters and an uncertain and unpredictable future and global economic environment. The COVID19 pandemic is not just a health issue, it is a development, environmental, human rights and a security concern. Thus, pursuing the 2030 Agenda in alignment with our Samoa 2040 strategy and the Pacific 2050 strategy is key to any sustainable and resilient recovery strategy for the pandemic.

Building back better
For Samoa, key to our efforts in building back better and SDG implementation includes, investing in improved social protection, strengthening our health system, accelerating climate and disaster risk reduction, realizing the benefits of a digital economy; prioritizing accurate and timely data collection, management and analysis; policy coherence and ensuring effective aid coordination.

**Partnerships**

In all our efforts, our partnerships are critical to our success. For example, Samoa is currently working with the UN on expanding the coverage of its social protection measures in place. This is an important step in our response to the impacts of climate change, natural disasters, global shocks and the COVID-19 particularly for the most vulnerable. Enhancing our digital economy is one of the key priorities of the recently launched Samoa 2040 strategy, and Samoa continues to work closely with many key development partners to realise this vision. **Inflow of grants and budget support funds** remain vital to our response efforts especially with our economy registering a contraction of -3.5% at the end of June 2020. Lastly, COVID19 vaccinations are an important factor in our response plans. Offers of quality vaccines from partners such as New Zealand for the Polynesian countries in the Pacific to ensure full coverage of the population and close collaboration with the UN and all contributors to facilitate equitable access to vaccines from the COVAX facility, makes all the difference for a Small Island Developing State like Samoa.
**Strengthening regional cooperation**

This spirit of effective and mutually respectful partnerships needs to be harnessed when we identify solutions for a regional approach to recovery from COVID19. Our Pacific subregion continue to prioritise the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development as our pathway for SDG implementation. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, a Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP C) was established as a mechanism to provide the enabling political environment and commitment to expedite assistance and cooperation among and between member countries in preparing for and responding to COVID-19. This was done by enabling the provision of medical and humanitarian assistance from all development partners in a timely, safe, effective and equitable manner.

We could also explore opportunities within our Asia Pacific region to help ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID 19 through partnerships between subregions for example. Strengthening digitization; sharing experiences, lessons learnt and technical expertise especially in health sector; public –private partnerships and financing are some important areas to explore.

Thank you Chair.