NATIONAL STATEMENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

Mr/Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,
The Government of Samoa remains fully committed to the ICPD agenda and the Ministerial Declaration of the 6th APPC adopted in 2013.

Five years later, we are pleased to report that the Government of Samoa has made progress in a number of areas, however, some challenges still remain for Samoa to address in progressing the ICPD Agenda.
In 2017, Samoa launched its Population Action Plan 2016-2021 drawing from its National Strategy for the Development of Samoa, in order to strengthen planning and policy analysis taking into account population issues when formulating our national policies and priority development projects, ultimately improving Samoa’s overall social and economic development.

We note some of the progress in the different broad areas as follows:

Sexual and Reproductive health, service and rights showed progress in some key areas such as:
- The Adolescent birth rate has dropped from 39/ 1000(2011) to 31/1000(2016)
- The Skilled Birth Attendant is relatively high with a slight increase from 80.8% (2009) to 82.5%(2014)
- The Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has reversed its direction from 28.7 % (2009) to 24.3% (2014) and therefore needs a lot of push for improvement in the future
- The Total Fertility Rate dropped from 4.7 children per woman in 2001 to 3.8 children in 2016
- The Unmet need for family planning dropped from 45.6 % (2009) to 35%(2014))

Education progress highlights:
- Developing targeted courses for the youth school drop-outs through the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development in collaboration with the National University of Samoa;
- Strengthening support and upskilling efforts for young mothers who have married into villages where there is no direct family support, through the Nofotane Project by UN Women

Poverty Eradication and Employment
- In addressing wealth inequalities that lead to poverty, the Government of Samoa has expanded employment opportunities through increased
schemes for different level of skilled workers. This include (4) additional schemes such as the Code 121, Duty concession, Apprenticeship and the Seasonal employment scheme

Gender equality and women’s empowerment
- The development of the district plans facilitated by MWCSD provided a platform for the engagement and empowerment of women, and a broad cross section of the community, in the design and implementation of 5 year development plans. The integrated approach allowed partnership amongst MWCSD, SFHA, Samoa Red Cross, Samoa Cancer Society and National Kidney Foundation to support greater ownership and engagement of women, men, youth, persons with disabilities and the older persons in addressing pertinent population dynamics including Sexual and Reproductive Health Services and Rights, Gender based Violence and Non-Communicable Diseases. It is also an important platform to encourage political representation of women in Parliament.
- Empowering women in rural communities through a loan scheme supported by the South Pacific Business Development (SPBD) in Samoa.

Adolescents and Young People
- The peer educators played an active role in conducting youth to youth community outreach. We see progress in youth empowerment and engagement in an open and intergenerational dialogue on matters pertaining to their life choices, their health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Ageing
- The Government provides a pension for aged persons reaching 65 years of age and they have free access to ferry transport and medical services.

Urbanization and Internal Migration issue has been addressed through:
- Prioritising the Development of social and security services in the rural areas to minimise migration
- The development of School policies for students to attend their own district schools.

Data and Statistics is vital
- The development of Statistics is improving as the latest Samoa Population and Housing Census 2016 report and related documents (Disability Monograph, District Profile) considered the importance of data to be disaggregated by sex, age, urban-rural, education, employment and people with disabilities. All the documents were launched with the involvement of the community, government and non-government organizations.

Although we note some of the progress achieved, Samoa still faces continuing challenges and we urge member states to consider:
The prioritising of the following issues in national policy, resource allocation and programming:
- Emphasising the need to ensure that all women, men and young people have information about and access to a wide range of safe and acceptable methods of family planning, in support of voluntary and informed reproductive choices and education, including measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence based on gender identity or sexual orientation (SOGI)

- Sustainable investments in gender equality and the empowerment of all women by ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal rights and opportunity in all fields and in leadership at all levels of decision-making.

- Acknowledging the importance of policy responses that address inequalities which often impact those already in vulnerable situations. Monitoring and evaluating the progress of our achievement can only be realised in a regional level if we ensure that national and regional accountability framework and effective partnerships, have clear time-bound targets and quality data, to oversee the fulfillment of the outcomes of the ICPD Agenda implementation.

We recognize the role of governments for policy and funding support for social protection, including the extension of pension systems, and health care that enables older persons to make full use of their skills and abilities and to enjoy independence and dignity throughout their lives.

We recognize the importance of a well-managed process of urbanization in promoting sustainable development through greater productivity.

Finally, in keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, we recommend investment including both official development assistance and domestic resources towards urgently improving national population data systems to enable the count and registration of all persons’, regardless of status, ‘and to build capacity for the effective use of such data to improve the delivery of public services and to protect the dignity and human rights of all people

Samoa looks forward to continuing effective pacific engagement partnerships and taking the Asia & Pacific review points forward, together with the invaluable assistance from UNESCAP and UNFPA to the CPD in 2019.

Thank you for your attention.