

# **Developing Programmes for Implementing the 2008 SNA, the 2012 SEEA and Supporting Statistics in the Pacific Region (Apia, Samoa, 20-23 August 2013)**

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**20 August 2013**

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**The Representative of the United Nations Statistics Division in New York  
Members of the International Community  
Representatives of the Pacific Island Countries  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

As the Minister Responsible for Statistics in Samoa I am very pleased to be able to make this Keynote address at the commencement of this important regional workshop on **Developing Programmes for Implementing the 2008 System of National Accounts, and the 2012 System of Environmental-Economic Accounting**.

In this time of economic uncertainty, and especially with the adverse impacts of climate change and other natural disasters becoming increasingly more apparent, the availability of sound, relevant and timely statistics on national economic performance and the contribution of the socio-economic and environment interface is critical.

There is an old English proverb that says "*You can't manage what you don't measure*". The management of our natural environments in the Pacific is critical for the future sustainable development of our nations. At the moment the measurement of the contribution and value of the environment is not well done. The outcomes of this workshop will help to strengthen our capacity to measure the value and contribution of the environment to the social and economic well-being of our people.

In August 2012 the Samoa Bureau of Statistics published its Strategy for the Development of Statistics for Samoa; this was milestone document for the Bureau and provides a roadmap for statistics development for the next ten years.

Within this roadmap we recognise the importance of regional cooperation in statistics development and the use of international best practices on standards and processes. These are clearly set out in the UN's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics which are captured in the Samoa strategy.

Our Government Statistician has recently relinquished his position as Chair of the Pacific Statistics Coordinating Committee but our commitment to the Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy remains very strong.

Samoa, like so many Pacific Island Countries, continues to experience the impacts of the global economic situation. We have also recently experienced the impact of Cyclone Evan and are concerned at the increasing effects of climate change on our environment and our rural and coastal livelihoods.

The emphasis of this workshop on more comprehensively integrating environmental statistics into the national accounts framework is therefore essential. Without a clearer and well-defined methodology it will be very difficult to measure the economic impacts of climate change on our natural environment. Linking environmental and socio-economic data is essential for policymakers.

The measurement of sustainability requires integrated information on the economy, the environment, and social and human impacts. Here in Samoa we are in the middle of a new household income and expenditure survey; this survey when it is complete next year will provide new information on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on the production of our natural resources sectors, and the changing socio-economic environment of the people in Samoa.

Better information and statistics on socio-economic & environment linkages will therefore help to improve national decision making in all Pacific countries as we face the challenges of climate change on our economic systems. Such information will also be useful in monitoring and evaluating regional and national sustainable development initiatives. These include the sustainable development goals which are being developed in the context of the post-MDG development agenda and the sustainable development themes in the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy of Implementation.

The forthcoming ***Third Conference for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to be held in Samoa in 2014*** will provide an excellent opportunity to once again take stock and to highlight the progress of developing and using of statistics in monitoring sustainable development through the economic & environment interface.

I see from the programme that you have a very full and comprehensive agenda to cover this week in this complex yet increasingly vital area of statistics.

I wish you well in your deliberations and hope that you will still be able to find time to experience our natural environment for yourselves.

Soifua (Good day)