

Statement on the 179th Waitangi Day Celebrations, New Zealand High Commissioner's Residence, 6th February 2019
by Acting Prime Minister, Hon Fiame Naomi Mataafa

Reverend Siasia Salesulu

Your Highnesses, the Head of State and Masiofo

The Honourable Member of the Council of Deputy

Honourable Cabinet Ministers

The Honourable Chief Justice and Members of the Judiciary

The Honourable Speaker and Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to congratulate the Government and people of New Zealand, through you High Commissioner on behalf of the Government and people of Samoa on the celebration of the 179th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Thank you for inviting me here today to celebrate with you. This annual event, in my view, serves the very important purpose of reminding us of the long shared history and unique relationship between Samoa and New Zealand as enshrined in the Treaty of Friendship between our two countries. These partnerships were developed in the spirit of hope and the promise for a better future, to realise our development aspirations and to utilise better opportunities for the future of all our children.

It is timely also that our Prime Minister, Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi is presently in New Zealand for Ministerial High Level Talks with your Government, and had the opportunity to briefly meet with your Prime Minister, Honourable Jacinda Ardern. Prime Minister Tuilaepa also had the honor to attend the official commemorations today for Waitangi Day, right at the home of the Treaty, Aotearoa.

I acknowledge the close and friendly relations that our two countries have enjoyed since Samoa became independent. The spirit of cooperation is alive and well and continues to be strengthened as demonstrated by the renewed joint commitment to all development aspects of our bilateral relations during Prime Minister Tuilaepa and The Right Honourable Vaovasamanaia Winston Peters' meeting yesterday, and which have you referred to. Our shared history, Christianity, democracy and the respect as Pacific neighbours that we highly value will continue to bind our relations.

I want to make mention of climate change, which remains our pressing challenge to date. I wish to underscore the need to strengthen our partnerships to find solutions to its impacts, not only at the national and regional level, but on the world stage. I acknowledge and welcome in this regard New Zealand's pledge to increase its support to climate financing as well as placing a special focus on the Pacific.

We recently farewelled our sons and daughters that have secured scholarships to study at Universities and institutions in New Zealand and the region. Educational development is a key

component of our bilateral cooperation to enhance and strengthen our human resource capacity.

We are pleased that we are able to work with New Zealand in many sectors of the economy and on issues of interest to Samoa including towards an efficient and more effective police force, a healthier population, better governance, enhanced security and a cleaner environment including an abundant and pristine ocean. Soon, we will enjoy the new scenery of the Government Building Area at Eleele Fou when the Waterfront Development Project is completed. It goes without saying therefore that we look forward to the continuation of the excellent bilateral developmental partnership between Samoa and New Zealand as well as the close working relationship we have at the regional and international fora.

In closing, thank you again for the invitation to join you in commemorating Waitangi Day this evening.

I wish now to propose a toast to success and prosperity of the the Government and people of New Zealand.

Soifua ma ia manuia.

