

Keynote Address
By
Honourable Lopao Natanielu Mua
Minister of Agricultural and Fisheries

“Samoa-China Business Seminar”
Friday 18th October 2019 at 9:00am Taumeasina Resort.

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all this morning to the Samoa-China Business Seminar, organized and delivered by Pacific Trade Invest China in collaboration with our Embassy of Samoa in the People’s Republic of China, and with the support of the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Samoa Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

China has today grown to become an emerging market for our Samoan exports and tourism industry with continued growth in investment opportunities. This seminar offers you a combined range of export facilitation services information, while also providing you with a deeper understanding of the market opportunities in China, learn about market expectations and trends to help you with your export or tourism plans for China

We have today an array of industry experts from China who will share some insights into their work and provide guidance to you our local businesses planning to enter the Chinese market. I am also pleased we have in our midst senior officials from General Administration of Customs of China (GACC), an important component of export facilitation to give you our exporters an understanding of import standards and market access protocols.

I would also encourage our exporters to utilize this great opportunity to discuss with GACC the prospect of increasing our export volumes of nonu juice and powder, coconut and fetau oils, cocoa products, coconut cream, frozen taro, tuna such as albacore, big eye, yellow fin skip jack, etc.

We will also get the opportunity to hear the experiences of some of our very own leading private sector businesses in Samoa and their business journey. As I look around the conference room this morning, I am very encouraged to see a significant cross section of our export and tourism industry business leaders – an indication of your commitment to growing your respective industries and help position Samoa as a key player in the international marketplace. At this juncture, I want to acknowledge and thank all our presenters, speakers and panelists for accepting the invitation to share your knowledge and experience with us today.

As the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, I would like to see more efforts placed in strengthening the linkages between agriculture industries and tourism sectors in Samoa. Over 25% of our annual food import bill in the last few years has been spent on imported food items mainly for our tourism industry. I am happy to inform you that through our various partnerships with our farmers, including our Samoa-China Agricultural Technical Aid Project that has been in existence for the last 9 years, Samoa farmers are now producing high quality nutritious fresh vegetables and fruits towards import replacement for fruits and vegetables from overseas. But we need to do more! And we have the potential to do so, not individually but collectively. Chinese proverb; **individually, you can go fast; but together, we can go far.** Our Government via my Ministry and our

Samoa Tourism Authority, in partnership with our relevant private sector entities, have developed various agritourism related projects to strengthen the linkages between the two sectors, and we are still exploring funding opportunities with our international development partners, to realise the implementation of these projects, for the desired benefits of our economy, our farmers, our tourism operators our industries, and our people.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Peoples Republic of China and the Huanan Ministry of Agriculture for the excellent funding and implementation of the Samoa-China Agricultural Technical Project. Let me tell you, Dr. Liu and his team is doing an excellent job and some of our Private Sector members , as well as my Ministry will testify to that, so a big thank you for that and hope Phase 5 will be approved soon.

Samoa-China relationship has grown from strength since the establishment of diplomatic relations some 43 years ago. It is through this relationship that Samoa continues to enjoy mutual benefits from people to people connectivity, and the close partnership with China in the development of growth sectors in our economy from tourism, education, health, sports, agriculture and of course human resources development.

Today's seminar is about building partnerships, strengthen collaborations and gauge business opportunities between Samoa and China. I am confident that the deliberations and conversations from today will provide key tangible leads and outcomes for you, but also provide a flavour of what is to come over the next few days as Samoa hosts the 3rd China-Pacific Economic Development and Cooperation Forum later this weekend.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all fruitful discussions today, and I do hope that the outcomes from this seminar will provide lessons that will not only stimulate growth in your export and tourism businesses, but also help enhance Samoa's presence in the international market place.

With those few words, I now declare the Samoa-China Business Seminar officially open.

God bless and Soifua!