

[HUMAN DEVELOPMENT] IS NOW DEFINED BY A PROCESS THAT ENLARGES PEOPLE'S CHOICES BY INCREASING THEIR CAPABILITIES.

[NO MATTER HOW RICH OR POOR A COUNTRY IS] THERE ARE THREE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS THAT PEOPLE NEED TO HAVE IN ORDER TO HAVE A GOOD RANGE OF LIFETIME OPPORTUNITIES.

(1) LONG AND HEALTHY LIVES

(2) KNOWLEDGEABLE

(3) ACCESS TO RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING

The concept of human development is intended to put emphasis on the development of the human being. To measure the extent of human development the quantitative concept of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was initially used. It measures how much a person earns for a living annually in relation to what he/she spends, to determine the extent to which a person's condition has improved or otherwise. However, over the past years the GDP concept became too focused on the economic aspect of the human being and that other equally important human aspects such as education and health were ignored. The GDP concept was consequently considered too narrow an instrument for measuring human development.

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI) was introduced to address the limitation of the GDP to fully reflect all elements of human development and to redirect focus on the total person as the central emphasis of human development. The HDI concept combines the quantitative measurements of the GDP with those of education and health. Statistical analyses of figures compiled by the ministries of education and health in their daily work can be used to calculate the extent to which the education and health aspects of a person have changed over a specified period of time. Therefore, the HDI concept is an improvement on the original GDP concept.

However, despite the improvement of the instrument for measuring human development from the GDP to the HDI, the latter still does not include other equally important aspects of being human such as culture, religion, governance and so forth. As stated in the *Global Human Development Report 2004*, 'allowing people full cultural expression is an important development end in itself'.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty with these aspects of human development is that they cannot be quantitatively measured. In order to gauge the extent of development in those other aspects of human develop-

ment in the Sāmoan context, chapters are included in this report on culture, governance, and religion. They give a qualitative assessment of the situation in Sāmoa and how the conditions described and analysed could be improved upon in order to have sustainable livelihood in a changing Sāmoa. Most importantly, the inclusion of additional chapters in this report is an attempt to understand human development in Sāmoa, to take into account all aspects of being human in order to understand how the human condition could be improved upon progressively.

The notion of an all-embracing concept of human development keeps expanding with that view in mind. Against that backdrop, the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) has gone further and define **human development** as a process that enlarges people's choices by increasing their capabilities.

No matter how rich or poor a country is, there are three essential conditions that people need to have in order to have a good range of lifetime opportunities. They include leading long and healthy lives, being knowledgeable, and having access to the resources necessary for a decent standard of living.

If people are to lead satisfying and productive lives they also need political, economic and social opportunities to be creative and productive, and to enjoy self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community. Increasing incomes is an important way to expand people's choices, but it is not the only one.<sup>2</sup>

Human development is connected to various global issues such as:

- *Human rights*: These include civil and political rights, as well as social, cultural and economic rights, particularly those identified in the United Nation (UN) sponsored international conventions.
- *Collective wellbeing*: Individual and collective wellbeing are connected. Strong social cohesion and an equitable distribution of the benefits of progress contribute to human development.
- *Equity*: Human development promotes equity in regard to wealth and income and also access to basic opportunities, such as education, adequate living conditions and good health.
- *Sustainability*: Sustainability means meeting the needs of present generations without limiting those of future generations, such as by destroying natural resources. Enlarging people's choices today should not be at the cost of people tomorrow.

The theme of this report is *Sustainable livelihoods in a Changing Sāmoa*. Sustainable livelihoods refer to ways of earning a living that are secure and do not deplete the resources that people depend upon. Not all types of jobs or livelihoods necessarily enrich the community, promote human development, or use resources in environmentally or socially sustainable ways. In this small island state, already experiencing environmental degradation, resource-based livelihoods such as agriculture have clear limits to growth. The most sustainable form of livelihood in Sāmoa has been traditional village subsistence agriculture and fisheries. Yet while this has a lower environmental impact than commercial agriculture for export, it does not produce the foreign exchange necessary to support a modern society. Furthermore, in a global marketplace, countries like Sāmoa can at-

tract businesses that are interested most in cheap labour and move on when they find an even cheaper source. Throughout the Pacific, there is considerable interest from 'industries' that want to dump dangerous wastes or engage in activities like gambling, money laundering, or the sex trade that are potentially harmful. Fortunately, Sāmoa has safeguards in place against these unsustainable livelihoods.<sup>3</sup>

There is an important difference here between the terms 'employment' and 'livelihoods' and how they are generally used:

- *'Employment'* is generally used to mean a person's primary, or main, job. The term 'creating employment' is often seen as increasing the number of paid jobs, where a person is formally employed for most of his or her day and receives a wage in cash. 'Self-employment' generally means something similar: that a person has their own enterprise or business to which they give most of their working day and from which they receive a cash or non-cash income. 'Unemployment' means that a person has no such job and, usually, no such income, unless provided by some insurance or government benefit. Used in this way, 'employment' describes fairly well the nature of work in the industrialized countries, where most employment statistics were first developed.
- *'Livelihoods'* is a wider concept, one that better reflects the reality of work outside of the industrialized countries. In developing countries, households often get their livelihood from a variety of sources, of which formally defined 'work' is only one. Sāmoa, like all other Pacific island countries, has a large traditional economy that provides a considerable degree of food security and is deeply bound together with the maintenance of Sāmoan village society, culture and identity. The true value of this traditional economy is difficult to quantify using conventional statistics. Most attempts to do so have concluded that the traditional sector provides the true strength of Sāmoa.

The promise of formal sector jobs sometimes draws attention away from the repercussions that commercial ventures can have on other forms of livelihood, particularly those in the 'traditional' or informal sectors. The likelihood in Sāmoa that labour force growth could outstrip formal sector jobs, together with the vulnerability of the physi-



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cal environment, reinforces the need to sustain the semi-subsistence and informal sectors as an important source of livelihood. Strengthening the social structure of Sāmoa is bound up in a fundamental way with the challenges of sustaining livelihoods and addressing inequalities. These are critical issues for Sāmoa and will be central to future human development trends in the country.<sup>4</sup>

The phrase in the theme “**A changing Sāmoa**” directs attention to a society that is in a constant state of flux as a result of both internal and external factors. The latter include the influence of migration, education, trade, religion and, more recently, accelerated globalization brought about by advanced information technology. Internal factors include competition for limited local resources, the existence of traditional structures and associated values, and changes brought about by the dynamics associated with continuous adapting to local conditions for survival. Thus, **sustainable livelihoods in a changing Sāmoa** means ways of earning a living that are secure and do not deplete the local resources that the Sāmoans depend upon, in a country that is constantly changing. This conceptual distinction between external (global) and internal (local) factors that give rise to changes also implies a tension between the same sets of factors. For example, modern strategies put in place to guide and improve economic growth and poverty alleviation could at the same time impact negatively on traditional values.<sup>5</sup>

Human development is about improving people's lives. More than increasing incomes or national wealth, it aims to expand the capability of people to live long healthy and creative lives, to acquire knowledge, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living, and to enjoy dignity, self-respect, and the respect of others.<sup>6</sup> Human development is first and foremost about allowing people to lead the kind of life they choose – and providing them with the tools and opportunities to make those choices. In recent years the *Human Development Report* has argued strongly that this is as much a question of politics as economics – from protecting human rights to deepening democracy. Unless people who are poor and marginalized – who more often than not are members of religious or ethnic minorities or migrants –

can influence political action at local and national levels, they are unlikely to get equitable access to jobs, schools, hospitals, justice, security and other basic services.<sup>7</sup>

In line with the notion of human development embracing all aspects of being human, a gathering of world leaders at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 issued the Millennium Declaration that affirmed global, collective support towards lifting the lives of many from the dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. A set of clear, time-bound objectives; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was established.<sup>8</sup> Since 2000, the Sāmoan government had indicated its commitment to the attainment of the MDGs in its national policies, plans and resource allocation. To assess the extent of developments towards the attainment of the MDGs in Sāmoa a series of national MDGs workshops were funded by the UN in collaboration with the Government of Sāmoa and Sāmoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO) and conducted by *O le Si'osi'omaga Society* in March and April 2004. A summary report of these workshops is one of the chapters in this report.

In line also with the drive towards the attainment of the MDGs, although not intended exclusively for that purpose, are the government policies stipulated in its current development plan entitled *Strategy for the Development of Sāmoa (SDS) 2005–2007* whose theme is “Enhancing people's choices”. The developmental policies stated in this document not only highlights the key sectors to be developed but also the target goals associated with each of those sectors. These key sectors and their associated target goals are either discussed or reflected in the chapters in this report.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World, UNDP, p. v.
- <sup>2</sup> UNDP, 1998.
- <sup>3</sup> Draft Sāmoa National Human Development Report, 2003, p. 6.
- <sup>4</sup> Draft Sāmoa National Human Development Report, 2003, p. 7.
- <sup>5</sup> Thailand Human Development Report 2003, UNDP, p. iii.
- <sup>6</sup> Thailand Human Development Report 2003, UNDP, p. x.
- <sup>7</sup> Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World, UNDP, p. v.
- <sup>8</sup> Tuila'epa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Sāmoa, Government of Sāmoa, Millennium Development Goals: First Progress Report 2004, p. 2.

SĀMOA, LIKE ALL OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES, HAS A LARGE TRADITIONAL ECONOMY THAT PROVIDES A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF FOOD SECURITY AND IS DEEPLY BOUND TOGETHER WITH THE MAINTENANCE OF SĀMOAN VILLAGE SOCIETY, CULTURE AND IDENTITY.

[ THIS TRADITIONAL SECTOR PROVIDES THE TRUE STRENGTH OF SĀMOA ]

