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## Introduction

The work that O le Si'osi'omaga Society (OLSSI) carried out to plan, coordinate, organize and implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Sāmoa on behalf of the Sāmoa National MDG Task Force during the months of March and April 2004 provided a solid basis for these comments. This opportunity provided an enabling environment and a truly consultative forum to capture the input on real life experiences of all sectors in the village communities on the issues addressed in the eight MDGs.

Involving government officials and members of the Sāmoa Umbrella of NGOs (SUNGO) to give presentations on each of the goals, further strengthens the claim that this approach was strategic and inclusive. It is consistent with the global drive to truly involve the people in the communities, who are themselves the primary targeted beneficiaries of these MDGs, to contribute to shaping a genuine response by Sāmoa on which human development indicators are relevant for them in the broader community that will need to be integrated in any calculation defining sustainable livelihood from a Sāmoan perspective.

It was evident from the government presentations that Sāmoa is quite advanced in its progress towards the achievement of the MDGs as a number of these have already been addressed in their past and ongoing national Sāmoa development strategies (SDS) in the areas of macro economic framework, education, health, primary sector development, employment creation, enhance agricultural opportunities, strengthen social structure, tourism opportunities, and public sector efficiency. In their view, Sāmoa had already taken responsibility to address these issues as priorities for the country in advance of the MDGs, and the reports to the United Nations will reflect this.

For civil society, this opportunity helped the representative population of village people from

selected villages of Sāmoa, and from all sectors of village society, to hear directly from the government and SUNGO members what activities they are involved with in their respective efforts to help Sāmoa progress further to achieve the MDGs. It also gave many village people the chance for the first time to have their say on how they themselves are working towards these goals and elaborate on what difficulties they are experiencing, and suggest ways needed to address these goals from their perspectives as people living in village communities.

The following comments on each of the eight goals reflect the presentations from the government and SUNGO resource persons. They capture the views of the village peoples shared during the working groups, discussions, debates, and drama presentations. The three questions that formed the basis of the data captured were with reference to the usefulness of these goals for Sāmoa for which there was a resounding affirmative response; what ways would they suggest to achieve these goals; and how useful were the MDGs in their daily lives. OLSSI was also responsible for the shadow report for the MDGs from a civil society perspective and text from this shadow report form a major part of these comments.

Television and radio programmes were also aired throughout the weeks leading up to the two



national workshops. Television spots involved informative statements on the MDGs, while radio presentations allowed participation by selected government officials and NGO representatives to speak on each MDG, and to receive live telephone calls from listeners that facilitated question and answer sessions as well as discussion. These sessions were again coordinated by OLSSI on behalf of the Sāmoa National MDG Task Force which included UNDP, members of SUNGO and government.

The Sāmoa MDGs progress report: an agenda for action, is therefore a truly participatory and collaborative product of joint efforts by communities and civil society, and the Government of Sāmoa.

## MDGs' Status at a Glance

The community consensus at the two major workshops in Upolu and Savai'i, where participants from villages around the two main islands as well as from Apolima and Manono, was that all eight MDGs were relevant to the situation of Sāmoa. However, there was also general agreement that some of the targets and indicators, although relevant for some developing countries, may not be strictly appropriate in the case of Sāmoa given its current level of social and economic development.

The following table gives an overall snapshot of the general status of Sāmoa given each MDG as synthesized from community conclusions and specialist presentations.

Table 2 (overleaf) indicates the status of various measuring variables used to determine the

status of each development indicator, giving its known value and the applicable year. These indicators emphasize aspects of development, such as education and health, more so than normally discerned from strict economic analyses and presentations that can skew towards economic growth that is sometimes not equitably or socially desirable in its incidence and distribution. Latest figures available have been used. In some cases published figures differ from those currently advised by representatives of respective responsible agencies.

The following sections discuss the eight MDGs in turn, and give more details concerning progress towards achieving the targets and goals established, as well as some of the challenges faced by the country in pursuing these development objectives.

### 1. Eradication of Extreme Poverty

The primary global target set for this goal is to "halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people whose income is less than one (US) dollar a day". The second target is to "halve between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger".

The average daily income on a per capita basis in Sāmoa is already above the minimum threshold set by the UN of one dollar per day. The second target is also claimed to be not significant or widespread in Sāmoa. However, the government has set targets that are more challenging than those set by the UN, and continues to promote development policies aimed at improving the lot of every Sāmoan resident. Also,

TABLE 1: GENERAL STATUS OF MDGS

Goals	Status towards achievement	State of supportive environment
Extreme poverty	Achieved-target higher than UN	Strong with positive policies
Universal primary education	Almost achieved-achievable	Strong-education policies in place
Gender equality	Noted progress-achievable	Strong-empowerment policies in place
Reduce child mortality	Achievable-already low	Strong-comprehensive programme ongoing
Improve maternal health	Noted progress-achievable	Strong-associated with child health programme
Combat HIV/AIDS and other major diseases	Some progress	Fair - awareness programmes improving
Environmental sustainability	Some progress	Weak - need better understanding of conservation and development relationship
Global partnerships	Slow ongoing progress	Fair but need more civil society participation

Source: Synthesized from community workshops discussions and general conclusions.

as stated in the UNDP Pacific Human Development Report 1999: *"It is poverty of opportunity that is at the heart of the problem of poverty, not just poverty of income... Poverty of income is often the result, poverty of opportunity is often the cause"*.

Both the government and civil societies, as well as the communities at large, nevertheless, consider that this MDG, in so far as localized targets are concerned, is important and appropriate for Sāmoa. The government, for example, through its Ministry of Finance, has conducted a local survey and assessment of the basic needs of a local resident. It calculates that an average person requires about 2,200 kcal per day, equivalent to around SAT3.53, to be adequately sustained.

To access other essential needs like clothing, schooling, housing, travel and traditional needs,

including food mentioned above, each person requires SAT5.36 per day, or SAT1,956.40 per annum. The country's nominal GDP for 2001 of SAT849,870,000, divided by the total population as counted by census for that year of 176,848, is SAT4,805.65. This is almost two and a half times the minimum required for a relatively adequate subsistence as calculated by the Ministry of Finance. However, as mentioned above, the per capita distribution of the nation's total income is unlikely to be so evenly spread.

The Housing Survey conducted by the Statistics Department during 1997, however, showed that 7 per cent of Sāmoa's "families" were living below the food poverty line, with 20 per cent of "families" living under the overall essential needs criteria. Although difficult to be definitive about these numerals because families differ in size, and some much more below the poverty line than



others, the figures vindicate the general view reflected by the villages and by members of civil societies in the two national workshops that there is poverty in Sāmoa. Also, some of the items included in the basket of essential needs, like schooling, travel and traditional needs, can vary from family to family.

It is apparent from the above discussion that living conditions for people in Sāmoa are much better than the minimum thresholds set by the UN. However, it is also apparent that much needs to be done to achieve a more balanced and equitable distribution of the national income so that the remaining 20 per cent of families living under the overall essential needs line move above it. The government has outlined nine key areas of development strategy aimed to achieve overall socio-economic development and also help alleviate this problem.

The current strategy emphasizes “*opportunities for all*” while the previous one was premised on a “*partnership for a prosperous society*”. To achieve the stated goals of providing opportunities for all, civil society is of the view that much more attention needs to be paid to the idea of working in partnership with the government as espoused in the previous Statement of Economic Strategy (SES). It has long been recognized that government agencies have inherent inadequacies in undertaking certain kinds of ventures, like business enterprises. It is contended that such a conclusion can also be made about numerous functions effectively and efficiently implemented by NGOs.

## 2. Achieving Universal Primary Education

The stated target for this MDG is to “*ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling*”. Unlike poverty and hunger discussed above, this goal has clearer challenges for Sāmoa. During 2003 only 84 per cent of primary school age males, and 85 per cent of females, were enrolled at schools. This compares to 83 per cent and 85 per cent for 2002, and 81 per cent and 83 per cent for 2001, respectively.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) aims to have achieved a 100 per cent enrolment rate at the primary level by 2015, to have 100 per cent of children achieve an education level up to years eight, and that all children 5-14 years old can read and write. These targets place Sāmoa alongside other developing countries within the target parameters set by the UN.

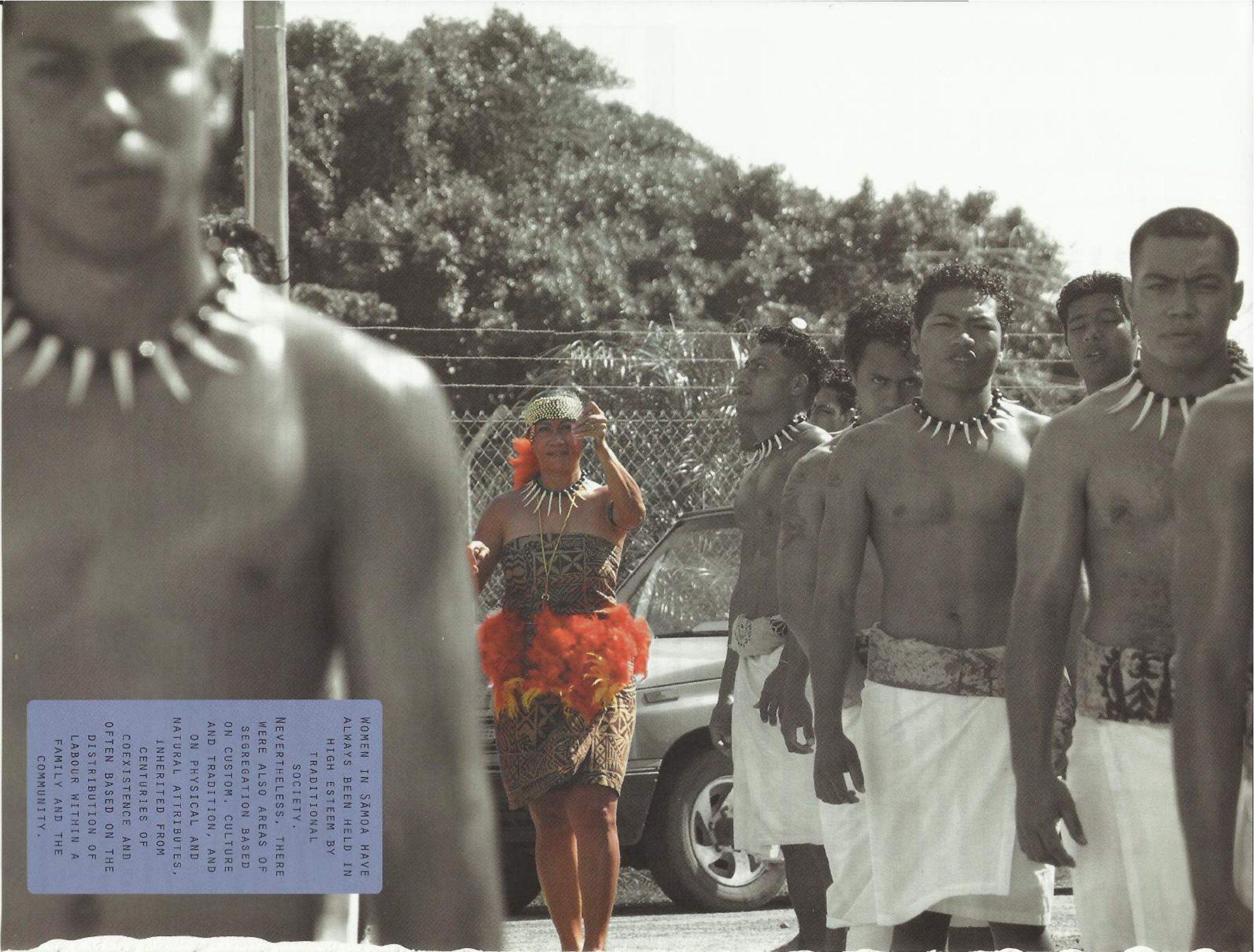
To achieve a 100 per cent attendance by children at the primary level in ten years time, from an average of 84.5 per cent in 2003, is a major undertaking. It will require an increase in annual enrolment of 1.6 per cent, made more difficult because children affected will increasingly be at the margin. Also, achieving the target of all 5-14 year olds being able to read and write by 2015 would require 100 per cent attendance almost im-

TABLE 2: STATUS OF KEY DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Key development indicators	Value	Years
Population size	176,848	2001
Annual population growth rate	1.29%	2000
Life expectancy at birth (females)	71.9 years	1997/1998
Life expectancy at birth (males)	65.4 years	1997/1998
GDP per capita	SAT4,806	2001
External debt as % of GDP	54.8%	2002
Poverty ratio (population below poverty line-US\$1/day)	7% of households	2000
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	12	2003
Aged 5-14 years enrolled in primary schools	94.7%	2001
Enrolment ratio for girls in primary school	85%	2003
Enrolment ratio for boys in primary school	84%	2003
Enrolment ratio for girls in secondary school	62%	2003
Enrolment ratio for boys in secondary school	48%	2003
Literacy rate for 15-24 year olds	99.9%	2003
Literacy rate all adults	95.7%	1999
Population use of traditional wood fuel	<50% and dropping	2000
People without access to safe water	10%	1999
Prevalence of HIV/AIDS (known cases)	4	2004
Prevalence of non-communicable diseases	increasing	2004

Sources: Various official and UN reports, plus information submitted by officials at the community workshops.

Note: Figures released by the Ministry of Finance after the above table was prepared show GDP per capita for 2003 at SAT4,990, and External Debt at a ratio of GDP at 50.8 per cent.



WOMEN IN SAMOA HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM BY TRADITIONAL SOCIETY. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WERE ALSO AREAS OF SEGREGATION BASED ON CUSTOM, CULTURE AND TRADITION, AND ON PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ATTRIBUTES, INHERITED FROM CENTURIES OF COEXISTENCE AND OFTEN BASED ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF LABOUR WITHIN A FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY.

mediately. The Ministry, likewise, claims 99.9 per cent of 15-24 year olds can read and write. Based on current enrolment statistics, this cannot be possible, unless some of those involved undertook other forms of reading and writing education, or returned to school at some later stage of their lives.

According to the census of the population conducted in 2001, the 5-14 age group totalled 45,933, of which 43,479 attended school full time, 103 attended school for only some time, and 2,351 did not attend school at all. Therefore, according to the census, approximately 5.1 per cent of 5-14 year olds never attended school at any time. Not available from the published data is the number of at least five-year-old children that later attended school, say when they became six or seven, or those temporarily not attending.

In addition to achieving the ambitious targets outlined above, the Ministry also recognizes that developing a comprehensive pre-school educational system, and integrating it with the primary schooling system, remains a challenge. As well, the Ministry has recently formally commenced a programme that addresses children with special needs. At present, there also exists legislation that mandates education for all. Implementing this legislation would require a host of incentives and disincentives that would compel full attendance.

To achieve its educational targets, the Ministry hopes to work closer in partnership with communities and village school committees. Its current development programmes that involve improvements to school buildings and physical facilities, teacher training, and resource enhancements, are designed to assist schools to achieve these set targets. However, civil society is of the general view that it would take a more holistic approach, encompassing in particular family development and enhancing economic resources for the relatively not so well off, to achieve the set targets for this MDG.

### 3. Promoting Gender Equality and Empower Women

The main target set by the UN for this MDG is to **“eliminate gender disparity in primary and**

**secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015”**.

The discussion of school attendance above highlighted the ratios of males and females enrolled at primary school level. For the past three years females in Sāmoa have consistently been better represented at primary school, one percentage point more than their male counterparts. This may be due to the general perception that boys in adulthood can better fend for themselves, and that there are more manual and other income earning chores for young males than females.

The disparity, however, becomes even more stark at secondary level. For the immediate past three years, 2001, 2002 and 2003, males enrolled at secondary school level represented 46 per cent, 44 per cent and 48 per cent respectively of all males at secondary school age. Females, on the other hand, represented 55 per cent, 54 per cent and 62 per cent of their peers. This trend, if it continues can eventually result in the reverse of this UN MDG, and that females in Sāmoa will become better educated than their male counterparts.

According to the 2001 census of the population 1,044 males and 953 females aged 15-24 years attended the university preparatory year, or some years at post secondary, or post secondary schooling at an educational institute, or at a university. Attendance at universities alone, however, shows a different picture. During 2001, 129 males and 227 females attended university for this age category. Again, this highlights a general attendance more favourable to females, in contrast to the perceived gender disparity envisioned by the UN.

The MESC figures show both genders in the 15-24 age group have a similar percentage representation that can read and write, at 99.9 per cent each. The census count for this population group in 2001 was 31,929. Ministry figures, therefore, indicate that just 32 people from within this category could not read and write. Females represent 46.58 per cent of this age group, implying 15 females in the group cannot read and write, again a favourable rating from the point of view of empowering women.





Employment statistics, however, show a different picture. According to the 2001 census of those aged 15 and above, 67.5 per cent of males were economically active while only 32.2 per cent of females were so engaged. This is largely explained by the number of females in this age category that declared they were engaged in "housework" or were "housewives", 31,339 in total, representing 62.2 per cent of the total number of females in this age group. The figures can also be misleading because of the relatively significant level of subsistence activity undertaken by people labelled as domestic workers.

Women in Sāmoa have always been held in high esteem by traditional society. Nevertheless, there were also areas of segregation based on custom, culture and tradition, and on physical and natural attributes, inherited from centuries of co-existence and often based on the distribution of labour within a family and the community. In modern times, however, a lady has been on the Cabinet since 1991. Three women are Members of Parliament. Six (Seven) are also currently Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries. Many more hold positions as deputy CEOs, as well as responsible positions in the private sector and within NGOs.

#### 4. Reduce Child Mortality

The stated target for this MDG is to *"reduce by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 the under-five mortality rate"*.

According to the Ministry of Health, during the year 2003 there was recorded a 1.2 per cent death rate for babies born live in Sāmoa, or a ratio of 12 deaths for every 1,000 births. Comparative figures for previous years from 1990 were not available. However, according to the Demographic and Health Survey, 1999, there were sixteen child deaths in 1997 and thirty-three in 1998, a significant increase between two years, although not sufficient to provide a meaningful series. Assuming that the course for reducing the child mortality rate is on target, this death rate needs to have been reduced to at most six out of every one thousand births by 2015.

A number of reasons have been given for child mortality in Sāmoa. These include inattention by

the mother to her condition during pregnancy, hard and heavy work by the mother during pregnancy, or the mother had some serious disease when she was carrying. These include diabetes, hypertension, and others like an inadequate diet. Poor service delivery by the obstetrician or midwife is also not ruled out.

The baby can also be born with, and be subject to certain ailments and conditions that contribute to early mortality. These include heart diseases, asthma, blood conditions (Hb), diarrhoea, pre-mature birth, malnutrition, use for delivery of unsterile equipment, not fully developed organs, as well as contributory causes like the habitual early weaning and adoption of babies. Programmes by the Ministry of Health currently address these concerns relating to both mothers and babies.

Although maternity services by community traditional caretakers are increasingly being recognized by the Ministry, and are given basic training by ministry staff, representatives of communities consider that other considerations also impact on this mortality factor. Appropriate education programmes for both expectant parents are often necessary. Providing appropriate training for traditional midwives can extend this advisory service, especially to more remote communities.

Sometimes it is the lack of family resources to meet these precautionary conditions that result in general neglect. Inadequate transportation and financial resources, for example, can result in insufficient visits to and consultations with appropriate health specialists. The general improvement of living conditions for all people, therefore, is also necessary alongside specialized programmes by the Ministry of Health if the set targets for reducing child mortality are to be achieved.

#### 5. Improve Maternal Health

This MDG targets reducing *"by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio"*.

Health programmes targeting maternal health are closely associated with those for reducing child mortality. Figures were not presented by the speakers at the workshops on this MDG, and



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so it is not possible to outline the magnitude of the task needed to reduce by two-thirds maternal mortality as targeted by the UN. A comprehensive programme by the Ministry of Health, however, is ongoing to address this concern.

One aspect of the Ministry's current efforts to curb maternal mortality and increase maternal health is closer working relationships with "traditional" birth attendants. This has led to more recognition of traditional healers and the provision of basic training for them in general maternal services. The Ministry has registered 89 such traditional caretakers, and has an ongoing programme for their further training. During 2002, 330 mothers were attended at birth by traditional maternal caregivers, representing 9 per cent of total births in Sāmoa that year.

Some of the reasons given by health officials and members of the communities for maternal mortality include the need by expecting mothers to recognize the special condition they are in when pregnant. Also, mothers and the family in general, must be aware of the potential difficulties this condition entails, and how important it is to recognize the value of health and life itself. Some mothers are lost through blood loss, late arrival at the hospital, lapses in maternal services, and the lack of financial and other resources for the mother to be properly cared for, and sometimes just being irresponsible.

General awareness education and training is seen as an important way to address the weaknesses mentioned above. This often requires participation by expectant fathers as well as mothers. Delivering such services requires cooperation between government officials of the Ministry of Health, village communities, and the individuals involved and their families. Awareness and the application of basic remedial actions such as sticking to a balanced diet, suitable exercise,

avoiding heavy work, regular medical checks, and avoiding harmful traditional massages are some of the basics that the Ministry is trying to instil through its educational programmes.

## 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

This MDG proposes to *"have halted by 2015 and have begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS"* and *"have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases"*.

The general consensus by the communities and government health representatives at the workshop discussions was that Sāmoa had some other more pressing health problems than those specifically mentioned for targeting by this MDG. HIV/AIDS, however, was considered a potentially looming health disaster, and was therefore relevant. Other diseases that needed urgent attention in the case of Sāmoa, though, included hypertension, related heart problems, diabetes, obesity, various cancers, and other lifestyle diseases. Malaria, a major scourge in many tropical developing countries, is not a threat in Sāmoa.

The official count of those that have been infected with HIV/AIDS in Sāmoa between 1990 and 2003 is still stated officially as 12, eight having since died while four are alive and being treated. The cost of treatment medicine alone is estimated at around SAT28,800 per case per annum. These four cases are handled by the Ministry of Health, although it is claimed that there may be others who have sought treatment elsewhere themselves. Given this, it is possible therefore, that more than four HIV/AIDS infected persons live in Sāmoa.

The incidence of the HIV/AIDS in Sāmoa is therefore still relatively minor compared to some other countries. The main cause is still sexual

A number of Samoan families have set-up trusts and fundraising activities to help the community combat certain illnesses. The family of Lanuola Keil, who passed away after a long battle with diabetes brought to Samoa, in its 10-years of raising funds, NZ Idol winner Rosita Vai, Australia Idol runner-up Emily Williams for its 2006 fundraiser. Although not pictured but also performing in the show were Mary Jane McKibbon-Schwenke and rising Opera sensation Ben Makisi.

PHOTO BY SARAH JOHNSTON



GOVERNMENT'S MINISTRY  
OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DEVELOPED IN 2001  
"A COMPREHENSIVE  
STRATEGY FOR THE  
CONSERVATION AND  
SUSTAINABLE USE OF  
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SET BY MDG-7.

transmission, except for the case of two children who were infected through their mothers. However, another major source in the spread of the disease, especially from highly affected to relatively unaffected areas, is travel. Even small atoll countries of the Pacific with significant contingencies of sailors working cargo ships abroad have been targeted in prevention programmes. This can become an increasing concern for Sāmoa as well, although alcohol has been identified as the major problem thus far in this area.

Workshop discussants were at a quandary over aspects of the administration of HIV/AIDS programmes. For example, it is often the case that the “rights” of the person infected to confidentiality and a hidden identity is strenuously protected. However, it was also claimed that this can and has resulted in the spread of the disease elsewhere, when irresponsible carriers have passed on the HIV virus. Likewise, the cost of treatment is phenomenal, and comes mainly out of the public purse. Some views expressed favoured greater public awareness of these cases.

The Ministry of Health has had for some time ongoing programmes aimed at reducing the incidence of many of the non-communicable diseases mentioned above. It has been claimed recently, for example, that two out of every ten persons in Sāmoa may be diabetic. Epidemiological extrapolations also indicate a high and growing incidence of other lifestyle illnesses such as hypertension and related heart diseases, as well as stroke, asthma, diabetes and obesity. Comprehensive health programmes continue to combat these trends, but because they are rooted in the way people live, it continues to be an uphill struggle.

## 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability

The main target under this MDG is to “*integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources*”. A second target is to “*halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation*”, and a third, “*by 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in*

*the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers*”.

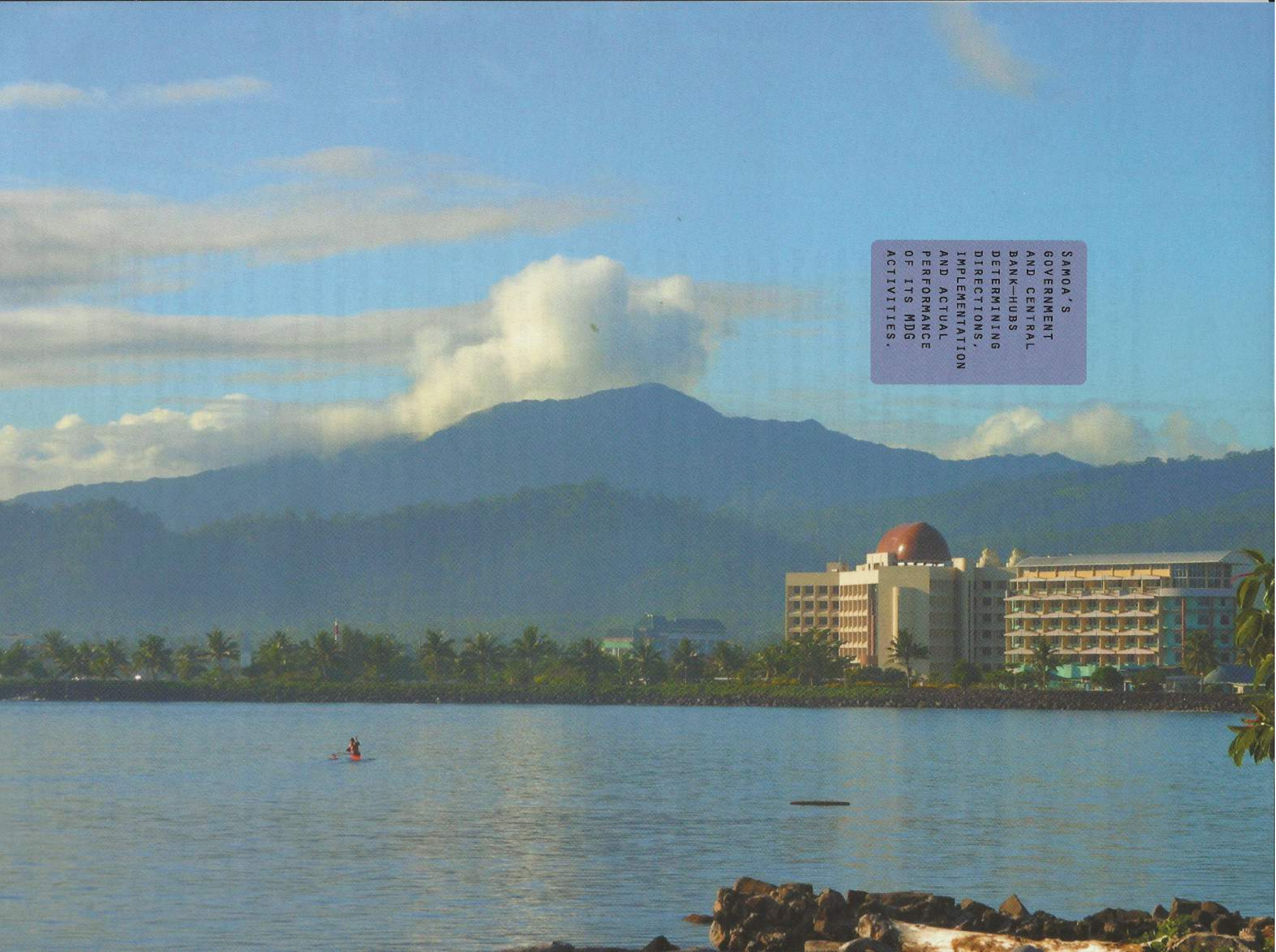
The Government has progressively over the past fifteen years built up its official institution responsible for safeguarding the environment, initially the Lands, Surveys and Environment Department, now renamed the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). Over the same period, there has also been a community response to environmental degradation, with civil society responding with their own NGOs addressing concerns about the environment.

Deforestation continues to be a major concern. Most major electric energy generation had targeted the country’s major wetlands and water catchment areas. Yet again, there are current official plans to extend this exploitation from Upolu to Savai’i, with the only remaining major water catchments area in the country still free from electricity application finally being pursued. Commercial logging and agriculture expansion also continue to contribute to the reduction in forest cover. Occasionally, forest fires, cyclones, and in places the spread of invasive species, also provide threats to the ability of forests to regenerate.

The 1998 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has yet to be formally approved by Cabinet. This has continued to tint the real and genuine thrust of government policies concerning sustainable development and the environment. The current land for logging concessions granted to commercial loggers will run out soon. Because forest plantations developed by the government under its reforestation programme have been handed back to the communities, it is imperative that the capacity of communities to manage their forest resources, especially given the impending next round of arrangements with commercial loggers, need priority attention.

The MNRE developed in 2001 “*a comprehensive strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of Sāmoa’s biological diversity*”, and it is claimed that “*an integrated and organized approach to addressing biodiversity issues is in place*”. This is essential to achieving the targets set by this MDG. Nevertheless, it is also necessary, in addition to having such a strategy to also

SAMOA'S  
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BANK—HUBS  
DETERMINING  
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OF ITS MDG  
ACTIVITIES.



The functions and regulatory apparatus of the Central Bank of Sāmoa have been enhanced.

Its regulatory responsibilities relating to international financial transactions and transfers have been developed in cooperation with similar financial institutions internationally.

Locally, its supervisory functions in relation to the operations of local commercial banks have been stepped up.

have the will and the means to implement it. Communities feel that the Ministry needs to work closer with NGOs and the wider community in implementing this strategy.

The energy and water sectors in Sāmoa, which contribute to environmental concerns in many ways, continue to be one of the fast-growing local industries. For example, they represented 2.5 per cent of GDP in 1995, 2.8 per cent in 1998, and 3.4 per cent in 2002, and accounting for growth during that seven-year period of 36 per cent, an average of 5.14 per cent per annum. Petroleum consumption, on its own, grew from approximately 43.1 million litres in 1989 to about 71.2 million litres in 1998, representing an increase of 65.2 per cent over that ten-year period.

The dramatic increases sustained by the economy's sectors mentioned above, in reality, are due in part to their initially low base. As well, in the case of electricity and water, these coincided with extensions to these services to cover most of the country, both urban and rural. The former traditional sources of energy, woodfuel and coconut residues, are also estimated to have declined drastically over the past few years with increasing monetization of the economy and a significant decline in purely subsistence activities.

The Sāmoa Water Authority was formally established in 1993. A number of major water improvement programmes were implemented prior to the establishment of the authority and since. These included a rural water supply project funded by the European Union (EU), maintaining freshwater quality at the community level projects funded by the International Waters Programme, a water metering project, a water-chlorination scheme for the greater Apia water supply, as well as others that have generally im-

proved the quality and availability of water to most parts of the country. Civil societies have also been active in some villages to develop clean community water supply systems.

However, cyclone damage and continuing land clearance are major threats to the ability of water catchment areas to hold water, as well as affecting the ability of remaining rivers to provide quality water. Sustaining the ability of catchment areas to provide adequate quality water will increasingly be a challenge with growing population pressures on both water use and agricultural land for development.

## 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

This MDG sets out a number of targets for measuring progress. These are:

- i. Develop further an open rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system, including a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally
- ii. Address the special needs of the least developed countries, including tariff and quota free access for least developed countries' exports; enhanced programme of debt relief for HIPC and cancellation of bilateral debt; and more generous CDA for countries committed to poverty reduction
- iii. Address special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly)
- iv. Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of the developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term



- v. In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries
- vi. In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication

Like some of the other goals and targets discussed above, these measuring guidelines have varying application and relevance to Sāmoa. Others, however, are necessarily mostly government driven, and involve international relations and coordination and cooperation with other governments and international agencies. Some, though have specific relevance to local situations, such as the relationship between local government agencies and civil society.

Developing an open and rule-based and predictable non-discriminatory trading and financial system has been the objective of government reforms involving the financial sector over the past decade.

Important reforms have been made to the local financial environment, and the functions and

regulatory apparatus of the Central Bank of Sāmoa have been seriously enhanced. Likewise, regulatory responsibilities relating to international financial transactions and transfers have been developed in cooperation with similar financial institutions internationally. Locally, its supervisory functions in relation to the operations of local commercial banks have been stepped up.

Serious attention has also been paid to the subject of good governance, especially within the government and the public sector in general. Numerous workshops, and attendance at such training programmes overseas, have been the norm over the past five years.

A major institutional strengthening programme has also been in place for some years, aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector. These programmes have been expensive, and their effectiveness difficult to measure. Only where actual service delivery has been delegated to a non-government implementing agency has the results been readily measurable.



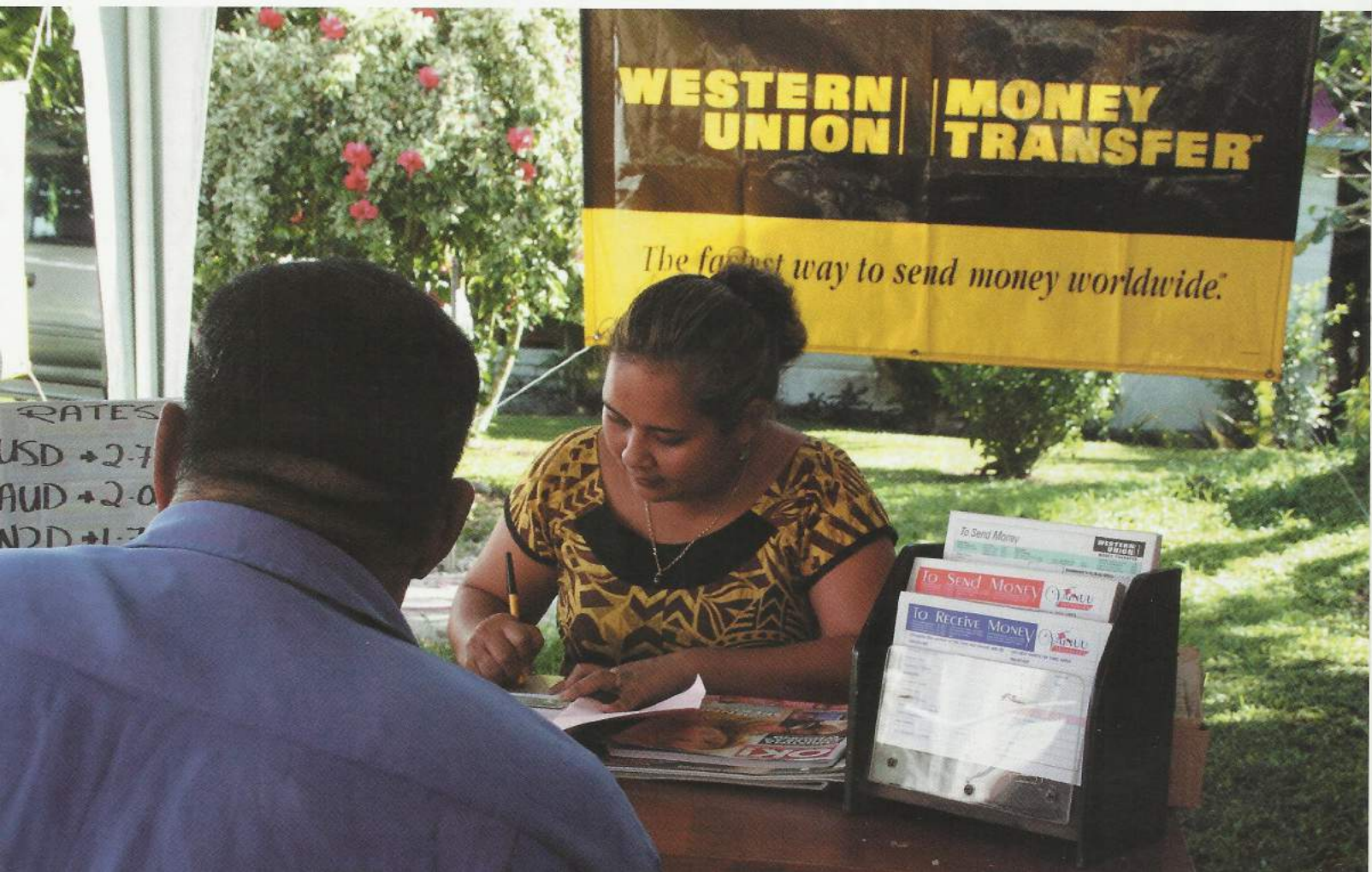
Civil society is also generally of the view that more transparency and independent representation at corporate board level are necessary to ensure good governance. For example, because government companies, corporations and agencies are government owned, appointments to their boards of directors and to steering and advisory committees are typically made at the political level. In some cases, this process does not lend itself well to the expression of an independent viewpoint and availability of technical competence needed at this level by the client corporation.

Many of the UN-suggested measures to address the special needs of least developed countries are not strictly applicable to the case of Sāmoa, mainly because of the country's placement at the margin of those states labeled LDCs. Discussed under the section above on Sāmoa's economic situation, the country's official overseas indebtedness is regarded to be in fair shape. Official development assistance has also consistently been of significant volume relative to its

GDP and population. And the country continues to benefit immensely from the generosity of its people overseas.

Market access, on the other hand, is an area needing development. Touted as the means to economic growth, Sāmoa instead has been facing stiff opposition in Europe to its exports of 'ava. Neighbouring markets like Australia and New Zealand have stringent conditions for imports of various fruits, especially those demanded by the Pacific Island communities in these countries. In the case of these two countries, bilateral assistance in the form of technical and other services to help Sāmoa overcome these trade restrictions would be appropriate. In the case of the EU, it would have been in the spirit of the Doha agreements to provide assistance to establish finally the efficacy of claims for and against the use of 'ava.

Opportunities for opening up employment avenues for youth remain a major challenge for Sāmoa given its youthful population and restrictive local opportunities for employment creation.





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YEARS WITH THE  
AVAILABILITY OF  
TELEPHONY SERVICES. THE  
BUILDING BY TELECOM  
SAMOA OF A GSM NETWORK  
FOR LAUNCH IN MID-2006  
WILL INCREASE CELL  
PHONE COVERAGE TO 90%  
OF SAMOANS.

Import tariff reductions introduced to open up the economy has already had an impact on local manufacturers. Reduced duty rates have benefited consumers through cheaper imports. However, it requires applying major structural readjustment to the operations of local businesses that produce similar goods. The policy has materially shifted incentives towards construction and service industries such as tourism-related activities, and repair and maintenance services.

At the multilateral level, the opportunity for Sāmoans to migrate to developed countries like Australia and New Zealand will remain a real potential for extending opportunities for job creation. This is nothing new or extraordinary because these two countries have had a free flow of their labour forces between their borders for many years. An arrangement along these lines for Pacific island countries might have been considered under the recently negotiated PICTA and PACER agreements under the auspices of the Forum Secretariat. Likewise, there is potential to extending arrangements like the one under which Sāmoan sailors and other personnel are employed.

Because of the size of the local private sector, and also that of the public sector relative to industrial operations overseas, opportunities for negotiating arrangements for the cheap supply of medicines are limited, although opportunities exist, especially through arrangements with larger developing countries, and especially concerning generic medicine. The concern again, however, is one that is not so profound for Sāmoa given its current needs and state of its economy. Niches, nevertheless, exist for irregular arrangements with overseas manufacturers, suppliers and philanthropist organizations that facilitate and service such needs from time to time.

Extending the availability of modern technologies, especially those associated with information and communication, received major strides in recent years with the availability of telephone services to most areas of Sāmoa. Telephone lines, especially, have been significantly extended. Cellular phone coverage, however, has remained static for some years, and needs to ex-

pand manifold to reach most of the country. The use of personal computers has also grown impressively in recent years, including access to the internet. This includes their availability within schools around the country, and also their proliferation among users such as church ministers throughout Sāmoa.

#### Role of International Development Agencies (IDAs), Government, and NGOs:

Bilateral and international development agencies have an important ongoing role to play in the development and the achievement of the MDGs in Sāmoa. The level of official development assistance, and the volume of development finance procured under softer than commercial terms, have continued to play major and pivotal roles resourcing basic infrastructure and long-term development projects in the country. Because of the low local savings rate, and also the dearth of opportunities to earn surplus income from exports and other economic activities, this situation is expected to persist long into the future.

Government's approach to the implementation of various social development and service functions in the country has also been undergoing some noticeable changes over the past decade. A number of service delivery agencies have been corporatized, with others commercialized. Some ministries have been relegated a more regulatory role, with the delivery of related public services consigned to commercial enterprises. The results have been positive, and there should be encouragement to do more of the same, targeting other ministries. In addition to strictly profit-oriented entities, however, there are numerous public services, especially those with more of a social nature, that can be effectively and efficiently delivered through non-governmental civil societies and organizations.

The formal arrangements for facilitating the identification and acquisition of financial resources for developmental programmes necessarily have to be coordinated through the government. This allows for a proper watch and tally of total resources availed to the country, especially

from bilateral and international governmental sources. Nevertheless, given the growing sphere of responsibilities and programmes tasked to various civil societies with appropriate competence, it must follow that, just like the overhaul needed when the functions of some key ministries were relegated to commercial interests, some of these primarily social functions - projects that can suitably be implemented by some NGOs - should be reviewed with a view to better smoothly facilitate the flow and timely utilization of resources, and the effective and efficient delivery of related services.

The partnership between IDAs, government and civil society in Sāmoa is based on very firm

grounds. Many of the government's service delivery are traditionally based on customary and social norms. Like its partnership with business, there are opportunities for NGOs and the government to also further strengthen their relationship. A major step has been made with the designation of a member of the Cabinet as the Minister for NGOs, the Prime Minister himself. Better defining and formalizing this relationship and partnership will result in enhancing effective communication and efficient service delivery.

The community view is that there are also opportunities for greater participation by NGOs at the governance level. Although members of civil society are routinely recruited to various special-



ized government task forces it is considered that such representation can be extended to the board of directors and advisory and standing committees of a number of government corporations and ministries.

Access, for example, to *ad hoc* government resources like income from gambling licenses, is one avenue for closer collaboration between civil society and the government in resourcing and delivering related social services.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Given the foregoing scenario, the following opportunities emanate from recommendations made on all the eight MDGs that came out of the two workshop processes and through the views shared in the meetings amongst members of the civil societies, village citizens, government, and NGOs. It is important to utilize the opportunities emanating from these recommendations to follow these up with the government, other identified development partners, NGOs, and with the village communities in particular to make sure that the peoples themselves are in fact the central focus of these eight MDGs and are receiving direct benefits from their implementation and targeted outputs and outcomes.

**MDG 1 :** It is recommended that more recognition and acknowledgment of the existence of “poverty of opportunities” is afforded in official government policy formulation and implementation so that the effect of development programmes aimed at alleviating these conditions are better targeted.

It is further suggested that the use of economic indicators like GDP per capita can distort the actual situation of many special groups in the population and that such indicators should be coupled with on-the-ground surveys.

**MDG 2 :** The conduct of preschools and other “pre-education” and non-formal activities are mostly undertaken by NGOs. Without these civil society services the goal of achieving literacy for all within the age group 5-14 years will not be achievable. It is recommended that more recog-

nition and assistance be given to these pioneering activities.

**MDG 3 :** The common use of the label “housewife” and “domestic duties” applied to womenfolk distorts the important and significant social and economic contribution made by women.

It is recommended that the description of “women” as used for economic categorization be reviewed, and that a more representative and impartial label such as “home managers” be developed that suits the local situation.

**MDG 4 :** Health programmes have been in place for some time aimed at reducing child mortality. It is recommended that greater accountability and transparency, in terms of service quality promotion and control, and in related professional education and training, be made a priority. Enhancing partnerships with traditional and NGO service delivery agents should be further enhanced.

**MDG 5 :** The existing programme that provides training by health officials for traditional midwives should be expanded and enhanced. Expansion should include training in other related aspects of health care other than aspects restricted to normal midwifery functions. Such an enhanced training programme would be more effective at the rural level if delivered in association with NGOs involved at that level, such as women’s committees. As well, with increasing urbanization, similar services may be necessary in newly densely populated urban communities.

A key employment destination for Samoa’s youth population is New Zealand. All staff of New Zealand Immigration Services and New Zealand High Commission go on a Retreat in June 2006 to explore ways to service Samoa’s public better. The retreat was led by NZ High Commissioner, H.E. Paul Adank.

**MDG 6 :** Because malaria is not prevalent in Sāmoa, it is recommended that health advocacy programmes should target more non-communicable diseases, including mental disorders, that are on the rise in the country. Instruction and awareness programmes to combat HIV/AIDS must continue.

**MDG 7 :** The longstanding issues of conservation and development continue to be controversial in Sāmoa. It is recommended that more transparency is necessary, and that the independent evaluation and review of development projects with potential adverse long-term impacts on the environment, should be encouraged. Approving and implementing EIA regulations

drafted some years back is an urgent need. Outsourcing government functions, especially so as to facilitate local community inputs, will contribute to sustainable development.

**MDG 8 :** It is recommended that the Government review and establish guidelines and routine procedures that steer relationships between the government and NGOs. This may involve an enhanced role for the umbrella of NGOs in Sāmoa, as well as policy and procedural processes in relationships with the Minister for NGOs being the Prime Minister himself and his Ministry. Such a review needs also to include policy and procedures with respect to the UN and other donor governments and agencies.

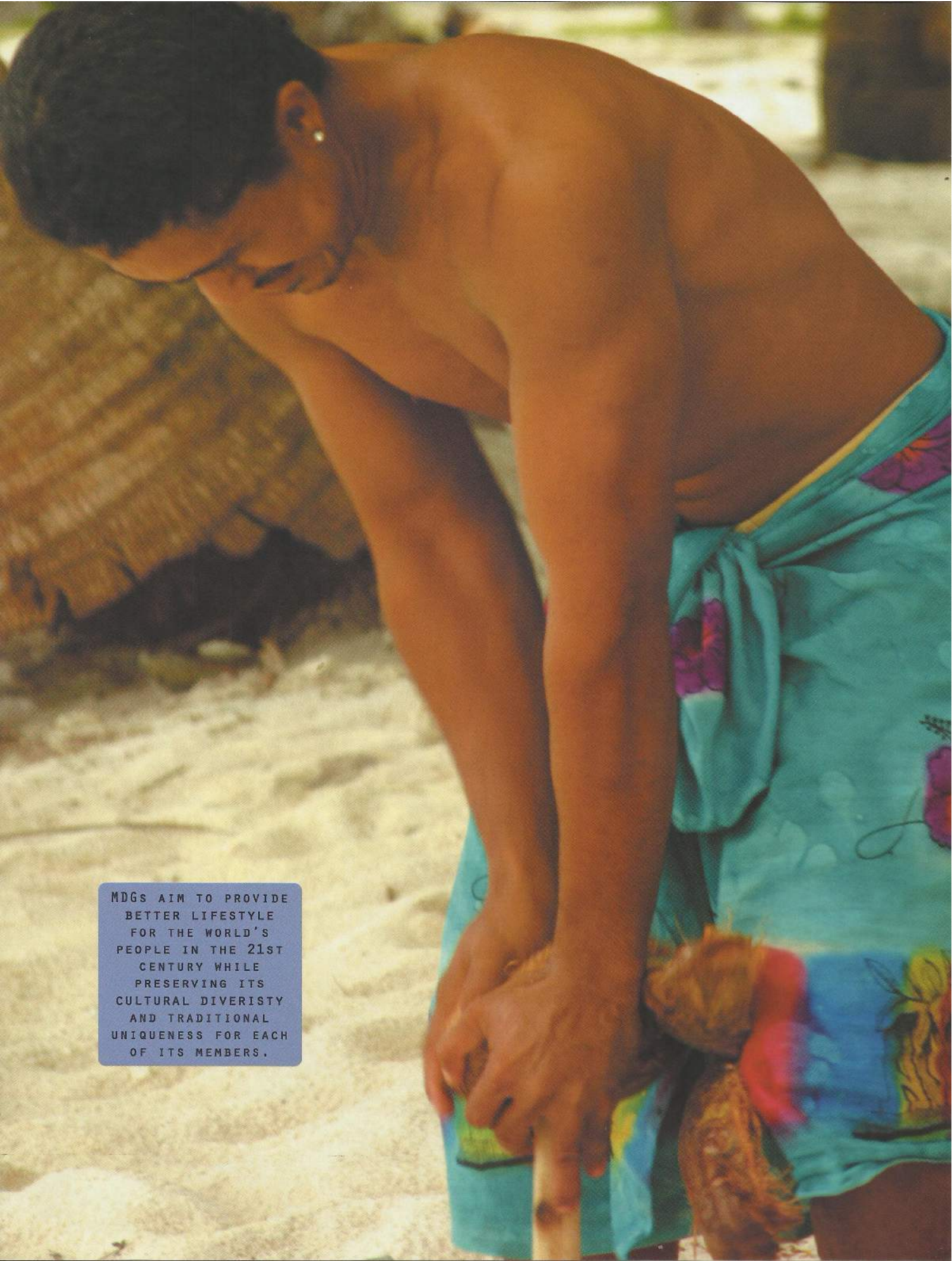
### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Hinauri, Fo'isaga, Palanitina, Rula, To'ia, Lofi.









MDGs AIM TO PROVIDE  
BETTER LIFESTYLE  
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CENTURY WHILE  
PRESERVING ITS  
CULTURAL DIVERISTY  
AND TRADITIONAL  
UNIQUENESS FOR EACH  
OF ITS MEMBERS.