



**Samoa's National Statement delivered by Honorable Tuilaepa Sailele  
Malielegaoi at the  
High-Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly to  
Commemorate and Promote the International Day for the Total  
Elimination of Nuclear Weapons  
Thursday, 26 September 2019  
Conference Room 4 (CR4)**

Mr President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for convening this important High-Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly, to Commemorate and Promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr President,

Once again, we mark the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons where the issue of nuclear weapons is all too vivid to some of our island countries in the Pacific, as they were sites for these nuclear weapons tests. The scars and threats from these real-life experiences have united the Blue Pacific continent when the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty or the "Rarotonga Treaty" was entered into force in 1986. The presence of the zone has played a deterrent role to try and safeguard our region against nuclear weapons and also to protect the Ocean, the Pacific's main resource from radioactive contamination caused by dumping of nuclear wastes at sea. We are committed to cooperate and coordinate with other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, States, International Organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations concrete actions to move us closer to achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, we are still at a time of heightened global tensions among nuclear-armed States. We will all be victims if the vast, unbridled power of these abhorrent



weapons is unleashed – which is why we must all work together to abolish them completely.

Mr President,

Today also marks one year since Samoa ratified the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**. We firmly believe that possessing nuclear weapons and adding new nuclear powers only make our world less safe, less secure and less peaceful – hence the need to rid our world completely of all nuclear weapons. The Ban Treaty marks a breakthrough in the efforts towards nuclear disarmament and highlights strong political commitments to achieve and maintain a nuclear free world. It will not impede nor hinder, but strengthen existing Nuclear Proliferation regimes. Its success, over time, will depend on the commitment of each and every UN member State. With each new signature and ratification, we will strengthen the global norm against these ultimate weapons of terror. We will move one step closer to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Samoa encourages all States that have not yet done so, to sign up and to ratify the Ban Treaty as a matter of urgency.

Mr President,

As a small Pacific island State, Samoa has no way to protect itself from the threat of nuclear weapons. Indeed, no nation, regardless of size or wealth, can protect itself from these weapons. Our only protection is international law. That is why Samoa is so deeply committed to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and continues to place great faith in the rule of law and the vital protection it offers to all States.



We must never grow complacent about the threat that nuclear weapons pose to our fragile Earth. Nor must we ever give in to the pressures of those who wield these horrific weapons and are fighting hard to preserve the perception that they are somehow legitimate weapons of war.

I also wish to emphasize that they are a threat to our environment and health through nuclear contamination seeping from nuclear waste storage facilities and into the oceans and seas. The Pacific Islands Forum leaders have reiterated their call in its fiftieth Communiqué, the need to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific. We have spoken this week about the urgency of united global action to address the climate crisis and I also believe that the imperative to eliminate nuclear weapons and nuclear wastes should be part of that discussion.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by reiterating Samoa's firm belief that the only guarantee humankind has against the use, and the threat of use of nuclear weapons is through the non-possession and total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

I thank you