



Malo o Samoa

# State of the Environment

## REPORT 2006



MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT





# STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2006



Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Government of Samoa

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2. Samoa's Capacity Building and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management ( SLM ).

Particular tribute is paid to Isikuki Punivalu & Associates (IPA) Ltd, the NCSA Project Team and members of the various Environment Committees for their valuable contributions to this 2006 State of Environment Report. Members of numerous community-based organizations are also acknowledged for their generous support of the broad consultative processes that drew on the diverse views of a wide cross-section of society. Further consultations will now need to take place from an implementation perspective. The MNRE is committed to meeting Samoa's development Goals and Objectives as outlined in the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) (2005-2007).

I would, therefore, also like to acknowledge the assistance provided by all staff of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment who assisted in the final preparation of this Report. There is now, throughout this document, a sense of urgency to respond to some major global issues: climate change impacts being only one of them.

The 2006 SOE is a document that be can be relied on when addressing environmental sustainability.



Tu'u'u Dr. Ieti Taule'alo  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Map of Samoa



## Foreword

The 2006 State of Environment Report (SOE) Report illustrates very clearly Samoa's environmental vulnerabilities and challenges, as well as supporting the creation of a more enabling sustainable development environment. Much of this Report, however, summarizes the current state of knowledge about the environment of Samoa. It instigates the move towards identifying Sustainable Environmental Management (SEM) indicators, and then covers them separately in the areas of climate change and ozone depletion, coastal and marine resources, water resources, land resources, tourism resources, forestry resources, biodiversity resources, even Samoa's socio-economic situation, as well as institutional responses to natural resource management and development trends. This Report provides valuable information and base-data to act as a gauge against which to measure the future state of Samoa's environment.

This Report will hopefully ensure that quicker action can now be taken should there be signs of further on-going and unnecessary environmental degradation and delays in restoration and/or responses. Also included in the 2006 SOE Report is a pertinent discussion of cross-cutting issues (such as tourism development and waste management) which provides some interesting perspectives on the challenges that are impinging even further on the quality of Samoa's economic environment, sometimes unbeknown to us. It has been written in a style which will make it accessible to a wider Samoan audience, even encouraging individuals to take responsibility themselves for things such as air quality, water quality and biodiversity conservation, to mention a few.

As well, it is valuable to have such an up-to-date document as the 2006 SOE Report which is useful not just to policy-makers, but also to the wider rural community. This Report thus builds on the initial 1993 SOE Report providing also available information to date with the hope of increasing capacity development at all levels of stakeholders. This latest information is, therefore, vital when developing on-going strategies aimed at environmental protection and sustainable development.

The MNRE, in collaboration with all Ministries, Government Corporations and the private sector will be seeking some modern innovative steps, including renewable energy and food security projects, these being implemented urgently if we are to address the vast array of increasing environmental challenges before us. Obtaining the alternate (as well as traditional) technologies and investments needed remains a challenge for Samoa. Also, putting a traditional '*tapu*' on all trees and forests within Samoa may be a further interim and innovative step that Samoa can seriously consider because of the severity, urgency and compounding future impacts as outlined in this Report. Every village within Samoa is now invited to play an intimate role in achieving this goal: attaining sustainable livelihoods for all before 2015. This 2006 SOE Report tells us:

- (i) exactly what steps need to be taken right now,
- (ii) how we can improve our capacity to respond more quickly to on-going environmental and developmental challenges before us, and
- (iii) how further long-term environmental research and monitoring is required in order to take full advantage of the global funds being targeted for environmental restoration and protection within Pacific Island Countries ( PICs ).

The Government of Samoa ( GoS ) is committed to sound environmental management because this translates directly into sound socio-economic development for all, addressing especially Samoa's rural communities which are currently ill-equipped to tackle increasing and costly global climate change impacts, on-going and severe consequences of land degradation and deforestation, increasing pollution and further loss of potable water supplies, not to mention increasing energy demands and increasing energy costs, worsened by energy inefficiencies (estimated to be 16%) and an increasingly less viable subsistence existence as invasive species continue to cripple our livelihoods.

Also, we need all the regional and international environmental organisations tackling the environmental and sustainability issues, as identified in this 2006 SOE Report, in harmony. We all need to take a collective approach as sustainable livelihoods for all Samoans and all Pacific Islanders are our goal.

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This Report, therefore, can be used to help guide Samoa towards attaining sustainable livelihoods for all within the shortest possible period. However, it requires increased commitment levels from the The Government of Samoa, under-pinned by an on-going innovative capacity development initiative which is still required by all key stakeholders, especially the private sector and our international development partners.

Samoa, finally, is committed to emitting more oxygen, absorbing more carbon dioxide, filling its carbon sinks and hopefully move towards a 'green' economy. 'Going Clean and Green' is not only good for economic competitiveness in the long run, but a green economy can also help attract new kinds of renewable industries to Samoa and so may result in further job creation and new export markets (e.g. for valued adding goods; ecologically-packaged and processed organic food products; biofuels; etc.).

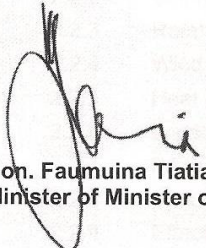
Finally, we need to learn from the 'environmental and developmental successes' highlighted in this 2006 SOE Report.

Because of past non-sustainable practices in fisheries, forestry and agriculture in Samoa, Samoa's future environmental restoration costs will be excessive. Take into consideration the current high cost of water reticulation infrastructure management in Samoa today, primarily because of serious damage being caused to our water catchments in the past and further impacted even today. The Government is now seriously looking at mainstreaming all natural resources holistically, including agriculture and fisheries resources that remains to be sustainably managed.

To also help guide the responses expected from the MNRE, and all other stakeholders, over the next 10 years or more, the MNRE would like to encourage a national monitoring programme of all the different parameters (Sustainable Environmental Management Indicators [SEMIs]) that are relevant to environmental management, sustainable development, as well as monitoring such parameters within individual sectors such as agriculture, education, forestry, health, rural communities, tourism, etc. Unless the awareness of these issues is raised significantly amongst all stakeholders, and unless their relationship with each other is realized and accepted, and unless immediate actions are being holistically taken, then further delays will be indeed costly for all future generations. This 2006 SOE Report endeavours, therefore, to offer this option, guiding the readers, and all the stakeholders, through all the different development scenarios. This 2006 SOE Report is, therefore, a development blueprint and your support is paramount to its success.

So, what will it take to make us all take notice, to act now, to think globally and act locally? First, you will need to read and understand this latest SOE Report on the status of Samoa's delicate and vulnerable environment, and then assist the Government of Samoa as best you can to put in place a system to ensure our heritage is protected for all generations to come.

As Samoa's human resource development continues to evolve, and as the benefits of long-term monitoring of SEMIs are realized, the next 3<sup>rd</sup> SOE Report should hopefully show some marked improvements across-the-board in all sectors. On behalf of the Government of Samoa, I would like to thank you all for your patience and all your welcomed contributions to date. And without the assistance of the community-based organizations and the non-government organizations, this task would have been very difficult indeed.



Hon. Faumuina Tiatia Liuga  
Minister of Minister of Natural Resources & Environment

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