

CONGRATULATORY STATEMENT FROM H.E. TUILAEPA LUPESOLIAI NEIOTI AIONO SAILELE MALIELEGAOI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF SAMOA AND PRESIDENT OF THE OACPS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON THE OCCASION OF THE OACPS' FIRST ANNIVERSARY

It is an honour and a privilege to be part of today's celebration marking the first anniversary since the coming-into-force of the revised Georgetown Agreement and the formal establishment of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

On behalf of the Government and people of the Independent State of Samoa, I offer our warmest congratulations on this occasion and reaffirm our strongest commitment to being a dedicated and integral member of this august organization. We in the Pacific value and are pleased to be part of this larger body which shares an understanding of the challenges confronting small islands developing states and those in Africa and the Caribbean. The COVID-19 has affected all of us and has driven home the reality that we, as a global community, need to support each other. Similarly, the existential issue of climate change must be the topmost priority of our collective efforts.

I also extend greetings on behalf of the OACPS Council of Ministers, of which, Samoa currently holds the Presidency, and consequently, the Chair of the Committee of Ambassadors.

In our quest for sustainable and inclusive development, Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement and our respective regional and national strategies, guide us. Together with our principal and long-standing partner, the European Union, we are committed to succeed, to improve the lives of everyone, and ensure no one is left behind.

Finally, I wish to extend my own personal congratulations to the Governments and peoples of our Organization, to the leadership and staff of the Secretariat, and to local, regional and international partners who

work with us to achieve the mission and vision of the Organization, and to serve the interests and challenges of our citizens.