

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates and dear colleagues, Talofa with a smile from the people of Samoa. Today I stand before you in this General Assembly as a second Speaker and representative of Samoa, again small in size but mighty in spirit, to champion good governance and the empowerment of every community. Our faith in these principles is not abstract. For Samoa, and for all nations, inclusivity, trust and equal opportunity are not luxuries; they are necessities for progress and peace.

These are not just ideals, they are the standards by which we must be judged. Every time a decision is made, we must ask: do these affected see themselves reflected in the outcome? If not, we betray the public trust and our mandate as leaders.

Enhancing good governance therefore requires more strengthened government institutions. It requires empowering people and communities to participate meaningfully in governance, strengthening trust between citizens and institutions, and ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities, vulnerable groups and communities in all parts of the country have opportunities to contribute to and benefit from national development.

Good governance is not only about how government makes decisions, it is about whether people are able to participate in those decisions, trust the institutions responsible for them, and have fair opportunities to benefit from development.

Good governance demands more than policies and promises; it demands action, fairness and transparency. Empowerment is not a slogan, it means inviting people to shape decisions from the outset and following through with real, tangible support. This is the only way to turn trust into lasting progress.

My first point, inclusion. Samoa's journey is living proof, when all voices are at the table, our answers are smarter, our communities more resilient, and our unity unbreakable. In the face of climate change and global uncertainty, no voice can be left behind.

Across the globe, governments, including Samoa, promise to consult their people. But consultation alone is not enough. If we listen only to the loudest, we silence the quiet wisdom of elders, the creativity of youth, the concerns of women, and the insights of people with disabilities. In Samoa, when we planned new water services, we sat with the daily users, the mothers, the farmers, the school children, at the start. That is how we built trust and found solutions that truly worked. Let's not just hear; let's listen and act.

My second point, trust is the engine of good government and the glue of strong societies.

Trust is not handed out with titles, it is earned day by day, through visible actions and unwavering honesty. When we fall short, we owe our people transparency, not silence. We must explain, not evade. Only then can we expect continued faith in our leadership.

This principle applies as much in this Assembly as it does in Apia or any village council. When we make a promise, the people of Samoa, and all our citizens, must see where we stand, how resources are used, and what remains unfulfilled. Accountability is not a box to tick, it is our contract with the people.

My third point, opportunity. Opportunity is not a slogan for speeches, it is a promise and in Samoa we know promises must be kept.

Too often we declare, “Young people are the future”, but what of the present? Opportunity must be real and immediate. In Samoa, youth councils work with government, not just observers, but as partners, budgeting, planning and shaping projects that affect them. We must pair every voice with real power to act. Let us not just promise opportunity, let us deliver it. Our future depends on it.

Some may argue that involving more people slows us down or hands power to the already power. These concerns are real, but we must ask, is efficiency worth more than justice? We address these challenges head-on by reaching those left out, setting timelines, sharing results and showing whose voice shaped the outcome. True progress is measured not by speed, but by impact and inclusion.

Let me be clear, I do not expect unanimous agreement. Democracy is not about everyone thinking alike. But I do hope that every decision to be one we can explain, defend and stand by because the people of Samoa and every nation deserves leaders who are accountable and courageous.

Leadership is not measured by how many meetings we hold or how many speeches we give. It is measured by outcome. Who was heard? Who had influenced? Did our actions make life better for our people? These are the questions that we must guide this Assembly, and every parliament, council and cabinet around the world.

Dear Colleagues, inclusivity ensures that people have a voice, Transparency provides people with information, accountability builds confidence in institutions, opportunity enables people to participate in development, trust connects all of these elements together.

The goal should therefore be to continue developing a governance environment in which communities are simply recipients of government policies and services, but active partners in the shaping the country’s development. In this sense, empowering,

communities is not separate from good governance it is one of the ways through which good governance can be strengthened.

This is how we strengthen governance, empower communities and create genuine opportunity for all. This is vision Samoa stands for, and the future we invite this Assembly, and all nations to build alongside us. Let us be bold. Let us lead. Let us not leave anyone behind.

Soifua and God Blesss.

Thank you.