

The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations Inc.

- SUNGO -

National President:
Lavea Peseta Lua Nafoi

National Treasurer:
Taule'ale'ausumai F Toni T

National Secretary:
Mataafa Faatino Utumapu

Chief Executive Officer
Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia

28 April 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations hosts the Civil Society Organization Forum for its members and non-members, to explore opportunities to strengthen the engagement and recognition by development partners and Government of the role of civil society organizations, as well as selecting two representatives to sit in the CSSP Steering Committee.

28 April 2023, *Ti'afau Fale, Millenia Hotel, SOGI* – Close to one hundred members of the Civil Society Organizations, who gathered at the Ti'afau Fale Millenia Hotel Sogi, for the Civil Society Organization Forum.

The Civil Society Organizations Forum officially started with a word of prayer, led by Reverend Tiafa'afo Gatoloai, from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa at Tulaele; who emphasized the importance of having several people work together, to accomplish a task; as the saying goes, "*many hands make light work*".

The keynote address was delivered by the Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Afioga Toeolesulusulu Cedric Schuster, who highlighted the role of Civil Societies within the country. He also congratulated SUNGO for the effort in nurturing the relationship between its member organizations.

There were various presentations at the Forum including one from the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Tautai and Tautua Projects under the Australian Government, as well as a presentation from the United Nations Development Programme. Mr Drew Havea who is the Deputy-Chair of the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO) Board also presented the FALE Project focusing on how communities respond to natural disasters and pandemics. The civil society participants also heard about the Nuanua O Le Alofa Incorporated's Presentation, which voiced the concerns of people with disabilities.

Each presentation concluded with panel discussions, to further clarify issues/matters raised by the Civil Society, during this Forum.

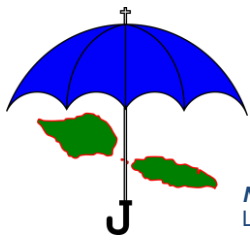
The Key Objectives of this CSO Forum include exploring opportunities to strengthen engagement and the recognition by the development partners and Government of the role of civil society organizations, provide a platform to inform CSOs on nationally available mechanisms/developments and how they can be made available to civil society, provide a platform for CSOs to inform the Government, Development partners, and the private sector on what matters to them, and most importantly is the selection of two representatives from the Civil Society organizations, to sit in the CSSP Steering Committee for the term of two years. After the election, Rev. Siasoi of Vailele Learning Centre, and Ms. Faafetai Alisi were elected to represent CSOs in the CSSP Steering Committee.

End of Release

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