

Keynote Address - Public Service Day 2016

OPENING SPEECH BY THE HONORABLE ACTING PRIME MINISTER and MINISTER OF FINANCE

FMFM II BUILDING

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Afioga Patele: Lauano Falaniko Matulino Members of the Cabinet and Associate Ministers, Members of the Diplomatic Corp, Chairman and Members of the Public Service Commission, All Public Service Employees Ladies and Gentlemen

As Acting Prime Minister and thereby Acting Minister of the Public Service Commission, it is my privilege to greet and welcome you this morning for the commemoration of the 5th Samoa Public Service Day, since its inception in 2012. Talofa and a pleasant morning to each and every one of you who braved yourselves in rising early to be part of this celebration.

FAAMALO LE TAUTUA MATAPALAPALA, MALO LE LOTO NUU.

Today as we observe this significant event, the 5th Samoa Public Service Day, we pause to remember with fondness and honour the memories of those public servants who have passed on and are no longer with us. We salute and acknowledge their important contributions and valuable achievements which no doubt lent to the improvement and enhancement of public service performance while upholding the values and ethics of a truly accountable and transparent Samoa Public Service. Such are the inspirations that behoves us all to aspire to an even higher calling and to be better than their best.

The vision of the current Public Administration Sector Plan is for Samoa to be enabled to acquire a 'professional and competent public service that provides quality service for and to its people'. In essence, the Samoa Public Service, through its various factions is to become the epitome of wholesome and exceptional provider of eminent services that will contribute towards raising the standards for an enhanced quality of life for each and every Samoan.

Over the course of the last two decades, our Government has undertaken comprehensive processes of restructuring and realignment to strengthen fiscal responsibility and public management, while improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the overall Public Service. Such initiatives included, though not limited to, such processes as the development of performance based contracts at the management level, an amalgamated human resource development plan, an enhanced policy to strengthen good governance and management in the public sector, as well as the ongoing work to strengthen public finance management. These are only some of the work the Government has assumed to streamline its internal systems and to support strategic partnerships with the private and non-government sectors.

In truth, these are only a few of the milestones we have achieved thus far, and though we ought to continue to forge forward in developing appropriate tools to enable the dispensing of wholesome services, we would be remiss in failing to acknowledge that there were and still are challenges that requires us to reflect upon and take stock of in pursuit of excellence in Public Administration. Advancements in technology to date has meant greater scrutiny of Government service delivery and as such, it is incumbent on public servants to be most sincere, more prudent and

with integrity undertake the execution of our duties and utilize the same principles to guide our decision-making in workplaces.

Nonetheless, against the many limitations that we face, I urge you, in as much as it is dependent upon you and to the best of your abilities, to tend to the needs of your countrymen with diligence and great empathy. I also strongly encourage you to serve our country with professionalism, administering well managed processes in a truly coordinated manner, ensuring cost-effectiveness, efficiency and transparency and that you as individuals be held accountable for your actions and performances. Needless to say, I advise you to become the solution and not the problem, to be facilitators rather than encumbrances.

The theme for this year's commemoration is "Celebrating the Public Service of Samoa". Today we may ask ourselves, what is it that calls for us to celebrate, and is it worth celebrating? You individually will have your own opinions though it is my humble belief that the Samoa Public Service has a lot to boast about amongst its peers both worldwide but particularly within the Pacific region. Ours is a uniquely "Samoan" experience. It is an intertwining of both modern day public service ideologies, practises and principles, with the values, ethics and standards instilled with the core tenets of the Samoan culture that are deeply rooted in our families, our people and our country which is of utmost importance 'Founded on God'. You as public servants provide the solid and firm foundation upon which all the three prongs of Government rely and depend on for their executions and the delivery of services.

Perhaps at times you may feel that your services have been taken for granted, that they go unrecognized and often criticized but overall, it has not dissuaded you from aspiring to be role models, to exemplify that your rendering of services to kin and country is based on Christian ideals and values that you were brought up on by your parents, your families and your Spiritual mentors. That today is without a doubt, a noble cause worthy of recognition and celebration and I thereby wish to express on behalf of the Government and the people of Samoa their congratulations and heartfelt gratitude by simply saying: FAAMALO I LA OUTOU TAUTUA MATAVELA, LAU TAUTUA LE POPO MA LAU AUAUNAGA LĒ FAALOGOLOGO TIGA!

In closing, I extend to all the public servants of Samoa, which incidentally includes all of us, former and current, old and young, my own best wishes for all your various achievements - past, present and future, in the numerous endeavours you have and continue to be engaged in.

As public servants, we are just those - 'servants of the public', and while we may think that such a calling is demeaning and undignified, I believe that if you have the heart of God, you will find the grace to serve from a Godly perspective and with Godly humility.

It is my great pleasure to declare the 5th Samoa Public Service Day Open.

SOIFUA!