



## PRESS STATEMENT

### Apia, 10 December 2021 – *Samoa commemorates human rights day 2021*

Samoa again joined nations around the world to celebrate Human Rights Day 2021. This year's celebration on the theme "end inequalities advance human rights" was an opportunity to acknowledge and recognise all Civil Societies Organisations and NGOs for their tremendous work in advancing human rights in Samoa with special focus on agencies who have been pioneers in advocating and lobbying for equality of opportunities, accessibility, fairness of processes, and eradication of barriers and discrimination in Samoa over the years.

The Honourable Prime Minister in her remarks acknowledged the important role of the civil society actors and NGOs in keeping Government accountable to its human rights obligations. The Prime Minister further emphasised that "it takes a collective effort to make progress in realising rights and equality for all in our country" and thanked NGOs for their contribution and also urged them to never give up in their fight in promoting and protecting human rights of Samoans most especially our vulnerable communities.

The event also released the bylaws of Lalovi Mulifanua, Vaiee, Taga, Asau and Saleia who participated in the Village Family Safety Committee Pilot Project led by the Ombudsman Office and partners which was initiated out of the National Inquiry into Family Violence 2018, joining other initiatives to mark the end of the 16 Days of Activism today.

"I would like to congratulate the Fono mamalu o Alii ma Faipule of these villages for being champions for family violence prevention within their villages by ensuring the inclusion of bylaws on violence against women and girls highlights commitment to zero tolerance towards family violence. Such commitment recognizes the pivotal role of village leaders in family violence prevention and the protection of women and girls at the village level", Prime Minister.

This year's celebration also officially launches the Ombudsman Office also the National Human Rights Institution's first national dialogue on good governance and human rights which started on Thursday 9th December with Government Ministries and continued on Human Rights Day with CSOs. This national dialogue aims to create a platform for our institutions and citizens to share meaningful strategies that can further strengthen the promotion of good governance and respect for human rights in Samoa.

The Office acknowledges all the Government Ministries, public bodies and CSOs who were in attendance, as well as the UNDP Spotlight Initiative for their financial support specifically for 6 villages' bylaws.

END.