

SUBMISSION TO THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW COMMITTEE
FROM Nuanua O Le Alofa Inc.(NOLA)

Nuanua O Le Alofa, a National Advocacy Organisation established in 2001 to advocate and promote the rights and abilities of persons with disabilities in Samoa would like to take this opportunity to present Nuanua O Le Alofa's submission to the Universal Periodic review committee in subject for Samoa's review in May 2011.

NOLA Congratulates the Government of Samoa for

- Being the first Country in the Pacific enacting. Education for all act in 1991 providing non discriminatory provision to enable access to education for children with disabilities, The appointment of the special needs Coordinator in the Ministry of Education in 2002, The establishment of Special needs units in Primary Schools in Upolu and Savaii Plus the collection of statistics within the Ministry since 2004 and it's move towards developing the inclusive education policy in 2008
- Acknowledges the Government of Samoa for Ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discriminations against women in 2009 as it's platform for action and including women with disabilities as part of the Samoa's CEDAW committee.
- Congratulates the Government of Samoa for it's commitment to review most of the existing policies and legislations. Most importantly considering disability matters in the process
- Acknowledges the Government for endorsing the establishment of the National Disability Task Force Committee and accepting the National Disability Policy.
- Identifying the Ministry of Women Community and Social Developments [MWCSO] as the National focal point for disability matters in 2008.
- Acknowledges the Government of Samoa for it's ongoing support to Disability Organisations.

Nuanua also do recognise that people with disabilities continue to be discriminated and marginalised at all levels of society because of their disabilities. Most of these pressing issues have been addressed through our submissions to the Ministry of Labour and the National Law Reform Committee as ground for non discrimination.

While all these are positive moves by the Government of Samoa to recognise and support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in National programmes and development plans, Nuanua raises it's concern on the following

- The National Disability Task Force Committee has not been supported with adequate resources to be an effective agency to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities
- That the National Disability Policy and plan of action 2009-2012 has not been launched by April 2010 to pave the way for development of

strategies to implement the Disability Convention and Biwako Mellinium Framework for action 2003-2012

- In April 2010, Nuanua completed an update of the disability identification census in which the total population of persons with disabilities in Samoa is approximately 5000. NZAID supported this review financially.
- Only %13 of the Adult Samoan Disability Population has paid employment.
- Communications, public transport and facilities are existing barriers for the local disability community
- Accessibility guideline has been developed under the Ministry of Works and infrastructure however, there is lack of compliance and monitoring systems to ensure effective implementation. Amongst the many inaccessible facilities is Government's education institution [The National University of Samoa] which denies access to tertiary levels for persons with disabilities
- Very minimal services are available for persons with disabilities in rural settings yet %83 of the population lives in remote communities
- Health care needs for persons with disabilities in Samoa are not being adequately met. The Pacific Sister's report for women with disabilities [2008] suggests that access to health care is a major issue for the %83 of the total population of women with disabilities who live in rural locations. Majority numbers indicated that they have not had their disabilities assessed diagnosed and received minimal assistance through the Health system. A revised disability census [2009] stated a low [%9] involvement rate of women with disabilities in the village systems. Clearly, they experienced discrimination at all levels of decision making and access to important village developments programmes such as reproductive and sexual health.

Nuanua acknowledges the strides made so far by the government to recognise persons with disabilities however, limited financial, technical and human resources to effect the advancement of persons with disabilities are contributing factors to slow progress in disability developments. We therefore, take this opportunity to provide the following recommendations.

1. Encourage the Government of Samoa to ratify and sign the International Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by 2011. This aims to coincide with the communique issued by the Pacific Island Forum's Secretariat, setting 2011 as the year for all Pacific Countries to endorse the Convention. In Addition, we humbly request assistances of relevant regional organisations to assist with this process
2. Encourage Government to support the National Disability Action task force with adequate financial, Human and technical resources to implement the provisions of the Disability Convention, CEDAW and

the Biwako Mellenium Framework for Action, that directly relates to improving the lives of persons with disabilities

3. Encourage Government to complete it's inclusive education policy and strategy by 2012, to emphasise in Strategy that teachers are to be given proper training in special education. Stress that other specialists services are to be recruited such as Speech therapists, physiotherapist, physiologists, sign language teachers, braille teachers, all educational facilities, public places and means of transportations are to be made accessible. Request oversease assistance to aid with the process and identify international aid targeted towards disability.
4. Enchorage Government to review and enforce it's National Policies and Legislations to allow Persons with disabilities to contribute constructively to the development of Samoa at all levels.

These recommendations were provided on 29th November 2010 by:

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