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ORAL STATEMENT
Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports: Samoa

UN Human Rights Council
49th session
28 February to 1 April 2022

Mr. President,

In March 2021, Samoa amended the age of marriage to 18 years for both men and women. To fully comply with human rights on gender equality, Samoa must also:

- Decriminalise same sex sexual activity between consenting adults;
- Ensure women and girls have access to safe and legal abortion; and
- Repeal laws that criminalise sex work.

Samoa must improve access to adequate health care for all people. There has been no independent and transparent investigation into the measles outbreak in 2019 that resulted in the deaths of more than 60 children. In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, we remain concerned about state overreach of powers and urge Samoa to ensure that restrictions on movement and activities are reasonable, necessary and proportionate, in line with international human rights law.

Mr. President,

We reiterate our concern on impediments to the independence of judges and lawyers following recent law reforms and threats to lawyers. We urge Samoa to drop politically motivated charges against Pauga, who has been detained in Australia for more than a year pending extradition. We fear that, should he be extradited, he will face violations of his right to a fair trial in Samoa. We urge Samoa to issue an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers to assist its efforts in strengthening the independence of the judiciary.

Finally, we urge Samoa to submit a mid-term report on progress towards implementation of recommendations to the Human Rights Council and to use an Item 6 General Debate to draw it to the attention of Member States.

Thank you.