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TUESDAY, 26 MAY 2020

Parliament convened at 9:07am pursuant to Parliamentary Sitting Programme 2020/2021.

Prayer.

MR SPEAKER: I announce that Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly have resumed.

I welcome you all here in good health. The Chair humbly applauds and expresses gratitude to the Hon Prime Minister, Leader of the House, I welcome as well the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet, Associate Ministers especially to all members of Parliament.

I acknowledge as well Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries and Corporations present in this Parliamentary Sitting.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF STATE

The Speaker read out the Message from His Highness, O Le Ao o le Malo.

MEMORANDUM for:

Mr Speaker:

Pursuant to Article 59 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa and in accordance with the Standing Orders of Parliament, consent is hereby given to the Legislative Assembly to consider the following Bills:

1. Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020.
2. Appropriation Bill 2020/2021.

GIVEN UNDER my own **Hand**, this date 25th of May 2020.

Signed: Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II
O LE AO O LE MALO

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OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MR SPEAKER**STATE OF EMERGENCY ORDERS**

MR SPEAKER: I announce to respectable members of Parliament that I have with me, Amendments to the State of Emergency Orders for Covid-19, as approved by His Excellency, O Le Ao o le Malo, Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II, upon recommendation of Cabinet as follows:

1. Amendment to the State of Emergency Orders, 30th April 2020, enforced 3rd May 2020;
2. Amendment to the State of Emergency Orders, 13th May 2020, enforced 14th May 2020;
3. Amendment to the State of Emergency Orders, 14th May, enforced 15th May 2020.

Current Orders will remain in force until further changes are made by Government, for clarification of Parliament especially the country listening in.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

The Clerk read out the Papers pursuant to S.O.49(2).

1. P.P.2020/2021 No.2, Annual Report of the Samoa Prisons and Correctional Services 2018/2019.
2. P.P.2020/2021 No.10, Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 2018/2019.
3. P.P.2020/2021 No.11, Annual Report of the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for the Financial Years 2017/2018 & 2018/2019.

PRESENTATION OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Clerk read out the Reports of Parliamentary Committees pursuant to S.O.52(5).

1. P.P.2020/2021 No.4, Report of the Economics Committee on the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector Bill 2019.

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Presentation of Parliamentary Committee Reports

2. P.P.2020/2021 No.6, Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on P.P.2019/2020 No.168, Report of Public Accounts 2018/2019.
3. P.P.2020/2021 No.7, Report of the Economics Committee on P.P.2019/2020 No.159, Annual Report of the Polynesian Airlines Limited 2018/2019.
4. P.P.2020/2021 No.8, Report of the Economics Committee on P.P.2019/2020 No.163, Annual Report of the Samoa Land Corporation 2018/2019.
5. P.P.2020/2021 No.9, Report of the Economic Committee on P.P.2019/2020 No.166, Annual Report of the Statistics Office 2018/2019.

MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 47

MR SPEAKER: With respect I call upon the Leader of the House.

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI (Prime Minister): Mr Speaker, let us heed praise and exaltation to the Almighty Father according to the delivered prayer for bringing the dignity of Parliament together in our scheduled Sitting this morning.

Mr Speaker I move the motion, *That Pursuant to Standing Orders 47, all Lapsed Business of Parliament Session 2019/2020 be carried forward to the current Session 2020/2021, according to the Supplementary Order Paper 2020/2021. No.1.*

Seconded by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Motion approved.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.3) 2019/2020 – first reading

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Hon Minister of Finance.

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**Supplementary Estimates (No.3) 2019/2020
– tabling**

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI (Minister of Finance): Mr Speaker I move a motion, *That the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 be read a first time.*

Seconded by the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture and the Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure.

Motion approved and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 was read a first time.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (NO.3) 2019/2020
– tabling**

MR SPEAKER: With all due respect I call upon the Hon Minister of Finance.

The Hon Minister of Finance, Afioga Hon Sili Epa Tuioti tabled before the Assembly the Supplementary Estimates (No.3) 2019/2020.

**SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL (NO.3) 2019/2020
– motion for second reading**

MR SPEAKER: I call upon the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker I move a motion, *That the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 be read a second time, and the clarification of the Supplementary Appropriation will be included in the Main Estimates Address 2020/2021.*

Seconded by the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture and the Minister of Revenue.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thank you. Pursuant to Standing Order 132, debate on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2019/2020 will be adjourned for not less than 14 days after the Supplementary Estimates (No.3) 2019/2020 stands referred to the Finance and Expenditure Committee before reporting back to the Legislative Assembly.

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APPROPRIATION BILL 2020/2021
– first reading

MR SPEAKER: With respect I call upon the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker I move a motion, *That the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021 be read a first time.*

Seconded by the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture and the Minister of Revenue.

Motion approved and the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021 was read a first time.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2020/2021
– tabling

Afioga Hon Sili Epa Tuioti tabled the Main Estimates 2020/2021.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2020/2021
– motion for second reading

MR SPEAKER: Once again I call upon the Hon Minister of Finance.

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker I move a motion, *That the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021 be read a second time.*

Seconded by the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture and the Minister of Revenue.

MR SPEAKER: I believe it is now the opportunity for the Hon Minister of Finance to convey his address.

BUDGET ADDRESS 2020/2021

“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”

Afioga Hon SILI EPA TUIOTI: Mr Speaker pursuant to Standing Order 131, it is my pleasure to present on behalf of the Government, the Statement on the Estimates for the fiscal year 2020/2021.

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Budget Address 2020/2021

“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”

I. BUDGET SETTING

Mr Speaker, as we stand together at the precipice to the final year of the XVI sitting of the Parliament of Samoa, we give thanks and praise to God Almighty for his guidance and his protection upon us all throughout the course of the past years.

Mr Speaker, praise of thanksgiving is now before the Lord Almighty with the prayer you voiced, to thank Him for his love in guiding us here safely especially as we near the end of this Parliamentary term.

I convey greetings to the Chair and respectable members of Parliament. The dignity of His Excellency Le Ao o le Malo, Member of Council of Deputies and Chief Justice. The respects of *Aiga ma a latou Tama, Tama ma o latou Aiga, Le Usoga a Tumua ma Puleono i Salafai*, also to the Holy Servants of God praying for the success of Samoa and its Government.

Mr. Speaker, The budget presented today before Parliament has been prepared while Samoa and the world faces economic duress due to the rapid spread of the COVID19 Pandemic which has affected many countries across the globe and has claimed countless lives. Even though Samoa remains safe and free from this pandemic, we must remain vigilant and continue to enforce protection measures to ensure that the virus does not reach our shores. Implementing these, measures will not be an easy feat but must be done nevertheless if we are to ensure the secured health of our nation and its people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Government to thank all our partners who continue to offer assistance to Samoa through monetary grants, much needed medical equipment, consumables and medicines as well as the technical assistance extended. We also acknowledge our continued partnership and the assistance of the private sector as well as the continued prayers from all for a safe and secure Samoa. Faafetai tele lava.

A special word of thanks also to all the public servants who are at the frontline for the National Emergency Operations, tasked with ensuring that our borders remain unbreached by the COVID19. Either through their work at all our healthcare facilities or at our international borders where all returning residents, our imported food and medical supplies are being received and cleared we thank you for your dedication and commitment. We also acknowledge the operational and logistics teams who support the frontline workers. Thank you for your service to Samoa.

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Mr. Speaker, there is an overwhelming sense of pride in glancing back over the course of the past five years and seeing the many challenges that we have been able to overcome through quick and efficient facilitation of prudent fiscal policies that currently oversees Government’s finances.

Following high growths in previous years, the fiscal year 2016/17 registered a low growth rate of only 1%, which was followed by a negative growth of 2.2% for the year 2017/18. Affecting these extremely low performances were the Yazaki Samoa closure in 2017; the decline in the fishing industry due to market issues in 2017 as well as the effects of Climate Change including Cyclone Gita which brought damage to the Apia township due to strong winds and flooding in 2018.

The fiscal year 2018/19 however registered a high growth rate of 3.5% for the Samoan economy. The country’s preparations for the hosting of the Pacific Games, which occurred in July 2019, contributed greatly to this growth along with the many regional meetings that Samoa hosted during the period under review.

Earlier this year in February 2020 before the COVID19 Pandemic reached the Pacific, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted its usual annual review on Samoa’s financial and economic performance. These comprehensive annual reviews were done based on international standards, which are used to measure performances across all other member countries of the IMF under the Article IV. At the conclusion of this review, the IMF in their final report concluded that they were confident that Samoa should be able to achieve a 3% growth in the current fiscal year 2019/20. Their projections were based on their assessment of the well-developed mix of macro economic policies implemented for the development of the economy. The review’s recommendation also supported the Government of Samoa’s continuation of many of its development works to ensure that the economy continues to grow in light of the uncertain global economic conditions. This assessment following a period when Samoa’s economy was struggling in the aftermaths of the many challenges it faced is an achievement in itself and is evidence that Samoa’s economy has the ability to quickly recover.

Mr. Speaker, It has been 3 months since our side of the globe has been affected by the COVID19 pandemic. It is without a doubt that at this point, we do not know how long it will take a cure and be developed by those nations with the resources to do so.

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Budget Address 2020/2021***“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”***

Millions of people have been left without work, many companies and industries worldwide that drove economic development have been forced to shut down further worsening global economic projections, which at current is expected to contract by no less than 5% in the current fiscal year. For Samoa alone, it is anticipated that the economy will contract by -3.3% in the current 2019/20 fiscal year.

The Budget laid before Parliament has been compiled with the objective of ensuring the following:

- 1) That a Phase II of the Governments Stimulus Package is prepared and released to those most affected;
- 2) Priority shall remain with and for the Health and Education Sectors;
- 3) Government will continue to implement its planned large developments not only to assist ongoing works but also to ensure economic activity;
- 4) Ensure sufficient fiscal space to sustain the priorities as outlined within the Main Estimates 2020/21;
- 5) Ensure prudence and continued compliance with existing mandates and policies that govern the use of public funds.

Mr Speaker, Samoa has long been considered as one of the most advanced economies within the Pacific in terms of developments and strategic direction.

It is therefore relevant that I should take the opportunity to outline some of the key achievements and development made since 2016 under the leadership of the HRPP Government as follows:

1. Increased Recognized Seasonal Employer Scheme opportunities for our citizens in New Zealand as well as the Pacific Labour Scheme in Australia;
2. Improved information technology infrastructural development through the Submarine Cable Project along with the relocation of the 2AP broadcasting mast and equipment;
3. Hosting of regional and international events that included various sports events, conferences and meetings which contributed largely to the development of the hospitality and business community;

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4. Refurbishment and reconstruction of the Faleolo International Airport to support international travel as well as the Apia Port development at Matautu to support international trade;
5. Improvements to education services that include refurbishment of district school buildings as well as the increase in Government’s assistance to schools including Early Childhood Education through the One Government Grant which will now be increased to \$18million in the new fiscal year to commence in July;
6. Health services have also seen improvement in the past years with the construction of the new hospital and refurbishments to district clinics along with raised support for public health in communities as well as new equipment and medical consumable supplies to support service provision;
7. New road construction has also accelerated in the past years built on more resilient standards in order to withstand the effects of climate change. Construction of fords and bridges to raise road safety and transport has also progressed over the years including the new Vaisigano Bridge in Apia, the Maliolio Bridge in Samalaelulu as well as the bailey bridge at Lotosamasoni. Access roads have also been built and developed to support community developments;
8. The development of the West Coast Road or Samoa’s Economic Corridor to the Faleolo Airport has also progressed and continues in the new fiscal year;
9. The construction of the new prisons at Tanumalala to raise the security for the country as well as support the rehabilitation of prisoners;
10. Construction of the new Parliamentary Complex;
11. Increased coverage for both electricity and water services to the country;
12. Improved foreign investment through attracting large enterprises including new hotel developments into the country to drive tourism industry and agricultural development as well as to raise employment opportunities;
13. Improved Tourism investment developments through the Waterfront Development Project as well as the launching of the Samoa Airways to service the New Zealand and Australian markets.

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14. Continuation of Agricultural Development projects through the SAFPROM Project and Agribusiness to support the sector as well as ensure food security and raised export opportunities.

II. OUTLOOK

Mr. Speaker, the Main Estimates laid before the house today clearly highlights the effects of the pandemic on our economy and has taken into account the projections of the leading developed countries of the world which anticipate contractions for the current fiscal year as production and trade decrease due to the COVID19. In light of these effects and given the reliance of our country’s tourism and businesses on these countries’ developments it is expected that our country’s developments will also be affected.

The projections therefore for Samoa’s economy in the new fiscal year anticipates a negative growth of -2% due to the uncertain economic conditions faced not only by Samoa but also the countries of the world. At current, no one can predict how long it will take to find a cure or vaccine for the COVID19, which is the only condition that will satisfy the reopening of our international borders to service our tourism industry as well as support usual business trade, which have borne the weight of the detrimental effects of the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the effects highlighted, the Government has committed to the development and release of a Phase II to its first Stimulus Package. This second phase endeavours to cover as much of the country as possible particular the priority sectors considered most affected or most vulnerable. It is the Government’s intention that this second phase should contribute greatly to ensuring the continued turning of Samoa’s economy during these trialling times.

The Ministry of Finance will continue to collaborate with Government’s key development partners to ensure continued implementation of its pipeline projects under grants assistance for the next five years to secure employment opportunities for our youth as well as to raise direct injections into the economy.

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Budget Address 2020/2021***“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”*****III. BUDGET STRATEGY**

Mr. Speaker, It is the Government’s belief that Samoa’s economy can quickly recover from the effects of this pandemic if we work together to action the priorities and policies laid out for the future development of our nation. It is in this regard that the current budget has been built around the theme of **“Weaving a Prosperous and Secure future for Samoa together”**. The theme of the Budget clearly highlights the message that the future of Samoa is the responsibility of many and reflects the commitment of the Government for a better tomorrow for all of Samoa and its people.

Mr. Speaker, the new fiscal year will kickstart with the release of the Phase II of the Government’s Assistance or Stimulus in response to the effects of COVID19 and the key features of this assistance are as follows:

1. ***NPF Dividend payout;***
The National Provident fund will be implementing a dividend payout for all its contributors to the total value of \$35 million tala in July 2020.
2. ***Additional One-Off Pension (\$100 tala per pensioner in July)***
A one-off \$100 top-up will be added to the July pension. In addition, the monthly pension will also be raised from \$145 to \$160 beginning July. This means the pension received in July, \$160 tala will be added a \$100, making it \$260 for July but after, it will be \$160 onwards from the \$145 it is now.
3. ***\$50 per citizen during the 2020 Census and National ID Registration Roll Out***
The Government intends to merge the 2020 Census with the registration for the National ID project and each citizen to come in for registration will be given \$50 tala;
4. ***Agriculture Stimulus***
This programme will be done in collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and its key stakeholders to revitalize the coconut, cocoa, taro and vegetable industry which will make use of those who have been made unemployed by the COVID19 to ensure food security within the country.

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5. ***Unemployment Subsidy***
The Ministry of Finance will work in collaboration with the Samoa Chamber of Commerce to distribute monetary compensation for all workers who have been laid off, been put on leave without pay or have had their working hours reduced due to the COVID19. Fesoasoani tau tupe mo ē ua aafia galuega ona o le Koviti-19;
6. ***3month extension on free rent for all vendors at Samoa Land Corporation and Accident Compensation Corporation Markets***
Vendors who are operating in the markets owned by the Samoa Land Corporation and the Accident Compensation Corporation will have their free rent periods extended by another 3months to the end of August.
7. ***Short Term Paid Training for the Hospitality Sector;***
The Government will work in close collaboration through the Samoa Tourism Authority with the Australian Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) to provide a 4-week training program on soft and minor skills for the service sector targeting workers in the hospitality sector who have been laid off due to the COVID19. To compensate for travel, food and other expenses each participant will be paid \$100 per week of attendance.
8. ***Assistance to Talofa Airways;***
Government’s assistance to Talofa Airways will be in the way of debt forgiveness relating to 3months of operations at Fagalii Airport since December 2019.
9. ***Partial insurance compensation for Samoa Primary Exporters;***
Government will compensate 5% of the value of primary agricultural exports and 1% of value of fishing exports lost between the month of February and May 2020. The compensation will be based on invoices provided by each exporter.

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Budget Address 2020/2021***“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”******10. Licensing fees for all domestic fishing vessels waived for 2020 (beginning May 2020);***

All fishing vessels in Class A ($\leq 11\text{m}$), Class B (11–12.5m) and Class C (12.5-15m) will have licensing fees for 2020 starting from May 2020 waived.

11. 2% Interest Relief for all Business Loans with Commercial Banks for 3 months;

The Government of Samoa will carry 2% of all interest charged on loan repayments for all business loans with Commercial Banks.

Mr. Speaker, this assistance by the Government is put forth on the condition that all four Commercial Banks operating within the country would match Government’s assistance as their contribution to the country’s recovery.

12. Credit Facility at the DBS for Specific Sectors focused primarily on COVID19 recovery;

Capital Injection from the Government to DBS to extend to specific sectors who were impacted from COVID19.

13. Assistance to Vulnerable Groups;

Assistance for our social welfare NGOs who are currently caring for our most vulnerable citizens. This includes;

- i. Mapuifagalele Home for the Elderly – Little Sisters of the Poor;
- ii. Samoa Victim Support Group;
- iii. Goshen Trust;
- iv. Faataua Le Ola;
- v. Nuanua o le Alofa;
- vi. Loto Taumafai;
- vii. Senese;
- viii. Divine Mercy Moamoa.

It is the Government’s belief that there are also other organisations providing social welfare services to our citizens and therefore have set aside sufficient funds should these organisations come forward seeking assistance.

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Budget Address 2020/2021***“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”*****14. *Interest Relief for Clients with loans under the South Pacific Business Development (SPBD)***

Government to provide 2% interest relief to all the clients under SPBD, especially women.

15. *Community Outreach;*

This assistance is targeted at raising the roles of committees within the villages to take charge of ensuring improved sanitation practices and healthy living as well as education at the grassroots. To kick start the revitalization of these committees the Government will distribute \$3,600 per village committee as verified by the Ministry for Women into established bank accounts to assist with their initial activities.

16. *Shelter Improvement Financing;*

To promote hygiene and security, the Government will partner with (ADRA) Adventist Disaster Relief Agency, who has an existing framework of this type to provide concessional financing to vulnerable families who are in need of secured shelter or shelter maintainance.

17. *Samoa Housing Corporation;*

Assistance to cover operating cost of the Corporation throughout the duration of the assistance extended to the public in the Phase 1 Stimulus Package.

18. *Electricity Rate Reduction extended until December;*

This assistance from Phase I which is meant to last until August 2020 will now be extended until December and entails a 10sene reduction in electricity unit rates and a 50% reduction in the daily fixed rates extended to hotels.

19. *Water Rate reduction extended until December and to include commercial clients;*

This is also an assistance from Phase I meant to expire in August 2020 but will be extended until December and will now include commercial users.

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Budget Address 2020/2021***“Weaving a prosperous and secure future for Samoa together”*****20. *Free Trade Concessions for Specific Food items under Phase I extended to August;***

This is also a Phase I initiative meant to last until the end of June 2020 but has now been extended until the end of September.

21. *Increase provision for the Ie Samoa Show (Faalelegapepe);*

The Government continues to acknowledge the role of the women and in particular mothers as providers of families and will therefore raise the annual provision for the Ie Samoa showcase to \$1million so that more monies are distributed to women’s committees of each village to assist their families.

22. *One Government Grant provision increased;*

Government’s annual assistance to schools has also been increased up to \$18million to assist schools in continuing to provide remote education services to the children of Samoa.

23. *Monthly pension increased by \$15;*

As previously mentioned, the monthly pension for the country’s senior citizens will now be increased by \$15 from \$145 a month to \$160.

24. *Frontline Workers’ Risk Benefits;*

All frontline workers’ of Government will have access to this benefit should they become infected with the COVID19 in the line of duty. This benefit will provide a year’s worth of salaries to the family of the frontline worker should they be affected;

25. *Construction and upgrade of Rural Hospitals including Physican Quarters;*

In line with the Government’s assistance to revive the relocation of medical personnel to district hospitals, the Government will endeavor to refurbish clinics and staff quarters.

IV. BUDGET AGGREGATES

Mr Speaker,

I would like to highlight the key components of the 2020/2021 budget as follows:

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<u>Revenue</u>	\$ 838,229,858
Ordinary Revenues	\$ 588,654,287
External Grants	\$ 249,575,571
<u>Expenditures</u>	\$ 965,840,810
Statutory Expenditures	\$ 137,428,197
Expenditure Programs (Ministries)	\$ 688,694,610
Development Expenditures	\$ 119,057,164
Unforeseen Expenditures	\$ 20,660,838
<u>Overall Budget Deficit</u>	
Financed by:	\$ (127,610,952)
Soft Term Financing	\$ 11,423,792
<u>Cash Deficit after Borrowing</u>	\$ (116,187,159)

The 2020/21 financial year Main Estimates is expected to record an overall fiscal deficit of approximately \$116.2million tala. When reclassified under the Government Finance Statistics format (GFS) 1, this is reduced to \$82.4million tala or 2.3% of GDP.

Mr. Speaker, the fiscal expansion presented herewith should not be cause for concern. In that regard, I refer to Government finances appropriated for key development programmes and in particular those that are crucial to the country’s economic development. There have been concerns circulating within the country around the possibility that the Government is bankrupt and no longer able to pay its debts.

Mr. Speaker, at current the Government’s financial position remains sound and the appropriation of its revenues remain sufficient to sustain its operations. A total of \$89million is included under the total Statutory Payments of \$137million allocated specifically for the Government’s debt servicing taken from total Government Revenues of \$838.2million. This means that after paying our debt servicing, a total of \$749.2million is left to be appropriated towards remunerations for public servants, payment of operations as well as other development programmes of the Government.

In terms of percentage, only 11% of Government revenues go towards our debt servicing while 89% remains for other operations of Government and its key developments.

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Despite current circumstances the Government remains confident that we can work together to ensure strong economic growth for a better future for all.

V. REVENUES

Mr. Speaker,

Overall **Total Revenues** of Government is expected to drop 5% in the new fiscal year 2020/21 attributed primarily to the expectation for a decline in taxation as a result of trade interruptions due to the COVID19.

Total **Ordinary Receipts** are expected to decline 10% attributed to the aforementioned decline in **Taxation Revenues** which will fall by 12% while **Non Tax Revenues** will increase by 12% to reflect the inclusion of fees and charges of the Land Transport Authority now transferred to the Ministry of Police.

Total **Grants** are expected to increase 9% to reflect the increased assistance from our development partners in response to the effects of the COVID19.

VI. EXPENDITURE PRIORITIES

Mr. Speaker and Distinguished Members of Parliament, Total expenditures of Government for the fiscal year 2020/21 is estimated at \$965.8million including development project payments and will be 1.5% lower than the provisions for the current fiscal year 2019/20.

The decline anticipated for total expenditures in the new fiscal year is attributed largely to the reduction in development programmes provisions reflecting the completion of many of the Government’s developments within the current fiscal year 2019/20. In addition, many of the pipeline projects planned with our development partners have been restructured and reprioritized so that priority is given to COVID19 response and assistance. Current Payments are anticipated to increase by 5% or \$42.7million attributed largely to the Phase II of the Government’s Response Plan for the COVID19.

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Mr. Speaker, I will now summarize the individual appropriations allocated to Ministries for the new financial year 2020/21:

1. *Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries - \$15.5 million tala;*

- \$11.9 million tala for the Ministry’s normal operations;
- \$3.49 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

Major initiatives planned by the Ministry for the new fiscal year includes:

- \$500,000 for the annual Agriculture Show;
- \$500,000 for the Rhinoceros Beetle elimination program;
- \$300,000 for the Women in Business Development Inc (WIBDI);
- \$200,000 for the WCPFC Scientific Committee Meeting;
- \$150,000 for the ICC Ministerial Meeting.

The Ministry is also working in close collaboration with our development partners on various projects of which the largest is:

- \$12.2 million tala for the Samoa Agriculture and Fisheries Productivity and Marketing Project (SAFPROM) under the auspices of the World Bank and the IFAD;

2. *Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour - \$7.5million tala;*

- \$5.2 million for the Ministry’s normal operations;
- \$2.3 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

Large initiatives planned by the Ministry include:

- \$200,000 usual Government assistance to the private sector;
- \$178,000 to continue the Government’s annual Apprenticeship Scheme intake;

3. *Ministry of Communications and Information Technology - \$5.7 million tala;*

- \$2.6million for the Ministry’s operations;
- \$3.1million for Transactions on Behalf of State.

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Significant expenditure programs of the Ministry for the new fiscal year includes:

- \$1.7 million for the co-location lease as well as associated utility costs for the SNBH infrastructures;

The Ministry is also working in close collaboration with our development partners in the implementation of key projects for the sector of the which the largest is:

- \$6.4 million for the Samoa Connectivity Project under the auspices of the World Bank and the Government of Australia;

4. *Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture - \$103.4million tala*

- \$72.6 million tala for the Ministry’s planned operations;
- \$30.7 million for Transactions on Behalf of State.

The planned initiatives of the Ministry include the following major developments;

- \$18 million for the One Government Grant to schools;
- \$6.5 million for the Education Sector Support Program under the auspices of the New Zealand and Australian Government;
- \$1.5 million for Teachers’ Scholarship program;
- \$350,000 for the Samoa Rugby Union;
- \$200,000 for Sports Development;
- \$150,000 for the Samoa Netball Association;

The Ministry is also working in collaboration with its major development partners in the implementation of key projects of which the largest are:

- \$2 million for Inclusive Education;
- \$1.2 million for the Nursing Workforce Development Program;

5. *Ministry of Finance - \$133.3 million tala;*

- \$16.5 million for the Ministry’s planned operations;
- \$116.8 million for transactions on Behalf of the State.

Some of the larger initiatives being led by the Ministry of Finance include:

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- \$32 million for the Phase II of the Government’s COVID19 Response Plan;
- \$27.1 million for the usual annual Senior Citizens’ Pension;
- \$13.5 million allocated to cover VAGST and duties for development project related expenditures including imports;
- \$5 million to cover land compensation associated with the planned Cross Island Road development;
- \$5 million to be paid to the Samoa Airways as compensation for Government’s takeover of the Fagalii Airport properties;
- \$4.7 million for Government assets insurance;
- \$1.5 million Government counterpart for the West Coast Road development;
- \$1 million tala for the rehabilitation of the Government’s Vaimea Warehouse;
- \$1 million tala for the relocation of the Government bowser to Tuanaimato;

\$126.3million has been committed by our development partners in terms of direct budget support not only to help fill the fiscal gap due to the effects of the COVID19 but also to finance the Government’s assistance to the country.

6. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade - \$26.7million tala;*

- \$19.1 million tala for the Ministry’s operations;
- \$7.6 million tala for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

Large planned initiatives of the Ministry include:

- \$473,440 for the relocation of the embassy in Japan into Tokyo;
- \$200,000 for the Summit on the Signing of the European Union – African Caribbean Pacific (EU-ACP) Samoa Agreement (Post Cotonou); expected to take place in Apia in November.
- \$150,000 Pacific Labour Mobility Annual Meeting;
- \$100,000 Meeting of the Pacific ACP-EU IEPA Trade Committee;
- \$100,000 Preparations for the CHOGM 2022;

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- \$76.3 million to support the usual operations of the Ministry;
- \$44.3 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

Some of the larger provisions for the Ministry include:

- \$8 million allocated for the Government’s Overseas Medical Treatment Scheme;
- \$5.7 \$5.7 million tala for the NCD’s Program for Results under the auspices of the World Bank;
- \$3 million tala for the reconstruction and refurbishment of district clinics and staff quarters.

Larger development projects implemented by the Ministry in collaboration with development partners include:

- \$2.5 million under the World Bank particular to COVID19 response;
- \$1.8 million for a Digital Radiography System General X-Ray Machine through the Government of Australia;
- \$1.5 million for the Samoa Nursing Community Training Centre under the auspices of the Government of New Zealand.

8. Ministry for Justice and Courts Administration - \$13.8 million tala;

- \$12 million allocated to support normal operations of the Ministry;
- \$1.8 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

Larger initiatives planned by the Ministry include:

- \$500,000 for preparatory works required for the new Ministry headquarters in Salelologa;
- \$200,000 for the re-roofing of the Ministry’s building at Mulinu’u.

9. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - \$26.8 million tala;

- \$13.2 million for the Ministry’s planned operations;
- \$13.6 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

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Larger initiatives of the Ministry as part of its annual operations include:

- \$4 million for compensation of land to be taken for Government developments and reserves;
- \$3.9 million for waste management contract services;
- \$500,000 for water resource land compensation;
- \$500,000 for Roads for Land Board leased Lands.

The Ministry is also leading the implementation of key development projects of which the larger ones are:

- \$11.2 million for the Enhancing Climate Resilience of Coastal Resources and Communities programme;
- \$3.5 million for the Economy wide integration of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management programme;
- \$2 million tala for the Pacific Resilience Programme;

10. Ministry of Police - \$26.4 million tala;

- \$24.4 million for the Ministry’s planned operations for the year;
- \$2 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

11. Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - \$8.4million tala;

- \$6 million for the Ministry’s planned operations for the year;
- \$2.4 million for Transactions of Behalf of the State.

12. Ministry for Customs and Revenues - \$13.2 million tala;

- \$10.6 million to support the Ministry’s normal operations;
- \$2.6 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

The largest expenditure initiative of the Ministry planned for the new fiscal year is:

- \$676,750 as final payment for the Taxation Information Management System;

13. Ministry for Women, Community and Social Development - \$10.8 million tala;

- \$9 million for the planned operations of the Ministry;

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- \$1.8 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

The largest provision for the Ministry is the \$1million for the Ie Samoa Annual Showcase.

14. Ministry for Works, Transport and Infrastructure - \$25.2million tala

- \$4.9 million for the Ministry’s operations;
- \$4 million for the EPC’s Community Service Obligations;
- \$4 million for the SWA’s Community Service Obligations;
- \$11.2 million for planned investment projects of the SWA;
- \$1.1 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

Other than their usual planned infrastructural works, the Ministry will also lead the implementation of some of Government’s larger development projects in the new fiscal year 2020/21 which include:

- \$13.6 million for the Samoa Climate Resilient Transport Project under the auspices of the World Bank;
- \$1 million for remaining works associated with the Apia Waterfront Development through the assistance of the New Zealand Government;

15. Office of the Attorney General - \$5.3 million tala;

- \$4.6 million for the operations of the Ministry;
- \$725,702 for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

16. Office of the Auditor General - \$3.9 million tala;

- \$3.4 million for the Office’s normal operations;
- \$568,037 for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

17. Office of the Electoral Commissioner - \$8.3 million tala;

- \$2.2 million for the normal operations of the Ministry;
- \$6.1 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

Large planned initiatives of the Ministry include:

- \$2.6 million allocated for the construction of the new office building for the Ministry planned for Mulinuu;

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- \$2.2 million allocated for the administration of the general elections in April 2021. These provisions include monies allocated for additional personnel required for the elections as well as allocations for hire of facilities in the communities as well as payment for catering provided by villages to support polling booths and officials.

18. Office of the Legislative Assembly - \$6.9 million tala;

- \$5.7 million for the normal operations of the Ministry;
- \$1.2 million for Transactions of Behalf of the State.

19. Office of the Ombudsman - \$1.6 million tala;

- \$1.4 million for the planned operations of the Office;
- \$195,399 for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

20. Public Service Commission - \$5.1 million tala;

- \$4.3 million to support the operations of the Ministry;
- \$891,248 Transactions on Behalf of the State.

In line with the functional restructuring as directed by Cabinet, included under the provisions for the PSC is \$27.6million in total assistance from the Governments of Japan, Australia and New Zealand for scholarships.

21. Fire and Emergency Services Authority - \$8.8 million tala;

- \$8.5 million to support the normal operations of the Authority;
- \$375,195 for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

22. Samoa National Kidney Foundation - \$8.3million tala;

- \$4.99 million tala to support the normal operations of the Foundation;
- \$3.3 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

23. Public Trust Office - \$2.9 million tala;

- \$1.2 million to support the Office’s normal operations;
- \$1.7 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

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- 24. Samoa Qualifications Authority – \$4.4 million tala;**
- \$2.9 million to support the planned operations of the Authority;
 - \$1.5 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;
- 25. Samoa Tourism Authority - \$12.7 million tala;**
- \$10.5 million for the planned operations of the Authority;
 - \$2.2 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.
- The STA will also lead the implementation of key development programmes of which the largest is the \$1.7million allocated under the assistance of the Government of New Zeland for the Tourism Growth Development Project.
- 26. Office of the Regulator - \$2.01 million tala;**
- \$1.9 million to support the operations of the office;
 - \$94,167 for Transactions on Behalf of the State.
- 27. Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa - \$4.3 million tala;**
- \$4.2 million for the normal operations of the organisation;
 - \$224,571 for Transactions on Behalf of the State.
- 28. National University of Samoa - \$24.7 million tala;**
- \$22.1 million to support the services of the University;
 - \$2.6 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.
- 29. Samoa Sports Facility Authority - \$2.2 million tala;**
- \$2.1 million to support the operations of the authority;
 - \$98,042 for Transactions on Behalf of the State;
- 30. Ministry for Public Enterprises - \$2.9 million tala;**
- \$2.3 million for the Ministry’s operations;
 - \$581,833 for Transactions on Behalf of the State;
- 31. Samoa Bureau of Statistics - \$5.7 million tala;**
- \$3.8 million to support the planned operations of the Ministry;
 - \$1.8 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State;
- Large planned expenditures for the Bureau include:
- \$441,835 for preparations for the Population Census;

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- \$527,625 to continue the suspended Agriculture Census;
- \$115,000 to complete the Demographic Health Study.

32. *Land Transport Authority - \$45.8 million tala;*

- \$40.5 million to support all the planned activities and operations of the Authority;
- \$5.3 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

The Land Transport Authority is also leading the implementation of many development projects the largest of which include:

- \$7.2 million for the West Coast Road Project (Toamua to Faleolo Airport);
- \$14.5 million in total for the Samoa Enhanced Roads project under the auspices of the World Bank and the Government of Australia;

33. *Law Reform Commission - \$1.4 million tala;*

- \$1.2 million to support the planned operations of the office;
- \$255,519 for Transactions on Behalf of the State;

34. *Ministry for Prisons - \$8.1 million tala;*

- \$6.6 to support the operations of the Ministry;
- \$1.5 million for Transactions on Behalf of the State.

VII. UNFORESEEN EXPENDITURES

Total estimated appropriation for the Unforeseen vote for the fiscal year 2020/21 stands at \$20.6million based on the overall total for Ministry Expenditure Programs.

VIII. DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Speaker, much of the Government’s planned development programs for the new fiscal year 2020/21 will be supported through grants and loans assistance from all our development partners. These developments will continue regardless of the uncertainties and effects in lieu of the spread of the COVID19 virus which is a significant commitment from our partners in ensuring continued economic growth for our country.

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Mr. Speaker, the Government continues to collaborate with all our development partners regarding planned programmes for the next 3 – 5 years.

IX. THIRD SUPPLEMENTARY 2020/21

Mr. Speaker, submitted also herewith is the Third Supplementary Budget for the current fiscal year 2020/21. The Third Supplementary laid before Parliament is expected to expand the current deficit by \$3.5million but will not have a significant impact on the projected fiscal deficit of 1.6% of GDP.

X. CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, I have consistently reiterated the detrimental effects of the COVID19 on the economy of Samoa, which is the same across other nations of the world at current. Tourism development itself, one of the biggest contributor’s to the country’s economy has been affected the most and despite aspirations to try to respond to the cry from the industry for large compensations, the Government’s response is limited to its available resources.

Our prayers remain that God will continue to bless the fruits of our lands to ensure sustainable supply of provisions for our nation and may His everlasting protection remain constant over Samoa. Let us continue to pray with all our Spiritual leaders that Samoa remains free and our children remain safe from the COVID19 and may all that we aspire to do be founded on God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

On behalf of the Government, I wish you all a happy and safe 58th Independence Day Celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, I now commend the 2020/21 Budget to the House.
Soifua and God Bless.

The House showed their appreciation with an applause at the conclusion of the Ministerial Address from the Hon Minister of Finance.

MR SPEAKER: Very well, thank you. I call upon the Hon Prime Minister for his speech.

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**STATEMENT BY THE HON PRIME MINISTER &
MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT**

Susuga Hon TUILAEP AUELUA FATIALOFA LUPESOLIAI LOLOFIETELE NEIOTI AIONO GALUMALEMANA Dr. SAILELE MALIELEGAOI: Mr Speaker and the sanctity of the House, we would like to give a big round of applause as our pension has been increased.

“Mr Speaker and the sanctity of the House, I stand to move the motion to adjourn the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly until the 16th June, 2020 at 9am.

“Before the motion is seconded and the question is conferred, I stand to offer words of gratitude, to thank the Honourable Minister of Finance and the Ministry for their work in reviewing the amount of money that was raised to fund for this administration, in this last year of our Parliamentary term.

“We are grateful for the funds received. I had heard the request and the resolute statement made by the new emerging Political Party, stating that if they win the election and become the governing party, they will abolish all taxes, but they will fully make appeals overseas, to ask for monetary assistance to fund our developments, if they become the Government.

“As we have heard it is not possible with the seriousness of the situation of the disease, which has affected the whole world, especially our partner countries that often aid us, even some of these powerful countries that have a lot of money are also making loans amounting to billions and billions of dollars, as this is the government’s way of finding jobs for people, with more than 30 million people that are unemployed in the United States of America, and in New Zealand they have also made changes, as now they have made appeals to those who were inactive and dependent on the money provided by the Government, who want to work again as they have noticed, that even the Government are having a financial crisis. So the donations to developing countries are no longer the same – they have become poor.

“Now the New Zealand Government has made a decision, because these things always occur, they return most of our people that are working on the farms, as I have heard that more than 800 Samoans will be repatriated. To provide employment for New Zealanders who are looking to work again. Well that is life, it is not something we should be surprised about, but we should be prepared for it.

“But thankfully, the long-term plans by the Ministry of Finance have been arranged, with the quick discussions they had with the largest banks in the world, and to accumulate the assistance we have received, as well as sensitive negotiations with our partner countries.

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despite the tragedy that is occurring, but the spirit of a good Samaritan never ceases in assisting Samoa, since they noticed that our projects that they funded are being implemented properly, as it is the money they received from the hard work of their taxpayers. Mr Speaker that is my acknowledgement, to the Ministry of Finance for their exceptional allocation of funds, as already stated.

“Mr Speaker, we are also looking at the status of the Appropriation Bill, and we will also cover the Parliamentary Committee, as these are the parliamentary ways. The 2021 appropriation bill for 14 days is being discussed with financial experts, especially with all the Chief Executive Officers of all Government Ministries being called in for an explanation and clarification.

This type of work is not a new practice, it is an old custom. The Parliament discusses the draft Bills, and then it is given to the Committee for them to consider in detail, as they are not Acts that have been approved, no; they are bills that have been proposed. When it is returned to the Committee it should be complete, just like preparing a umu, as the breadfruit is first scraped lightly, and it is finally processed by the Committee, and then it is presented again in Parliament for approval. Such is the aspect of the Act. There are two major things, they are different like the distances between east and west, where the sun rises and where the sun sets again.

“These two things vary, so when it is given to this House, it is a Bill that has yet to be incorporating into the legislature, just like a boat that is waiting near the harbor for a fitting ship to ensure it is able to enter the harbour and make its way to the town wharf.

“All the Acts of Samoa are to be first discussed in this House, before it is enforced, it is being introduced, and it has yet to be approved, it is a proposed act that is why the Committee is responsible for notifying the public for discussions first.

“I mention this issue because it is surprising; I am shocked with the opinion of others, as these three Acts have already been approved, so all the things that have been done are professed, the discussions with the public. No Act can be considered as already being approved, as judges and lawyers work on these bills until it is approved by this House, after the consultation of the Legislative Committee of Parliament. And then it will be remitted to the Parliament for a final approval. Therefore, it will be known as an official Act that was approved by the Parliament after the third reading and then it will be signed by le Ao o le Malo. That is the final phase.

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“But all the Acts that are known as bills, they have not been approved by this House, it is only a draft for others to analyse for further amendments. You can also go before the Committee multiple times to give your opinions regarding the Act.

“Mr Speaker, at present the world has become different, with the emergence of new crimes being committed, as the people determine the crimes of the world and it is recorded by other criminals here in Samoa via telecommunications. I will provide examples of the traits from overseas, when we first started to practice elections. There were many that opposed to the idea. Why?

As these are national traditions. Discernment fades, to consider the wisdom of the village council in their House, the Village Council, to occupy the seats of the Assembly, Fono Toa Fono of the village, the decision made is obeyed by the whole community, and when someone violates it they will be penalised. This was the decision by the first Criminal Court of Samoa before the arrival of the European Criminal Court.

“When the seat of the orator is considered at the pillar of oratory, if they are unable to make a decision then it is given to the central pillars consisting of senior chiefs of the village and then they will make a firm decision that the village will adhere to. Then what? Then the men of the village that made the decision will be members of the assembly. They are the Legislative Assembly of Samoa. They are also Judges. As the orators sit idly the chiefs make the laws that the people of the village abide by, so if a young man or a person were to cause defamation, there are penalties laid down by the community, those are the customs of our country. There are also those who have been appointed to make the fine. There are also those, to divide the penalty – meaning to lighten the penalty or to raise the penalty.

“This means we still possess the first Criminal Court and Courts of Appeal similar to the European Courts.

“When the Europeans arrived, we already had a traditional Court, the chiefs of the villages and their village councils that made decisions for the development of the village. They were also responsible for creating laws that will bring peace for the village and they are responsible for administering justice. The three governmental branches were also completed before the Europeans arrived. It should be noted that we also have our own Court of Appeal. These are issues that need to be recognized in our Constitution which is not understood by many lawyers and Judges that do not comprehend the Samoan culture. Even some of the chiefs that are not allowed to sit in the village councils because they are “too lazy” just like the current rioters, but they do not understand.

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“Mr Speaker, there are so many foreign influences, that challenges our traditions with which we are accustomed. In 1996 the ACP conference was held in Samoa. All the Ministers of the Pacific attended. Four of the Ministers visited my office, from Tonga, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji. They stayed in Samoa for three days before the conference, touring the countryside.

“Then we conversed, they said, how much is being spent by your Government to beautify your villages and lands, as it is very clean. The Fijian Minister stated, our country is much littered – You Samoan put us to shame! We do not have a culture like yours that obeys their cultural Leaders.

“And then I laughed proudly. Our own traditions, the authority of the chiefs and councillors as well as the wives and caretakers, to make their villages beautiful, this statement is very true.

“According to the Ministers, Samoa is fortunate to still have the rule of the village council.

“Mr Speaker, a lot of crimes have arisen at this time due to foreign influences. Some of these crimes fall under the umbrella of human rights. When they ordered by the village council they mention their rights, to oppose the commands. If we read the Bible, of the great event of Sodom and Gomorrah, fire was sent down from heaven to burn these nations. Why? They have committed immorality in transgression of the commandments of God.

“It has now been approved by many Governments, the true meaning under the umbrella of human rights. These are the same rights that have caused displeasure. The crime of murder has rights in foreign Governments. Murder has been permitted through abortion. However, it is clearly stated in the Christian beliefs, when a woman becomes pregnant, it is a gift from God to man, through the creation of a person, so that we no longer have to remove ribs from men to create women. If this process were to continue, many of our men would have lost all their ribs, but God has completely changed it, with the creation of a man and a woman, then they will perform the holy sacrament of marriage, which only God can terminate.

“What is happening in many Christian countries? They have permitted the violation of the laws of God, under these rights, and these rights have given rise to many different crimes which have been accepted by many of the Christian nations of the world. And I believe that it was not a coincidence that this deadly virus occurred in the world. It is just a mere virus, but the scientists from all around the world are unable to find a cure. Those countries built the atomic bomb. As of now one atomic bomb can destroy the entire world, and it can be certain death for us given the extreme weaponry power.

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“Countries with scientists that have knowledge to reach the moon, and other planets, but when it comes to this mere virus they are unable to find a cure. It demonstrates the greatness of God who created the heavens and the earth, the God whom Samoa is founded on.

“Mr Speaker, several new crimes are on the rise in the world and constantly everyday, a new offense exists which should have our attention. There are two elements I wish to highlight. When our Government adopted foreign practices, the elections were held to obtain the Members of Parliament, which was not a normal practice for us in the past. The election was decided through the freewill of the village council of chiefs in their prudence and foresight in village Councils. Today, we have adopted western electoral style that is done using a secret ballot. What’s happened now? The leaders from Vaisigano Number 1 in those days turned around in 1967 and increase the number of matai titles which succeeded only Tufuga Efi Olaf Nelson and Vaai Kolone. What was the reason behind all this? Foreign influence. This ebated this practice which disallowed the village council of chiefs from implementing the electing in their Parliamentary Members in the country because we have attributed to western influence.

These are stated herein the Constitution which had the assistance of western drafters with us following the western electoral system and practice. So what did we do? We turned around and took action to stop it. Because the reason for increasing these chiefly elections, is to find victory to join politics and to take over the seats we are currently taking. Then the HRPP will move on to amend the Constitution. The reason why this change is important, is because they were difficult to implement during the HRPP administration in 1982 as initial successors. Why? It was very difficult for the Leaders before HRPP in 1982 to implement due to different beliefs they had. That is why the 2/3 majority was hard to achieve in those days. Now that the HRPP had managed to implement this change in the Constitution to free our country from the bondage of the Constitution, and for us to implement universal suffrage, to officially permit the chance for untitled men to vote and stop the misuse of matai bestowals which has lessen the significance of the faamatai system even though the increase in number of matai conferrals is again seen today. Matters pertaining to the elections have already passed, although there is another issue faced, they are refusing and there should be a way to make significance our fa’amatai system, as they are the ones who are governing the country, and as the youth of today we should do our job as Leaders of Samoa to maintain our faamatai system instead of enticing over pathetic things.

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If our forefathers have already finished their job, then the ball is passed down to us to contemplate guardedly and prudently the protection of our traditions and customs. Who else is above this? These duties are being passed down to us to uphold the protection of our traditional treasures.

We are all matais. The words of a song conductor, ‘the division of inheritance is acceded to a chief from God.’ He was chosen to lead the Family in a peaceful and loving way. “Mr Speaker, those are areas we should monitor properly, by looking at this influence from outside. There was in turmoil in 1999 when the HRPP administration took over which brought about a very critical matter, saying that telecommunications needs to be separated from the Ministry of Postal and Telecommunications, and convert it into a business company, the State has seen the remarkable developments in Asia that relies on advance technology and so Samoa too needed advance technology internally and externally.

“I do not want to reflect back on those days, three hours every night for 2AP to read out the names of those sending in money, and now, we no longer used that instead we now use our cell phones, the level of communication has improved in Samoa and has made business transaction much easier creating more employment opportunities for our children. It is more accessible now for parents to connect with their kids overseas. We can actually see and chat with our children and say our evening devotions with them through video calls as if they are here in Samoa due to advance communications.

“We have also witnessed the remarkability of technology one being the cyber choir on tv from people singing from all over the world whilst being composed from here. I have seen this type of technology in 1997 when I was chosen as representative of the Ministers on matters related to telecommunications and advance technology in the Pacific at a conference in Singapore where I saw these modern changes. Upon returning it got me thinking that, I will converse with Tofilau about amending the law so as to go ahead with this new system to be in line with the rest of the world. Samoa is at a raising standard than other Pacific island nations before this change was implemented in 1999. The standard is more advance as witnessed in the number of people using cellphones and the level of communications we now have which is a good development.

“There is also another serious crime on the rise, defamation/slandering, the hacking of private cellphones causing the spread of foul and offensive words and baseless accusations. Our Government did not expect such criminal charges to occur.

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“What I meant is to say is that I am only making a brief clarification, so we can all better understand the position in which our government and Parliaments stands. It is not about sitting in air conditioned rooms and rock the chairs. We must be vigilant all the times. If we also notice that something is wrong, it is not good to just sit around and wait. It is necessary that once we become aware of it, we take action accordingly, find a solution and amend the laws to avoid immorality from rising. Degeneracy has increased.

“What has happened with many of the villages? Various rights have weakened the authority of the council of village chiefs. Wickedness must be suppressed. When it is brought before the Court, the verdict goes against communal right. Why? The individual rights in the Constitution has been prioritised. Is there a stipulation of communal rights in the Constitution, No, there is nothing. It only states individual rights.

“The previous testimony of the Attorney General says, the decisions are made in accordance with the Constitution.

“We are still witnessing this, the rising of immorality within our villages, some untitled men are walking around with guns to threaten village matais. Whilst some are freely growing marijuana plants. If we remain negligent, the authority of the village council of chiefs will be pitiful and insignificant.

“We are starting to witness this in villages, power seems to be diminishing there. If we think of taking this matter to court, however, what is the court prioritizing, it is the rights of individuals.

“There may be flaws for communal rights which must be regulated constantly. Gods days are plentiful, there is a reason for everything, to gain fresh thoughts. The aim of the three bills beforehand is to consider both group or communal rights and individual rights.

“Mr Speaker, I wish to emphasise the difference the bills and acts that have been passed. The interpretation of the law passed by Parliament for any act or bill, the order is totally not the same. These are two different things.

“If an approved Law is interpreted, lawyers and judges will assist the interpretation of words 2011 – and Court Decisions. When interpreting or defining a legislation, it is important for you to go back to the Constitution. Whether you wish to make a contribution for the improvement of a bill, this is your chance to do so. Do recall that your interpretation of a bill at that time will have no legal weight as it is not yet passed by Parliament, it is just a bill.

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Thus is the term ‘bill’ was chosen to explain the Bill – as it is not yet enacted and therefore, it can only become part of the Law in the Samoan Book of Laws once the final deliberations is made by this Parliament meaning the bill is returned to this Parliament for final dicussion before it is passed and written in the Tusi Tulafono or the Book of Laws after the approval from the Legislative Assembly or the Parliament of the Independent State of Samoa give its approval.

“There was a legislation which was already dicussed and was brought before Parliament for its final decision, in relation to the arrangement of individual seat boundaries, and I interjected when I saw an uproar in Parliament on it. I interrupted immediately to return the bill back to the Parliamentary Committee for their ongoing consultations, as being the Leader of the House, I saw that there was still a state of misunderstanding within the House.

“Then it all goes back to the Committee for reconsideration, the Committee’s report is being referred back through a motion by the State, the Vote is now open, the vote is up to the member of HRPP itself given its own individual right, the outcome gave 13 votes for those in favour of the Government’s motion including myself, Fiamē and the rest in the HRPP supports this bill, whilst the rest of Parliament members and a few from our Party opposes the motion. Then the motion of the State was rescinded. That is the clear democratic ways, while the Hon Laauli is seated at his seat, he must reconsider and understand these political party procedures. For HRPP – farsighted wisdom and prudent knowledge still exists.

“Since no bill has been approved by Parliament yet, therefore these bills are not officially law yet. These are just laws for reviews and consideration by Parliament, after the final analysis and consultations takes place. I have reiterated the difference on these matters over and over again, as there are members of this House who are currently conducting personal consultations with some of the villages on these three bill which have already been given approval, and it is a waste of time to make further consultations. Therefore if these districts are hearing this today, you have been misled by this member, I commit to you today, this practice and nature is normal since 1962, it is no different with what our leaders had performed in the past, their footsteps are still being followed by this House.

“The question is what is the purpose and focal object for this bill, what is its main reason and intent. The response in summary, it is to better reflect Samoa in its culture and tradition in the Constitution. It is to exemplify a Samoan based Constitution.

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So far, for these three bills, they are only legislations, they have not yet come into Parliament for a decision. These bills are similar to a vessel that is docking near the harbor and is waiting for permission to get in as it is not yet allowed to enter the city.

How can we insert Samoan affairs into the Constitution of Samoa, Samoan related matters which is the constitutional law of Samoa. What are the exact matters that pertain to Samoa and portray the image of Samoa upon its Constitution? The answer is, it is the courthouse of the lands and titles, presided on decisions regarding the lands and titles issue for Samoa, our long independent country.

“That is the true meaning of these bills or proposed bills that have not yet been listed in the book of laws and passed by Parliament and therefore done. It is finished, passed, confirmed, it is OK and has been given the thumbs up. Therefore, thoughts which seem to mean that the bills are contradictory with individual rights and thereby has no connection whatsoever with the objects and intents of these bills. Why, because these bills are made to be improved repeatedly so that it does not contradict with the existing Constitution. Now, this only covers individual rights yet we attempt to insert communal rights or village council of chiefs rights, or organisations such as Church, it does not mean that equal rights are removed, any Law that Parliament makes is for the benefit of all people.

“So when creating and drafting legislations, it is necessary that they should not overlap/interfere the layout of existing laws. If the insertion of a new change is made and brings effect, it should affect a bill in such a way that can add further benefits and only good improvement for the betterment of our people, without omitting any iota or usefulness that is already in existence. That is the entire object, bills that are causing an uproar to those who want to cause it, well that is their own desire. Although the State is sitting back calmly. The State understands well the Constitution, it is not in shock. Let us remember that it was inside this Parliament that these bills were instigated. We all met in the first session of this Parliamentary term after a Parliamentary seminar that took place. Perhaps there were some members that did not attend. The Chief Justice made a statement and he outlined the clear principles of the Constitution of Samoa. The Chief Justice has undertaken this role for over 25 Years as the Chief Justice of Samoa. And he had explained two things. First, these words, ‘E Faavae i le Atua Samoa, ‘Samoa is Founded on God’, it is not in the heart of the Constitution. It is written outside the cover of the Constitution or the Preamble and therefore it is not part of the Article of the Constitution of the State of Samoa. For that reason, this is not constitutional.

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It is not official if the Judiciary raises these words which are taken as symbol of paying God great Significance as the Foundation of our Nation. For over 50 years, we have been singing God the Almighty 'He is all knowing, however, He is watching this distortion being done.

"Mr Speaker that is the first critical point the Chief Justice had recommended to be amended in the Constitution. The second part is when the members had questioned the meaning of having multiple Courts and their decisions in which an individual wins over a council of village chiefs. The Chief Justice clarified that there is no stipulation of communal rights of village chiefs in the Constitution, it is only the rights of an individual.

"Mr Speaker, perhaps these were the ideas during discussions of the Constitution in those days as Samoa was pushing for independence from the United Nations, which is home to the many existing church denominations that are thousand years older than the Christian Church.

"Mr Speaker, that is probably the case and reason for the oversight mentioned whilst the correction of opinions and legal beliefs is now being declared by the Chief Justice which is in accordance to his testimony of the 3 bills that are under heated talks today.

"I hereby sign a resolution in accordance with the Constitution of the State of Samoa, which are not subject to communal rights of village council of chiefs with teardrops from my eyes. Why? Because the authority of communal rights of village council of chiefs is not recognized.

"Mr Speaker these words are not light. Especially when it was voiced by a former Chief Justice. Such is why the State had submitted these matters based upon the advise from this Legislative Assembly to be implemented immediately, therefore, it all initiated from a motion on an Inquiry Committee to be set up, to begin consultations on these matters and for the Legislative and the Government to offer assistance upon this branch of the Government, as the issue is becoming very grave. Problems on what? Too many appeals particularly in the Lands and Title Court as well as the Criminal Court.

"That is reason for the decision made by the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Committee of Inquiry to consult with the public. The profundity of this matter is not understood by many outside this House, which was discussed by this Parliament. Upon the completion of deliberations on the motion moved by the Inquiry Committee of Parliament, whom we have in our presence, the matter will then be passed by Parliament, and assessment of this matter will then be in progress.

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After conducting a review on public submissions, a report is then submitted for a decision to support the Committee's judgements, and a directive will be made for a legislation to be drafted to be presented to this House for approval. The first part on the heart of the Constitution and the sacred words 'Samoa is Founded on God' has already been approved by this Parliament during this Parliamentary Term.

This Parliament has already approved it. Except for this matter on Communal Rights and a few related Amendments to the Lands and Titles Bill. There are reasons for the delay in this submission from the Attorney General. They have various preparations that they must go through. The same with the Law Reform Commission. They have observed what other countries are doing and the various implications upon our other Acts. Thus the creation of this Bill which is now before Parliament.

"So when reading through the thoughts that say, it has been rushed. This is totally wrong. The drafting of these bills started at the beginning of this term and now that we have come to the final year for this term, however all these talks in Parliament were being broadcasted publicly on radio and TV during all these years of this Term.

"I can say that, this is one Parliamentary term that has implemented so much accumulated works. I commend you all for your farseeing wisdom. You have done so much work without fear. Countless objections have already been received and some were in it too, they forget that this legislation belongs to the House of Parliament which have provided well expressed submissions. These are qualities that define a Leader that is conceited. A Leader who is unwavering. A Leader who does not stand behind or front. A Leader who does not hide and trembles in fear when strong winds blows. If the three bills is interpreted otherwise by someone who does capture the real intent and purpose of these bills, so as to exemplify our beloved Samoa in its Constitutional law, therefore that person is not Samoan in body and spirit.

"How then can assistance be made to the law through a contribution so as to extensively promote the apex and purpose for these bills?

"This is the challenge to the judiciary and the Law Society and all those who do not want to understand. Many lawyers have offered their assistance, on the normalcy they are accustomed to, as patriotic lawyers with deep knowledge and understanding of our culture and treasures, furthermore, they hold deep prudence of the true interpretation for these proposed legislations through their amicable recommendations which are necessary for further improvement. Their names are also not made known in a vainglorious spirit.

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However, their contribution is led by a heart of dignity and integrity, and unwillingness to stand in front of a tv or newspaper, 'other than lawyers who want to speak their minds outside the central point of these three bills which ludicrously reveal their inadequacy.

“So if the perspectives are incorrect in relation to these bills, the question is, whether you have read and interpreted the bills outside of its main object which exhibits Samoa in its Constitution. Then the situation of your opinion is different on this matter. You are beside the main point on these three bills or any other bill.

“I offer gratitude to those who have swiftly grasp the true intentions and objects of these bills. After all, they can submit their share of the contribution through comments and personal viewpoints to further improve these bills promptly. How so? This is a great opportunity to bring about your vital contribution to further recognize your tradition and culture that we prioritize and find interesting to uphold and maintain in our Constitution, through the Lands and Titles Court. This contribution Mr Speaker and Members of Parliament, is to recreate and rebuild further improvement of our bills for the Parliament of Samoa’s final approval.

“The is to help those who are making claims and broadcastings on the profound differences between these bills and acts that have gone through the third readings and have been passed by Parliament, to ensure that dignity is upheld with your public announcements on these bills. You have brought cloudiness and confusion upon the country through your broadcastings. Questions are essential, what do you think, what is the real purpose behind these bills if you know that these bills will better reflect Samoa in its Constitution, so that consultations can commence directly which may be of great help to those who lack insight. The goodwill that is being sought requires ideas to better the law that has been designed in the original draft before mediations can start. Instead of trying to destroy the bill that is at its initial and proposing stage.

“Other views are beside the objective and purpose of these bills which are inadequate and irrelevant and it is very difficult to resolve, on how they are related with the assistance required on the intent of providing in depth and constructive ideas to further improve the bills. The only ideas they present are objections without understanding and say, stop those things, do not do it. There is no help provided as the main focus is, they want the current turmoil to resume and in turn, they receive more money by filing appeals and responses, and it is getting to the point whereby it undermines our tradition and culture especially the village council of chiefs.

The intent is not good.

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“Mr Speaker, the assurance here, is that our legislations are not permanent. Special Parliamentary Committees are still available for your submissions. This is to further improve our legislations and to further elucidate our three proposed bills. The house of Samoa is built collectively. Each has a share in fulfilling the laws to its entirety through consultations in relation to the Lands and Titles Court.

“Mr Speaker, this is my statement to conclude our Sitting.

“I recommend raising the question immediately for the official closing of our Assembly”.

MR SPEAKER: Very well thanks. Parliament and the public have absorbed our Sitting today. The Hon Minister of Finance has spoken on the pleasing Budget Statement all for the sake of our country. Government’s perspective is for us to gain assistance given this pandemic we are facing. The wonderful Budget has been received and will be achieved for the various sectors of the State.

The statement of the Leader of the House for other instrumental matters to highlight and recommend Parliamentarians as well as the support of Samoa. It is no longer easy these days, *o si ota lima lava e paia ai lota mata*, let us gain...if clarification is well received on a matter, we must never leave aside our roles and responsibilities which we are called to do. The Leaders of the country will implement its duties for Samoa’s development and in relation to what the country wants, Samoa has changed from the past. Everyone is happy with the situation being witnessed today.

Although the Hon Prime Minister is wrapping up his motion to adjourn Proceedings of the House until Tuesday, 16th of June. Do second the motion put forth by the Prime Minister.

Seconded by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Minister of Women, Community and Social Development.

Motion was approved.

MR SPEAKER: Pursuant to Standing Orders 132, debate on the Appropriation Bill 2020/2021 is adjourned to no more than 14 days, whilst referral of the the Main Estimates 2020/2021 is made to the Committee of Revenue and Expenditure for their review and shall report back to the Legislative Assembly.

*26 MAY 2020***OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

MR SPEAKER: There is an important announcement by Parliament on normal procedures and services, which must be complied by including the country as a whole. Although we are in the middle of the Covid19 crisis, this will not stop us from the necessary programs that have been set for the Parliament's protection. Other branches of the Government are also prioritising these programs given their roles to ensure security of Samoa during times of emergency.

There is belief that it is not easy for this House if something happens such as a fire, and there are no preparations in place to guide us through whenever these emergencies come up.

For the sake of Parliament, I therefore announce with due respect that after our Meeting today, we will have a fire drill in this House, it is an emergency drill program for the House during Parliamentary Sitting today.

Secondly, this drill will be a collective effort, 1. Office of the Legislative Assembly. 2. Fire Services and Emergency Authority. 3. Electric Power Corporation. 4. Samoa Red Cross Society 5. Samoa Water Authority 6. Other services that relates to emergency disasters.

I plead with respect to the dignity of Parliament, after the prayer is said, do please remain seated. Although this is just a drill, however it is necessary that we all work together, because we do not know what will happen tomorrow and the future. After the official adjournment of our Sitting, the Sergeant of the House will officially take the Mace to the backroom, which is normal Parliamentary protocol.

Our Office will turn on the alarm sign for emergency and we will be guided by the instructions given. There will be male and female officials who will be assisting us through after completing these trainings from the Samoa Fire and Emergency Services Authority, to comply with their instructions when entering this House. It is necessary that we comply with all the instructions from the Office for the smooth running of this activity please.

The drill today will be scheduled as such; the fire will start from this room beside this door behind the Hon Prime Minister and the dignity of Cabinet, the door on my righthand side, for your information. Therefore, no one is permitted to use this door for exiting. We will be using 2 doors only for our safety. The one on the western side, which is on my lefthand side, the names of those I will make known will be the only ones that will exit. That said, this side here, the 4 members in the front row starting from Aeau, 2.

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Other Announcements by the Speaker

These 4 members, starting from the Deputy Speaker, 4 on the top row, starting from Namulauulu, other members including Government Heads will exit through the door in the front. During emergency, it is appropriate to follow instructions put forth by the respective Office for our safety. These officials will also advise us where to assemble when exiting the House. Be very mindful that during these emergencies, you must take importance of your life; prioritize your life before finding your belongings.

I plead again that we please work collectively. For your information, after this drill then we will make our way to the Maota o Tofilau Eti Alesana building where lunch will be served. Although it will take long, but for the sake of health security for the Cabinet, Prime Minister and Parliament, particularly you the Government Heads.

This is the announcement with due respect. I will end our Session with a prayer.

Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly adjourned at 11.42am until 9:00am on Tuesday, 16th of May 2020.