BWC Universalization Follow up Workshop
For the Pacific
Nadi Fiji
12 & 13 Dec 2018
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Associate Minister
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)
and PGA Member, SAMOA
Samoa’s Accession

• When? 21 Sept 2017
• Samoa became the 179th State Party.
• It took Samoa 45 years, 5 months, and 11 days to ratified the convention
• The convention is that old. In fact older than some in the room.
• Samoa’s story is the Pacific story, ... and so are others PICs.
PGA Advocacy

• I became a member of the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) in May 2016
• I was asked to work on BWC among other things
• I wrote to and discussed with the PM, who is Minister of MFAT
• PM started the process when he directed Foreign Affairs to check Samoa’s status.
• As progress was made to get Samoa to accede the convention, more agencies became involved including; MFAT - MNRE - AG – MPMC - Others
Accession Journey

- AG to conduct review and assess the level of compliance to date, and identified areas that Samoa needs to fulfil in order to satisfy the requirements of the convention.
- Cross cutting issues across Ministries, ...
- Involve consultations with relevant private sector organisations and NGOs.
- The process can go around in circle, can stuck for weeks or months.
- Report with final recommendations to Cabinet for approval.
- Instrument of Accession prepared.
Accession and Ratification

- Instrument of Accession submitted to the Depository State
- Graduated from Non State Party (NSP) to a State Party (SP)
- **Domestication or Implementation** is the next process for Samoa.
- The more comprehensive the review at the accession/ratification stage; the easier the implementation.
- Implementation is the measure of success for any conventions.
- Important to have Monitoring Unit at the national level. ISU at the international level
Regional level
Universalization Workshop
Nadi Fiji – July 2017

• July 2017, 5 PICs were Non State Parties; Samoa, Niue, FSM, Kiribati and Tuvalu
• Since then, **Samoa** and **Niue** have acceded to the convention.
• Congratulations to **Mr Aldric Hipa**, Crown Counsel for leading Niue accession efforts after participating in the Fiji workshop 2017
• It leaves **FSM, Kiribati** and **Tuvalu**. Except for FSM, both Kiribati and Tuvalu were represented at the 2017 workshop
Universalization Workshop
Nadi Fiji – December 2018

• BWC universality cannot be achieved for the Pacific as long as FSM, Kiribati and Tuvalu remained NSP.
• This workshop therefore should focus on getting FSM, Kiribati and Tuvalu to accede to the convention
• Specific and targeted efforts should be made for the 3 remaining PICs to accede the convention
• All other PICs have acceded the convention since 1972. From Fiji in 1973 to Niue in 2018
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific Island Countries</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Ratification Accession</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>22/2/73</td>
<td>04/09/1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28/09/1976</td>
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<td>Palau</td>
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<td>20/02/2003</td>
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<td>Cook Islands</td>
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<td>04/12/2008</td>
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<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15/11/2012</td>
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<td>Samoa</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21/09/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
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<td>14/06/2018</td>
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Non State Party

- We have raised the bar in terms of awareness, so NSP cannot use it as an excuse any more.
- We need to know what the issues really are.
- The technicality of the convention. Certain level of sophistication.
- National capacity to review the extend of the convention
- Capacity to assess the level of compliance.
- ISU can provide support and so as UNDP and many of the SP in the Pacific.
Issues and Challenges

• Red tape, lengthy processes; across Ministries; across sectors.
• National priorities or lack thereof; relevancy and/or urgency, is at the discretion of Government
• No central implementing agency; ... MFAT?
• Executive responsibility; check and balance, accountability as UN members
• Parliament further down the line when the convention is domesticated and Bill is passed
• Therefore the important role of PGA and other Parliamentarians Associations
Concluding remarks

• The issues addressed in the Biological Weapons Convention may not be major issues for the Pacific. The threat however is real.
• Geographical isolation, lack of resources and capacity, etc for SIDS, must be addressed.
• Pacific Island countries are among the most vulnerable to climate change, we need to be sensitive with our politics, ... meet half way.
• Not doubt the 3 NSP in the Pacific support BWC; with the right level of support they will accede
• UN – BWC – ISU support and presence should be more prominent.
To FSM, Kiribati and Tuvalu

- The continuing delays in accession/ratification can send out conflicting messages; eg
- ... engage in activities that contravene BWC
- ... that there is development, production and/or stock piling
- ... that there is support for and endorsement of activities of the radical & terrorist states and organizations
- The threats of Biological weapons in the Pacific remain as long as the 3 PICs choose to remain where they are, as NSP.
Finally

• We need to stop the proliferation of weapons; instead **proliferate peace and security**
• Stop mobilizing weapons of mass destruction; instead **mobilize leaders of mass influence**
• Kofi Annan; ‘we need a reaffirmation of **political commitment at the highest levels. ...**’
• We need some demonstration of this **political will** from our neighboring FSM, Kiribati and Tuvalu.
• The Pacific needs to unite in the fight against Biological weapons from getting into our shores
• **Universalisation of the BWC** – requires a universal approach
Samoas’ Journey

• Will continue beyond accession
• Until the BWC is fully domesticated
• Its is Samoa’s responsibility and our duty and obligation to our Pacific region, to the UN and to the world
• We owe it to ourselves
Faafetai lava
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

• Government of Fiji
• UNODA - BWC - ISU
• PGA - Peace & Democracy Programme;
• Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT)
• Samoa Office of the Attorney General (AG)
• Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment (MNRE)
• Ministry of the Prime Minister & Cabinet (MPMC)