

PRESS RELEASE  
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## MESSAGE ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC CAUCUS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

On behalf of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Region we give our strong congratulations to the nation of Samoa for its decision to support the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Although belated, Samoa's affirmation of the Declaration adds to international support for Indigenous Peoples, global diversity of cultures and beliefs and humankind's close relationship with mother Earth.

We thank Samoa for taking a leading role in the Pacific region to recognise and respect the Indigenous populations, and setting an example for other Island nations in the region to express their support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Samoa defender of human rights, Fiu Elisara, expressed his gratitude to Samoan officials who have worked to support the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

'As a Samoan I am extremely pleased with this outcome and wish to commend the Samoan government for changing its abstention vote made on 13 September 2007,' Fiu Elisara said.

'This move now recognizes the fundamental rights of some 97% of Samoans as indigenous peoples.

'I especially thank H.E. Ambassador Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia for his tremendous work at the United Nations in New York and for assisting the Samoan Prime Minister and government to uphold this very important Declaration.'

As the world struggles with economic crises and climate change threatens the lives and livelihoods of many Indigenous Peoples, it is important that leaders of the Pacific affirm the values of the populations throughout the region and fight for protection of the values that keep our people and our territories closely united.

We ask the nation of Samoa to consider ways to confirm the rights of its Indigenous Peoples in its constitution and laws.

Again we thank Samoa for its positive step to affirm important human rights in the Pacific region.

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on behalf of the Pacific Caucus of Indigenous Peoples