



## Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on CSW67

*“Implementing economic, labour and social policies that ensure women are not left behind in the digital age and leveraging financing for inclusive digital development and gender transformative innovation*



# Introduction

- I am honored to address this forum today as part of the Asia-Pacific Regional Consultation on the priority theme of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women.
- The theme is quite significant since it has far reaching implications on the improvement of lives of women and girls in families and our communities. The panel discussion for this forum will therefore stimulate productive options which could generate cost effective innovations that can be adopted by women and girls to support themselves and their families in the long term future. There have been many attempts and efforts spent on developing various platforms to support such innovations and the agenda for this panel discussion is no different.

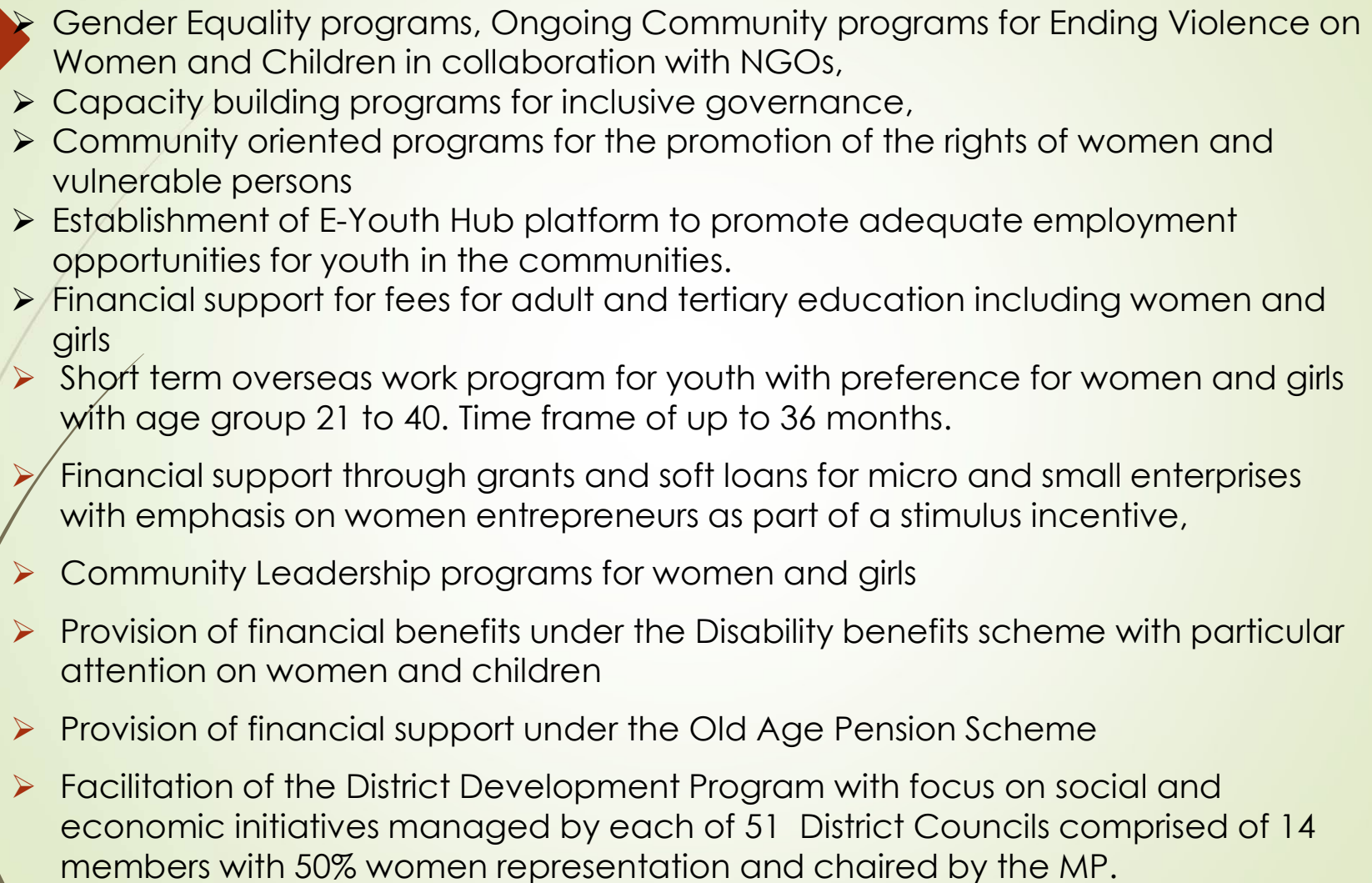
These discussions should help

- enhance our efforts to develop appropriate strategies in place to implement these innovations such as the application of a user friendly technology that relates to the theme of this year's forum.
- There has been a noted increase in the number of women representation in parliament including the appointment of Samoa's first woman PM.
- Other key Cabinet women appointees include the Minister of Finance and Minister of Justice. There are also 4 women judges which is a significant milestone achievement especially for the Judiciary.
- Participation in Govt. services by women at the CEO & Executive Management level have also increased significantly over the past 5 years.



# Empowering Women in Samoa

- ▶ The Govt. of Samoa under a new administration embarked on a new strategic direction to focus more on human development and as such the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS) a 5 year planning initiative is in place commencing from July 2022 to June 2026. The PDS is well aligned to the priorities for social development including focus on empowerment of women and girls. Timely implementation of the PDS is critical and despite the challenges, the progress of initiatives implemented since the launching of the PDS is quite encouraging and summarized as follows:

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- Gender Equality programs, Ongoing Community programs for Ending Violence on Women and Children in collaboration with NGOs,
  - Capacity building programs for inclusive governance,
  - Community oriented programs for the promotion of the rights of women and vulnerable persons
  - Establishment of E-Youth Hub platform to promote adequate employment opportunities for youth in the communities.
  - Financial support for fees for adult and tertiary education including women and girls
  - Short term overseas work program for youth with preference for women and girls with age group 21 to 40. Time frame of up to 36 months.
  - Financial support through grants and soft loans for micro and small enterprises with emphasis on women entrepreneurs as part of a stimulus incentive,
  - Community Leadership programs for women and girls
  - Provision of financial benefits under the Disability benefits scheme with particular attention on women and children
  - Provision of financial support under the Old Age Pension Scheme
  - Facilitation of the District Development Program with focus on social and economic initiatives managed by each of 51 District Councils comprised of 14 members with 50% women representation and chaired by the MP.



# Summary

- Despite these challenges, Samoa has made satisfactory progress with improvements needed in certain areas. The Govt. is fully committed to enhancing its efforts for the empowerment of women and girls especially over the last 12 months, and this is evident by the progress of social protection programs under way.
- Whilst the theme for this year relating to Innovation and technological change is quite ideal, the emerging challenges will need more attention.
- These are:
  - Having the appropriate supporting technical infrastructure in place
  - Changing technology and affordability issues
  - Climate change risks
  - Impact of economies of scale technology development on small countries like Samoa.
  - Nevertheless, the panel discussion may need to explore appropriate viable options such as contingency technology for small island countries as practical sustainable alternatives to inspire women and girls involved in social entrepreneurship to support social wellbeing.



# Conclusion

- I wish all the panelists a fruitful discussion and I look forward to the outcome on the knowledge and experience sharing as part of the consultation on the priority theme.
- God bless, Soifua