



Samoa



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Key facts

Geography/Demographics

Official Name - The Independent State of Samoa

Land Area - 2,820 sq km on two main islands of Upolu and Savai'i and seven small islands

Population - 180,741 (2006 census)

Capital City - Apia

Religions - Mostly Christian: 35% of the population affiliate to the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, while the Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Latter-Day Saints Churches account for around 20%, 15%, and 13% of the population, respectively (2001 census)

Official Languages - Samoan, English

Currency - Samoan Tala SAT\$ (or Samoan dollar) = 100 sene (cents)

Exchange rate - SAT\$1.8543 = NZ\$1 (Westpac currency rates, 12 May 2010)

EEZ - 98,500 sq km

Political

Political System - Parliamentary democracy with a Westminster-style Cabinet government

National government - The Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) holds 37 of the 49 seats in the Fono

National legislature - Unicameral, 49-member Fono; 47 members are elected by all Samoans aged 21 or over to represent 41 constituencies, while the remaining two are elected from the electoral rolls made up of voters with no village affiliation; the Fono sits for five-year terms.

Last election - 31 March 2006 (legislature); 15 June 2007 (Head of State)

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Next election - March 2011 (legislature); 2012 (Head of State)

Head of State - His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi; elected 18 June 2007 following the death of Malietoa Tanumafili II. The Head of State is elected by the Legislative Assembly to serve a five-year term (with no term limits)

Head of Government - Prime Minister Hon Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi; elected 1998. Prime Minister Tuilaepa is also responsible for Foreign Affairs, Immigration, and the Office of Attorney General

Council Of Deputies - Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa II

Key Ministers -

Misa Telefoni Retzlaff

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour

Fiaame Naomi Mataafa

Minister of Women, Community and Social Development

Niko Lee Hang

Minister of Finance

Tu'u'u Anasii Leota

Minister of Revenue

Gatoloaifaana Amataga Alesana Gidlow

Minister of Health

Unasa Mesi Galo

Minister of Justice and Courts Administration

Taua Tavaga Kitiona Seuola

Minister of Agriculture

Safuneituuga Pa'aga Neri

Minister of Communication and Information Technology

Toomata Alapati Poesa Toomata

Minister of Education, Sports and Culture

Faumuina Tiatia Liuga

Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment

Toleafoa Apulu Faafisi

Minister of Police, Prisons and Fire Service

Tuisugaletaua Sofara Aveau

Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure

Key Opposition MPs -

Asiata Sale'imoa Va'ai, MP, Leader of the Samoa Democratic United Party (SDUP)
Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi, MP, leader of the Tautua Samoa Party

Note that there is no officially-recognised formal opposition in Parliament.

Main political parties - Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP), Samoa Democratic United Party (SDUP), Tautua Samoa Party (TSP), The People's Party (TPP).

Economic

GDP - SAT\$1.055 billion (approx NZ\$600 million)

GDP breakdown - Goods: 38.7%, **Services:** 61.3% Source: Samoa Ministry of Finance

GDP per capita - SAT\$5,864 (approx NZ\$3,333)

Real GDP growth - 5.0% (2008), -4.9% (2009) -2.8% (est.) Source: IMF

Exports - SAT\$29.97 million (approx NZ\$17 million)

Main exports - Fish; coconut oil and cream; copra; automotive parts (re-exports, not included in exports figure above); taro; phone cards; beer

Imports - SAT\$541.96 million (approx NZ\$308 million)

Main imports (fob 2008) - Machinery and equipment; industrial supplies; foodstuffs

Tourism - SAT\$304.67 million; 2009

Remittances - SAT\$369.72 million; 2009

Current account - Deficit SAT\$92.9 million, -14.4% GDP 2009 Source: ADB

Inflation - 4.8% (March 2010)

Gross external debt - SAT\$604.71 million; 42.8% of GDP

Source: Central Bank of Samoa unless otherwise stated. Westpac exchange rate 21 May 2010.

New Zealand Trade

NZ Exports (FOB) - NZ\$116 million (2009)

Main Exports - Vehicles, machinery, meat, wood, electrical machinery, dairy, plastic, steel products

NZ Imports (CIF) - NZ\$3.9 million

Main Imports - Prepared unrecorded media (namely, phone cards); prepared foods (namely, coconut cream); scrap metal

Source: World Trade Atlas, 2009 calendar year.

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History

Migrants from Southeast Asia and Melanesia are believed to have arrived in the Samoan islands over 2,000 years ago and from there settled the rest of Polynesia further to the east. Samoa's pre-European history was interwoven with chiefdoms of Fiji and the kingdom of Tonga, with archaeological records supporting native genealogies and oral tradition telling of interisland

voyaging and intermarriage.

The first major European settlements occurred in the 1830s for missionary work and trade, and in 1899 Samoa became a German colony. New Zealand assumed control of Samoa following the outbreak of World War One and the islands became a mandated territory of New Zealand under the auspices of the League of Nations. Between the Wars there was considerable agitation for the removal of foreign control over Samoan affairs. After World War Two, Samoa was administered by New Zealand as a United Nations trust territory and measures were gradually introduced to prepare for self-government. In 1962 Samoa became the first Pacific Island country to gain independence. With effect from 4 July 1997, a constitutional amendment changed the name of the country to the Independent State of Samoa (or just Samoa). Previously it had been known as Western Samoa.

Political situation

In June 2007, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi was appointed Head of State for a five-year term. This followed the death a month earlier of His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, who had been appointed Head of State for life under the 1962 Constitution.

The government is a parliamentary democracy with a parliamentary term of five years. The Prime Minister, who is chosen by Parliament and appointed by the Head of State, leads a Cabinet of twelve members. The governing Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) is dominant in Samoan politics. It came to office in 1982, at that time led by the late Hon Tofilau Eti Alesana. It was re-elected in 1991, 1996, 2001 and most recently on 31 March 2006, when it was returned to power with an increased majority. It now holds 37 of the 49 parliamentary seats. Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi was appointed Prime Minister in November 1998 after Tofilau resigned due to failing health.

Tofilau's period in office was associated with significant constitutional reform. Universal suffrage was introduced with the 1991 elections. Before that, only **matai** (chiefs) could vote for all but two of the seats. (The two other members were elected on the basis of universal suffrage by citizens with no village affiliation). Apart from the two "Individual Voters" seats, candidates for election to Parliament must still hold **matai** titles, and the exception for the "Individual Voters" seats is to be removed, commencing with the 2011 elections. Tuilaepa continued with the reforms of the public service, which involved the merging of some ministries and the creation of a new body – the Planning for Urban Management Agency (PUMA).

Samoa's Parliament does not have a formal opposition. The main opposition party was the Samoa Democratic United Party (SDUP), but parliament withdrew that recognition after SDUP infighting in late 2006 amongst opposition MPs resulted in a split, leaving the party without the minimum number of MPs (eight) necessary to be recognised as a party under the Standing Orders.

In April 2008, two HRPP members resigned from the party and became independents. They banded together with other independents (former SDUP members) to form a new political party, the Tautua Samoa Party (TSP). The party's founders describe their aim as providing parliamentary opposition to the ruling HRPP and targeting the next general election in 2011.

A court ruling in mid-2009 reinstated nine MPs who had been thrown out of Parliament by the Speaker for joining a new political party on the grounds that the party in question had not been registered under the Electoral Act. The government introduced amendments to the Electoral Act, requiring the Speaker to declare vacant any Parliamentary seat occupied by a member who had

formed an allegiance with a new party during a (five-year) parliamentary term, regardless of whether that party was registered under the Electoral Act. The provisions took effect in March 2010; three seats held by TSP members (including leader Lealailepule Rimoni Aiafi and deputy Palusalue Faapo II) were subsequently declared vacant. In by-elections held in mid-May 2010, Lealailepule was defeated by HRPP candidate Ale Vena by some 70 votes, while Palusalue retained his seat against HRPP candidate and former CEO of the Prime Minister's department, Auseugaefa Poloma Komiti. In the third constituency, TSP affiliate Va'ai Papu Vaelupe was unchallenged.

In July 2008 another new party called The People's Party (TPP) was also established on the back of the People Against Switching Sides (PASS) lobby group. No sitting MPs are members of TPP. The PASS group formed in opposition to the government's controversial decision that the country would switch from driving on the right hand side of the road to the left. After several protests and petitions, PASS also filed a legal challenge alleging, *inter alia*, that the switch was a breach of the right to life (enshrined in Article 5 of the Constitution). This was rejected by the Supreme Court. A last-minute plea from PASS to postpone the switch was rejected by Cabinet, and as of 7 September 2009 cars drive on the left in Samoa.

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Economic situation

Samoa underwent significant economic turmoil in the early 1990s due to poor economic management and successive natural disasters. However, a determined programme of economic reforms initiated during the 1990s earned Samoa the reputation as the Pacific's model economy, and placed Samoa amongst the fastest-growing of the Pacific Island economies. The Government embarked on a campaign to increase the efficiency of the public sector and is fostering private sector development, including through reductions in tariffs and other costs which impact negatively on business. In March 2006 the UN reviewed Samoa's Least Developed Country (LDC) status and in December 2007 recommended graduation to Developing Country status in 2010. Samoa, however, is seeking to revisit this in light of the global economic crisis and the tsunami of 29 September 2009.

Samoa is a small, fairly liberalised economy, with a GDP of around NZ\$867 million (to the end of 2008). It is reliant on foreign imports and has a large trade deficit. The economy is largely driven by tourism (20-25% of GDP), remittances (25% of GDP), and foreign aid. Samoa is one of the highest recipients of remittances in the world as a proportion of GDP. This is a by-product of large overseas Samoan communities in New Zealand, American Samoa, the United States and Australia, who retain strong links with their relatives back in Samoa. Fisheries, construction and, to a lesser extent, agriculture and small-scale manufacturing also contribute to GDP. Its exports consist mainly of fish, coconut products, automotive parts (as re-exports from the Yazaki wire harness factory), and taro.

Only around 12% of Samoa's total population is engaged in formal paid employment. Two-thirds of the potential labour force is absorbed by subsistence village agriculture, a dominant sector in the Samoan economy. Private sector growth is constrained by a narrow resource base, limited infrastructure, and isolation, dependence on fuel imports, a lack of skilled labour, and a small domestic market.

Samoa experienced uneven but moderately fast economic growth over the 5 years to December 2007, at an average rate of 3.2%. A particularly strong economic performance in the 12 months to December 2007 lifted GDP to 6.1% - the highest growth rate in the past decade. This spike in

GDP was largely driven by a construction boom, funded by the state and donors, in preparation for the South Pacific Games (SPG), which were hosted by Samoa in August 2007.

Despite this positive indicator, Samoa has recently been feeling the impact of the global economic crisis - with growth dropping to -3.4% in 2008 - and ongoing economic impacts from the tsunami of September 2009. GDP growth forecasts for the current financial year are varied, ranging from a further decline of -3.0% (IMF) to growth of just under 1% (Samoa Central Bank), with significant impacts on the manufacturing sector. Tourism earnings and remittances have held fairly steady, but rising unemployment and diminishing tourist numbers resulting from the global economic crisis, the tsunami and possible impacts of the H1N1 influenza pandemic may reverse some of these gains.

Samoa's economy remains highly vulnerable to economic shocks and natural disasters. For example, cyclones in 1990 and 1991, combined with the onset of taro blight caused severe economic setbacks. The devastating tsunami which struck Samoa on 29 September 2009 killed 143 people (including several New Zealand tourists) and wiped out large stretches of the south and south-east coasts of the main island of Upolu. Tourism was particularly badly hit by the tsunami, which damaged or destroyed around 25% of Samoa's tourist accommodation stock, including several high-end resorts, in one of the most picturesque parts of the country.

The fiscal cost of tsunami rehabilitation alone is estimated at between 15% and 18% of GDP, and Samoa has looked to its development partners to help fund the reconstruction. New Zealand has contributed some NZ\$10m in tsunami-related assistance (principally dedicated to tourism and housing reconstruction), in addition to the emergency assistance provided in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami. This tragic event has brought into stark relief Samoa's increasing dependence on tourism, and the vulnerability of this sector of the economy given the country's largely coastal infrastructure. Samoa has also sought to bridge the gap in its public finances with increased resort to concessionary finance from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank which has increased its overall level of indebtedness though this remains at what is regarded as a sustainable level.

The local employment market has been affected by a downturn in the manufacturing sector and the associated curtailment of the operations of Samoa's single largest private employer, Yazaki (a Japanese firm which produces wire harnesses for motor vehicles for export to Australia). Yazaki currently employs 800-900 employees, down from a high of 2000 due to reduced orders from Australia.

The unemployment situation has been exacerbated by the closure of one of the fish canneries in American Samoa, following the gradual implementation of the US Federal minimum wage conditions in American Samoa from 2007. A large percentage of the 2,000 employees of that fish cannery were from (Western) Samoa. The possibility of reduced remittances from the Samoan diaspora struggling in source countries is also a looming spectre. As Samoa's single largest source of foreign exchange, remittances are key to ensuring that Samoa's current account deficit remains sustainable.

Increases in the prices of fuel and some basic commodities, such as wheat, rice, sugar, and dairy products, have created new challenges for Samoa, with inflation at an annual average of 10.9% in December 2008 (an increase of 4.8% from December 2007), surging to over 14% in the first half of 2009, but subsequently falling to 4.8% by March 2010. Interest rates remain high and although budget expenditure pressures arising from the need to construct infrastructure for the SPG have eased, construction activity has slumped, leading to growing urban unemployment.

The current framework for economic and social development is the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) 2008-2012. The SDS identifies seven key development priorities: sustained macroeconomic stability; private sector-led economic growth and employment creation; improved education outcomes; improved health outcomes; community development including improved village governance; improved public sector governance; and environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction.

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Foreign relations

Samoa is an active member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), which is based in Samoa. Pacific regional offices for the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are located in Apia. Samoa is a member of the Commonwealth.

Samoa's membership of other international organisations includes the Africa Caribbean and Pacific group (ACP), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Group of 77 (G-77), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Criminal Court (ICC), International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (Sparteca), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Bank (WB), and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Samoa is also currently in the process of acceding to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Samoa has supplied a small group of police for the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) since the inception of the mission in July 2003. It also has police deployed on peacekeeping operations in East Timor, Liberia and Sudan.

Relations with New Zealand

The special relationship between New Zealand and Samoa is underpinned by the 1962 Treaty of Friendship, concluded when Samoa became independent after a period of New Zealand trusteeship from 1919 to 1962. The relationship is a rich and multi-stranded one, with close linkages between New Zealand and Samoa, underpinned by the large number of New Zealanders of Samoan descent or origin living in New Zealand. An estimated 131,100 Samoans now live in New Zealand, making up around 50% of this country's Pacific Island population (2006 census). The arts and culture of Samoan New Zealanders have become a distinctive voice and contributor to New Zealand society.

2009 Tsunami

The strength and quality of New Zealand's relationship with Samoa was epitomised by the tremendous response by the New Zealand Government and people to the deadly tsunami that struck Samoa on 29 September 2009. On learning of the tsunami the New Zealand Government quickly pledged NZ\$2m to the immediate disaster relief effort, as well as mobilising substantial quantities of relief supplies and facilitating the transportation of supplies provided by international

aid agencies.

The New Zealand Defence Force deployed air and naval assets as well as some 150 personnel from all three services to provide a wide variety of assistance including:

- surveillance tasks to assess the extent of damage caused by the tsunami as well as search and rescue support to identify possible survivors
- transportation and distribution of relief supplies and personnel from New Zealand to Samoa and within Samoa to tsunami-affected areas
- medics to support the reopening of a clinic in the affected area, as well as undertaking triage for displaced people who had taken refuge on higher ground
- engineers to assist with clearance of debris and construction of temporary shelters and latrines
- environmental health officers to map displaced people and to pre-empt and mitigate public health issues
- dive teams to assist with clearance of debris and reconnection of water supplies to coastal islands

The New Zealand Ministry of Health sent substantial quantities of medical supplies (more than 2½ tonnes) and co-ordinated the deployment of specialist surgical teams to assist Samoa's National Health Service to provide care to tsunami casualties. Mobile teams including GPs, nurses and psychologists were sent into the affected areas to carry out assessments and treat displaced people. Public health advisers (including an infectious disease specialist) provided support to the Samoan Ministry of Health. Subsequently psychosocial support and supervision has been provided to front-line responders, and some US\$3m of funding for the Samoan health sector (to which New Zealand is a contributor) has been reoriented to providing a sustained health response to both the ongoing health needs of disaster-affected areas and addressing some of the systemic issues exposed due to the scale of the response required.

The New Zealand Police provided essential radio communications equipment to the Samoan Police, and deployed specialist search staff, disaster victim identification experts, search dogs and handlers and radio technicians to provide assistance.

The New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management assigned personnel to support Samoa's Disaster Management Office, which had overall responsibility for co-ordinating the disaster response effort and distributing relief supplies.

In addition to these official contributions, many thousands of New Zealanders donated money and goods to various relief efforts, and have subsequently volunteered their time and skills in the rebuilding of homes and community buildings lost in the tsunami.

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Air services

Transport links are of vital importance to Samoa's continued economic development. In light of this, the New Zealand Government agreed to underwrite Samoa's losses up to NZ\$1million on the Air New Zealand "mid-Pacific" service to Los Angeles for 12 months from April 2009, and is currently looking at what more can be done to maintain the route.

New Zealand-Samoa air services are governed by the Multilateral Agreement on the Liberalisation of International Air Transportation (MALIAT), of which Samoa became the first non-APEC member in November 2002.

In 2005 Polynesian Blue (a joint venture between Pacific Blue and the international arm of the Samoan government owned, Polynesian Airlines) was formed. To date the venture has adjusted well to the new competitive environment. Samoa's decision to enter the joint venture arrangement for international air services was a bold decision by the Samoan government to reform its national carrier in the interests of growing inbound tourism and avoiding future calls on the public purse. Some of the gains in the tourism sector can reasonably be attributed to the new joint venture airline.

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Agriculture

Agriculture remains an important, mainly subsistence, activity in Samoa, particularly in the villages, but contributes only minimally to foreign exchange receipts. Copra, cocoa, kava, and nonu are exported. (By far the largest commodity export earner, however, is fish at around 70% of total exports by value.) The appointment of a dedicated Pacific plant products advisor in MAF Biosecurity is proving effective in assisting Pacific island countries to meet New Zealand's phytosanitary requirements. More recently, Samoa has experienced some success in the export of higher value products, most notably, virgin coconut oil, a trade forged by local NZ-funded organisation Women in Business, supplying The Body Shop, and by pursuing organic and fair-trade premium markets.

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Defence

Samoa has no standing army, with responsibility for security residing with Police. New Zealand's relationship with Samoa in this area remains close. Visits by Royal New Zealand Air Force and Royal New Zealand Navy assets are common, with the participation of RNZAF No. 5 Squadron and the crew of HMNZS **Canterbury** in Samoa's Independence Day celebrations on 1 June 2009 being warmly welcomed.

The New Zealand Army and RNZAF have both carried out training exercises in Samoa in the past. A major undertaking was the RNZAF's Exercise Tropic Astra, which took place in Samoa in August 2009 and brought benefits to Samoa through a variety of civic assistance activities, capturing valuable aerial imagery of the country for use by Samoan officials, and participation in an emergency evacuation scenario. This co-operation proved to be sadly prophetic but the strong relationships forged during Tropic Astra allowed the large NZDF contingent to work effectively in support of the Samoan-led tsunami recovery.

Through NZDF's Mutual Assistance Programme (MAP), New Zealand has provided training for the Samoan Police, including in preparation for deployments of Samoan civilian police officers to the United Nations in East Timor. Other defence cooperation includes maritime surveillance flights by RNZAF aircraft over Samoa's EEZ (sometimes with Samoan officials on board). The last

Mutual Assistance talks were held in March 2010. A small number of NZDF personnel participated in the US-led Pacific Partnership 09 civilian assistance mission to a number of Pacific Island countries including Samoa.

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Education

Samoa's education system comprises an eight-year primary and five-year secondary programme. Education is not compulsory for children older than 14. Literacy rates are high compared to other developing countries, and figures show a 65% participation rate for 15 to 19 year olds at secondary school. Pre-school education is on an informal basis and is largely organised at a village level. Samoa Polytechnic and the National University of Samoa offer tertiary studies. The University of the South Pacific's School of Agriculture is located in Apia.

New Zealand provides substantial assistance (US\$8.6 million over five years) to support basic education in Samoa and provides 45 tertiary scholarships per year for study in New Zealand and the region. Vocational and workforce training is also supported through the Short Term Training Awards (for study in New Zealand) and the Samoa In Country Training Programme. In 2010, New Zealand and Australia will jointly fund a major new initiative providing school fees grants to state, mission, and special education schools, which will remove the need for families to pay school fees. The scheme evolved as a response to the economic pressure on families from the Global Economic Crisis but has been taken on as a long term policy by the Samoan Government, and is designed also to strengthen standards of education at school level.

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Police

The New Zealand Police and Samoa Police and Prison Service have shared a long and close association. There is active cooperation between the two services in both the bilateral and regional contexts. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by Police Commissioners in the margins of the inaugural Joint Ministerial Consultations in Apia on 18 March 2005. One of the outcomes of that MOU is to develop a joint plan of action covering collaborative activities between the two services over a one to two-year period. The text of a revised and updated MOU was finalised at the 2010 Mutual Assistance talks. NZ Police currently support Samoa's Domestic Violence Unit and have recently provided training in prosecutions and maintaining public order. Further opportunities are under consideration for 2010. NZ Police also support Samoa's canine unit.

In September 2009 a NZ Police Liaison Officer position with responsibility for the south and south-west Pacific was established within the New Zealand High Commission in Apia.

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Immigration

Immigration is an important element of the bilateral relationship. Under the 1982 Protocol to the Treaty of Friendship, New Zealand has a specific obligation to consult Samoa on immigration (and citizenship) matters affecting Samoa. A special immigration quota introduced in 1970 by the New Zealand Government allows up to 1,100 Samoans annually to be granted New Zealand permanent residence, in addition to those entering New Zealand under normal immigration arrangements.

Samoa was one of the first five Pacific Island countries to receive facilitated support for its participation in the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. The RSE allows workers to come to New Zealand for up to seven months to work in the horticulture and viticulture sectors. All Forum Island countries, apart from Fiji, are eligible under the scheme, but New Zealand has worked intensively with five to help kick start the policy. Since it commenced in April 2007, 3288 Samoans had been to New Zealand under the RSE scheme.

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Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Samoa's progress in improving human development since the early 1980s is reflected in increases to life expectancy (to 70.8 years), a rising adult literacy rate (98.6%), increased enrolment in schools, growth in average incomes (GDP per capita ST\$7,748) and a steady reduction in the child mortality rate.

While there has been a rise in the levels of human development, inequities of income distribution, slow growth of the private sector, hardship amongst vulnerable groups, lack of formal employment and income generating activities, reliance on remittances, limitations in access to quality education and health and the prevalence of non-communicable diseases are limiting the gains made to date. Addressing these issues has become the core focus of Samoa's development objectives.

A number of donors are active in Samoa including Australia, EU, China and New Zealand with development assistance constituting 15% of GDP. The multi-donor environment is well coordinated by the Samoan Aid Coordination Unit, in the Ministry of Finance. This has resulted in a number of multi-donor, multi-year sector wide programmes (SWAPs) of which New Zealand has committed to support Health and Education. New Zealand is also a key supporter of a multi-donor private sector facility which supports private sector led initiatives, and a similar public sector improvement facility, engaged in critical areas of finance and public sector reform.

New Zealand's bilateral ODA programme is aligned with Samoa's national development priorities (SDS 2008-2012) and focuses on economic and private sector development, improving social and public sector delivery, human resource and community development.

New Zealand development assistance has increased from NZ\$10.5 million in 2008/09 to NZ\$14 million in 2009/10, with further increases planned to NZ\$15 million in 2010/11 and NZ\$17 million in 2011/12. It will focus in particular on addressing the challenges in the health and education sectors, as well as to support private sector development. New Zealand and Australia have also committed to a school fee grants programme which will ensure that all primary age children have access to education.

Additionally, 2009/10 saw New Zealand commit an additional NZ\$6 million as budget support for Samoa's comprehensive tsunami recovery plan, and a further NZ\$4 million specifically to the

Samoa's comprehensive tsunami recovery plan, and a further NZ\$4 million specifically to the tourism recovery, including concessional finance to high end resorts and grant funding to reconstruction of beach fale and associated businesses. Further work to strengthen the tourism sector is planned.

Tourism

Tourism, although highly vulnerable to natural disasters, has developed into Samoa's top foreign exchange earner (excluding remittances) - and not without justification. Samoa's natural advantages of sun, scenery, and culture have drawn unprecedented numbers of tourists (with New Zealanders comprising around 40% of all tourist arrivals) making the most of cheaper flights offered by both Polynesian Blue and Air New Zealand. For the moment, tourism earnings continue to hold fairly steady despite the global economic crisis and the September 2009 tsunami.

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Visits

There are regular Ministerial visits in both directions.

Visits to Samoa

- Paula Bennett, Minister for Social Development and Employment, included a short official programme on a private visit to Samoa in April 2010.
- Prime Minister Hon John Key and Hon Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Samoa on consecutive days in October 2009, just after the tsunami of 29 September 2009 to express solidarity with the government and people of Samoa and to assess New Zealand's relief efforts.
- Hon Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stopped briefly in Samoa in July 2009 and met with Prime Minister Tuilaepa and Deputy Prime Minister Misa Telefoni.
- Prime Minister John Key led a 75-person delegation to Samoa as one of four countries visited in his Pacific Mission in July 2009.
- Hon Tim Groser, Minister of Trade, attended the Forum Trade Ministers' Meeting in Apia in June 2009.
- Hon Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Samoa in February 2009.
- July 2008 - Rt Hon Winston Peters accompanied the United States of America Secretary of State Dr Condoleezza Rice to Apia for a meeting with Forum Foreign Ministers.
- March 2008 - Rt Hon Winston Peters and Hon Shane Jones visited Apia to participate in the 3rd New Zealand/ Samoa Joint Ministerial Consultations.
- July 2007 - Rt Hon Winston Peters, Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban and Hon Mahara Okeroa led the 2007 Pacific Mission. The delegation also included business representatives, NGOs, academics, media and officials
- April 2007 - Hon Harry Duynhoven, Minister for Transport Safety attended the Forum Transport Ministers' Meeting in Apia
- March 2006 - Rt Hon Winston Peters, Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Samoa
- March 2005 - Hon Phil Goff, Hon Paul Swain and Hon Taito Phillip Field visited Apia to participate in the inaugural New Zealand/Samoa Joint Ministerial Consultations.
- August 2004 - The Prime Minister, Hon Phil Goff and Hon Taito Phillip Field attended the Pacific Island Forum in Apia

- 2003 - Hon Jim Sutton led a trade delegation to Samoa
- June 2002 - Prime Minister Helen Clark visited Samoa to participate in the 40th Independence Anniversary celebrations.
- April 2002 - Hon Phil Goff led a delegation to Samoa

Visits to New Zealand

- Prime Minister Tuilaepa, Minister of Women, Community & Social Development Hon Fiamē Naomi Mataafa and Minister of Works, Transport & Infrastructure Hon Tuisugaletaua Sofara Aveau visited New Zealand in November 2009 for the fourth Joint Ministerial Consultations and to attend the Tsunami Memorial Service held at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Auckland
- PM Tuilaepa visited Hawke's Bay in April 2009 to meet with an employer of Samoan workers under the RSE Scheme
- Hon Fiamē Naomi Mataafa visited New Zealand in February 2009
- Speaker of the Samoan Parliament, Hon Tolufuaivalelei Falemoe Leiatua MP, visited New Zealand April 2008
- Deputy PM Misa Telefoni signed WTO Accession Agreement with Hon Phil Goff March 2008 in Auckland
- Hon Fiamē Naomi Mataafa attended the Commonwealth Advanced Learning Seminar in Wellington in March 2008.
- The Head of State of Samoa, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, visited New Zealand December as a Guest of Government December 2007.
- Prime Minister Tuilaepa, Police Minister Apulu Faafisi and Finance Minister Hon Niko Lee Hang attended the annual Joint Ministerial Consultations in Wellington November 2006.
- February 2005 Minister of Agriculture, Hon Tuisugaletaua Aveau Sofara visited Auckland
- March 2005 Prime Minister Tuilaepa visited New Zealand to speak at a Pacific Cooperation Foundation seminar on Pacific regionalism. While in New Zealand, Prime Minister Tuilaepa attended a Pacific Islands Forum Core Group meeting in Auckland. He visited Auckland again in August 2006 to attend the Pacific Futures Conference
- June 2004 Hon Misa Telefoni Retzlaff recently visited New Zealand for the Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting and led a trade delegation to Auckland in March 2005
- Prime Minister Tuilaepa led the Samoan delegation to the Pacific Islands Forum in Auckland in August 2003

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Representation

- [New Zealand High Commission Apia, Samoa](#) [external link].
 - [Samoa High Commission, Wellington](#)
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Travel advice

The Safe Travel website provides a travel advisory for [travellers to Samoa](#) [external link].

