



**World Health Organization
Organisation mondiale de la Santé**

FIFTY-FIRST WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

A51/DIV/9
15 May 1998

Citation

**Award of the World Health Organization
Health-for-All Gold Medal
to
The Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana
Prime Minister of Samoa**

After a career in commerce, and active participation in community life, the Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana was elected to Parliament in 1957 and appointed Minister of Health in October 1959. He is one of the very few surviving signatories of the National Constitution of Samoa adopted in 1960.

Appointed Prime Minister in December 1982, he has occupied that post with great distinction, receiving among other awards, the title of Companion of Australia in 1993 for his outstanding leadership. Widely recognized as one of the elder statesmen in the South Pacific Region, he received an Honorary Doctorate in 1993 from the National University of Samoa.

The Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana has contributed to significant advances in public health in Samoa. He occupied the post of Minister of Health on three occasions, during which he, and the Department of Health, worked successfully in partnership with WHO in improving public health. Today, Samoa has thriving primary health care services, accessible to the entire population, with a health promotion and health awareness programme that are well known throughout the Pacific region. Almost the entire population has access to clean water supplies and most people have access to hygienic sanitary facilities. Immunization coverage is nearly total and diseases such as poliomyelitis, yaws and syphilis have been eliminated. Maternal and infant mortality figures have improved significantly. During the cyclones that hit Samoa in the early 1990s, the Prime Minister worked tirelessly in collaboration with WHO to minimize the impact on health of these disasters.

The Prime Minister has been closely associated with health development in Samoa, including efforts to foster healthy lifestyles among his people. He has displayed an acute awareness of the importance of social measures to protect young persons against violence and substance abuse, to ensure that working conditions are conducive to health, and to create a school environment that is supportive of good health and personal growth. He has also strongly supported programmes for the control of communicable diseases such as malaria, dengue fever and filariasis.

The Prime Minister has been a strong advocate of the Healthy Islands initiative adopted by the Pacific Island countries in 1995, and in particular of the Yanuca Island Declaration of that year, which affirmed that "all countries in the Pacific must strive to work together towards a healthy island state through sharing of information technology and expertise for the betterment of the environment and health status of the people of these island

nations". This commitment was reiterated in the Rarotonga Agreement of August 1997, which stresses the importance of partnerships among communities, government departments and other sectors in meeting health needs.

The World Health Organization is privileged to present the Health-for-All Gold Medal to the Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana, in recognition of his important contributions to the attainment of the social goal of health for all in his country and region.

Hiroshi Nakajima, M.D., Ph.D.
Director-General
World Health Organization
14 May 1998

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