Minister of Health of Tonga - Statement

Hon President and distinguished delegations; the Kingdom of Tonga wishes to thank WHO for all support and strong leadership by DG Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus and WHO RD for WPR - Dr Takeshi Kasai. We appreciate the:

- The On-site financial and technical support by WHO country office
- Partner coordination and Pacific tailored support provided through Joint Incident Management Team for the Pacific countries in Fiji Sub regional office
- Weekly information session with RD WPRO
- Guidelines developed and information shared by WHO HQ, which was adapted to the Tongan context
- And also the procurement of items especially the Testing kits and PPEs

So far, Tonga remains Covid 19 free and we are working on a policy document for opening the border with strict facility based quarantine, strengthening contact tracing and case management, and community engagement.

- Tonga is seeing this adversity as opportunity to strengthen health system, and already established and strengthened one of the community health center to be a COVID treatment center, and strengthened lab capacity to be able to conduct PCR testing.
- Community support has been tremendous and community are engaged and are more aware of infection prevention and control including the importance of handwashing

I would like to remind everyone that this year is the year of the nurse and midwife and my thoughts are with them and frontline staff, supporting those who are in need and saving lives. I am sure, together in solidarity, we can get out of this situation, stronger.

Finally, I wish to thank WHO and partners for continual support for Covid 19 response and beyond, tailored for the Pacific and small island countries, like the Kingdom of Tonga.

Thank you and Malo ‘aupito.

A/Professor Dr Amelia A Tuipulotu
Hon Minister of Health,
Tonga