



Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development

**REPORT ON  
PROGRAM FOR CELEBRATION OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
DISABILITY WEEK  
3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014  
TO'OA SALAMASINA HALL, SOGI**

Prepared by the Disability Unit – DFRPPIP, MWCSO

## **Introduction**

The International Disability Week (IDW) is celebrated every year on the 3rd December. For this year, celebrations were held from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at the To'oa Salamasina Hall. It was officially opened by the honourable Minister for MWCSO, Tofa Tolofuaivalelei Leiatua, as one of the essential events celebrated together with the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence and the National Youth Week on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014. In his welcoming speech, the Minister soundly reiterated on the purpose of having to annually acknowledge the work of Persons with Disability through the commemoration of the International Disability Week, particularly the importance of continuously empowering the collaborative efforts of all Disability Organizations in conjunction with the MWCSO as the national focal point for Persons with Disability.

**“Sustainable Development: The promise of Technology”**, was the theme for the commemorative event, identifying opportunities to use technology in the lives of persons with disabilities. In addition, it is to continue, maintain and expand future and current development for persons with disabilities through the use of technology. It was a vital opportunity for persons with and without disabilities to promote and share skills to facilitate each of their specific roles either as a disability service provider, disability advocate or as an inclusive education teacher using various forms of technology.

The program for the first 2 days were coordinated and hosted by the MWCSO while the third day was left to each Organization and Ministry to conduct their own commemoration activities. Nevertheless, the highlight of IDW 2014 was to also celebrate a milestone when the Prime Minister of Samoa signed the CRPD earlier in September 2014 indicating that the Samoan government is willing to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

## **Planning** (Plan attached)

The planning for IDW was done through a number of discussions and consultations with members of the Disability Taskforce and the Disability Sub-sector as well as key stakeholders. The proposed activities were also finalized during a sub-committee meeting particularly of the 7 NGO's who were involved in the Public Exhibition and Drama Competition.

## **Participants**

Participants for the IDW were from various Government Ministries, NGOs and members of the Disability Taskforce. The attendance saw groups from UN agencies, the media, all MWCSO staff and the event was opened to parents of students and the wider public. It brought together an estimated number of more than 400 individuals ranging from young pre-school age to the elderly population.

## **Media advertisements and publications**

TV advertisements were published on both the TV1 and TV3 stations a week prior to the IDW for a period of 2 weeks. Earlier to this, all 4 ads were presented and screened before members of the Disability Taskforce and Sub-sector Committee for their comments and feedback. The TV ads were available in English with a Samoan voice over. Each ad had a different message including accessibility, inclusive education, active participation and inclusion and empowerment. Moreover, the CRPD articles were published in the Samoa Observer for 1 week throughout the IDW.

The MWCSO published and distributed its revised Disability booklets comprising of the Samoa Disability Sector Profile and Directory (English version) and the Samoan versions of the CRPD questions and answers and CRPD children's book. Copies of these booklets were included as prizes for all 3 competitions as well as gift packs for the judges.

### Activities

There were different activities planned and conducted during the 2 days.

#### **Day 1: International Disability Day Exhibition, Wednesday 3 December, 2014**

Present at the exhibition were reps of the 7 disability service provider NGOs, distinguished representatives invited from the public and private sectors and international donor community, and members of the public. The welcoming was conducted by Fa'afetai Korua, ACEO for DFRPPIP who was also the MC for the day. This was followed by the opening prayer by Rev. Ma'auga Motu, Secretary of the National Council of Churches. The Chief Executive Officer of the MWCSO, Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago, provided opening remarks. The Deputy High Commissioner for DFAT, Ms Rosemary McKay delivered the keynote address while Fa'aolo Utumapu-Utaileso, Secretary for NOLA conveyed a special address on behalf of all persons with disabilities, in recognition of government's signing of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which took place in September 2014

##### 1. Essay Competition Prize giving

The essay competition was opened for 2 weeks prior to the IDW. The target was Year 12s and 13s students as well as the higher tertiary level to submit an essay expanding on the theme of IDW. Prizes were awarded for first, second and third prize winners. Prizes were prepared via the Samoa Disability Program, as well as the assistance of Samoa Stationery and Books.

A total of 5 essays were received after the due date and all displayed a high level of knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues with regards to the use of modern technology. These essays were judged together by representatives from MESC, MWCSO, Senese and Loto Taumafai School (Find names of prize winners attached).

##### 2. Drama Competition

The 7 disability service provider NGOs were asked to select an item from either a play, a song or to perform a creative dance based on the sub themes namely; Communication devices, Mobility assistive devices or technology during natural disasters. These sub themes were intended as manifestations of the theme of the day. Some organizations requested to combine items with cross-cutting themes and this was allowed as long as it was within the 10 minutes time limit. The top 3 winners were awarded trophies and higher prize monies with the last 4 receiving consolation prizes (Prize winners list attached). The participation from persons with and without disabilities as well as the commitment from all staff members of each of these organizations was exceptional and displayed creative items which clearly sent out messages relevant to the theme of the week. The competition was judged by representatives from DFAT, NHS and MCIT with MWCSO as the scrutineer.

### 3. Public and Booths Exhibition

All members of the Disability Taskforce were invited to set up booths or provide information on disability progress and services available to be disseminated to the public for this day



### 4. Media and publicity.

In preparation for the event, TV spots had been prepared with the assistance of Signz Studios, with broadcasting of the spots beginning one week prior to the week of the event. 4 TV spots were prepared to highlight various scenarios of disability inclusive development at national level. The themes captured by the spots were: 1) Accessibility / Empowerment; 2) Collaboration / Awareness; 3) Participation / Recognition; 4) Intervention and Access to Services; Inclusive Education

Information materials produced by the Ministry were also showcased during the Exhibition:

- English and Samoan copies of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Samoa Disability Sector Profile and Directory;
- CRPD Booklet for children
- CRPD: Questions and Answers Booklet

## **Day 2: Mid-term Review for the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2011-2016) (NPPD)**

Another critical event was the mid-term review for the NPPD. This review invited participants from the disability sector, Government Ministries, NGOs and community representatives from STNs and SNs. The review looked at progress made in the implementation of the NPPD from the period of 2011 to mid 2014. It was also based on the completion of 5 Core Outcome Areas of the NPPD against its Objectives, Key Result Indicators and Actions. The objectives of the review were:

- i. To analyse performance of relevant disability sector partners in line with the NPPD
- ii. To identify strengths and weaknesses, existing and emerging trends in program implementation and priority areas; and
- iii. To provide background to programs and structures developed by the disability sector assisting in providing advice and research purposes and in the delivery and mainstreaming of disability interests across relevant programs and forums

Some challenges highlighted in this review are the lack of a centralized coordinating agency. There are various disability service providers but majority tend to work in silos and lack coordination which leads to duplication and concentration of services in the urban areas. Additionally inclusive education in rural primary schools still face inefficient resources and lack qualified teachers and professionals particularly to cater for students with severe disabilities. The issues of persons with disabilities obtaining formal employment and women with disabilities and accessibility come out strong in this review as key areas whereby investment of resources are needed the most.

## **Conclusion**

The IDW 2014 celebrations attracted an active participation and involvement in a range of critical activities from not only the disability sector but also many persons with disabilities. The opening ceremony was able to further illuminate the significance of the IDD theme: 'Sustainable Development: The promise of technology' – in ways that were beneficial not only for the disability service providers, but also for the public. It was also an important opportunity to bring home the reality of Samoa having signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the implications of this for all Samoan people. Lastly, the IDW celebrations demonstrated the collaborative efforts of the Ministry and the disability sector.

There were several challenges faced by the Ministry, namely with delays in the processing of payments and the endorsing of programs and materials in preparation for the ceremony. These are areas that will be addressed for future programs.

The Ministry would like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Australia through the Samoa Disability Program in realizing opportunities to ensure sustainable futures for persons with disabilities of Samoa. The Ministry acknowledges also the

invaluable contribution of partners in the private sector, in the preparation of this event. A special thank you and congratulations to all our stakeholders in the disability sector; the achievements of 2014, namely the signing of the CRPD, are a testament to their efforts to better the community.