Statement on behalf of Samoa by H.E. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa’olelei Luteru on the draft Resolution for an Advisory Opinion on Climate Change

Mr President, Excellencies,

I am pleased to make the following brief remarks on behalf of my country, Samoa, and we align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Federated State of Micronesia on behalf of Pacific SIDS, and Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum.

Samoa supports fully the adoption of the Resolution seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the obligations of States in respect of climate change. The key principles of human rights and justice are well enshrined in our UN Charter and supported by international treaties. Principles and values that bind us as citizens and custodians of planet earth.

Mr President,

We are currently witnessing unprecedented and unparallel changes in our climate system, that will have long lasting effects if we do not come together and reverse the current trends in greenhouse gas emissions. The IPCC’s 6th Synthesis Report is yet again another stark reminder of the urgency to act now. The science is clear and irrefutable.
This is a timely initiative by Vanuatu. It is also an urgent global call to action. The right to the environment is now accepted as a universal human right by the Human Rights Council and by this General Assembly in its Resolution A/RES/76/300, which recognized the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right.

This is about climate justice and a human rights issue - that affects current and future generations.

Mr President,

As of today, the financial burden falls almost entirely on the affected nations and not on those most responsible for the adverse effects of climate change. Seeking an advisory opinion to clarify the rights and obligations of states under international law pertaining to climate change, is morally, the right thing to do. As a small vulnerable state, Samoa relies on the rule of law as one of the few shields to protect our people. It will also assist, we firmly believe, in the future work of the UN and the UNFCCC.

Dear friends,

I congratulate Vanuatu and all member states for championing this vitally important initiative for all of us and assure you of Samoa’s continued unwavering support. We encourage member states to stay engaged in the next phase and to share your ideas and comments with the ICJ in due course.

As members of the global community affected by climate change in one way or another, let us move forward together, in line with the principles of climate justice and human rights. I call on your continued valuable support for this initiative.

Thank you. Fa’afetai tele lava.