



## PRESS STATEMENT

### **Apia, 9 December 2021 – *Ombudsman Office hosts its first dialogue on good governance and human rights in Samoa***

Building strong and responsive institutions through good governance and human rights is the theme for the first dialogue led by the Ombudsman Office (Office). As mandated by law to promote good governance in public agencies and human rights as the National Human Rights Institution, it was imperative that the Office led the facilitation of discussions on good governance and human rights with emphasis on strengthening public complaints resolutions, mainstreaming of human rights in decision making, processes and services, as well as strengthen partnerships to further promote good governance values and principles and human rights protection.

The Dialogue was held over two days. Day 1 of the dialogue focused on Government Ministries and Public Bodies with discussions aimed at exploring areas institutions see they can improve on in handling complaints and how collectively they can be addressed to ensure that officials are well informed with skills and knowledge to handle complaints. In addition, exploring strategies to enable a more transparent and proactive relationship between the Office and Ministries to ensure that public complaints that comes through the Ombudsman Office are responded to and dealt with in a timely manner and efficiently.

Day 2 of the dialogue was devoted for Civil Societies Organisations (CSOs) focusing on challenges and strategies in human rights advocacy and work, as well as exploring ways CSOs and the Office through its human rights mandate can both benefit from one another in their distinct roles to promote human rights.

Assistant Ombudsman Maualaivao Pepe Seiuli noted that, “this is the first for the Office to host such collective Dialogue and hopes that its outcome will greatly benefit the development Samoa in ensuring that institutions are strengthened and improved. Furthermore, it will also contribute to Samoa’s efforts in achieving the SDGs specifically, SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on building strong and effective institutions.

The dialogue will be an ongoing event for the Office and hopes the outcome will greatly contribute in informing future efforts of Government, CSOs and the Office in strengthening complaints resolution services and advancing human rights mainstreaming in Samoa.

The Office acknowledges all the Government Ministries, public bodies and CSOs who were in attendance.

ENDS.