



## PRESS STATEMENT

### **Apia, 12 February 2021– CSOs prepares for 3rd UPR Reporting for Samoa**

The Office of the Ombudsman which is also Samoa's National Human Rights Institution in collaboration with SPC-RRRT (Pacific Community) and the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Fiji hosted a capacity building workshop for Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) in Apia Friday, 12 February.

The workshop aimed to refresh and raise awareness among CSOs in Samoa about the United Nations Human Rights Council's (HRC) upcoming **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** and provide guidance to CSOs in preparing and compiling their submissions or shadow reports to the UPR.

Director of Human Rights Loukinini Vili-Lewaravu said it was an opportunity for CSOs to discuss best practices and better understand their involvement in the UPR process.

"It is important to bring CSOs together remind them of the crucial role they contribute to the reviewing process of Samoa and to discuss options for submitting alternative submissions reports to the UPR in order for them to highlight their issues in the most effective way. Ms. Vili-Lewaravu said.

Mr Ashley Bowe, Human Rights Adviser to the Pacific Community comments on the importance of updating CSOs on best practices and technical guidelines on report structures that are recommended by UN experts"

"It is always helpful to share experiences from the process - the challenges and best practices as well as being familiar with reporting guidelines. SPC commends the NHRI of Samoa in assisting CSOs with their drafting and ensuring there continues to be a greater representation of CSOs in these UN processes". Mr Ashley Bowe said.

CSOs in Samoa have been invited to submit shadow submission reports to the UPR by March 25 2021.

The UPR is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. It is a state-driven process which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations.

The Office acknowledges the support and presence of various CSOs in Samoa who attended, and also Ms Simona Marinescu the UN Resident Coordinator and Mr Glen Ryan from the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and Papalii Mele Maualaivao of UNWOMEN for their contribution and valuable input.

Samoa's third UPR is scheduled for November 2021.

ENDS.