



MO LE SILAFIA

JANUARY - JUNE 2024 | ISSUE 9 | VOLUME 1



Komesina o Sulufaiga

THE OCEANIAN PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN DIGNITY CONFERENCE (APRIL 23 -25 2024)



(L-R) Maualai'ao P. Seiuli with Honorable Tamatoa Jonassen of Cook Islands in Lā'ie, Hawaii

Leaders from various fields met for the Second Oceanian Conference on Religious Freedom and Human Dignity to honor the 75th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR).

The event aimed to address human rights and religious freedom, offering scholars and religious leaders opportunities to deepen their understanding through diverse Oceanian perspectives. Notably, Robert J. Torres, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Guam expressed that when people begin to ignore human dignity, they also start to disregard human rights: *"The battle for justice and dignity endures despite advancements in consciousness and awareness, serving as a constant reminder of the need to continue protecting everyone's rights and liberties, our commitment to dignity is what defines us."*

Further: *"Respect for human dignity is alive and well in Samoa. It is inherent in our culture and society and reflected in our laws and practices"* explained Honorable Maualai'ao Pepe Seiuli, Acting Ombudsman of Samoa.

Furthermore Seiuli stated that: *[H]uman dignity is understood as part of Samoa's international obligations and that Samoa agrees to be bound by a human rights treaty or convention only when it is satisfied that its domestic laws are compliant, and the local context is suitable for the practical application of such a human rights instrument.*

Moreover, Tamatoa Jonassen, Secretary of Justice in the Cook Islands, highlighted the profound impact of climate change; scarce resources; and conflicting priorities on human dignity. *"These issues foster insecurity, restrict personal growth opportunities, and sideline at-risk groups"*, he said.

Jonassen stated that prioritizing immediate concerns over long-term sustainability can overlook essential elements for upholding human dignity.

Adapted from: Kealaka'i News BYU Hawaii

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AFIOGA MAUALAIVAO PEPE SEIULI

TALOFA & WELCOME to this Issue of our 'Mo le Silafia' (MLS) Newsletter 2024.

Notably, the Office attended as an invited Speaker the Oceania Perspectives on Human Dignity Conference in Lā'ie, Hawaii.

Further the Office also participated in the Annual Conference of the GANHRI where NHRIs unanimously endorsed a pledge to advance the use of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Furthermore, the Office also participated once more as one of the Speakers in the 13th International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) World Conference in the Hague.

Moreover, carrying out our legislated core services in: managing public complaints; special investigations duties; and public engagement is ongoing mostly in a successful if not in a reciprocal way.

Fa'afetai & God Bless

THIS ISSUE

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 - IOI 13th World Conference 2024
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 - SIU Complaint Boxes Distribution
 - Visit by PC SSPC, APF NHRIs
 - Police Recruits Training 1, 2024
 - Information & documentation system (HURIDOCs) Refresher Training.
 - International Women's Day
 - COMMUNITY-LED Human Rights consultation - Savaii & Upolu
 - HRCLD Workshop - Nadi, Fiji
 - Office collaborations with Working Communities
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- **ALBUM - Assorted Photos** (pg. 11 - 14)

APF & GANDRI NHRIs Meeting - MAY 2024



Maualai'vao P Seiuli and Ellenlina Moala together with fellow participants at the APF & GANHRI Meeting

Asia Pacific Forum (APF) members, together with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) around the world, are strengthening their efforts to safeguard human rights in relation to business activities, with a focus on climate change, digital technologies, and online civic space.

At the Annual Conference of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), more than 80 NHRIs unanimously endorsed a statement pledging to advance the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The statement highlighted the importance of addressing environmental concerns, digital advancements, and online civic engagement.

NHRIs committed to leveraging their unique mandates to promote and protect human rights, as well as to monitor, report, and handle complaints, ensuring the protection of human rights. They also committed to collaborating with businesses, governments, and their fellow NHRIs.

Following extensive discussions during the conference, the Outcome Statement emphasised the NHRIs' dedication to engaging with stakeholders across multiple sectors. This includes promoting sound policy measures related to the environment and climate change, monitoring online civic space and digital technologies, and advocating for a balanced mix of policy and regulatory measures. NHRIs agreed to collaborate through GANHRI to share information, best practices, addressing complaints with transnational human rights dimensions.

Adapted from: <https://www.asiapacificforum.net>



Group Photo of Participants at the APF & GANHRI Meeting



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INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE WORLD CONFERENCE - NETHERLANDS, 2024



Maualai'vao P Seiuli attending sessions and as Speaker at the IOI World Conference, Netherlands

The 13th World Conference and General Assembly of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) was successfully hosted by the National Ombudsman of the Netherlands in The Hague from 12 – 17 May 2024. The conference provided an opportunity for the entire membership of the IOI to meet again in person after eight long years and 200 delegates from 60 different countries and all six IOI regions participated in this important quadrennial event.

The conference was preceded by meetings of the IOI Board of Directors, in which the Board admitted new members from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin and North America. The Board further endorsed the publication of the next Best Practice Paper on “Whistleblower Protection”, which will be made available on the website soon, as well as the continuation of the IOI’s regional subsidies program in the membership year 2024/2025.

At The Hague, the IOI renewed its close cooperation with the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), in signing a MOU by which both organizations agree to continue their strong and cooperative relationship, with a view to sharing best practices in the area of ombudsman institutions and torture prevention.

On 14 May, the IOI General Assembly was held and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Volker Turk delivered an opening address in which he underlined the significant contribution Ombudsman institutions make to protect the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Turk further acknowledged Ombudsman as mechanisms to address and correct injustices caused by maladministration, as well as their ability to identify systemic failings and ensure that governments become more transparent and accountable. *“You are an important link between the institutions of the State and the population, thus for a renewed, refreshed social contract,”* Türk said in his opening remarks.

Adapted from: <https://www.theioi.org/ioi-news/current-news>

SIU DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLAINT BOXES - FEBRUARY 21 2024



(L-R) Principal Leota Ta'alo Leota, Director Lagafuaina Tavita, OIC Vaiaata, Senior Officer Nepa C Papali'i, and Assistant Mele Taveuveu

Acknowledging the Ministry of Police, Prisons and Corrections Services (MPPCS) for allowing our Special Investigations Unit (SIU) to establish the last of our Savaii Ombudsman complaint boxes at the Asau and Vaitoomuli Police Outposts. This is an initiative of the Office that commenced in June 2023, in an effort to reach out and be more accessible to the public living in remote areas across Samoa.

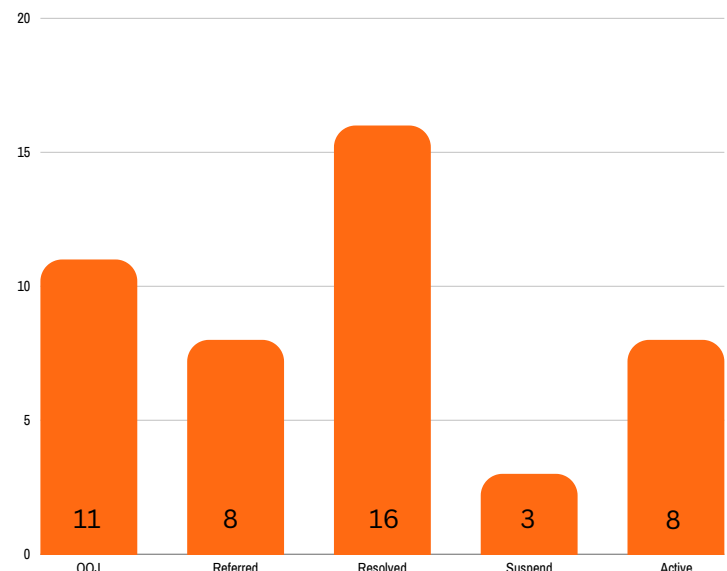
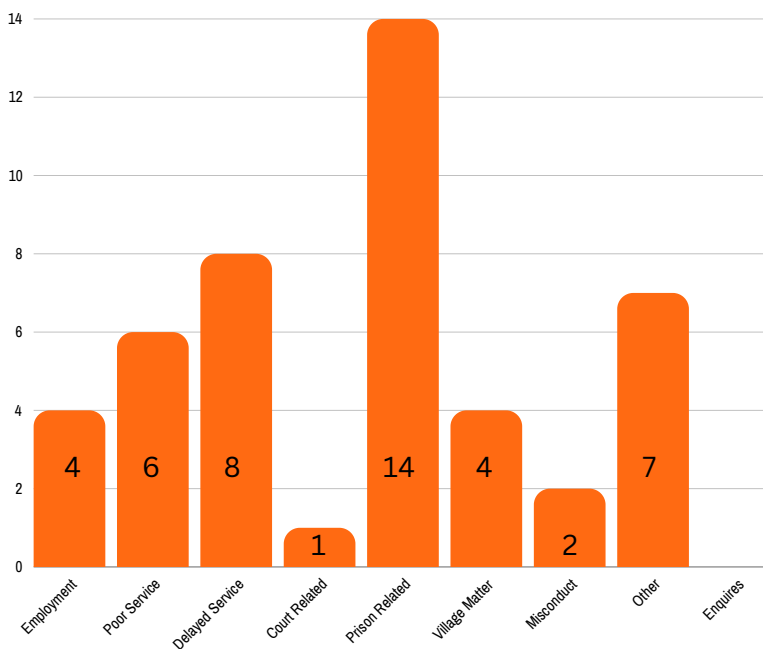
If you live in a remote area in Savaii and need to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman, please visit your nearest Police Station and lodge a letter of complaint in our Ombudsman Complaint Box.

We will uplift these complaints on a regular basis. We also have posters and brochures at all Savaii Police Stations available in both Samoan and English, explaining our Complaint Handling process; and for further information on our functions.

Thanks again MPPCS for allowing this initiative in ensuring our services to all our people are at least fair and reasonable.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT (SIU) COMPLAINTS (JANUARY 2024 - JUNE 2024)

Special Investigations Unit (SIU) received 46 complaints within this period with 76% (35 files) already having been finalized and addressed (ie. closed, out of jurisdiction, referred). Of the remaining 11 files, 8 are currently active and 3 are suspended due to complainants having yet to return with required documents for assessment. The nature of the majority of complaints were prison related (14 complaints), followed by complaints about the delay in service (10) and other complaints (7).



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IN-HOUSE MATTERS

STAFF MOVEMENT - RECRUITMENT & OUTGOING STAFF

NHRI DIRECTOR ULUGIA ROSA
TOESE - **TALOFA !!**



Director of National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), afioga Ulugia Rosa Toese has brought her expertise and wealth of experience to the Office on May 27, 2024.

ECU SENIOR OFFICER AFOA GAGAU
JERRY AH- KEE - **TALOFA !!**



Senior Engagement Officer tofā Afoa Gagau Jerry Ah - Kee who officially has brought his expertise joining the Office on March 28, 2024.

NHRI SENIOR OFFICER MS VAELEI APULU IOASA - **FAREWELL!!**



We bid a heartfelt farewell to Ms. Vaelei A. Ioasa. Her dedication and service have contributed overall to the Office and particularly through the NHRI vision and mission. We wish Vaelei the very best in her future callings and endeavors.

MEDIAROOM

Mo Le SILAFIA NEWSLETTER



Mo Le SILAFIA Newsletter Vol 1 Issue 7
(July 2023- Sep 2023)



Mo Le SILAFIA Newsletter Vol 2 Issue 8
(Oct 2023- Dec 2023)



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Police Recruits Training February 29, 2024

The Ministry of Police, Prison and Correction Services (MPPCS) once more invites the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct a session with the first lot of this year's Police Recruits on the legislated role of the Office; comparable to their pursuant to be police officers in the country. This is an ongoing partnership and an invaluable opportunity for the the Office to disseminate information and raise awareness on good governance practices; investigation processes more-so highlighting SIU's special networks and NHRI. We wish the Samoa Police Basic Recruits all the best in your Police training!

Group Photo & Images of the Police Recruits Training

(Top - Bottom) Group Photo with assorted images of interactive discussions during the recruitment training



For further information contact:

Ministry of Police, Prisons & Corrections | Samoa Police Headquarters

Training & Development Unit Office | Matautu-uta | PO Box 53, Apia SAMOA | Tel: (685) 22222, 28556

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YouTube

[Samoa Office of the Ombudsman NHRI](https://www.youtube.com/SamoaOfficeoftheOmbudsmanNHRI)



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OMB - TEAM ENGAGEMENTS

INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM (HURIDOCS) REFRESHER TRAINING FEBRUARY - MARCH 2024



Facilitators Hyebin Bina Jeon and Natasha Todi of HURIDOCS with Office Staff

The Office staff participated in a 5-day training at the Lava Hotel by the Human Rights Information and documentation system (HURIDOCS) last week (26 February - 1 March 2024) on the Office internal information system currently being developed by HURIDOCS with the support and assistance of Pacific-Community-SPC. The system will enable information to be more accessible and transparent within the organisation and to capture and organise the collection of information on its human rights activities and in particular investigations. Facilitated by Bina and Natasha of HURIDOCS the training looked at complaints management, human rights monitoring, project analysis and correspondence management which are key components of the system.

The Office acknowledges the support of the Pacific-Community-SPC with this ongoing work and also HURIDOCS for taking the time to travel to Samoa to take our staff through the system.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8, 2024



Smiles from the Office Ladies signaling support for the 2024 International Women's Day Celebration!

Supporting inclusion in our roles in families; workplaces; and churches, as we celebrate the International Women's Day 2024. The Office of the Ombudsman/NHRI undeniably stands in solidarity with the world in honoring the undeniable achievements of all women of Samoa and worldwide.

In essence, the Office cordially acknowledges the invaluable contributions of women of Samoa towards nation-building since the foreseeable past until today! For this remarkable reason in particular, we celebrate the unwavering contribution of all the ladies in the Office and every organisation nationwide.



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COMMUNITY-LED HUMAN RIGHTS CONSULTATION - SAVAII



Community-Led Savaii, Itumalo Salega - 13 March, 2024



Participants at the Community LED Savaii, Saipipi

The Office took the Community-Led initiative to Savai'i with much anticipation that the two selected districts of Salega 1 & 2; and of Fa'asaleleaga 4 & 5 would be taking the lead in discussions particularly with identifying issues pertaining to human rights. In effect the theme: "E fōfō e le Alamea le Alamea" encapsulates the basis of how the Office approached this project from pre-planning to its actual implementation phase.

In the same vein, the Office particularly the NHRI Team was at the forefront in ensuring that the selected communities were actually leading discussions and deliberations. NHRI and the Office were very mindful of limitations as to how much information the Office needs to share with communities allowing participants to share information on human rights within the context of each selected district and communities.



Group Photo at the Community LED Savaii, Saipipi

Firstly the Office started with Salega 1 & 2 before rolling out the same programme to the Fa'asaleleaga 4 & 5 from march 13 - 16 2024. In hindsight, the Community-Led Project for the most part was a success mainly because of the support from the communities as highlighted.

The Acting Ombudsman and the Office sincerely wish to acknowledge the timely co-operation and support from Sui o Nu'u as well as Sui o Tama'ita'i of Salega and Fa'asaleleaga which was actually illustrated throughout the implementation phase of the Community-Led Project. Fa'afetai tele.



Chiefs filling registrations at Community LED Savaii, Saipipi

The majority of complaints received by SIU have been through the Ombudsman Complaint Boxes; and Walk in.



Walk in 15



By Writing 4



By Phone 4



SIU-Prison Box 12

THREE- DAY WORKSHOP ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECT - FIJI



Participants at the Human Rights Community-Led Development Workshop held in Nadi: Photo Human Rights Commission Fiji



Some of the participants engaging in a group discussion session during the Workshop

To reflect the Human Rights Community-Led Development (HRCLD) process and the growing ownership of the 'community', in this case the Pacific Community of HRCLD Practitioners, the programme was designed by the practitioners. The topics for discussion were identified during online discussions prior to the workshop and were informed by the experiences of the first several months of facilitating a HRCLD process in their countries. Practitioners also took ownership of each session - facilitating, collating information and applying this information to their thinking and ongoing development.

Day One involved 1.5 hour-long progress presentations from each of the countries. Following each presentation practitioners identified the key themes, challenges, and strategies. These were grouped, collated and contributed to discussions for the remainder of the workshop. They were also used to ensure that the topics programmed for the workshop covered everything that the group wished to discuss. Presentations are available on request and Appendix 5 lists reported challenges, strengths and learning to date.

Day 2 and the first half of day 3 were spent in talanoa, discussing the topics identified. as well as contributing to continuing improvement of HRCLD practice, this material will inform the HRCLD Guide and be transcribed as notes for each of the teams as they continue their projects.

For the remainder of **Day 3**, a workshop was held on developing the MEAL frameworks for each project. Good practice would have meant that these were developed alongside the small project planning. Given that, mostly including the challenge of working online, this didn't occur.

The workshop provided an opportunity for capacity-building and to begin drafting the frameworks which will be developed further during individual country online mentoring discussions.

Overall, a key take-out from the discussions was the recognition from each of the NHRIs that, in order to facilitate a HRCLD process in full and to ensure sustainability past the life of the project, engagement was necessary past end of June 2024.

(Adapted from: HRCLD Supporting Pacific NHRIs to Build Human Rights Communities in the Pacific - Interim Activity Report)

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OFFICE COLLABORATIONS WITH WORKING COMMUNITIES - 25 MARCH 2024



Participants from Public offices and Private sector at the Working Community consultation

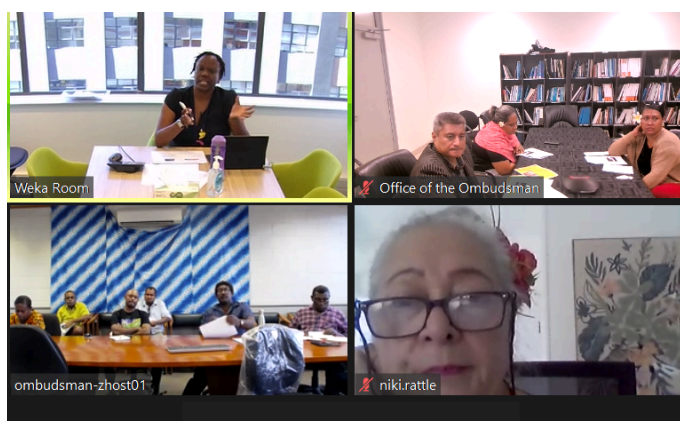
The Office had the privilege of hosting a consultation with representatives of the public and private sector working community. The consultation was based on the theme; "*E fofo e le Alamea le Alamea*" An illustration that a crown of thorn starfish heals its own poison, again giving the opportunity to the working community to share thoughts on the human rights issues within their work place; more-so identifying strategies that can assist in resolving those issues.

It was a very insightful consultation and our Office looks forward to future collaborations with each ministry and organization to ensure that Human-Rights continues to be promoted and protected in their respective ministries and within the private sector and organizations.



A glimpse at Participants exchanging viewpoints during group discussions at the Working Community Workshop.

"COACHING FOR SENIOR INVESTIGATORS AND LEADERS" WORKSHOP BY THE NZ OMBUDSMAN - MARCH - JUNE 2024)



Why is coaching important?

- Improves performance
- Increased collaboration
- Boosts staff motivation and engagement
- Empowers staff
- Improves team effectiveness and productivity
- Fosters a culture of learning and development

Office of the Ombudsman
Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

"Coaching for Senior Investigators and Leaders" workshop by the NZ Ombudsman Julia Komugabi

The NZ Ombudsman held seven training workshops between March to the end of June on ZOOM having one or two trainings per month. This particular workshop was facilitated by Julia Komugabi (Capability Development Lead) of the NZ Ombudsman Office. The training was based on work and communications styles, giving and receiving feedback, stages of learning, asking questions and coaching and mentoring. The participants were from Tonga, Cook Islands, Solomon Island and the three staff from Samoa including Senior Investigation Officer Manino Eveni (GGU), Rosuweti Galuvao (CSU) and Michael Tamanikaiyaroi (ECU). The workshop was successfully completed on the Thursday, 27th of June.



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INDUCTION & OFFICIAL WELCOMING OF NEW OMB. STAFF

The Office is delighted to welcome the two new additions to the OMB Team. The new Director of the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), afoiga Ulugia Rosa Toese, as well as the new Senior ECU Officer tofā Afoa Gagau Jerry Ah-Kee Welcome once more to the OMB family.

Prior to joining the Office, Ulugia and Afoa had been working at the Legislative Assembly as Manager of Institutional Strengthening Services Manager; and Community Relation Services Officer respectively. Their Induction Sessions were conducted by the Office as usual ensuring the new incoming staff members are fairly informed about the history more-so the legislated functions and perceived public expectations of the Office. Manuia tele lo oulua tula'i mai ma le alofaiva .



(L - R) Maualaivao P. Seiuli NHRI Director Ulugia R. Toese with CSU Director Muliagatele D Salanoa during Induction



(L-R) Prin. Officer Nepa Papalii with Snr. Afoa Gagau J Ah Kee with a glimpse at discussions during the Induction session.

ASSORTED PHOTOS OF OMB EVENTS & PARTICIPATION



(L-R) Tafilipepe D M Faioloa, Michael Tamanikayaro, and Afoa Gagau J Ah-Kee, at Radio 2AP/ TV9 OMB ECU Engagements



Office Meetings (10)



Public Booths (1)



Office Visits (146)



Facebook Posts (12)



Press Releases (2)

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Office Invitations (10)



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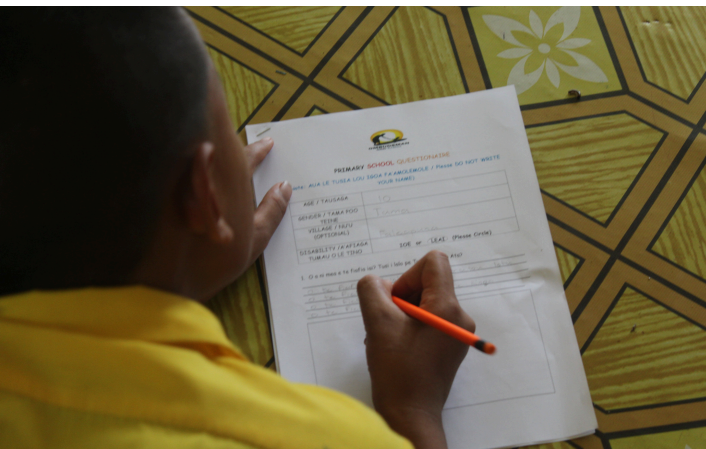
ASSORTED PHOTOS OF OMB EVENTS & PARTICIPATION ...



(L-R) Faletua & Tausi and Chiefs as Participants at the Community-Led consultation - Assembly of God Hall, Falefa 2024



(L-R) Youths Group discussion and Chiefs participating at the Community-Led consultation - Assembly of God Church Hall, Falefa.



(L-R) A student at work and a Group activity at Faleapuna Primary School during the Community-Led consultation.



(L-R) Anoama'a College students smiles for a Group Photo with students at work during the Community-Led consultation.

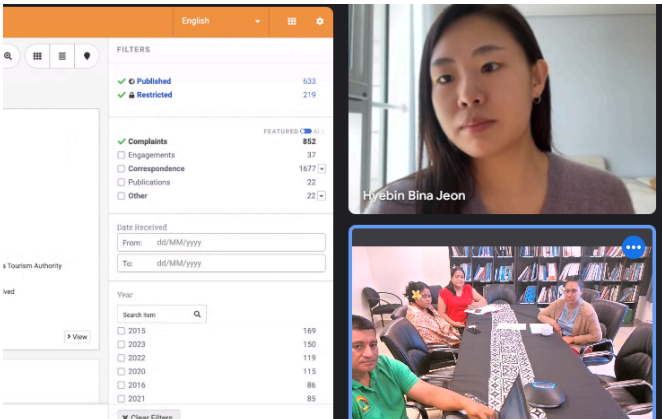
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SIU Complaint Letter Collections - May 2024



(L-R) Leota Taalo Leota (Principal Investigation Officer SIU) & Lemalu Ropati Sitivi (Office Assistant & Driver CSU)

NHRI HURIDOCS Support Session II - May, 2024.



(L-R) Program Officer Hyebin Bina Jeon interacting with OMB Staff online during the NHRI HURIDOCS Session II 2024.

The Office Corporate Service Unit (CSU) led a follow-up HURIDOCS support session via ZOOM altogether with facilitator Hyebin Bina Jeon (South Korea) to gauge and update the Office staff regarding any issues and relative queries on the use of the UWAZI platform.



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OFFICE PUBLIC BOOTH & ANNUAL STAKEHOLDER SURVEY 2024 - SAVAI'I



Setting up our Booth at the Salelologa Market for public engagement and information sharing on the Office services and functions.



Students of Vaiola Primary School visiting our Public Booth with teachers at the background.



Snapshots at Tuasivi Hospital of OMB Team in action for the Annual Stakeholder Survey and Engagement - May, 2024.



(L-R) Setting up the Salelologa Market Booth and a snapshot of a participant in the Survey at Salelologa Wharf.