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### **A tribute to Maiava Iulai Toma**

I am honored to deliver this short eulogy as the current Ombudsman of Samoa, in tribute to the life and legacy of Maiava Iulai Toma, a dearly departed friend and colleague and one to whom this office meant alot.

Maiava was the third and longest serving Ombudsman of the Samoa Ombudsman Office, yet he humbly referred to himself and to his office as “a servant of the people.” He dedicated his career to this role, serving with unwavering commitment and integrity from 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1994 to his retirement on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

During his tenure, Maiava played a pivotal role in shaping Samoa’s public service and human rights landscape. He was a trailblazer in expanding the Office’s mandates enabling it to investigate the conduct of public disciplinary forces and for it to become Samoa’s National Human Rights Institution. Under his guidance, the Ombudsman Act 1988 was updated and transformed into the more comprehensive and far-reaching Ombudsman Act 2013 and the Office achieved the esteemed Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) “A” accreditation in 2016 on its first try. To this day, the Samoa Ombudsman is still the only ‘A status’ NHRI office in the Pacific region.

His leadership was marked by a plethora of groundbreaking initiatives, including the first comprehensive national inquiry into domestic and family violence in Samoa. Recognised nationally and internationally as the most definitive grass-roots work on family violence in the Pacific. In addition he conducted numerous investigations and public inquiries that changed the face of the Samoa Public Service. Amidst these accomplishments, he is dearly remembered by us for his insistence on having a balanced work life and always putting God and family first.

As we reflect on Maiava’s remarkable contributions, we honor his legacy of service to the people, his dedication and the profound impact he made on the

lives of countless individuals and the broader Samoan community who sought help from his Office during his tenure.

Tautai a'e Maiava. Mapu ia oe i aao alofa o le tatou Alii Faaola. Faafetai i lou sao taua i le tautuaina o Samoa, aemaise i le Ofisa o le Komesina o Sulufaiga.

*“You have fought the good fight, you have finished the race, you have kept the faith.”/Ua e tau le taua lelei, ua iu ia te oe le tausinioga, ua e taofi i le upu o le faatuatua.”*

When I think of Maiava, who also had a long and distinguished career as a public servant, I will always think of these further words from the good Book - “le auauna lelei ma le faamaoni, ulufale mai i le fiafia o lou alii”. No truer words exist to describe the man and his journey.

O alofaaga e le mavae, o lau aufaigaluega ma lou Ofisa o le Komesina o Sulufaiga ma Aia Tatau i Samoa. Manuia lou malaga Maiava, tatou te toe feiloai i le taimi o le Atua.

Vui Clarence Nelson and the staff of the Ombudsmans office, Samoa.