|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description: Description: Description: C:\Users\amessent\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\MN1HAVZZ\Brand NZ-no agency High Res.jpg | **Human Rights Council**  **39th session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group**  **Samoa**  **Delivered by New Zealand Permanent Representative**  **Lucy Duncan**  **2 November 2021** |

Madam President,

Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes Samoa’s participation today.

We **commend** Samoa for acceding to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as recommended at its last review.

We further **commend** Samoa on successfully upholding the rule of law, freedom of assembly and freedom of expression throughout a complicated post-election period.

We note further work is required to address inequalities resulting from gender and sexual orientation-based discrimination. Aotearoa New Zealand **recommends** Samoa review and strengthen anti-discrimination laws relating to same sex relations between consenting adults, sexual orientation, and gender.

Finally, and against the backdrop of Aotearoa New Zealand’s own challenges in this area, we note with concern that violence against women and girls remains high and we **recommend** Samoa prioritise efforts to tackle this.

We wish the delegation a successful review.

Thank you Madam President.