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برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

- PRESS RELEASE -

***PGA Congratulates Government of Samoa on Its Accession to  
The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)***

*New York (September 21st, 2017)* - PGA wishes to congratulate the Government of Samoa and PGA Member, Associate Government Minister for Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) of Samoa, Hon. Taefu Lemi Taefu, MP on the occasion of the Accession to the Biological and Toxin and Weapons Convention by Samoa.

PGA also wishes to recognize the efforts made by a wide range of organizations and stakeholders, including the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention of the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), which have all contributed to this important step forward for peace and security in the Pacific Islands region.

Since May 2016, PGA Member Hon. Taefu Lemi Taefu, in close coordination with expert staff in the Peace & Democracy Program of PGA in New York, has assiduously advocated for the Government of Samoa to accede to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

In November 2016, BWC Accession documentation was submitted to the Office of the Attorney General of Samoa for clearance. In January 2017, the Office of the Attorney General sent the Accession documents to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), seeking a number of clarifications which were responded to in February 2017. In March 2017, the Office of the Attorney General formally cleared/approved accession to BTWC by Samoa. In April 2017, Hon. Lemi Taefu MP's Ministry, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) assumed responsibility for preparing the Memorandum for submission to Cabinet in this matter. In May 2017, the Submission was transmitted to the Office of the Cabinet. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the decision of the Cabinet of the Government of Samoa approving accession to the BWC was issued by the Office of the Cabinet. In July 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) prepared the Instrument of Accession to the BTWC that was subsequently signed by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Samoa on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Hon. Associate Government Minister Lemi Taefu Lemi, MP commented earlier today:

*"I was very pleased to be informed several hours ago that the Government of Samoa has deposited our Instrument of Accession to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention with the State Department of the United States of America, one of the Depository States under the Convention, so becoming the 179th State Party to this vital international treaty. The terrible consequences of the usage, manufacture, development and stockpiling of Biological Weapons - in common with other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) - by definition, require universal adherence to this Convention. Our small world is filled with grave dangers and uncertainties, including the ever growing risk that Non State Groups may also seek to access and use such weapons. One can only watch the latest news to see that the world in which we live is no longer a safe place. It is therefore incumbent on all countries to join the BTWC without further delay. The time to act is now. Countries that have not ratified or acceded must do so now, for your own county's sake as well as for your region and, indeed, for the entire global community. We owe it to all generations to join this Convention now.*

*I congratulate Samoa on its accession and believe it is better late than never. I also wish to take this opportunity, as I have always done in our regional gatherings, to warmly encourage our Pacific neighbors who have not yet taken this step - the Governments of Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, Tuvalu and Niue – to also now accede to the BTWC without further delay. The BTWC was adopted in 1972 and entered into force in 1975. Nearly half a century later, never has it been more important to secure full universality of this Treaty. I have been pleased to advocate support for the BTWC among my colleagues in Government and also in the region.*

*I have also greatly appreciated the expert advice and technical inputs from Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) over the past 18 months in my journey to get Samoa to this stage. The journey has never been easy, but the support and guidance of PGA was instrumental in my own efforts to get Samoa to accede. It is much appreciated."*

For further information on PGA's Global Parliamentary Campaign to Promote Ratification and Implementation of the BTWC worldwide, please contact Mr. Peter Barcroft, Director of the Peace & Democracy Programme, PGA at [peter.barcroft@pgaction.org](mailto:peter.barcroft@pgaction.org) or Mr. Thiago Carvalho, Programme Officer, PGA at [Thiago@pgaction.org](mailto:Thiago@pgaction.org)

*PGA is grateful to receive the kind support of The WMD Threat Reduction Program of Global Affairs Canada for its Global Parliamentary Campaign to Promote Universality and National Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and to the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the Danish Foreign Ministry from who it receives core support.*

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