



FALE ALEA 'O TONGA

**STATEMENT PREPARED FOR HON TEVITA FATAFEHI PULOKA
PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR TONGATAPU 1**

The Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free World

Fifth Review Conference

Siam Reap, Cambodia

25-29 November 2024

- *Chairman*
- *Honourable Ministers,*
- *Colleague Parliamentarians,*
- *Excellencies*

I bring warm Pacific greetings on behalf of the Legislative Assembly and the People of Tonga. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the Government and People of Cambodia for the warm welcome we have received in your beautiful country.

2. I am honored to represent the Lord Speaker and the Parliament of Tonga at the Fifth Review of the Ottawa Convention and the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Treaty.

3. The Lord Speaker and I had the honor of meeting His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein, Special Envoy, and Senior Minister, His Excellency Hon Dr. Ly Thuch in the margins of the 149th Assembly of the IPU in Geneva, Switzerland, earlier last month.

4. We were deeply moved by the harrowing accounts of the devastating impact of anti-personnel mines, which can remain deadly for decades, posing a threat to innocent civilians. However, we were also encouraged by the ongoing efforts under the Convention to destroy these mines and the push for the universal adoption of the treaty.

5. I would like to thank the organizers for the opportunity to visit the Cambodian Peace Museum. It serves as a stark reminder of the enduring legacy of violence and suffering caused by landmines. This experience

reinforces our conviction to do everything possible to protect future generations from such horrors.

6. Tonga remains one of about 35 countries that have not yet signed the Ottawa Treaty. Our discussions with HRH Prince Al-Hussein and H.E Dr. Ly Thuch emphasize the need for Tonga to consider signing and ratifying the treaty.

7. Committed to peace and prosperity, Tonga, as a founding member of the Pacific Islands Forum and the Blue Pacific Continent, follows our 2050 Strategy for a better future. As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, we need to stand with the state parties. Supporting the treaty signals our collective commitment to eliminating the devastating impact of landmines.

8. Excellencies, the Pacific region, once a battleground during World War II, is still affected by anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance, endangering our communities. We have a moral obligation to eliminate these threats, ensuring future generations can live safely and supporting the global Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines.

9. I would like to announce that we will propose ratifying the Ottawa Convention in the Parliament of Tonga. Signing this treaty represents a crucial step toward eliminating the dangers of landmines and advancing global peace and security. We are also committed to promoting the treaty's universalization across the Pacific, where some countries have yet to join.

10. I wish you every success with this Summit.

I thank you.