



File Ref:

Government of Samoa

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT



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Faamolemole faatuatusi uma mai fesootaiga i
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OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

LAUNCH OF THE "MANGROVE MARINE SANCTUARY" AS A CHOGM LEGACY INITIATIVE AT NONO'A-SALEIMOA, SAMOA

Nono'a-Saleimoa Village, Samoa
24th October, 2024



Participants with the local community during the launching of the Mangrove Marine Sanctuary

Samoa is thrilled to announce the launch of the Mangrove Marine Sanctuary, a long-awaited project unveiled to commemorate the visit of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla during the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). This initiative is the result of a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI), the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (CHEC), Rotary in London, and the Rotary Club of Apia. It's a major step forward for Samoa's conservation goals.

Nono'a Village, located in Saleimoa, was chosen as the site for the sanctuary due to its incredible biodiversity and the community's strong commitment to environmental protection. This marks the start of a multi-year program to expand mangrove restoration efforts across Samoa, helping to safeguard marine life and strengthen resilience to climate change.

On September 27, 2024, Dr. Christopher Puttock, who leads Rotary's global mangrove restoration efforts, joined MNRE officials to introduce the project to the local community. The village of Nono'a hosted a traditional 'ava ceremony to kick off the partnership in style.

Dr. Puttock emphasized how significant this project is on a global scale, as it builds on Rotary's work restoring mangroves in 26 countries, including 15 Commonwealth nations, since UNFCC COP26.

“This initiative is essential to supporting our coastal and marine ecosystems, which are vital to the livelihoods of the Samoan people,” said MNRE’s Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the Water Resource Division, Asuao Malaki Iakopo, speaking on behalf of the Ministry during the event.

He continued: “Samoa is 98% ocean, and our waters are home to an incredible variety of marine habitats—seamounts, vibrant coral reefs, mangroves, and deep ocean basins. These ecosystems are key to our economy, our way of life, and our identity as Samoans. That’s why projects like this are so important to protect them.”

Asuao also highlighted that the initiative is perfectly in line with Samoa’s national priorities to promote sustainable use of natural resources and build resilience against climate change.

In preparation for the sanctuary’s launch, a mangrove nursery has already been set up in Nono’a with support from Dr. Puttock. This will supply seedlings for future planting events. MNRE is also rolling out awareness campaigns to educate the community on the importance of mangroves in protecting Samoa’s coastlines.

The sanctuary is set to play a big role in Samoa’s environmental conservation efforts and will contribute to global initiatives aimed at protecting coastal areas. The project promises long-term ecological and economic benefits for Samoa’s coastal communities, ensuring a brighter, more sustainable future.

The launch event included speeches from key partners, such as Nono’a village representative, MNRE’s ACEO-WRD, Vice President of SpaceX, and Rotary leaders. A ribbon-cutting to launch the Mangrove Marine Sanctuary billboard and mangrove planting ceremony followed, marking the official opening of the Sanctuary.

MNRE extends a huge thank you to all the partners and supporters who helped make this initiative a reality.

For further information on the Mangrove Marine Sanctuary and upcoming activities, please contact MNRE’s Division of Environment and Conservation (DEC) at +685 67200

Photos



Rev. Lotaua Mose opening the event with prayer, hym and a short sermon



Community remarks delivered by the representative of Nono'a Village



Assistant Chief Executive Officer of MNRE's Water Resource Division delivering the official Government statement



CEO of Sustainable Markets Initiative, Delivering her remarks



Vice President of SpaceX, delivering her remarks



MBE Rotary Representative to the Commonwealth, delivering her remarks



MNRE and partners officially launching the Nono'a, Saleimoa, Mangrove Marine Sanctuary billboard by cutting the ribbons



Participants during the mangrove tour



Executive mangrove tree planting activity



Executive mangrove tree planting activity



MBE Rotary Representative to the Commonwealth, planting her mangrove tree



Executive Mangrove tree planting activity



Executive Mangrove tree planting activity



The Mangrove Marine Sanctuary billboard launched during the event



Entertainment from the men of Nono'a Village



Entertainment from the women of Nono'a Village