Speech of H.E. Muktesh K. Pardeshi, High Commissioner of India
at the Ceremony of Presentation of Credentials
Apia, Samoa, 12 March 2020

Your Highness the Head of State of Samoa:

I have the great honour today to present to Your Highness the Letter of Credence by which the Honourable President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind appoints me the High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Independent State of Samoa. Please allow me to convey to Your Highness the cordial greetings of the President of India and extend, through Your Highness, sentiments of goodwill and best wishes of the Government and people of India to the Government and people of Samoa.

Our both countries enjoy warm and longstanding relationship founded on commonwealth heritage, shared values and developmental aspirations. It is my particular privilege to be presenting my credentials in the 50th year of the establishment of diplomatic relationship between India and Samoa. The fact that India was the second country to establish diplomatic relations with Samoa in June 1970 is a testament to the importance India has attached to this relationship from the beginning.

India also attaches great importance to the Pacific region and has created a robust platform of engagement with the Pacific Islands countries under the aegis of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation, which has met twice since 2014. As we are preparing for the 3rd Forum sometime this year, we would like to engage with Samoa and understand its developmental priorities. Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi hosted India-Pacific Small Islands Developing States meeting in New York in September 2019 during which he announced a concessional Line of credit of US $150 million and US $1 mn to each Pacific Islands country towards implementation of a high-impact development project of its choice.

India has been extending support to Samoa to meet its developmental objectives by capacity building through ITEC scholarships and through projects for socio-economic development. Samoan diplomats are availing of professional courses conducted by Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi. Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative Project was launched with a grant of US $1 million by India under the aegis of India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

I am pleased to note that the India-Samoa Centre for Excellence in Information Technology at National University of Samoa has become operational and will be launched by Hon’ble Prime Minister of Samoa tomorrow.

These are interesting and may I say, challenging times to be High Commissioner of India in the Indo-Pacific region with the threat of climate change, disasters and epidemics staring at us. India would like to extend helping hand to Samoa towards recovery from the recent measles epidemic that took the toll of more than 80 innocent lives. We appreciate Samoa for joining the International Solar Alliance, an initiative for harnessing solar energy for combating climate change.

Your Highness, I assure you that under my stewardship, High Commission of India will exert all efforts to further the cooperation between our two countries and the friendship between our two peoples. To take this relationship forward, both sides are engaged in the establishment of Honorary Consulates. We are examining the proposal of Samoan side for the appointment of an Honorary Consul in New Delhi. We are also desirous of doing the same in Samoa this year for which I seek the support of the Government of Samoa.

I again thank, Your Highness, for accepting my credentials as High Commissioner of India to Samoa.

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Excellency,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Samoa and to receive your Letters of Credence accrediting you as the High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Independent State of Samoa, and I acknowledge the Letter of Recall for your predecessor.

I would kindly request that you convey to your President, the Government and people of India, the assurances of warmest greetings from Samoa and also my esteemed regards for continuing prosperity.

Excellency,
I acknowledge with sincere gratitude the financial assistance and goodwill thoughts of support by your Government towards our national recovery operations for the measles epidemic. Our national health continues with its post-epidemic responses and recovery efforts, and are strengthened by the kindness of our development partners including India.

Excellency,
The occasion of receiving your Letters of Credence here today, is an encouraging attribute of the growing relations, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our diplomatic ties. Our shared identity within the Commonwealth, the United Nations and other international organizations have contributed to our lasting cooperation in the field of education, health, environment and technology.

Samoans continue to receive advanced and affordable medical treatment in India under the India-Samoa Health scheme. Our public service and private sector have benefited from capacity building courses under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme.

The Tax Information Exchange Agreement between our two countries will soon be formalized and the India-Samoa Center for Excellence in the Information Technology that have been operational by the end of 2019, will be officially opened tomorrow. These are highlights as we pause to celebrate and reflect on our journey as bilateral development partners.

Excellency,
I welcome the engagement of India to the region through the India-Pacific Islands Cooperation Leaders Forum that allows the opportunity to understand national priorities from both sides. As a small island developing state, immediate global actions to combat the impacts of Climate Change remains a priority agenda for our Blue Pacific continent that Samoa shares with other island states. The Indian diaspora in our communities is a prominent feature of our people to people links with many serving in our tourism industry, car dealership, restaurants, telecommunications, academia and others.

Excellency,
I congratulate you as the new High Commissioner of India to Samoa and I am confident that your appointment will yield more opportunities for both our people and Government. I wish you well for the remaining itinerary of your trip and a safe journey on your return.

May God Bless and welcome once again to Samoa.

Soifua ma ia manuia.