INTRODUCTION
Samoa experienced Western civilization in the early nineteenth century with the arrival of Europeans and the Missionaries with Christian values. Christianity took root very soon, and the various missions introduce education to teach the indigenous population to read write.

Colonisation came first with the Germans (1990-1914) followed by the New Zealanders (1914-1962) until independence in 1962. Preparation for Independence brought about a strong desire for a well educated population with a strong understanding in International relations and governance. This modernisation initiated a strong desire for economic development. Despite these events, the traditional social and cultural fabric of society remained firm. The only major transformation was the infusion of Christianity into the Faa-Samoan (Samor-an-way-of-Life) which remains the binding force today. This is reflected in our Constitution where it is strongly emphasized "SAMOA IS FOUNDED ON GOD".

SAMOA: A DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT STATE
Like most emerging independent states, Samoa’s relations with the outside world and even its learning mechanisms and the work of Commerce and Government, was very much influenced by the Western ways of our previous colonial power. This was not
a bad thing for a democracy in transition from being under the protection of a bigger
developed country to being independent. While there was a strong demand for
Education in order to take up leading roles in a new Government. Education
development therefore became very important. More primary schools were built,
where today almost every village has a Primary School. A number (5-10) Primary
Schools serve as catchment areas for each of the 25 Government Secondary Schools
around the country. In addition, there are 17 Mission Secondary School. This
means that every school aged child has access to a Primary or Secondary Schools.
The teachers college which started in 1939 was merged in 1997 with the National
University of Samoa (NUS – started in 1984). The Technical Institute which started
in 1963 was upgraded to become Samoa Polytechnic in 1993. Samoa is also a
member country of the University of the South Pacific (USP) that has its main
campus in Fiji and a campus for the Schools of Agriculture in Samoa. Quite a
number of Samoans also get educated in overseas Universities and Polytechnics.
The need for tertiary education opportunities in overseas countries (Pacific, Asia,
Europe, the Americas, etc.,) is a conscious decision by the country for a wider
International perspective and understanding.

So right from the beginning, Samoa valued and recognised education as a means to
International understanding, as a vehicle for promoting tolerance and peace, and a
way forward to Economic and Social development.

SAMOA: HER CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURES FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETY COHESIAN

• Tradition/Culture
Samoan has a very strong sense of tradition and has bride in her ‘living culture’.

This culture is based on a very inclusive and transparent social structure, central to
which is the ‘Faa-matai’ or chiefly system. The other structures are the untitled men,
the young ladies, the married women and the children. All these structures
interlinked to form the basis of Samoan society.
This is the structure for every village in Samoa. The basic unit of this structure is of course the family which is not confined to the nuclear family but includes the extended family. Each family has a chief (matai) or a number of chiefs. The chief represent the family in the village council of chiefs which is the main decision making body of the village. This does not mean that the married women (mothers), young ladies or the untile men do not have a say. Their voice in decision making is through their chief into the council of chiefs. The married women, young ladies and untile men also have their own formal forums where matters pertaining to their rolls and duties for families, and village welfare are discussed.

A number of villages form a district. Chiefs from villages form a District Council of chiefs.

From family, to village council to district even to the whole country, each structure has its own particular “Faalupega” or way of formal address which is unique to that particular family or village or district. There is formal way of addressing the country which is a combination of “addresses” of all districts.

Why are these important? They are important because in times when there is some misunderstanding between families or villages or districts knowing the “formal address” is a sign of respect etc. It is through these structures and formal addresses and ties through marriages that keeps peace and harmony.

• Educational Policy and Curriculum
The Educational Policies and School Curriculum promotes equity, quality, relevancy and efficiency.
This means, Policy ensures that all learners have access to a quality and relevant Education which is efficiently served by the Department of Education and her personnel and adequately provided for by Government.

Ethics and values is also the common thread throughout the curriculum of Early Childhood Care and education, Special Needs Education right up to University level.

Politics and Constitution
Samoa is a democracy, which is based on the chiefly system and Christian principles, although universal suffrage ensures, 21 year olds get the vote. The constitution ensures that the rights of everyone is protected.

The constitution also ensures that the Samoan language is promoted. Samoan is the language of Parliament and Cabinet. Samoan and English are accepted languages of commerce and Government.

• Church/Missions
Religion plays a very important role in Samoan Society. The infusion of Christianity into Samoan Culture has strengthen Samoan Society. The strength of church denominations in running their own schools instill in young people values which reaffirms the tradition and culture of the home and his society. Churches are very strong in promoting youth development. Church Minister in every village runs a youth group. These give opportunities for youth to consider issues that affect them and necessary actions which promote their own development. Church Denominations also have annual conferences where development issues and appropriate actions are proposed for development that benefit congregation members.

• Non Government Organisations
Numerous Non Government Organisations are active in promoting social welfare and development activities. These range from the environment to animal protection, protection of children and women etc.

• International Organisations and Friendly Relations with other Countries
Samoa is a member of quite a number of International Organisations. A number of these organisations have offices for the Pacific in Samoa. We have UNDP, UNESCO, FAO, SPREP, WHO and EU.
Samoa also has friendly relations with many countries, including the Republic of Korea. This means that Samoa is prepared to take responsibilities in the International arena promoting International Understanding.

CONCLUSION
In promoting tolerance and solidarity through traditional structures and culture and an infusion of christian principles, Samoa has a firm foundation in her society to promote peace. Because we practice our culture and our traditional ways in our everyday life, it is dynamic and sustainable and has a healthy prospect for growth.

The second medium of growth is promoted in our Education system with a healthy input from the international and bilateral communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
I take this opportunity to say thank you to the Chairman and Secretary-General of the Republic of Korea National Commission for UNESCO for giving Samoa the privilege to participate at the opening of this Centre for International Understanding.

I have no doubt that this is another milestone in our search for ways to promote peace in the world.

Faafetai, Faafetai, Soifua.