Respective members of the UN CRC committee, Ladies and Gentlemen, Greeting and Talofa Lava.

I am honoured to present this statement on behalf of youth and children with disabilities of Samoa as our contribution to the Pacific statement on comment No. 26 with support of the Disability Rights Fund.

Youth and children of Samoa and the Pacific commend our Governments for the multi-level collaborative efforts to improve access to and engage young persons with disabilities in climate change developments.

As witness in the adoption of the Sendai Framework, the ratification of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and CRC.

However, this statement draws our attention to the vulnerability of children and youth with disabilities in the Pacific region to climate change. Impacts include rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, ocean acidification, impacts on livelihoods and economies, and changes in patterns of vector borne disease. These adverse effects significantly impact the human rights of children and adults with disabilities, who are disproportionately at risk of harm, neglect, violence, and abuse.

The lack of opportunities for engagement of/ inclusion of youth and children with disabilities in national climate actions remains a concern

The poor hygiene, contaminated water by soil erosion that affects health, as well as the destruction of seedlings that threatens the ecosystem, nutrition and livelihood of communities is a major concern for pacific youth with disabilities especially those who are blind and visually impaired.

Youth and children with disabilities are often the first to be forgotten and the last to be remembered in discussions/ distribution of essential services and support. Services include SRHR, information and communication in accessible formats, evacuation centers to name a few

Youth with disabilities of Samoa and the Pacific call on the UN CRC committee and member states to consider the following recommendations:

1. Insert a paragraph for children and youth with disabilities in the general comment
2. Recognise the intersectionality of identities, barriers to participation by youth with disabilities in climate actions and commit to mobilise resources to carry out child rights impact assessments (inclusive of gender, disability, and other grounds and their intersections) on climate change, environmental and disaster risk policies, plans and protocols.
3. Ensure disability-inclusive climate mitigation and adaptation efforts consider the challenges, priorities and needs of youth and children with diverse disabilities
4. Commit to the mobilization of national resources to Promote education, awareness-raising and capacity building of children and young people with disabilities as future leaders in this area

Thank You and Faafetai Tele Lava