

For Official Release  
PR 03-05032023  
Office of the Governor  
Utulei, American Samoa  
May 3, 2023



## **State Department: Pacific Island Forum**



On May 3, 2023 Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga met with Wendy R. Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State to discuss important matters regarding American Samoa's observer status on the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and how American Samoa can be more proactive at a regional level.

The Pacific Islands Forum is the region's premiere political and economic organization, bringing together 18 countries to address common issues affecting the Pacific region. Given the Pacific Islands Forum's impact on shaping policies that affect the Pacific region, it is crucial to push for American Samoa's inclusion in this organization. As one of the US territories in the Pacific, American Samoa has often been hindered by bureaucratic issues and limited regional cooperation with its neighboring island states.

Over the years, American Samoa's isolation from regional decision-making has contributed to a lack of adequate representation and support on relevant issues including climate change, public health, and economic development. Having a seat at the Pacific Islands Forum would allow American Samoa to participate in important policy discussions and decision-making processes that directly impact the territory's future in the Pacific. If granted the opportunity to become a PIF Associate member, American Samoa can make a valuable contribution to the region as a whole. Through active participation, American Samoa will be able to share its unique perspectives and experiences on various issues.

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