



# United States Coral Reef Task Force

## Special Session

### **Population Impacts and Coral Reefs: *An Opportunity for Collaborative Conservation***



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## Presentation

### **Population and Conservation in American Samoa**

**Lelei Peau, Deputy Director**

**American Samoa Department of Commerce**

# **Population Pressure Initiative:**

*Addressing our biggest environment threat*

- **Need to slow rate of population growth from migration & natural increase**
- **Need to upgrade methods to better manage our built environment**
- **Need to remove direct threats for coral reef survival**

# What are these population threats to our reefs?

- Growth increases levels of siltation, sewage & solid waste
- Limited developable land causes crowding which leads to increased land disturbance & pollution
- More housing/utilities outstrip government 's ability to control
- Compounding human threats are natural events – e.g. the tsunami caused serious damage to reefs
  - Breakage & damage to coral
  - High levels of debris in reefs



# What specific actions can combat these threats?

- Public outreach to build awareness of threats, communicate value of reefs & better use of resources
- Create better tools for managing population/development
- Form Commission to understand dangers/take collaborative action on public policy addressing concerns/planning
- Develop effective enforcement with cultural awareness



# Examples of Key Local Activities

## Population Summit

*Public/key stakeholders at well-publicized two-day conference viewed hard-hitting DVD on managing population growth & discussed theme “Too little land for too many people”.*

## Regional Population Workshop

*Summit follow-up had demographer from SPC with staff of various local population-related agencies discuss demographic indicators, their meaning & policy options.*

# The Population Commission

- Address land based pollution sources that threaten reef survival
- Balance population growth w/available natural/human resources
- Raise knowledge of benefits of healthy reefs & our well-being
- Improve ability to effectively use/develop our land/resources:
  - *by upgrading management capability of staff/decision-makers*
  - *by requesting technical services to protect/improve reefs*



# How can our federal partners help?

- **Provide knowledge of existing reef systems/resources**
- **Identify how conditions are impacted over time**
- **Provide technical/financial support to better manage**
- **Monitor reefs to assess outcomes & success of actions**



Fa'afetai tele lava!