

LIS 9316 – Foreign Government Report for Samoa – Mark Borden

Background

History and Government

Samoa is a tiny nation island of 195,476 people, as of 2013, located in the Pacific Ocean which is commonly grouped together with other neighbouring countries and known as either Oceania or Polynesia. Samoa was a German protectorate which was absorbed into the British Commonwealth following World War One under the Treaty of Versailles. Known at the time as Western Samoa the nation became independent from the Commonwealth in 1962. In 1997 Western Samoa changed the countries name to Samoa. Samoa operates under a Parliamentary Democracy and has twelve ministers appointed by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's name is Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi and has been in power since 1998 representing the Human Rights Protection Party. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ws.html>

http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/History_of_Samoa.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuilaepa_Aiono_Sailele_Malielegaoi

Important Government Components

1. Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture
2. Ministry of Finance
3. Ministry of Health
4. Ministry of Works, Transport & Infrastructure
5. Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment

I listed the Ministry's in order of budget from largest to smallest. The first four on the list were, by and far, the largest with yearly budgets exceeding 80 million each. After that there as a drop off with the next on the list having an operating budget of around 30 million.

[http://www.mof.gov.ws/Portals/195/Services/Budget/Approved%20Estimates%20FY2013-14%20\[English\].pdf](http://www.mof.gov.ws/Portals/195/Services/Budget/Approved%20Estimates%20FY2013-14%20[English].pdf)

Government Online

Each of Samoa's twelve Ministries had a webpage, some with decent access to government publications, as well as other entities like the Samoan Parliament and the state run Electric Power Company, as examples. With that being said the official Samoan government site contained a lot of dead links and I had to find Ministry and state corporation pages using Google. The sites also look very dated, think AOL-era internet, and I often found myself double checking to make sure I had the official page because they did not look professionally done.

Government Initiatives

Samoa seems to be leading the charge on an UN sponsored initiative, involving neighbour countries called the, "Small Island Developing States". While this is not created by the Samona government they seem to be a major player hosting the conference several years in a row and actively engaging with New Zealand and Australia for investment. <http://www.sids2014.org/>

Statistics

The Samoan government collects and publishes the statistics we have come to expect from countries. Four examples include:

The Samoa Bureau of Statistics collects information on imports/exports, GDP, Consumer Price Index, and etc... <http://www.sbs.gov.ws/>

Health and healthcare related statistics are gathered and published by the Ministry of Health.

<http://www.health.gov.ws/Publications,StatisticsResources/Publications/tabid/5385/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment keeps statistics on things like agriculture, fisheries and environment impact and publishes their findings.

<http://www.mnre.gov.ws/index.php>

The Ministry of Education has a yearly publication called the Education Statistical Digest 2013 which contains census, demographic, performance and other stats about the school system in Samoa.

http://www.mesc.gov.ws/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=82&Itemid=148

Law

The major source of legislation in Samoa is via their Parliament. I found finding information on how laws are passed but I glean from the site that the Parliament of Samoa functions very similar to what we have in Canada as bills are introduced by the Speaker and debated by the Legislative Assembly.

<http://www.parliament.gov.ws/>

Case law can be found at the Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (PacLII), which seems very similar to CanLII in that it is a searchable database.

<http://www.pacii.org/databases.html>

Lawyers are regulated by the Samoa Law Society

<http://www.southpacificlawyers.org/member/samoa>

Business

Industries

Agriculture is the biggest industry in Samoa employing roughly two-thirds of the labor force, followed by fishing. Tourism is also a large industry in Samoa accounting for 25% of their GDP. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ws.html>

Exports

1. Insulated wire; optical fiber cables - 45.85% (\$39,430,069)

2. Frozen fish, excluding fillets - 5.68% (\$4,881,058)
3. Sanitary ware and parts of iron or steel - 1.84% (\$1,580,817)
4. Fruit juices - 1.71% (\$1,467,558)
5. Coconut oil crude- 1.67% (\$1,432,689)

I did not chose just the top five as other manufactured goods (liquid pumps and thermostat valves) were present at the top of the list and I did not believe they were the most important over natural resources like coconut oil and fruit juice. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/country/wsm/>

Imports

1. Petroleum oils, refined - 12.86% (\$47,476,597)
2. Containers for carriage by one or more modes of transport - 10.45% (\$38,594,551)
3. Cruise ships and similar vessels for the transport of persons - 7.39% (\$27,279,300)
4. Prepared or preserved fish - 2.70% (\$9,984,540)
5. Cars - 2.68% (\$9,911,512)

These five were the top imports into Samoa and I left them in this order as I think all of them are clearly in service, or are necessary for production, to the industries identified above.

<http://atlas.media.mit.edu/country/wsm/>

Regulation

The Central Bank of Samoa regulates banking and is the bank of the government:

<http://www.cbs.gov.ws/index.php/about-us/what-we-do/what-is-the-central-bank-of-samoa/>

Trade is regulated by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade:

<http://www.mfat.gov.ws/TRADE.html>

Financial Health

According to the CIA factbook, even though Samoa saw low growth to their GDP, 0.1%, they have benefited from a low inflation. Furthermore their national reserves are considered relatively healthy while maintaining a low foreign debt. So, overall, while the nation is quite small and based around largely agriculture, it would appear to be stable and healthy financial speaking. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ws.html>

Science and Technology

Intellectual Property

According to WIPO the registration of intellectual property in Samoa is the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour. In particular, within that Ministry, the Registration of Companies and Intellectual Property Division (RCIP) is the entity responsible.

http://www.wipo.int/directory/en/contact.jsp?country_id=187&http://www.mcil.gov.ws/rcip.htm

National Scientific and Medial Institutions

The Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS) would appear to be a national research institution that defines its goals as adding value to exports, in particular produce, while

developing technologies to reduce the countries need on imported fuel.

<http://www.sros.org.ws/about.aspx>

According to the Samoan Ministry of Health's webpage one of their core activities is to support, coordinate and facilitate the *Health Research Committee*. I was able to find a citation on the World Health Organizations website listing the Health Research Committee, in tandem with the Ministry, for Samoa but could not find information specific to this committee.

<http://www.health.gov.ws/AboutUs/Divisions/SDPD/HealthPolicyResearch/tabid/5440/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

List of Regulated Medical Professions

- Physicians and Surgeons - Medical Practitioners Act 2007
- Dentists - Dental Act 2007
- Pharmacists - Pharmacy Act 2007
- Nurses and Midwives - Nurses and Midwives Act.2007

<http://www.health.gov.ws/AboutUs/Divisions/MedicalDentalAlliedHealthQA/tabid/5397/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Education

Levels of Education

The levels of education offered in Samoa appear to be the same as what we have here in Canada. Formal education begins in primary school, continues to secondary school (which does not appear to be mandatory) and from there students have the option to attend either college or university. <http://www.mapsofworld.com/samoa/education/>

International Benchmarking

I was unable to locate this information. UNESCO has a data centre where users are able to compare two or more countries against one another by category, which in this case would be education, but Samoa did not have a dataset on this site.

<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/regional-data-collections.aspx>

The World Bank has education stats for Samoa in their "nation profile" but no way I can see to easily compare countries against one another. Even if I could it would not meet the requirements for this task as these stats are mostly demographic.

<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>

News Sources

Major News Sources

The Samoan Observer would appear to be the largest news source in the country as it appears first and pretty much only result, on a Google search of the subject. I tried looking on Lexis Nexus for any mention of the Samoan Observer and found it cited in large Australian and New Zealand newspapers as the original source. <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/>

Academic Aggregators

As mentioned above the academic aggregators return results published in Australian and New Zealand newspapers about Samoa but not any, that I was able to find, originating in the country.

Libraries and Information Centres

The National University of Samoa Learning Resource Centre would appear to be the largest library in the country and was coming up as the first, if only, choice when searching for national resource centres. It appears on the National Library of New Zealand's information page as the contact for Samoa. Again I could not search directly on the National University of Samoa website as it is currently down. <http://directory.natlib.govt.nz/library-symbols-web/library/NUSL>

Foreign Relationships

America

This has been a stumbling point for me in researching for this report as America has territory in the country, American Samoa, and I am unable to fully understand how those islands fit into Samoa, if at all. American Samoa has a separate homepage, which is a .gov, and own entities which are departments, not ministries, and pay some taxes to the US government. I think the complex nature between Samoa and American Samoa joins them to the hip with the United States. <http://americansamoa.gov/> & <http://www.doi.gov/oia/islands/american-samoa.cfm>

Australia

Australia is the closest, in terms of proximity, major nation to Samoa and is a source of major revenue for the country. Australia accounts for 44% of all exports from Samoa and their demand of fibre optics seems to have spurred economic and industrial development in the country. As mentioned before 2/3 of Samoa's population work in the agricultural section but Australia's need for fibre optic cables, has led to manufacturing jobs. <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/country/wsm/>

Stability and Risk According to the sources cited below Samoa has a stable political system and suffers from relatively low levels of corruption. The regulatory environment in Samoa has middle of the road rating when it comes to economic freedom but is still viewed as one of the best in the region in that regards. Analysts report some caution must be taken as Samoa is at risk at seeing some of their natural resources effected by climate change in the near to far future which could have political/social ramifications.

<http://www.euromoneycountryrisk.com/Wiki/Samoa> & <http://country.eiu.com/Samoa>

Challenges and Surprises

As I mentioned I was constantly bumping into information regarding American Samoa, and not Samoa, so I had to be ultra-vigilant not to confabulate the two in my report. For a surprise I was happy with the amount of primary information available in English, which is to say, all of it. In hindsight I should have expected that to be the case but it was a fear of mine going in that I would bump up against sources non in English which would be hard to find translations for. I was also surprised by the amount of dead links for official Samoa sites, most notably, the site for the National University of Samoa still being down several days after I first tried to access it. Lastly my biggest surprise was that, from a direct link on the Samoan Government official site, to their worker compensation board contained a video of William Shatner. <http://www.acc.ws/>

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