Mr. President, Excellencies. We deliver this statement on behalf of Tongan civil society. Our advocacy is guided by the ancestral voyaging framework of *Pikipiki Hama Kae Vaevae Manava*—the structural alignment of our outriggers to guarantee that no community is left behind.

However, aggregate national planning metrics frequently obscure acute sub-national inequalities. Under SDG 7, official celebrations of a 32% renewable energy penetration mask a grimmer reality: highly volatile, un-subsidized fuel tariffs drive severe household energy poverty and compel mass labor migration.

Under SDG 9, nominal 4G coverage cannot compensate for deteriorating inter-island transport infrastructure. Severe maritime supply disruptions trigger immediate food pricing spikes, driving multidimensional child deprivation to a staggering 48.9% in the outer island of ‘Eua.

Tongan civil society remains the backbone of localized disaster risk reduction and crisis response. Following the catastrophic 2022 volcanic eruption, when centralized systems faced operational ceilings, our grassroots networks instantly delivered primary relief. Through the permanent mechanism of FALE, we have institutionalized localized, community-driven humanitarian action as a faster, more trusted model.

Under SDG 11, true structural resilience requires universal design and human dignity. Leaving no one behind demands rights-based public financing and legislative protection for all bodies and genders. We urge the state to urgently decriminalize same-sex relations to secure basic safety and visibility for our traditional *Leitis* and SOGIESC communities.

Tonga has proven that civil society can permanently strengthen state architecture, as demonstrated when the Ministry of Finance formalized our Citizen Budget Guide under SDG 17. Yet, this same standard of regulatory transparency must apply to high-risk commercial extraction. Despite consecutive national consultations delivering a unanimous public rejection of Deep Sea Bed Mining, corporate exploration contracts continue to be renewed without public explanation.

Leaving no one behind is not a rhetorical slogan; it is a design requirement. We demand system-level reforms: a legislated national minimum wage, island-specific budgeting floors, rigid environmental protections, and structural state funding for frontline civil society protection networks. Align your outriggers with the people.

Thank you.