

# Vaitoa Toelupe - AsiaPacific Outgames

*In this podcast Vaitoa Toelupe delivers a keynote presentation. Vaitoa is introduced by David Huebner, the United States Ambassador to New Zealand. The presentation happened during the second plenary session: Our rights across the Asia Pacific region - a snapshot.*

2010s, activism, asia pacific outgames (2011), fa'afafine, history, human rights, ilott theatre (wellington town hall), samoa fa'afafine association, so'oalo to'oto'oali'i roger stanley, transcript online, transgender, vaitoa toelupe

**Record date:** 17th March 2011

**Location:** Ilott Theatre (Wellington Town Hall)

**URL:** [http://www.pridenz.com/apog\\_vaitoa\\_toelupe\\_keynote.html](http://www.pridenz.com/apog_vaitoa_toelupe_keynote.html)

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[00:00:00] This recording was made at the second Asia Pacific Outgames human rights conference held in Wellington, New Zealand in March 2011. [00:00:09] Our next speaker via toa to LA is a very outspoken and proud Saman flop Athena. Via tau is a member of the Somme off Athena Association and a graduate of Auckland University, holding a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. Via tall is currently a senior officer in the just disaster management office in Salma. She's famous in sama for her designing consultancy by the name of Island coat Sure. This is set seen her design and dress numerous Miss sama and Miss South Pacific titleholders via toa Did you design anything last year? For 2010 I was the lead judge the Miss sama pageant last year and I didn't see you anywhere. That's why I was asking. Via tola has also successfully organize the FIFA FIFA industry variety awards, which was the first of its kind in sama to showcase the colorful Entertainment's by the Athena and sama and to date it remains the talk of the town please give a very very warm welcome to via tele

[00:01:32] thank you for the introduction everyone and also Lee Sofia the vice chairman of aim when they eat at a lower more more no fat we play it by ear Mama Mama it's in the mouth too low for newer and Ala Moana taco for newer to know. Tonight our new volunteer or you too low for two hours to follow my CML Pacifica solo salmon. Yama, Manuel Miranda, my Amreeka Sam, Sam or too low to no to low lover. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and distinguished delegations from across Asia and the Pacific. Thank you for this opportunity to hear the voices of the Pacific. And hopefully it will echo through this forum through the hallways and across the vast Pacific Ocean. So it may have an input and significant change in our purpose to advocate for our God given universally declared human rights. As introduce I invite an executive member for some of our feelings in association Incorporated. I am humbled to be given the opportunity to speak on behalf of our president Roger total de Stanley, who could not be here today. Raja is one of the few of our Phoenix who has been recently appointed at the Assistant Chief Executive Officer level for the Ministry of women Community and Social Development and achievement the SAM off of our female association is most proud of and it's inspiring for most to follow. So even though she's not here, physically, she is with us in spirit. And it's a good thing she's not here, because otherwise she would be snoring already in the front row. And asking where morning when morning tea will be served in. [00:03:37] But for those of you who know Roger, [00:03:41] she may be snoring. But if you're out of line, she'll come

back to life like a hungry lion. And considering her voluptuous Island delights, her attack is not a pretty sight. She is after all, once, twice, three times. It is [00:04:06] probably one of our known attributes as [00:04:11] we say it as it is, with little consideration of how you perceive what is said. It is one of the reasons why we naturally become strong advocates for what we believe in. And in this gathering happens to be a human rights.

I will speak today about human rights and the intricacies of navigating the main feet and minefield of traditional and cultural values versus the New Age laws and customs among and most importantly, its relevance to the lives of our female fans, I think there is a cultural identity, it is not a sexual identity. To understand a female you must first understand the first time more or someone culture. We are intrigued with the well with a wealth of knowledge and learning from this conference, especially with the LGBT community, the history, the struggles, and finding the way forward. It is therefore necessary that the LGBT community has an opportunity to hear a perspective from a wonderful group within a vulnerable group within a vulnerable group. In some more courts are succeeding. There is someone saying or some more what Mona to see, some more has already been defined. The three main pillars of someone is culture, the church and its constitution, or fire by its social structure determines roles and responsibilities of each individual to uphold to honor respect, and execute, execute, to keep the stability and harmony involving all this definition of someone. Society pre determines the purpose of an individual and the entitlements. We when a child is born, this child is born with its unique cultural identity and associated birth rights. They are the living continuum of family genealogy, heritage and history. They are is truly to family land in England for who they are is to chiefly metallic title and their birthright is to inherit all of the above plus the coconut tree and the mango tree in front of their house. And finally someone finally they are the for the male the timer. The identity is well established. The other strength on my Lucy that Oh sure.

The pulley the authority for girls or teeny. They are the most sacred feeling associated with some Assad almost by it will see solar lights I'm attorney Yes, tomorrow latter one. She is the covenant, the honor, upheld and protected by her brothers. If I'm going to lay Norma for her womb, from her womb, our genealogy will continue. But if I [00:07:13] only saw Samir, even a favor of Lima, she is the provider and the wealth of her family lives in her hands to protect and maintain or by my only she is the peacemaker. It is the same identity given to Christianity as a founding principle in the San Juan culture. Christianity was given the utmost respect as the fear or the covenants and the social structure will protect it and honor it as we do today. Every someone inherits these rights from birth. It is why when a salmon meets another someone The first question is What is your name? Where is your village? Who are your parents? What search do you come from? What land do you belong to? And never do we ask who all wants to you sleep with. Because of these cultural birth rights, this is the basis of our existence. When a finger is born. Like every salmon boy, a fat finger is an heir to land, Messiah titles to the authority. It is our role to uphold family honor by preserving the covenant between boys and girls and God all events up here, in their growth of our famous can also be providers and peacekeepers. It's the perfect cocktail of the two roles, and somewhat overprivileged, but it's inheritance that comes with a price. It is these birth, birth rights. As I finish in SAM will have long enjoyed the salmon people sincere tolerance as they are children of the land and family. So in my country, you being someone having the blood of your ancestors running through your veins being a vessel to uphold any tradition and culture. Having a purpose to care for your sisters and brothers and honoring your birth rights is your first measure as a human being. Me being a female is secondary. And so is what I do in bed. for female have sex with straights mean this is effect, but it is not received the homosexual act and this is the culture. This cultural identity is extremely important because it is

the foundation to our approach to advocating for human rights. We are feeling extremely proud of our culture.

Our Place in San Juan society in recognition of our people is the reason we stand streets. We walk tall we sing loud, and often arrogant thinking some more is bigger than Africa. But our culture, the essence of our very being is also our greatest enemy. The true test of someone people's tolerance was tested on sexual rights sexual orientation, the term homosexuals, homophobia, stereotypes, reproductive issues and marital preferences became a parent became parents. With the wake of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the late 1980s. It severely challenged the status quo and the three pillars of the culture became strongly influenced by labels, terminologies, and its associated implications of our fingers embrace similar cultures such as drag, artistry, entertainment, even gay lifestyles when traveling abroad. The unspoken father, female having sex with men was immediately thrown under the microscope, and our cultural identities became confused in the process. The shameful realities of the silence with alpha female sexuality became more and more prevalent issues around child abuse and sexual exploitation of our female, generally by male family members, and far fields were immediate family members with unreported and it was a fast some more head to face orientation by overseas experts focused on homosexuals and faster female were immediately targeted because of a student and apparent sexual orientation. It was the first time for field study to hear of LGBT the church Phoenix community despite its strong presence in church activities became easy targets of the use usual ocean, you are an abomination. homosexuality is a sin, while ministers turn a blind eye to alcohol abuse, to crime, adultery, rape and murder. Yet, for our Constitution, pressures of consensual and non consensual homosexuality, and wearing and having articles of women's clothing on you in public, was against the law and punishable by fines and imprisonment, a direct cut and paste and what I like to call nip and tuck from colonial New Zealand administration. In Rogers own words, they say I'm breaking the law because I'm impersonating a woman. Well show me a woman that looks like me.

[00:12:15] So the realities of the sexually have so the realities of the sexuality of our cultural identities, tolerated by people before became more parents, it was just as ugly and real as it is around the world. These realities you are too familiar with. Which brings me to the second part of my Jason, which was the surfacing realities and challenges. But it we do about it. The five minute community, it's a traditional panel of the Minister of Health since initiation of the HIV prevention program in 1987. It has established its role as the advocacy leaders, that outreach to the marginalized groups and those who cannot be reached by the official networks. It was the beginning of the Fatima movements, for the first time organized workshops and through teacher gathering to discuss issues on health, sex, and well being for five minutes saw the potential with the farming community to take HIV and AIDS to the next level, using non conventional meat conventional means of promotion and for decades, the Ministry of Health has capitalized on social and professional connections of happiness to reach the marginalized and vulnerable groups. This is where Fairfax ama comes in. Because of the Status of Women culturally, the firefighter community are not visible as a firefighter in the community. Their issues are often conservative and research within the comfort and security of their own families. Unlike far far finish to sentence sometimes think they are in Hollywood safwan summer keep to themselves and keep them a man who their sacredness and their honor because also their sexuality was also thrown under the radar. advocating for someone that is broke that is not broken, will probably go against them. So in one Thomas words, let sleeping dogs lie. This is their preference and a position we must respect prostitution and suffer finish involvement casual paid or casual kind paid sexual activity also received an extended hand from the Fatima community. Although this is never encouraged as an option for full time job in the islands.

There's a lot of land to work, the awareness for HIV and AIDS and finish taking the leading role, eventually to the establishments the sama AIDS Foundation 10 Molly was here today and Theresa appa were founding members of the HIV and AIDS agenda and the HIV and AIDS agenda escalated to new heights. By this by this stage in our moment, the sum of our senior community was ready to take the bold step of establishing a collective to focus purely on vulnerable groups within vulnerable groups. And after cheaper Benacerraf puts it and borrow coke at Rogers mentioned, which could only five people, the greatest initiative of our time, was conceived to establish the sankofa finish Association. And sure enough, nine months later, down the line, the most beautiful, most dank our most monumental bed, most beautiful some of our female association was born. It came instant political support with our Prime Minister as a patient and instantly suffer I was in a position to make a stand. for happiness rights advocacy began to include the right sort of sexual orientation or gender identity, cultural identity, and gender expressions with a minor issues of sex relations, same sex relations, adoption and anti discrimination. Some of other things Association, submitted last year a lot during a Law Reform Commission, to decriminalize punishment to homosexual activity and female impersonation. I am pleased to advise that the SAM Moore Law Reform Commission took on board of submissions and recommended it to governments, we are waiting to hear the outcome of that of that exercise. But nevertheless, we will still wake up every morning, we are putting taxis put on our big flowers, and we go to work to provide for our families despite it being a crime. The police do what they want, do what they do, and we do what we do. It's like a mutual respect and understanding of our reliance on our gender expression as much as our reliance on our careers in order to supply support our families, just as the police do, sadly, the GOP model is has its found wanting for us here.

Because with advent of HIV and AIDS in the Pacific, Pacific, excuse me, the issues are now off about sexuality and sexual acts went for us the Far far field. In fact, we have the rich, we have this rich history, in our heritage, which we are moving to removing the Association of our role to sexual acts. And in conjunction with the sandwich Foundation, we making inroads into the general public in terms of making six safe six x campaigns, a part of everyday life for all someone's not just for five finger, we are going back to our roots, our cultural identity and use that model instead of the [00:17:17] GB It model or the foreign terminologies. It's appropriate sizing, what works in our construct, why should we use an outside model that will not only that will only insult and antagonize our elders, our culture, our people, it doesn't make any sense. And it is perhaps the reason why the six act models will continue to push an uphill battle in some more and the Pacific. In our advocacy, we want to make known the yoga Carter principles as little as 2000 and sick six. And we acknowledge their use relevance to Western societies or societies where there is consistent abuse, confusion in terms of citizenship, gender, identity and sexual orientation. But because of its focus on gender identity and sexual orientation, its application are flawed for us in the Pacific, we know our sexual orientation. And so to all of our people, we know our place and our gender identity. And so to all of our people are driving strategic direction, is to full steam ahead with capacity building for female, so they truly know their place in society. It's the only way they can contribute by feeling a sense of pride of belonging to something that is part of you and your culture.

For us, it's a long road from humble beginning as a social gathering, which then led to the formation of some of our female Association. And we are here. And we are humbled by the opportunity. So the question really, what do we want from this conference? We are able to share our cultural perspective and our cultural identity. But what do we really want from this conference? What do we want to achieve? And it's quite simple. And I think we have three main main main agendas that we want to push through. One is funding, funding funding funding, with the proper support structure to work with

us on relevance of policies that work in our culture, in our context, we don't want to give we don't want you to give up on us. real value is based on gathering real evidence. As a movements, we need to hold it. donors and people are responsible for providing this funding accountable. But we must also determine if your structure and policies are effective and applicable in our context. to Asia Pacific needs to needs to be inclusive of the Pacific. In both otherwise don't use the Pacific issue once again. So officially include our cultural identities. The third points in the documentation in the language and the advocacy.

We respect LGBT. But if the only excuse is adding all the names is too long, they commonly said that they will be so had 10 papers with all the names. That's what we want. Our world, yours and mine is in trouble. And there is no arguments at all. We live in a society bloated with Phil and filled with data and information. We ride the subway, subway highway of Facebook and Twitter and emails yet we asked for wisdom. We're connected to each other 24 seven, taken through technology, yet we are filled with anxiety, fear, depression and loneliness, issues, which are all of which are at an all time high. Don't you feel or agree with me that we need a correction in our course. The link between the past and the future is very fragile, especially more so for us in the Pacific. Our forefathers fought for our human rights. It's why we want to connect the battle. So in closing, I would like to offer you this the Asia Pacific we would like to see this outcome new. Our people are the voyages to navigation begin in the human hearts. It's the most important map of all together, we can do it together Together we can generally help each other. There is nowhere else to go and this is the message for our Pacific delegation. And for everyone needs today there is nowhere else to go. What we are looking for is right here. What we are looking for this right here. I would like to thank the Netherlands government, the United States government and also the government of New Zealand for inviting us here today and being Eve and having the opportunity to sponsor our participation. We are very grateful. Thank you very much.

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