

**Combating Climate Change-Taiwan Can Help
Calling for Taiwan's Professional, Pragmatic, and Constructive
Participation in the UNFCCC**

September 2018

Foreword

The 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP24) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will take place in Katowice, Poland, this December. During the event, the participants are expected to work out and adopt a package of decisions to better ensure the full implementation of the Paris Agreement. This will help focus international efforts on mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.

However, due to political constraints, Taiwan can only attend the COP sessions as an NGO observer. Being a responsible stakeholder in the international community, Taiwan will never let its exclusion become an excuse for not partaking in global efforts to combat climate change.

I. Taiwan has set ambitious reduction targets for its greenhouse gas emissions.

In June 2015, Taiwan passed the Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act, setting five-year regulatory carbon reduction targets in the hope of reducing Taiwan's greenhouse gas emissions to 50 percent of 2005 levels by 2050. It seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by two percent by 2020, 10 percent by 2025, and 20 percent by 2030.

To better control and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration created the National Climate

Change Action Guidelines, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Action Plan, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Control Action Program targeting six major fields: energy, manufacturing, transportation, residential and commercial buildings, agriculture, and environmental management. The initiatives, which are to be reviewed once every five years, facilitate cross-ministerial cooperation within government.

Taiwan has set the goal of having 20 percent of its energy come from renewable sources and 50 percent from low-carbon natural gas by 2025, thus lowering its energy from coal-burning power plants to 30 percent of the total. Taiwan will continue to promote its energy restructuring in order to realize sustainable development.

In August 2018, Taiwan amended its Air Pollution Control Act to reduce air pollution and accelerate Taiwan's energy transformation. It also seeks to further restrict vehicle and factory emissions, improve air quality, and enhance the management of pollution sources and treatment of pollution.

Taiwan understands that the issues associated with climate change are inextricably linked to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and is committed to helping achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In September 2017, Taiwan released its first Voluntary National Review to document the concrete progress it has made to this end.

II. Taiwan needs to participate in the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. Taiwan's exclusion contradicts the spirit of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

The UNFCCC preamble acknowledges that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible participation of all countries in order

to achieve an effective and appropriate response. In addition, the Paris Agreement highlights the important concept of climate justice, calling on all states to take action to address climate change. It is unjust to keep Taiwan excluded from the UNFCCC and leave the government to deal with the impact of climate change on its own. Taiwan's inclusion in UNFCCC initiatives would conform to the aims and spirit of the convention, as well as to the principles embodied in the UN Charter.

Taiwan is vulnerable to climate change.

The increasing frequency of extreme weather events and rising sea levels caused by global warming endanger Taiwan's environment and, indeed, its very survival. Taiwan's average temperature over the past two years has been the highest in 100 years. Atypical heat waves have been causing water shortages, damaging the economy, threatening the people's welfare, and restricting the generation of hydroelectric power. To make matters worse, just this August, sudden torrential rains from a tropical depression caused severe flooding across southern Taiwan, seriously impacting people's lives and damaging infrastructure and property.

Taiwan's lack of access to UNFCCC meetings and mechanisms and exclusion from the international response framework have weakened its ability to formulate adaptation strategies in response to the challenges posed by global warming and climate change. There is an urgent need for Taiwan to be included in early warning systems for disasters, gain access to real-time information, and contribute more to global climate change adaptation mechanisms.

Taiwan needs to mitigate the negative impact on its economy and trade.

One of the key elements to the implementation of the Paris Agreement is

the realization of both economic development and environmental protection. Taiwan's Five Plus Two Industrial Innovation program includes measures to create a sustainable homeland through the promotion of green energy and a circular economy for waste management. The plan will help shift Taiwan's industrial base from traditional contract manufacturing to foster a high valued-added and environmentally friendly economy.

Taiwan's exclusion from access to the UNFCCC climate finance mechanism will make it difficult for Taiwan to offset the high economic costs of carbon reduction measures. This could seriously reduce the competitive edge of Taiwan's industries and discourage them from helping the government develop a green industrial structure for the transformation of Taiwan into a low-carbon society. Almost all World Trade Organization (WTO) members are contracting parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. However, Taiwan, a WTO member, remains excluded. As WTO trade rules permit countries to impose tariffs on imports due to environmental protection considerations, Taiwan's industries might be targeted as a result.

As an important world economy, Taiwan should contribute to the UNFCCC.

As the world's 22nd-largest economy, Taiwan plays a major role in both the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region, as well as the global economic and trade system. Like other countries, Taiwan has a responsibility to help mitigate the effects of climate change and, therefore, should not be excluded from the UNFCCC. Taiwan calls on the international community to support the participation of its Environmental Protection Administration as a nonmember government observer in the upcoming COP24 in Poland.

III. Taiwan is ready to contribute to global efforts to combat climate change.

Taiwan can be a constructive partner in addressing climate change.

Taiwan is competitive in green technology. Many of our advanced renewable energy products are exported to other countries. Taiwan has much to offer the UNFCCC, not just in terms of technology, but also in financial support and capacity building. Taiwan's experience with rapid economic development, industrialization, and environmental management would be extremely valuable to other island states and developing countries facing similar challenges associated with climate change. By drawing on Taiwan's advanced technologies and experience, these countries could modernize their economies, while minimizing harm to the environment.

Taiwan is willing to share its experience and technology with other countries.

Over the decades, Taiwan has undertaken a wide array of projects helping developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. These include food and energy security, renewable energy, green technology, LED street lighting, biodiversity conservation, natural disaster management, post-disaster reconstruction, reforestation, environmental protection, water resource management, and drought relief.

For example, Taiwan has sponsored the Enhancing Home Energy Efficiency and Promoting Renewable Energy Project in the Marshall Islands. This significant climate change mitigation project is anticipated to help the Marshall Islands reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 992 tons annually.

In the Caribbean, Taiwan's modern agricultural techniques have helped countries adapt to climate change. For instance, Taiwan has worked with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to implement the Strengthening Farmers' Organizations and Improving Fruit and Vegetable Production Technology projects. With Saint Christopher and Nevis, we have worked on the Enhancing Agriculture Adaptive Capacity to Climate Variability Project. Both partner countries have been able to strengthen their ability to respond to natural disasters and improve the sustainability of natural resources.

Moreover, starting next year, Taiwan and Belize will launch the Urban Resilience and Disaster Prevention Project to help minimize the impact of extreme weather by introducing modern Geographic Information System technologies to enhance Belize's disaster management capabilities.

Taiwan, a leader in the field of seismic and maritime weather monitoring, has the highest concentration of monitoring stations of any nation, with around 800 currently in operation. Given the vulnerability of Pacific Island states to climate change, Taiwan offers training to their meteorological personnel and dispatches experts to improve their weather forecasting systems. For example, Taiwan developed an early warning system for extreme weather events and earthquakes in Solomon Islands. The weather data collected through the system will also help Solomon Islands issue dengue fever alerts, a feature which has drawn attention from the international community.

Multilateral cooperation helps promote green technology and energy efficiency.

For instance, in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction

and Development (EBRD), Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) has contributed US\$80 million to the Green Energy Special Fund. This money is used to cofinance EBRD investment projects with green energy components, such as LED street lights, smart meters, solar-powered technologies, and public transportation and electric systems.

Through such cooperation, Taiwan has supported the Moldova Chisinau Urban Road Project to modernize Chisinau's street lighting system. It will replace traditional mercury lamps with modern LED ones, improving energy efficiency by up to 70 percent.

TaiwanICDF's contributions have also supported the Bosnia and Herzegovina Elektrokrajina Power Distribution Upgrade Project. This initiative should reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 63,000 tons and save 80 GWh of electricity per year by introducing smart metering technology and upgrading the electricity distribution system.

Another cofinanced project is the Jordan Greater Amman Municipality Solid Waste Project, which has introduced gas collection technology to Jordan. The landfill gas-generated power will be connected to the national grid, helping the country reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by 150,000 tons annually, as well as its reliance on fossil fuel imports.

Conclusion

In May 2017, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, "The sustainability train has left the station. Get on board or get left behind," urging the world to rally behind the landmark Paris Agreement. Taiwan, like other countries, should be afforded the opportunity to participate in

global mechanisms, negotiations, and activities that promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Therefore, we call on all parties to look beyond political considerations and support Taiwan's professional, pragmatic, and constructive participation in the UNFCCC. Let Taiwan help in global efforts to combat climate change!