

Report by Jaushieh Joseph Wu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan), at the Foreign and National Defense Committee of the Legislative Yuan on March 23, 2023

Honorable Chairperson, Members of the Legislative Yuan, ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning!

I am pleased to be here today at the invitation of the Foreign and National Defense Committee to present a briefing on Taiwan’s diplomatic work. The following report covers the major challenges and opportunities we have faced in our endeavors in the current international environment, the important accomplishments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter “the Ministry”) in implementing steadfast diplomacy since the previous Legislative Yuan session, as well as our key future directions. Your feedback and suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

1. Foreword

The global pandemic has been gradually abating, but the international landscape has undergone drastic transformations. Taiwan continues to face formidable external challenges, along which opportunities have also arisen. The Ministry will do its utmost to leverage these opportunities; overcome challenges; and take a resilient, flexible, and professional approach while promoting diplomatic work and expanding and deepening Taiwan’s global presence. Although the president represents an extension of national diplomacy, she has been unable to travel abroad in more than three years due to the pandemic. The Ministry is proactively planning an overseas trip for the president in the near future in order to fully safeguard our nation’s

sovereignty, dignity, and interests; consolidate diplomatic alliances; deepen substantive relations with like-minded and friendly countries; increase international participation; make more diverse and concrete contributions to the international community; demonstrate Taiwan as a force for good; share its positive impact; and steadily bring Taiwan closer to the world and the world closer to Taiwan.

2. Challenges and opportunities facing Taiwan in its diplomatic work in the current international environment

2.1. The international landscape of democracy verses authoritarianism is becoming more distinct; Taiwan is now an indispensable and robust partner in the global democratic camp.

The current international situation has grown increasingly complex. Challenges arising from the energy crisis, disinformation campaigns, and other hybrid threats are related to the steady expansion of authoritarianism. They also continue to impact the international order and affect regional peace and stability. The Russia-Ukraine war and China's military drills around Taiwan last August have deeply impressed upon the democratic community the serious threat that authoritarian countries pose to global order and security. The antagonism between democracy and authoritarianism has already taken shape in the international arena. This can be seen from the comprehensive strategic competition between the United States and China; the willful and frequent testing of ballistic missiles by North Korea that has heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the region; and the contest between major world powers to gain influence in such areas as the South China Sea, the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, as well as among Pacific island states. In the evolving international environment,

Taiwan, as a member of the democratic community, continues to uphold democratic values and, due to its geostrategic position, remains a vital force in global supply chains. Taiwan has become an indispensable and robust partner in the global democratic camp. Taiwan will continue to enhance its self-defense capabilities and deepen its cooperation with other democratic countries so as to jointly safeguard democratic values and the democratic way of life.

2.2. With the world facing hybrid challenges in the postpandemic era, Taiwan seeks to assist diplomatic allies and other countries in need in promoting national development and reconstruction, thus gaining international recognition as a force for good.

In this postpandemic era following the gradual abatement of COVID-19 around the world, many countries face hybrid challenges in revitalizing the economy, easing inflation, and increasing employment. They are also confronted with numerous traditional and nontraditional threats, including natural disasters, climate change, energy and food security, terrorism, disinformation, and cybersecurity. Taiwan is working with international partners to help diplomatic allies and countries in need to enhance people's livelihoods and promote postpandemic economic recovery. We continue to assist Ukraine, which also stands on the front line of democracy like Taiwan, in resisting authoritarian aggression. This includes engaging in international cooperation with democratic partners, integrating the strengths of civil society, and allocating related budgets, thereby providing Ukraine with humanitarian aid and support for reconstruction. Last month, we actively assisted Türkiye and Syria in the recovery work following the earthquake there. We

immediately dispatched an international search and rescue team to disaster areas and made monetary and in-kind donations. We again demonstrated to the international community the compassion and capability of the Taiwanese people in lending a helping hand to those in need, gaining greater recognition and support worldwide for Taiwan as a force for good.

2.3. Despite China’s relentless suppression, Taiwan is taking an uncompromising attitude toward authoritarianism, receiving widespread acclaim.

China has never stopped its suppression of Taiwan in the international arena and in recent years has intensified its threats. It has persistently resorted to enticement, coercion, and other tactics in its attempts to lure away our diplomatic allies; undermined our efforts to develop relations with other countries; and interfered with our international participation. It has also attempted to downgrade Taiwan’s national and international status based on the so-called “one China principle” and restrict our international space. China has ramped up its rhetorical and military intimidation of Taiwan and repeatedly announced its refusal to abandon the use of force against Taiwan. It frequently dispatches military aircraft and vessels to intimidate Taiwan and extensively employs cognitive warfare and other gray-zone tactics against us, all the while claiming that it seeks to foster cross-strait economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation in order to promote “peaceful unification.” Its strategic use of a carrot-and-stick approach is part of a cognitive warfare campaign to create an international perception that Taiwan is part of China’s internal affairs. We have taken note of statements by Beijing authorities regarding foreign policy and their position on Taiwan during the 20th National

Congress of the Chinese Communist Party last year and the meetings of the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference this year. We are prepared to respond to all sorts of challenges from China. We will continue to demonstrate Taiwan's resilience and self-confidence to the international community. Our refusal to compromise with authoritarianism not only has elicited widespread attention for Taiwan's strategic position in the world but also has shaped international consensus on the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

3. Major accomplishments of steadfast diplomacy since the last Legislative Yuan session

3.1. Despite China's continuous attempts to entice away and coerce Taiwan's allies, Taiwan is doing its utmost to maintain diplomatic alliances and underscore solid partnerships.

The government continues to promote frequent high-level mutual visits, while ensuring that antipandemic measures are in place.

Saint Christopher and Nevis Prime Minister Terrance Drew; Nauru President Russ Joseph Kun and his wife; Saint Lucia Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre; Paraguay President Mario Abdo Benítez and his wife; Belize First Lady Rossana Briceño; and Eswatini Prime Minister Cleopas Siphon Dlamini were among the high-level officials of diplomatic allies who visited Taiwan since the last Legislative Yuan session. Last November, Vice President Lai Ching-te led a delegation to Palau and met with President Surangel S. Whipps, Jr., and Vice President J. Uduch Sengebau Senior. Premier Chen Chien-jen traveled to the Holy See in January in the capacities of special presidential

envoy and former vice president to extend condolences and attend the funeral of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

Bilateral cooperation projects are proceeding smoothly.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the Taiwan-Marshall Islands Adaptation and Contingency Fund for Climate Change, which Taiwan helped establish, was submitted to and approved by the Executive Yuan this February. We also signed five cooperation agreements in total with three countries: Paraguay, Saint Lucia, and Belize. We participated in assistance programs that the United States and other like-minded countries introduced in our allies, concretely demonstrating that we definitely do not engage in pointless checkbook diplomacy competition with China. In January, Legislative Yuan President You Si-kun and the parliamentary speaker of Tuvalu signed a joint statement for cooperation between the Legislative Yuan of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Parliament of Tuvalu. It calls for deeper postpandemic bilateral collaboration in such areas as economic recovery, climate change adaptation, and other domains.

We continue to assist allies in developing people's livelihoods and promoting postpandemic economic recovery.

We are working with allied nations to promote bilateral cooperation projects that benefit the development of people's livelihoods. We introduced an initiative to assist in economic recovery and women's empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean in the postpandemic era. Furthermore, we have expanded cooperative ties with 113 international partners, including global aid and financial institutions, as well as nongovernmental organizations. We

are working with the United States to jointly implement the Building Economic Inclusion via the Blue Economy program to support postpandemic economic recovery and growth in Latin American and Pacific allies and enhance women's economic empowerment and gender equality. We are also providing postdisaster reconstruction assistance and humanitarian aid to allied partners. The outcomes of our efforts have received widespread support and acclaim in both our allies and the international community.

3.2. Diverse and rapid advances in the Taiwan-US partnership

The US administration continues to support Taiwan through concrete actions.

The United States has brought together its allies at numerous bilateral and multilateral events to underscore the importance of preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. Such major events included the Group of Seven (G7) Foreign Ministers' Meeting and President Joe Biden's meetings with the leaders of Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea during the East Asia Summit last November; the US-France summit and the 32nd Australia-US Ministerial Consultations last December; the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee (2+2) meeting and the US-Japan Summit Meeting in January this year; and the meeting between the US secretary of state and Lithuanian minister of foreign affairs in March. To date, the Biden administration has announced nine arms sale packages to Taiwan. This continues the US policy of normalizing arms sales to Taiwan and reflects the United States' high regard for Taiwan's national defense needs and commitment to honoring its security pledges to Taiwan. Last November,

Taiwan and the United States signed an MOU on development and humanitarian assistance cooperation, highlighting the fact that the two countries are further institutionalizing their robust partnership in promoting development and humanitarian assistance. In February, the US Departments of State, Commerce, and Agriculture sent a joint letter to state governors, mayors of major cities, and business leaders, encouraging them to bolster their interaction with Taiwan. This again demonstrates the US administration's friendly approach toward advancing its bilateral partnership with Taiwan.

The US Congress continues to take concrete actions to assist Taiwan, with bipartisan support provided by both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Since late October last year, a total of 20 members of the two chambers of Congress have visited Taiwan. Congress has also passed flagship bills that are friendly to Taiwan. Last year, it incorporated pro-Taiwan provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. These were signed into law by President Biden. With the completion of legislative procedures, they serve as a legal foundation and offer diverse policy tools for the Taiwan-US partnership across all domains. Furthermore, in late February, the House Financial Services Committee passed three pro-Taiwan bills, namely, the Taiwan Conflict Deterrence Act, PROTECT Taiwan Act, and Taiwan Non-Discrimination Act; and the House Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously approved the Taiwan Assurance Implementation Act. These developments point to Congress's strong backing for Taiwan-US relations and high regard for security across the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan-US economic and trade relations continue to strengthen.

The third Taiwan-US Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue was held in Taipei and Washington, DC, last December. Both sides deemed the dialogue productive and successful. During the Taiwan-US Initiative on 21st-Century Trade negotiations held in Taipei in January, the two sides reached consensus on some of the provisions. This demonstrates the keen interest in and momentum for deepening our bilateral economic and trade partnership. The Ministry will continue to coordinate with domestic economic and trade agencies to advance Taiwan-US economic cooperation through the 21st-Century Trade initiative; the Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue; the Technology Trade and Investment Collaboration framework; and other mechanisms and platforms.

Bilateral cooperation is expanding across all domains in breadth and depth.

The third high-level dialogue on the Taiwan-US Education Initiative was held successfully in February. Our two countries continue to implement programs on Mandarin education, including the Gilman Scholarship funded by the US Department of State and two other official programs. Under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, we held an international seminar on sustainable oceans based on the rule of law in Tokyo, Japan, last October, as well as an overseas event in Israel for exchanges on industrial development in such fields as the digital economy, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence.

Taiwan's relations with US local governments continue to take root.

Last year, 42 resolutions backing Taiwan were passed by the Senate and/or the House of Representatives of 26 US states and the Guam Legislature. Since the beginning of this year, the Senate and/or House of Representatives of 14 US states have approved 16 resolutions supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, the signing of a Taiwan-US bilateral trade agreement, and engagement with Taiwan on Mandarin education. Since last year, 26 US state legislatures have established Taiwan friendship caucuses, which now boast a total membership of more than 565 senators and representatives, underscoring the solid friendship between Taiwan and the United States. In addition, a number of US states have opened offices in Taiwan, elevating the level of engagement between Taiwan and US local governments.

3.3. Continued comprehensive enhancement of Taiwan-Japan relations and development of bilateral exchanges and cooperation

Taiwan and Japan are further strengthening their comprehensive substantive partnership.

The government of Japan has stressed the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait at multiple important international events. It issued statements affirming this stance at the East Asia Summit, US-Japan Summit Meeting, and Japan-US-ROK summit last November; the US-Japan Summit Meeting this January; and the Japanese prime minister's meeting with the secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in February. Last December, the Japanese government revised three defense documents, including its National Security Strategy, to incorporate pro-Taiwan statements,

such as affirmation that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait constitutes an indispensable component for the security and prosperity of the international community.

Taiwan and Japan enhance comprehensive cooperation through parliamentary exchanges.

President You Si-kun and several other members of the Legislative Yuan, along with US and Japanese lawmakers and think tank researchers, participated in the second trilateral strategic dialogue held last November. The forum aimed to facilitate the establishment of a security communication channel among Taiwan, the United States, and Japan. Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the House of Councillors Seko Hiroshige visited Taiwan last December. That same month, the Taiwan-Japan Relationship Sustainability Forum was jointly held by the two countries. Representative and LDP Policy Research Council (PRC) Chair Koichi Hagiuda traveled to Taiwan to attend the event, marking the first visit to Taiwan by an LDP PRC chair in 19 years. Such developments point to the importance that Japan's governing party places on bilateral relations.

Taiwan and Japan bolster economic and trade relations and promote maritime affairs and fishery exchanges.

The 46th Taiwan-Japan Economic and Trade Conference between the heads of the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the fifth meeting of the Taiwan-Japan Cooperation in Developing the ASEAN Market mechanism were convened in Tokyo in February, further cementing the close economic and trade relations between

the two countries. The fifth bilateral dialogue on maritime affairs cooperation was held in January and the ninth meeting of the Taiwan-Japan Fishery Committee in March. These developments have strengthened bilateral cooperation in maritime affairs, as well as exchanges and dialogue on establishing orderly fishing operations at sea.

3.4. Rapid development of Taiwan-Europe relations, speedy increase in scope of bilateral cooperation, and support for cross-strait security included in government policies of many countries

Taiwan and European nations continue to deepen exchanges through mutual contact and mutual visits.

President Tsai Ing-wen spoke to Czech Republic President-elect Petr Pavel over the phone in January and congratulated him on his victory. In February, I extensively discussed comprehensive bilateral cooperation in a videoconference with Czech Chamber of Deputies Speaker Markéta Pekarová Adamová. When Speaker Adamová led a delegation to Taiwan at the end of March, I welcomed her on behalf of the government. Other visiting delegations included those from the German-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the German Bundestag last October; the United Kingdom House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee last November; senior parliamentarians from the Free Democratic Party on the German Bundestag Committees for Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid in January; and the Kosovo-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group in March. Chairman Anders Fogh Rasmussen led a delegation of the Alliance of

Democracies Foundation, a Danish think tank, to visit Taiwan in January. We also hosted a delegation from the European Parliament (EP) Committee on International Trade last December, the third EP delegation to make a formal visit since 2021, demonstrating once again the EP's staunch support for Taiwan.

European countries are voicing support for Taiwan at a quickly rising frequency and volume.

European countries have reaffirmed the importance of cross-strait security at numerous multilateral and bilateral meetings. These include the G7 Summit, the EU-Japan Summit, the EU-Australia Leaders' Meeting, the third high-level meeting of the EU-US Dialogue on China, and the France-Japan Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting last year; as well as the France-Australia Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations, the Australia-UK Ministerial Meeting, and the 36th France-United Kingdom Summit this year. Meanwhile, the policy report entitled *Integrated Review Refresh 2023: Responding to a more contested and volatile world*, published by the UK government in March, mentioned Taiwan for the first time. It also expressed opposition to any unilateral change in the status quo across the Taiwan Strait and support for cross-strait peace and stability. Furthermore, the EP has passed 10 resolutions in support of Taiwan and its international participation since last year. For example, in September, it adopted a resolution on the situation across the Taiwan Strait, strongly condemning China for conducting military exercises in areas around Taiwan and reiterating the EP's opposition to any attempt to unilaterally change the cross-strait status quo and to any military threats. This January, the EP also voted to approve the annual implementation

reports of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, calling for deepening partnerships with Taiwan. Members of the interparliamentary Formosa Club in Europe expressed concern over China's escalation of the situation across the Taiwan Strait and endorsed Taiwan's participation in the International Civil Aviation Organization. The Parliament of Wallonia, a region of Belgium, passed its first resolution backing Taiwan and called for greater cooperation with and international participation of Taiwan.

Efforts continue to be made to promote economic and trade connectivity and bilateral exchanges between Taiwan and Europe.

We have been steadily promoting the signing of a bilateral investment agreement with the European Union. The Taiwan-EU Trade and Investment Dialogue was upgraded to the ministerial and director-general level last year, with the two sides reaching consensus on several items and agreeing to establish a platform for working-level discussions. In addition, to deepen economic and trade connectivity, Taiwan has continued to engage in bilateral trade talks with European countries. For instance, it held deputy ministerial-level trade talks with Sweden last November, with Finland last December, and with Lithuania in February.

Since signing an air services arrangement in 2021, Taiwan and Germany have added new flight destinations in each other's countries. A ceremony for the first flight of the Taipei-Munich route was held last November. In addition, the Taipei-Milan route was launched in October, and the Taipei-Prague route will become operational in July. Last year, the Ministry introduced the

European Valued Important Partnership program to continue forging stronger connections with our friends in Europe. The Taiwan-Europe Connectivity Scholarship program continues to encourage outstanding individuals from European countries to engage in educational exchanges in Taiwan.

The government of Taiwan has donated supplies to assist in Ukraine's reconstruction.

During a reception hosted last October to celebrate the friendship between Taiwan and Ukraine, the Ministry announced that the government had allocated a budget of NT\$1.8 billion to assist in Ukraine's reconstruction. The Ministry donated US\$1 million for the procurement of power generation and heating equipment, as well as 95 tons of winter clothing and supplies, to help Ukrainians survive the harsh winter during the war. Taiwan also donated approximately US\$140,000 for the purchase of ICT equipment that would provide Internet access to 551 Ukrainian orphans living in Türkiye, helping fulfill their educational needs.

3.5. Coordinating with related ministries to comprehensively advance the New Southbound Policy

Economic and trade exchanges grow steadily, and efforts continue to be made to enhance agricultural cooperation.

Taiwan's trade with New Southbound Policy (NSP) partners totaled US\$180.267 billion last year, registering a record high since the policy's introduction and realizing annual growth rate of 20.7 percent. Taiwan and India signed an MOU for cooperation in traditional medicine last November

to deepen bilateral economic and trade exchanges. The government is subsidizing the Taiwan-Southeast Asia Vegetable Germplasm Initiative, a three-year capacity-building project conducted by the World Vegetable Center for farmers and agricultural researchers in Southeast Asian nations. To help realize the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of zero hunger, as well as decent work and economic growth, Taiwan has implemented a number of agricultural cooperation projects. These include projects in Indonesia covering horticultural development in Karawang, high-quality rice seed production in South Sulawesi, and guidance on garlic and shallot production and marketing in North Sumatra.

Personnel exchanges and humanitarian assistance are being strengthened.

Last December, Taiwan and Indonesia signed an agricultural internship agreement, allowing Indonesia to select 55 young farmers to receive training in Taiwan. In addition, under the Taiwan-Philippines MOU for disaster prevention, we arranged for 35 firemen from the Philippine Bureau of Fire Protection to participate in an intense program at the National Fire Agency's fire training facility in Zhushan, Nantou County. Meanwhile, we donated US\$100,000 to Indonesia for earthquake disaster relief efforts in Cianjur, West Java, and US\$400,000 to the Philippines in the wake of the destruction caused by Tropical Storm Nalgae.

Cultural exchanges are frequent.

The Ministry and missions of Southeast Asian countries in Taiwan cohosted the first NSP Film Festival last October. Twelve film screenings were presented to the public free of charge. Performance arts troupes were also

encouraged to perform in India as part of an effort to bolster bilateral cultural exchanges. These included the College of Indigenous Studies Dance Troupe of National Dong Hwa University and the Ming Hwa Yuan Arts and Cultural Group.

3.6. Bolstering momentum for Taiwan's international participation

Owing to China's unwarranted interference, Taiwan has been unable to participate in the UN system. However, efforts have been made in many places around the world to show that Taiwan can help. These have received international affirmation and recognition. As China's threats against Taiwan continue to escalate, administrative and legislative government branches, media, and public opinion in more and more countries have acknowledged that Taiwan's appeals to gain international participation are both appropriate and legitimate. International support for and affirmation of Taiwan's participation in the global arena have been rapidly gaining momentum year after year.

The 152nd session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board took place in Geneva from January 30 to February 7 this year. Diplomatic allies, the United States, Japan, and other like-minded countries have continued to speak up and demonstrate in various ways firm support for Taiwan's participation in WHO.

Last November, Taiwan organized a delegation to participate in the 27th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Egypt. Diplomatic allies, parliamentarians from

friendly countries, and more than 400 members of the Formosa Club chapters in Latin America and the Caribbean sent letters or spoke up in support of Taiwan's UNFCCC campaign. Our delegation held 40 high-level bilateral talks with diplomatic allies, like-minded countries, and international organization delegations and attended six side meetings.

Taiwan continues to exert international influence through its participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. President Tsai again appointed Morris Chang, founder of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, as the leader's representative to the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting last November. Representative Chang held meetings and discussions with over half of the APEC leaders and representatives, including US Vice President Kamala Harris, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Between late October of last year and March of this year, Taiwan attended the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting, APEC Ministerial Meeting, and three APEC Senior Officials' Meetings. During that same period, Taiwan hosted seven APEC meetings and events focusing on such topics as utilizing digital technology to advance occupational safety and health in the digital age, as well as leveraging digital twin technology to enhance supply chain productivity for resilient economies. Furthermore, Taiwan donated US\$2.2 million to APEC last year in a concrete demonstration of our active participation in and contributions to the organization.

3.7. Taking proactive steps to make our voice heard internationally

The Ministry continues to employ a variety of approaches to speak out in the

international community, including arranging interviews for President Tsai with international media. Since the last Legislative Yuan session, I have given nearly 30 interviews to international media outlets, which were extensively reported in print and electronic media. As of March this year, a total of 146 journalists representing 81 media outlets from 22 countries were registered with the Ministry. Eight international outlets have stationed journalists in Taiwan since last October.

To promote a positive international image of Taiwan, the Ministry launched both Chinese and English versions of a video introducing Taiwan's national developments at the end of last year. Shorter versions of the video were also produced, in 10 languages. The Ministry's official Facebook account has attracted over 260,000 followers since its launch, and the Facebook accounts of 106 overseas missions have a combined total of approximately 920,000 followers. Meanwhile, our official Twitter account now has more than 410,000 followers and has attracted an accumulated total of more than 280 million visits by users. These avenues have helped the Ministry effectively raise Taiwan's international visibility.

3.8. Actively contributing to global issues and fulfilling our international responsibility as a constructive partner of the democratic camp

The government of Taiwan has participated actively in international humanitarian assistance efforts. It has also made substantive contributions to the international community by strengthening disaster relief, combating climate change, promoting sustainable development, and bolstering the security of democratic supply chains. Since the outbreak of the Russia-

Ukraine war, our government and private sector have donated a total of 27 tons of medical supplies and over 700 tons of humanitarian aid supplies to Ukraine, provided over US\$41 million in financial aid, assisted in resettling Ukrainian refugees, and launched a warmth-sending program by donating winter relief supplies and food and aiding Kyiv in purchasing power generators.

In response to the Türkiye-Syria earthquake that occurred last month, our government immediately dispatched a search and rescue team to disaster areas. The Ministry aided in setting up relief donation accounts and took the lead in donating US\$2 million on behalf of the government. We also provided US\$20 million to the government of Türkiye and international charities for joint assistance initiatives benefiting earthquake survivors in Türkiye and Syria. Taiwan will continue to participate in and make contributions to global issues of concern to help expand the international virtuous cycle.

4. Further advancing steadfast diplomacy

In facing the current formidable and complex international landscape and challenges, the Ministry continues to implement steadfast diplomacy by upholding a resilient spirit and a flexible and professional attitude, focusing on the following priorities and directions:

4.1. Consolidating ties with diplomatic allies

We continue to promote high-level mutual visits, reinvigorate head-of-state diplomacy, and deepen and expand bilateral cooperation projects for the development of people's livelihoods in allied nations in a manner that keeps

pace with relevant trends. We also seek to engage like-minded and important friendly nations and democratic partners in multilateral efforts to jointly assist Taiwan's diplomatic allies. Meanwhile, we have reiterated that Taiwan will definitely not engage in checkbook diplomacy to compete for allies with China. In addition, high-ranking officials from allied countries and like-minded nations, such as the United States and Japan, voiced support for Taiwan following Honduras's plan to establish diplomatic ties with China. This clearly demonstrates that the right approach for Taiwan to consolidate relations with diplomatic allies is to uphold the principle of mutual assistance for mutual benefit.

4.2. Deepening relations with like-minded and friendly nations

We make good use of the favorable international climate and friendly forces worldwide that attach great importance to Taiwan's strategic position and heed the significant implications that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait have on the world. We also continue to bolster partnerships with such like-minded and friendly nations as the United States, Japan, European countries, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada so as to jointly counter global threats and challenges. In addition, we further expand our global strategic deployments and seek the mutual establishment of representative offices. The Lithuanian Trade Representative Office was inaugurated and began operations officially last November. We will launch the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Montréal, in Canada's Quebec Province. Furthermore, we continue to encourage international nongovernmental organizations to set up offices in Taiwan. The US-based Freedom House and the European Values Center for Security Policy, a Czech Republic think tank,

have established operations in Taiwan.

4.3. Increasing international participation and making proactive contributions

Based on the principles of pragmatism, professionalism, and making contributions, we continue to combine public- and private-sector resources and strengths to join relevant international organizations through various channels, while fully striving to safeguard our rights and interests in organizations to which we already belong.

4.4. Strengthening the implementation of the NSP

To implement the NSP, the government is focusing on four pillars: economic and trade cooperation, talent exchanges, resource sharing, and regional connectivity. Through Taiwan's soft power, we are creating new mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation models and establishing linkages with the Indo-Pacific strategies and initiatives of like-minded partners as we make concrete contributions to regional development.

4.5. Fully endeavoring to join regional economic integration mechanisms and strengthening regional cooperation

In particular, as we endeavor to gain accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the Ministry continues to actively seek the support of CPTPP members through bilateral and multilateral channels.

4.6. Making our voice heard internationally

We continue to employ diverse approaches to communicate our message to the international community so that the world can better understand and further support Taiwan. In particular, we arrange foreign media interviews and increase our use of new media platforms to give the world a positive image of Taiwan.

4.7. Fulfilling our international responsibilities

We work to realize the UN SDGs and staunchly safeguard democratic values and the rules-based international order.

4.8. Continuing to enhance services and convenience for the public

The Ministry spares no effort in implementing various public services, such as by further enhancing service quality, optimizing procedures, and streamlining the process for passport applications.

5. Conclusion

I would like to once again thank the Legislative Yuan and the distinguished members of the Committee for all your support of and encouragement to the Ministry. Despite the formidable external challenges, especially escalating threats and suppression from China, the Ministry will continue to make every effort in its work. We very much look forward to the Committee members' continued support and guidance. Thank you.