

Health for All, Taiwan can help:

Support Taiwan's participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA) and in all World Health Organization (WHO) meetings, mechanisms, and activities

As the world enters the fourth year of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is hope that the global public health emergency will soon be behind us. This year marks the 75th anniversary of WHO, making it an excellent opportunity for the international community to enhance public health efforts and work toward the ultimate goal of achieving Health for All.

The WHO Constitution, which entered into force in 1948, states that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent on the fullest cooperation of individuals and states. This is as relevant today as it was 75 years ago. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that the world must work together in order to overcome collective health challenges. WHO coordinates global health efforts, and it is crucial for it to involve all stakeholders—especially ones such as Taiwan, which make significant contributions to global public health.

Taiwan has been a valuable partner in the fight against COVID-19. But despite its antipandemic contributions, Taiwan continues to be excluded from WHO and the WHA due to unjustifiable political considerations. This seriously jeopardizes the right to health of the 23 million people of Taiwan. It also undermines WHO's efforts to make global health architecture more resilient, hindering health emergency prevention, preparedness, and response. Taiwan calls on its diplomatic allies and like-minded partners to support its participation in the WHA as an observer, as well as in all WHO

meetings, activities, and mechanisms.

1. Taiwan can help, and Taiwan is helping

1.1. Sharing best practices for combating COVID-19

Taiwan's experience in combating communicable diseases, such as SARS and H1N1, has fostered innovative approaches that bolster its public health care system and well-trained healthcare personnel. Taiwan's continued efforts in epidemiological surveillance, investigation, and analysis have made it better prepared to prevent and mitigate future outbreaks of communicable diseases.

At the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, Taiwan was able to implement advance deployment and rapid response mechanisms, establishing a cross-sectoral system to prevent and contain the pandemic at a time when vaccines and antiviral drugs were unavailable. Taiwan's border control measures, epidemic investigations, patient evacuation system, government-coordinated distribution of medical supplies, and supply chain management successfully contained the spread of the virus and kept its citizens safe.

When compared with the 38 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development member states and Singapore, Taiwan ranks sixth-lowest in COVID-19 mortality and case-fatality rates. Taiwan also ranks fourth-highest for coverage rates of at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and third-highest in terms of vaccine boosters administered.

Working with international partners, Taiwan has demonstrated its commitment to sharing its expertise and successful pandemic response methods with other countries through bilateral and multilateral platforms.

Moreover, Taiwan is developing medical countermeasures to COVID-19 and strengthening its capacity to innovate critical drugs and active pharmaceutical ingredients. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Taiwan has issued 13 export licenses for its herbal formula NRICM101 (Taiwan Chingguan Yihau) to help countries in the region combat the pandemic.

1.2. Universal health coverage and advanced technologies

Taiwan is dedicated to achieving universal health coverage. Over the past few decades, Taiwan has bolstered its health care and public health system in line with WHO's recommendations. This includes enhancing primary and oral health care, as well as combating communicable and noncommunicable diseases.

Taiwan's National Health Insurance (NHI) is a prime example of universal health coverage, offering financial protection and access to a wide range of essential services. Besides improving access to medical care, Taiwan has actively promoted digital health and innovation. Taiwan is upgrading its medical system, introducing new medical care models, and utilizing telehealth consultations for patients residing in remote areas and outlying islands.

In the fight against COVID-19, Taiwan established response measures that harnessed the capabilities of artificial intelligence, big data, and surveillance networks. Taiwan also took measures to enhance cybersecurity and ensure the responsible use of personal information. By integrating digital technologies with the NHI database, Taiwan was able to implement smart initiatives such as the COVID-19 Vaccination Registration and Reservation System to efficiently manage health care within its borders.

Taiwan has made significant advances in and contributions to universal health coverage and is committed to sharing its experience and expertise with the world to help achieve the goal of Health for All.

1.3. Taiwan, a force for good, working with the world to combat global challenges

In a dynamic world of converging challenges, Taiwan is willing and able to help wherever there is a need. In response to the health emergencies in Ukraine, the people and government of Taiwan have donated tens of millions of dollars and hundreds of tons of medical and humanitarian relief supplies to Ukraine and neighboring countries. Taiwan will continue to act as a force for good in the world to help bolster the resilience of the global health network.

2. Enhancing Taiwan's contributions by including it in more international platforms

2.1. Taiwan's attendance at the WHA as an observer

Taiwan previously participated in WHA meetings as an observer and provided valuable expertise that informed the WHA's discussions. However, Taiwan has been excluded from the WHA since 2017 due to political considerations, which has hindered Taiwan's ability to receive assistance from WHO and contribute to global health efforts.

The WHA facilitated dialogue among countries to chart an effective course to end the pandemic. Discussions such as these should exclude no one, especially not Taiwan and its 23 million people, who successfully united to overcome the pandemic and set an example for the world.

2.2. Taiwan should be invited to all WHO meetings, mechanisms, and activities

In addition to the WHA, Taiwan should also be included in other WHO platforms so that it can help bolster global efforts to safeguard public health. The fight against emerging communicable diseases requires the sharing of genetic sequencing data. All stakeholders, including Taiwan, must be involved in the global information-sharing network to improve pandemic preparedness and response. We urge WHO to include Taiwan in all health emergency-related meetings and mechanisms, such as the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence and the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System.

2.3. Taiwan hopes to work with WHO to strengthen global health architecture

To better prepare for and respond to future communicable disease outbreaks, it is important to apply the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic to develop a coherent and cohesive global collaboration framework. WHO is leading discussions on amendments to the International Health Regulations and negotiations on the new pandemic accord. Taiwan is willing to share its exemplary pandemic response model with WHO to collectively strengthen the global health architecture.

3. Efforts to attain Health for All should leave no one behind

Viruses do not respect borders. In the face of shared global health threats, the international community must unite in a collective response. This is the only way to achieve the ultimate goal of Health for All.

Taiwan's participation in WHO and the WHA is a pragmatic issue—not a political one. Taiwan stands firm in its commitment to upholding the

principles of professionalism, pragmatism, and making contributions. Taiwan hopes to engage with the global health security network and work with WHO to make global health architecture more resilient, thereby promoting health emergency prevention, preparedness, and response.

Taiwan once again calls on WHO to maintain a professional and neutral stance, resist inappropriate political interference, invite Taiwan to the WHA as an observer, and include Taiwan in all WHO meetings, mechanisms, and activities. Taiwan also urges its diplomatic allies and like-minded partners to continue to staunchly support Taiwan's participation in WHO and the global health network, enabling it to contribute even more in the postpandemic era.