

**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 9, 2020**

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

I'm 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 our achievements in promoting steadfast diplomacy over the past four years, the external changes and challenges we face, the accomplishments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since the previous Legislative Yuan session, as well as key future directions. Your feedback and suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

1. Taiwan has achieved significant breakthroughs and accomplishments through steadfast diplomacy despite China's intensifying suppression

Over the past four years, the government has strived to maintain the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. We have neither engaged in provocations nor sought to exacerbate existing circumstances. We maintain that peace, parity, democracy, and dialogue are the keys to positive cross-strait interactions and long-term stable development. However, China has stepped up its suppression of Taiwan in the international arena, attempting to destroy our sovereignty and limit our presence. Not only has China lured away some of our diplomatic allies, it has also hindered Taiwan's international participation, undermining stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the face of these challenges, our Ministry has promoted steadfast diplomacy in line with the principle of mutual assistance for mutual benefit. In addition to consolidating relations with Taiwan's diplomatic allies, we have bolstered substantive ties with like-minded nations, raising the level of interaction and expanding the scope of cooperation. We have deepened exchanges on such global issues as democratic governance, women's empowerment, religious freedom, public health, climate change, and combating disinformation, enabling Taiwan to contribute to the international community. Strategically, Taiwan will focus on working with like-minded partners, including the United States, Japan, and countries in Europe, to build a values-based alliance and increase our influence in the Indo-Pacific region through the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF).

In terms of regional strategy, our New Southbound Policy has achieved initial success, as reflected in the significant growth in economic, trade, cultural, educational, and tourism exchanges with partner countries. We have aligned this policy with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, effectively elevating Taiwan's international strategic status. And despite relentless interference from China, our efforts to participate in the World Health Assembly (WHA), United Nations, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have gained stronger support from the global community.

2. Taiwan is facing external changes and challenges in its diplomatic work

The international political and economic landscape has experienced drastic changes and uncertainty exists regarding peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific

region. Our Ministry is closely monitoring key trends and formulating appropriate responses accordingly. Key developments are as follows:

2.1. China's continuous suppression of Taiwan in the international arena

After PRC leader Xi Jinping announced his five-point proposal concerning Taiwan, the Beijing authorities have sought to impose the “one country, two systems” model on Taiwan in an attempt to destroy our democracy. Beijing has stepped up its rhetorical assault and military intimidation against Taiwan, luring away our diplomatic allies, dispatching military aircraft and vessels to conduct military exercises that clearly target Taiwan in areas around the Taiwan Strait, repeatedly declaring publicly that the PRC will not rule out the use of force, as well as interfering in our relations with other countries and our participation in the World Health Organization (WHO), ICAO, and other international bodies. China was also critical of and tried to interfere with governments of countries conveying congratulations to President Tsai Ing-wen on her reelection this January and those planning to send official representatives to attend her inauguration ceremony.

The PRC has relentlessly attempted to limit Taiwan's international presence, ignored the existence of the Republic of China (Taiwan), and disregarded the fact that the majority of Taiwan's people will never accept the “one country, two systems” framework. Obstinate and unilaterally, China has undermined the status quo of stability in the Taiwan Strait and seriously impacted peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, causing great concern and unease in the international community.

2.2. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Taiwan

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is wreaking havoc worldwide. On the frontlines of epidemic prevention, Taiwan has considerable expertise and effectiveness. We wish to contribute to the international community and are cooperating with the United States and other like-minded nations on disease control. However, due to political factors, UN agencies, such as WHO and ICAO, have incorrectly listed Taiwan under China (PRC) when introducing control measures against COVID-19. Their exclusion of Taiwan from the global disease prevention system shows a complete disregard for our citizen's right to health and has impacted the travel rights of Taiwan nationals as well as the aviation rights of Taiwan airlines.

2.3. International economic and trade landscape fraught with uncertainty and challenges

The United States and China (PRC) signed a phase-one trade agreement in mid-January, but have yet to resolve disputes in the areas of finance and technology. This factor, as well as the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union and developments in regional economic integration—involving the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—are expected to have an impact on Taiwan's economy. The spread of COVID-19 has dealt a severe blow to the service, manufacturing, and transportation industries in a number of Asian countries. It has also been detrimental to global economic growth.

2.4. Uncertainty in regional security

The COVID-19 outbreak has recently become a pandemic, spreading to every continent, and more than 80 countries have reported confirmed cases. The situation is especially serious in Central and East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The Hong Kong protests against an amendment to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation, the North Korea situation, and the US-Iran conflict seem to have abated. However, there have been isolated conflicts in the Middle East and the South China Sea, and in early March, North Korea fired test missiles for the first time this year. Overall, the regional security environment is fraught with uncertainty and related developments must be monitored closely.

3. Key steadfast diplomacy outcomes since the previous Legislative Yuan session

3.1. Cordial and frequent high-level mutual visits with diplomatic allies

Last October, the heads or deputy heads of state of diplomatic allies—including Prime Minister Allen Chastanet of Saint Lucia and Vice President Hugo Adalberto Velázquez Moreno of Paraguay—visited Taiwan to attend our National Day celebrations, highlighting our solid bonds with these nations. Immediately after our presidential election in January, the heads of state and government leaders of many diplomatic allies congratulated President Tsai on her reelection and on the smooth election process via letters, phone calls, and public posts on social media. Among them were King Mswati III of Eswatini, President Tommy Remengesau Jr. of Palau, and Prime Minister Kausea Natano of Tuvalu.

Vice President Chen Chien-jen led a delegation to the Holy See to attend the

canonization of British Cardinal John Henry Newman and four others last October. Then, in December, Vice President Chen traveled to Palau to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between our countries. During his visit, he met with President Remengesau.

Also in October, I led a delegation to Paraguay, where I met with President Mario Abdo Benítez. This January, I served as the President's envoy to the inauguration of President Alejandro Eduardo Giammattei Falla of Guatemala. On the trip, I also visited Honduras and met with President Juan Orlando Hernández.

Heads of state and political leaders from diplomatic allies have also visited Taiwan. Among them were President Lionel Aingimea of Nauru, then President Hilda C. Heine of the Marshall Islands, President Giammattei of Guatemala, Foreign Minister Simon Robert Kofe of Tuvalu, and Foreign Minister Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres of Nicaragua. Last November, when Pope Francis was flying through the Taipei Flight Information Region on his way from Thailand to Japan, he sent special greetings and blessings to President Tsai and the people of Taiwan.

3.2. Steady advances in Taiwan-US relations

Taiwan-US relations are stable and robust, and continue to advance steadily. In addition to enhancing mutual trust, we have strengthened our partnership through relevant channels, with cooperation expanding to a broader range of domains.

High-ranking US officials have spoken up in support of Taiwan on numerous occasions. Vice President Mike Pence recognized Taiwan's democratic accomplishments during a lecture at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars last October, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sent a message of congratulations to President Tsai soon after her reelection.

The Trump administration has announced five arms sales to Taiwan totaling US\$12 billion. On December 20, 2019, President Donald Trump signed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 into law. The Act expresses support for Taiwan to strengthen its self-defense capabilities and calls for enhanced military exchanges, again underscoring US commitment to Taiwan's security.

The United States has, on numerous occasions, recognized Taiwan's contributions to the Indo-Pacific region and its role in the US Indo-Pacific strategy, which is closely aligned with our New Southbound Policy. This again highlights the values-based partnership between Taiwan and the United States.

Both the US Senate and House of Representatives have shown support for Taiwan. Roughly 80 Congress Members, including Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and President Pro Tempore of the Senate Charles Grassley (R-IA), sent messages of congratulations to Taiwan after our general election. Both the Senate and House of Representatives passed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act of 2019. This January, Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO), Chairman

of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, and some of his colleagues sent a letter to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, urging WHO to grant Taiwan observer status and assist Taiwan in dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY), Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) also wrote letters to ICAO calling for Taiwan's participation.

Last year, Taiwan and the United States jointly held seven workshops under the GCTF, focusing on women's empowerment, public health, energy security, and media literacy. Diplomatic allies participated in the workshops, some of which were cosponsored by Japan, Sweden, and Australia. These developments are gradually transforming the GCTF into a multilateral mechanism.

Last October, Taiwan and the United States hosted the first Pacific Islands Dialogue in Taiwan to explore ways to strengthen cooperation in the Pacific.

3.3. Taiwan-Japan relations are maintaining a healthy momentum

Taiwan-Japan relations are advancing steadily. Over the past year, Japan has shown greater support for Taiwan in the international arena, an indication that bilateral interactions are beginning to cover multilateral issues. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reiterated his support for Taiwan's participation in WHO in response to a parliamentary interpellation.

Bilateral cooperation has become more comprehensive. The 44th Taiwan-

Japan Economic and Trade Meeting held in Tokyo last October concluded with the signing of four agreements. The third Taiwan-Japan Committee on Cooperation in Third Country Markets and the fourth Taiwan-Japan Maritime Affairs Cooperation Dialogue Forum were also a success last year. These developments further institutionalized negotiation mechanisms between our countries.

Parliamentary exchanges at both the central and local levels have increased significantly. Last October, more than 20 members of Japan's National Diet attended the National Day parade in Taiwan, representing the largest delegation from a foreign nation. Local government and people-to-people exchanges have also increased in momentum, as evidenced by the sisterhood and friendly alliances that cities and counties in Taiwan have established with 131 counterparts in Japan. Bilateral visits between our peoples reached a record high last year, topping the seven-million mark for the first time.

3.4. Taiwan-EU cooperation has been enhanced through values-based diplomacy

Taiwan-EU relations have maintained a healthy momentum, with both sides continuing to deepen exchanges and cooperation based on shared core beliefs and the values of democracy, freedom, and human rights. Taiwan has become a values-based partner in Asia for Europe.

Taiwan and the EU have diverse and healthy institutionalized consultation mechanisms in place. Last year, the two sides held the Human Rights Consultations, the Labor Consultation, and the Dialogue on Digital Economy,

deepening and enhancing bilateral cooperation.

On December 4, 2019, the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted a resolution expressing concern that autocratic regimes, by means of disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, and other tactics, were posing a threat to Asian democracies and regional stability. The resolution also reiterated EU support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations. It was followed by the passage of additional resolutions during a plenary EP session in Strasbourg on January 15 this year, emphasizing the importance the EU attaches to regional security and democracy. That the resolutions were passed after Taiwan's general election is of great significance. The European Commission and more than 150 parliamentarians from 26 European nations publicly congratulated Taiwan following our general election in January, demonstrating their support for Taiwan.

Last October, Taiwan friendship groups from the EP and the German, French, and UK parliaments established the Formosa Club to consolidate support for Taiwan's bids for international participation. When WHO erroneously listed Taiwan under China this February, the Formosa Club promptly wrote a letter to the WHO Director-General expressing concern and demanding a correction. Friendly members of the EP and parliaments of nearly a dozen European countries, including Italy, Latvia, and the Czech Republic, spoke up on our behalf. This indicates growing support for Taiwan's international participation among like-minded European partners.

We have also engaged in exchanges and cooperation across various domains with a number of European countries. Last December, we signed an MOU for a working holiday program with the Netherlands, making it the 12th country in Europe and the 17th worldwide to reach such an agreement with Taiwan. We also signed a reciprocal driver's license agreement with Germany, which took effect on December 31, 2019. This February, the Czech Republic ratified an agreement signed with Taiwan on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of tax evasion, which will take effect in 2021. This is the 16th accord of its kind that we have concluded with a European nation.

3.5. The New Southbound Policy is achieving substantial success

We have steadily deepened diverse exchanges with New Southbound Policy partner countries and achieved substantial success.

Last year saw steady growth in trade and investment between Taiwan and New Southbound Policy partner countries. Trade volume reached US\$111.9 billion, while 645 cases of inward investment by these nations totaling US\$1.096 billion were approved. Industrial collaboration forums were held in six partner countries, which led to the signing of 40 letters of intent and numerous agreements on cooperation in such industries as smart cities, green technology, and food biotechnology.

With regard to personnel exchanges, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has rolled out visa facilitation measures in phases under the New Southbound Policy, attracting more tourists from partner countries. Last year, citizens from these countries made more than 2.77 million visits to Taiwan, up 6.8 percent from

the previous year. We have also forged ahead with talent exchange and incubation programs. These include the Young Agricultural Ambassadors New Southbound Policy Exchange Program and the Taiwan Fellowships and Scholarships Program.

In resource sharing, our Ministry remains committed to the One Country, One Center initiative, under which Taiwanese medical centers engaged in health care cooperation and development in eight partner countries last year, including India, Indonesia, and Myanmar. As for regional connectivity, Taiwan signed numerous agreements with New Southbound Policy partners, among them an investment protection pact with Vietnam and an MOU on food safety information exchange with Australia.

The third annual Yushan Forum, themed “Deepening Progressive Partnerships in Asia,” was held in Taipei last October. Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands Sandra Oudkirk, and former White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders delivered keynote speeches at the event. More than 1,000 opinion leaders, scholars, experts, ambassadors, and representatives from 31 countries attended, gaining a better understanding of Taiwan’s commitment to implementing the New Southbound Policy.

3.6. Increasing momentum for greater international participation

Owing to China’s interference, Taiwan has been unable to participate in the UN system. However, the international community widely recognizes that Taiwan can help. An ever increasing number of nations, including their

executive and legislative branches of government, media, and citizens, are speaking up for Taiwan, underscoring the fact that our appeal for international participation is both appropriate and legitimate.

At a meeting to discuss COVID-19 during the 146th session of the WHO Executive Board this year, eight diplomatic allies voiced their support for Taiwan, while such like-minded nations as the United States, Japan, Germany (on behalf of the EU), and Australia strongly endorsed our participation. High-ranking officials worldwide, including US Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar II, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and officials at the European External Action Service, as well as parliamentarians from nearly 20 friendly nations also backed Taiwan.

Moreover, we have achieved considerable success with our participation in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Last year, Taiwan attended 117 APEC meetings and activities, hosted or jointly organized with fellow APEC members 32 seminars and events, and received APEC funding for 10 initiatives, ranking Taiwan fifth among members in terms of APEC-funded projects. Taiwan's contributions were duly noted in the *Report on the Outcomes of APEC Chile 2019*, which listed 20 key initiatives and projects we had proposed or completed. Taiwan also participated in this year's First Senior Officials' Meeting and will continue to foster high-level bilateral exchanges with other APEC members.

Our Ministry's bid to participate in the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) garnered wider support last year than ever before.

Eleven diplomatic allies sent letters to INTERPOL President Kim Jong Yang or spoke up for Taiwan during the General Assembly. High-level police officials from eight allies filmed a video endorsing Taiwan's participation. Like-minded nations extended unprecedented support, including then US Acting Assistant Secretary of State Patrick Murphy. The parliaments of more than 14 countries also conveyed their support in various ways.

During the 25th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC held last December, Taiwan's delegation participated in 13 side events and held 42 bilateral meetings. Our Ministry released a short promotional film entitled *Riding the Wind*, recounting Taiwan's efforts and contributions toward reducing carbon emissions. Meanwhile, parliamentarians from 13 diplomatic allies and 12 friendly nations sent letters individually, spoke up, or expressed support in other ways.

3.7. Taking proactive steps to make our voice heard internationally

Our Ministry continues to employ a variety of approaches to speak up and let Taiwan's voice be heard throughout the world. From last October to this February, I gave 21 interviews and met with journalists from 120 foreign media outlets, including the *Washington Post* and other prominent news agencies from a number of countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan. A total of 139 news reports were issued in relation to these interviews. Our presidential election garnered significant foreign media attention. Before the election, I held an international press conference and spoke about Taiwan's democracy. Journalists from more than 50 media outlets attended and over 40 new reports were issued.

In addition, our Ministry's official Facebook page has attracted over 120,000 followers since its launch, and the Facebook pages of our overseas missions have a combined total of nearly 330,000 followers. Our bids to participate in international organizations are promoted via the 93 Facebook accounts and 226 websites of our overseas missions. Meanwhile, through our official Twitter account, we have reached more than 61 million users in the one-plus year since its launch. These have effectively raised Taiwan's international visibility.

4. Further advancing steadfast diplomacy

Today, we face a complex international landscape and formidable challenges. Our Ministry will continue to forge ahead with steadfast diplomacy in the following ways:

4.1. Consolidating ties with diplomatic allies

We are making a concerted effort to consolidate relations with diplomatic allies. Firstly, we are enhancing human and other resources at our embassies and strengthening intelligence gathering. We will also continue to promote mutual visits by high-ranking officials and build on current strong foundations to advance bilateral initiatives. We will work with the United States and other friendly countries to support diplomatic allies and safeguard democracy and the rule of law in the Pacific region. I want to reiterate that Taiwan will not engage in pointless checkbook diplomacy competitions with the PRC.

4.2. Deepening relations with like-minded countries and other nations with

which Taiwan does not maintain diplomatic relations

Making good use of the current international climate, which is favorable to Taiwan, we will align with friendly forces worldwide and continue to bolster substantive ties and expand the scope of cooperation with like-minded nations, such as the United States, Japan, European countries, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, in an effort to jointly counter traditional and nontraditional challenges and threats and advance regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

4.3. Implementing the New Southbound Policy

The government will build on existing foundations to further promote the New Southbound Policy and strengthen its alignment with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy. We will focus on four pillars: economic and trade cooperation, human resource exchanges, resource sharing, and regional connectivity. By exercising Taiwan's soft power, creating new mutually beneficial cooperation models, and promoting a "Taiwan helps Asia, and Asia helps Taiwan" spirit, we will seek to contribute to the prosperous development of the Indo-Pacific region.

4.4. Increasing international participation and making proactive contributions

Participating in the UN system and other international organizations is a broad aspiration of our people and the set policy and long-term goal of our government. Based on the principles of professionalism, pragmatism, and making contributions, we will dedicate all available resources and expertise to promoting our bids to join more international organizations. In addition, we will deepen our involvement and safeguard our rights in organizations to

which we already belong. In particular, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, our Ministry will work with other ministries and agencies to take preventative measures to protect the health of our people. We will actively seek to participate in related WHO meetings and mechanisms as well as cooperating with friendly nations to contain the disease, thereby concretely contributing to regional and global disease prevention efforts. Furthermore, given that Taiwan's nongovernmental organizations are well-equipped to play a role in global affairs, our Ministry will continue to work with them in all domains to increase our international presence through public-private coordination.

4.5. Endeavoring to join regional economic integration mechanisms and strengthening regional cooperation

Our government is fully committed to joining regional economic integration mechanisms. Our highest priority is to join the CPTPP. We are currently focusing on integrating internal and external resources to establish a CPTPP track for informal interactions with CPTPP member states and to seek their support through bilateral channels and multilateral talks in order to build momentum for formal consultations.

4.6. Making our voice heard internationally

Our Ministry continues to employ diverse approaches to speak out and share our contributions and achievements with the international community so that the world can gain a better understanding of and extend greater support to Taiwan. In particular, we will make better use of social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, to demonstrate the positive effects of public diplomacy.

4.7. Fulfilling international responsibilities

Taiwan continues to work closely with like-minded nations to counter challenges and threats. We will also further implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals in order to fulfill our international responsibilities and make greater contributions to the global community. Taiwan will staunchly uphold the worldwide consensus on maintaining the status quo of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and will safeguard shared values and the rules-based international order.

4.8. Optimizing public services and facilitating greater travel convenience

Our Ministry will continue to improve public services and facilitate greater travel convenience. As of today, ROC nationals are granted visa exemptions, landing visas, or electronic visas by 169 countries and territories, and can enter many of these countries via automated customs clearance systems. Last year, Taiwan was incorporated into Russia's electronic visa program, was one of the first countries to be eligible for Saudi Arabia's electronic tourism visa, and was accorded multiple-entry and fee-exempt electronic visa treatment by Turkey. This year, Taiwan and North Macedonia have agreed to extend reciprocal visa-free treatment for five years.

Due to the spread of COVID-19, several countries have banned flights by Taiwan airlines and imposed travel bans on Taiwan nationals. After proactive negotiations by our Ministry, our airlines were able to resume flights to Vietnam and the Philippines lifted its travel ban on our citizens. We will continue to negotiate with other countries to correct similar oversights.

During the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in January, before the disease had spread globally, our Ministry notified all overseas missions to be prepared to activate their emergency response plans and to conduct timely reviews and take enhancement measures in accordance with developments in their host countries. Before the Lunar New Year, our Ministry established an emergency response team and mechanism, which I personally oversee. We have taken these steps to protect the rights and safety of our citizens traveling overseas and to ensure that our overseas missions can operate normally should the COVID-19 situation deteriorate.

5. Conclusion

I would like to once again thank the Legislative Yuan and the distinguished Members of the Committee for your support and encouragement of our Ministry. Despite the rapidly changing international landscape, challenges to regional security, and relentless pressure from the PRC, we will forge ahead with our work under steadfast diplomacy. While seeking stability, adaptability, and progress, we will show the world Taiwan's vitality, professionalism, and resilience. We will safeguard Taiwan's sovereignty, dignity, and democratic values. We very much look forward to your continued support and assistance. Thank you!