

**Health for All — Taiwan Can Help**  
**Support Taiwan’s participation in the World Health**  
**Organization and the 2019 World Health Assembly**

*The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.*

*—Constitution of the World Health Organization*

*As we embark on this great collective journey [toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development], we pledge that no one will be left behind.*

*—UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1*

While Taiwan was not invited to attend the World Health Assembly either in 2017 or 2018 as an Observer, it has sought to participate in technical meetings, mechanisms, and activities of the WHA and World Health Organization for many years. To this end, Taiwan has won the understanding and support of many nations, which have taken concrete action backing Taiwan. We will continue our effort to ensure the health and wellbeing of the 23 million people of Taiwan as well as of the whole human race.

**Why WHO should include Taiwan**

All over the world, border and immigration policies are becoming less restrictive. This has increased the possibility of cross-border disease transmission. A concerted, global effort is the only way to effectively ensure the health and welfare of people around the world. Taiwan is located at a strategic node in the Indo-Pacific. It has a particularly high need for disease prevention, as people and goods are constantly entering and leaving Taiwan.

However, due to political sabotage, Taiwan is excluded from full participation in WHO technical meetings, mechanisms and activities.

In one recent example, Taiwan applied on January 3, 2019 to attend WHO Consultation and Information Meeting on the Composition of Influenza Virus Vaccines for Use in the 2019-20 Northern Hemisphere Influenza Season held in Beijing in February. Technical matters were used as an excuse to obstruct participation by our delegation; WHO delayed in sending an invitation to Taiwan until the day before the event's start.

The ascendancy of political considerations over professional ones has resulted in Taiwan's absence from the international disease prevention and health security protection network. When SARS struck in 2003, many of our people were needlessly sacrificed as Taiwan had to press ahead combating the disease without WHO's timely assistance. The international community should not permit such a travesty to occur again. It should understand that Taiwan's people share with the rest of the world the same right to participate, on an equal basis, in the global disease prevention system.

Taiwan has transformed itself from a recipient of foreign aid to a provider of international humanitarian assistance. It has actively helped many nations in need. Taiwan's experience can serve as reference to many other nations. Bringing Taiwan into the international disease prevention system will benefit many nations, and help WHO be more effective in its disease prevention

efforts.

### **Universal Health Coverage: Taiwan Can Help**

Taiwan has had great success in achieving universal health coverage. Since the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI) in 1995, Taiwan's people have had access to necessary treatments, as have foreign nationals studying, working, or otherwise legally residing in Taiwan. The principle of leaving no one behind has reigned paramount, and, through vaccinations, cancer screening, and preventative care where risk factors are present, Taiwan has improved its primary health care system.

### **Health Emergencies: Taiwan Can Help**

Taiwan faces a high risk of natural disasters and has a wealth of experience and ability in responding to such disasters. It has much to offer WHO's Health Emergencies Programme through the provision of emergency medical assistance. Taiwan continues to improve its nationwide disease prevention capabilities in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR). It is the eighth nation to have undergone a Joint External Evaluation (JEE), which has helped improve the global infectious disease prevention network.

### **Training the Trainers: Taiwan can help**

Taiwan has trained thousands of medical professionals from around the world. It has become an important international training center in such areas as electrical cardioversion technologies, advanced reconstructive surgery, and

reconstructive microsurgery. With the conviction that teaching people to fish is more effective than giving them fish, Taiwan hopes to assist more nations with improving their medical capacity and sustainable development, so as to effectively realize UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

When the Ebola virus reared its ugly head once again in 2018, Taiwan quickly announced a donation of US\$1 million to WHO to help in the fight against the disease. This donation was, unfortunately, forced to be suspended due to politically driven interference. However, through this, Taiwan has shown an unwavering determination to participate in international medical cooperation. Taiwan will not give in to political sabotage, and will continue to seek international affirmation of its efforts. Adhering to the principle of being professional, pragmatic and constructive, Taiwan will continue to seek participation in this year's 72nd WHA as well as WHO technical meetings, mechanisms and activities. This will help ensure the complete early realization of WHO's vision of health as a human right.