

**Taiwan and Renewable Energy:
Powering the Planet for a Green Future**

Supporting Taiwan's professional, pragmatic, and constructive
participation in the UNFCCC

September 2021

Foreword

The 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will take place in Glasgow, United Kingdom, this November. The postponement of the summit last year has created a sense of urgency and motivated stakeholders this year to exert even greater efforts to significantly slow global warming.

Taiwan is also eager to contribute but, due to external political factors, is only able to attend COP sessions as a nongovernmental organization observer. As a responsible stakeholder in the international community, Taiwan is firmly committed to combating climate change. Indeed, building on the Paris Agreement and aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050, Taiwan strives to do its part, as well as continuing to assist other countries with the challenges arising from climate change.

I. Taiwan has charted a roadmap to carbon neutrality by 2050.

Taiwan deeply values the international community's net-zero emissions initiatives to combat global climate change. After reviewing other nations' emissions reduction plans and engaging in comprehensive discussions with

the public and private sectors, Taiwan is optimally positioned to chart the most appropriate course for a sustainable, carbon-neutral future.

On Earth Day 2021, President Tsai Ing-wen stated that Taiwan and the world shared the common goal of cutting carbon emissions and slowing climate change. Taiwan is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and established the Net-Zero Pathway Task Force under the coordination of the Executive Yuan.

Since the Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act took effect in 2015, Taiwan's emissions have grown slower than any other Asian country. And in response to the international community's ambitious vision of climate change mitigation, Taiwan is now proactively reviewing policy tools and amending the act. Amendments will provide for the goal of net zero emissions by 2050, the strengthening of climate governance, the promotion of management efficiencies, and an increase in carbon pricing systems and climate change adaptation.

Moreover, Taiwan launched the National Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan to boost Taiwan's climate change resilience. Through interagency cooperation, the action plan helps coordinate disaster prevention and response strategies and promotes sustainable development goals.

Accelerating renewable energy transition

The Taiwan government is dedicated to advancing clean energy and energy

transition measures through its green energy policies, which include increasing natural gas use and reducing coal dependency. In recent years, Taiwan's renewable energy capacity has grown significantly. From 2016 to 2020, renewable energy installations increased more than 100 percent, with solar power capacity surging 370 percent. In 2019, Formosa was commissioned, becoming one of the first commercial-scale offshore wind farms in the Asia-Pacific region.

President Tsai has also called for accelerated energy transition, updates to green energy development goals, policy reviews, and the introduction of new technology to bolster Taiwan's carbon reduction objectives. At this pivotal moment in Taiwan's energy transformation, the central government, local governments, and the private sector are joining forces to enhance the development and promotion of renewable energy.

II. Taiwan should be invited to participate in the UNFCCC. The exclusion of Taiwan contradicts the aims of the UNFCCC.

The UNFCCC preamble acknowledges the global nature of climate change and calls for the widest possible participation of all countries to implement effective and appropriate responses. Taiwan's exclusion contravenes the aims and spirit of the convention, as well as the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter.

Taiwan is being severely impacted by climate change. The Paris Agreement highlights the importance of addressing climate justice, i.e., recognizing that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect some countries and groups more than others. As an island state, Taiwan

has felt the effects of climate change, making Taiwan's inclusion in UNFCCC initiatives even more crucial.

The impacts of climate change on Taiwan are becoming increasingly severe. For instance, early this year, Taiwan experienced its worst drought in decades, with many reservoirs falling to dangerously low levels—some lower than 20 percent capacity. Fortunately, the arrival of the monsoon season ended the drought, but heavy rainfall brought floods and landslides, which inflicted substantial losses.

Taiwan's lack of access to UNFCCC meetings and mechanisms and its exclusion from international response frameworks 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 participate more meaningfully in global climate change mechanisms.

Taiwan must mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on its economy and trade.

This year, stakeholders from around the globe will be focusing on the implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which seeks to establish a fair and transparent carbon market mechanism. However, Taiwan—a World Trade Organization member and semiconductor industry pioneer—remains excluded from the mechanism. Taiwan's exclusion will make it difficult to offset the high economic cost of carbon tariff measures and will significantly reduce Taiwan's industrial

competitive edge.

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

As the world's 21st-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 trading system. Like other countries, Taiwan has a responsibility to help mitigate the effects of climate change and should not be excluded from the UNFCCC. For this reason, Taiwan calls on the international community to support the participation of Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration as a nonmember governmental observer in the upcoming COP 26 in Glasgow.

III. Taiwan is willing and able to contribute to global efforts to combat climate change.

Taiwan is leveraging its private sector to combat climate change.

Private-sector engagement is essential to helping the world reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change. Taiwan is one of the world's major manufacturing hubs and plays a crucial role in the global supply chain, especially with regard to semiconductors and other IT products. Taiwan's technology giants, including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), Delta Electronics, and Acer, together with eight others, joined RE100 and pledged to use 100 percent renewable energy by 2050. Taiwan's private sector has demonstrated its commitment to accelerating the shift to a low-carbon economy and a more sustainable future, helping lead energy transition in the Indo-Pacific.

To support and promote the private sector's efforts to combat climate change, Taiwan's Financial Supervisory Commission launched the Green Finance Action Plan 2.0 in 2020. The plan aims to use financial mechanisms to foster awareness of environmental, social, and governance issues among enterprises and investors and seeks to help renewable energy enterprises obtain funds for development, facilitate the issuance of green bonds, and enhance information transparency.

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

Despite Taiwan's exclusion from international climate talks and a lack of international opportunities to demonstrate its dedication to combating global climate change, Taiwan has undertaken a wide array of projects to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Through years of long-term bilateral cooperation with a variety of countries, Taiwan has shown its willingness to contribute to climate action. Responding to the most urgent needs of the most vulnerable nations, Taiwan is enhancing cooperation in the following domains.

- 1. Good environmental governance:** Taiwan has successful experience of promoting good environmental governance and associated systems and is willing to share this with other nations. To help Palau achieve its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Taiwan is currently assisting Palau to promote carbon-neutral tourism, together launching the world's first project to create a carbon footprint calculator and design a carbon offset program for tourists.
- 2. Early warning systems:** Taiwan has cooperated with Central

American partners to implement numerous capacity-building projects, including geographic information systems and global positioning systems. This has helped countries such as Belize and Nicaragua strengthen nationwide environmental monitoring and disaster prevention systems.

3. Energy efficiency: Taiwan has established a range of bilateral cooperation projects promoting green technology and energy efficiency, including the Home Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Project in the Marshall Islands, which is expected to curtail pollution through a reduction in the use of imported fossil fuels.

4. Green finance and technological innovation: A competitive nation in terms of green technology, Taiwan exports a significant amount of advanced renewable energy products to other countries. It is also strengthening investment and technical transfer via international climate financing. Taiwan's International Cooperation and Development Fund has contributed US\$55 million to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's Special Fund for the High Impact Partnership on Climate Action, which is assisting Eastern European and Central Asian nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance adaptive capacity, and strengthen resilience to climate change.

IV. Conclusion: Taiwan's inclusion in the UNFCCC is vital.

Although the Paris Agreement sought to limit global warming to an increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius, this threshold is alarmingly close to being breached. Taiwan has had to adapt to the impacts of extreme weather and, in so doing, has gained significant domestic and international experience.

Taiwan, through collaboration between the public and private sectors, has demonstrated a great willingness to share its technologies, resources, and expertise with the world. To date, however, for purely political reasons, Taiwan is still being denied the opportunity to submit its ambitious NDCs to the UNFCCC Secretariat. Until Taiwan can participate, there will continue to be a gap in the world's net-zero emissions coalition and global climate action initiatives will continue to be undermined.

Responding to climate change requires solidarity and courage. It is neither appropriate nor justifiable to restrict Taiwan's participation in the UNFCCC to the very limited quota of NGO participants permitted to attend COP sessions. For the UNFCCC to be effective, Taiwan must be afforded opportunities to participate in global mechanisms, negotiations, and activities that promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Taiwan exhorts all parties to look beyond political considerations and support Taiwan's professional, pragmatic, and meaningful participation in the UNFCCC. Let Taiwan help do its part in the global fight against climate change.