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**Remarks by Vice Premier Chen Chi-mai for the CSIS webcast on Taiwan’s exemplary response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Hello and good morning, Washington, DC! Thank you for your kind introduction, Bonnie. I am pleased to join Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services Eric Hargan and CSIS Senior Vice President Stephen Morrison. Today, I’d like to share Taiwan’s experience to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In Taiwan, we currently have a total of 440 confirmed cases. We’re pleased that 80 percent of these cases have recovered and there have been zero locally transmitted cases for 26 consecutive days. While we must remain vigilant, businesses and schools are open as usual, and even baseball games are in full swing! Taiwan has proven that democracies are well positioned to win the fight against COVID-19.

We owe our success to cautious assessments of the outbreak in China and an early response. During the 2003 SARS outbreak, lack of transparency from China and our exclusion from the WHO meant we had to take decisive action on our own. That experience and our natural suspicion of everything China says spurred us to quick, effective risk assessments and action this time. Due to the prevalence of COVID-19 in Wuhan and frequent travel across the Taiwan Strait, we did not wait for directives from the WHO. We took swift action on border control as early as December 31. Then we established our Central Epidemic Command Center, or CECC, stockpiled critical epidemic prevention supplies, and ensured that our hospitals and medical personnel were ready.

Now, allow me to introduce the three pillars of the Taiwan Model: **transparency**, **technology**, and **teamwork**.

**Transparent and open** information is vital to the Taiwan Model, as this builds a foundation for public trust in the government. Since late January, Health Minister Chen Shih-chung has been holding daily CECC press briefings. During the briefings, health officials share information about the latest cases, raise public awareness, provide health education, and explain policy decisions. Government agencies also update COVID-19 information on their official websites and social media accounts.

Transparency is important for raising public awareness and tackling disinformation, which can be as damaging as the virus itself. That is why the Taiwan CDC has invited trusted experts to share disease prevention information on major Taiwanese TV channels. People can also get health advice from a chatbot on Taiwan’s most popular messaging app. Moreover, the public can report cases or access information via a COVID-19 hotline.

These actions are important not just because democracies must be accountable to their people, but also because the whole society needs to work together to combat the coronavirus.

The second pillar of the Taiwan Model is **technology**. As a physician by training with a background in public health, I am also currently serving as the Chief of Information Security of Taiwan. The current crisis presents an opportunity to combine big data with AI to protect public health. Back in January, we linked our government’s travel, customs, and health care databases to shape border control, and case identification measures and to monitor quarantines and contact tracing.

We have also used our National Health Insurance database to create a name-based rationing system for face masks. This system has given at least 80% of the population in Taiwan access to face masks, preventing public panic and supply shortages. We have shared this method with other nations, to help them distribute medical supplies.

As a democracy, it is important that the government remain accountable to the public when using certain technologies to prevent them from being abused. We have been very careful, ensuring that the scope is limited to public health. We have worked strictly under the legal frameworks of the Infectious Disease Control Act and the Personal Data Protection Act. Safeguarding fundamental freedoms and civil liberties has always been a top priority.

The third pillar of the Taiwan Model is **teamwork**. President Tsai Ing-wen has held a number of national security meetings to plan and decide major policies; the Executive Yuan has been coordinating efforts from various agencies; and the CECC has been handling quarantine measures, preparing medical supplies, and following the latest developments of the global outbreak. Together, we have created a highly efficient platform for coordination.

However, the whole society must also work together with the government to defeat COVID-19. At the peak of the outbreak, in a single day, as many as 55,000 people were under quarantine in Taiwan, and 99.5% of them abided by quarantine regulations. Seventy-three manufacturing companies have answered the government’s call to increase the production of surgical masks, creating a national team for mask production. Even the annual Dajia Matsu Pilgrimage, Taiwan’s largest, was postponed after peaceful consultations and risk communication among the relevant stakeholders. There was no need for the government to assert its authority to postpone it.

Let me conclude by emphasizing that the Taiwan Model can be adopted by other democracies around the world. We are pleased that Taiwan and the US have established a partnership to exchange information, critical supplies, and best practices in policymaking. I want to especially thank Health Secretary Alex Azar for his comments on Taiwan and his engagements with Taiwan’s Health Minister Chen Shih-chung.

We will continue to work with the United States on the issue of Taiwan’s participation in the WHO. Our 23 million people should not be excluded from the WHO. Taiwan should be allowed to engage in meaningful WHO participation and should be an official member. We believe that Taiwan is capable of contributing to the WHO’s work, including the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

I would like to thank CSIS once again for inviting me. I look forward to your feedback and your continuous support.