

Taiwan Health in the



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Minister Dr. Hou representing TaiwanIHA sent the orthopaedic surgical experts to the assistance in Indonesia earthquake rescue in June.

TaiwanIHA Provided Field Training in Burkina Faso to Help Prevent the Outbreak of Avian Flu

In early April, the deadly H5N1 strain of avian influenza was detected in Burkina Faso. Subsequently, on April 7, four experts representing Taiwan International Health Action (TaiwanIHA) were sent with a shipment of sanitation materials and equipments to disinfect the infected areas and provided education seminars. They visited several villages to help the communities in high alertness.

The donation included isolation suits, protective clothings, gloves, masks and disinfectants. At the end of April, Mr. Jean de Dieu SOMDA, deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, represented the Prime Minister Mr. SOMDA in his speech praised Taiwan for the donation and the good relationship between these two countries. He also added that although Taiwan was unfairly excluded from WHO, Taiwan has taken its responsibility and has contributed in positive manner to solve health issues all over the world, and has contributed to humanitarian assistance as well. He mentioned that the materials and equipments received will be used in a very effective way. ☺

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TaiwanIHA's disease control experts demonstrated the protection measures to workers in Burkina Faso.



TaiwanIHA team members provided disinfectants to workers in Burkina Faso.



TaiwanIHA experts showed the workers of Burkina Faso hygiene technique in the village.

Taiwan International Health Action-TaiwanIHA : A better coordination for a better efficiency

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On March 30, 2006, Chen Shui-bian, Taiwan's president; Wang Jin-pyng, Legislative Yuan Speaker; James Huang, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hou Sheng-mou, Minister of Health, launched the Taiwan International Health Action (TaiwanIHA), inaugurating a new step in Taiwan's participation in global affairs.

Origin and structure of the TaiwanIHA

In response to the increased interdependence and the need for international action in the domains of health and humanitarian emergencies, Taiwan's public and private sectors have been active in providing assistance to international communities. Though Taiwan's international contributions have allowed the nation to help large numbers of people, these activities, thus far, have never been coordinated.



TaiwanIHA established medical clinic in Java, Indonesia, after the earthquake.

With the goal of increasing coordination, Taiwanese experts have concluded that in line with the World Health Organization's spirit of aiding nations in times of need, Taiwan should create a single institution to increase efficiency and efficacy in the coordination and delivery of health-related assistance programs, involving both the public and private sectors. Progress towards this objective was realized on February 6, 2006 with the establishment of the Taiwan International Health Action (TaiwanIHA) by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the approbation of the Executive Yuan. Co-funded by the DOH and the MOFA, the TaiwanIHA is an ad hoc task force whose remit is to integrate the resources and capabilities of the public (government) and the private sectors into a coordinated platform for international medical and health cooperation.

These are the reasons why the TaiwanIHA first established partnerships and alliances with actors, such as the International Cooperation Development Fund (ICDF), hospitals, academic institutions, Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and experts. Further, the TaiwanIHA is open to any suggestions from think tanks and consultants in related areas. The TaiwanIHA is co-directed by two conveners : Tzay-Jinn Chen, Deputy Minister at the Department of Health (DOH) and Dr. Michael Kau, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). There are also two deputy conveners: Richard J.C Fang, convener of the WHO task unit (MOFA) and Peter W.S Chang, Director of the Bureau of International Cooperation (DOH), who is also the Executive Director of the task force.

Using our resources efficiently to help nations in need

The TaiwanIHA has five main missions. First, it coordinates the efforts at home and abroad in the areas of international medical and health cooperation in addition to humanitarian emergencies. Secondly, it plans the international health contributions of Taiwan, which has to be comprehensive. Indeed, simultaneously to several medical missions, TaiwanIHA wants to adopt an approach emphasizing on public health education and training in order to progressively help the needy people to be more autonomous to deal with infectious diseases and health crisis. Third, it also allocates qualified human expertise, medicine and medical equipment for Taiwan's international health activities. One of the tools that the TaiwanIHA uses make its allocation of equipment abroad more efficient is the Global Medical Instruments Support and Service Program (GMISS). This program, established in May 2005,



Medical relief materials are ready to dispatch to Indonesia for emergency assistance.

collects pre-used, well-maintained, functioning, medical equipment offered by medical centers and hospitals in Taiwan, and donates it to different countries according to their specific requirements. Fourth, TaiwanIHA pushes for a legal framework, without which Taiwan's international contributions could be jeopardized. This framework relies on agreements and licenses with foreign countries that need help and is particularly important for short and long-term medical and health missions. Finally, TaiwanIHA promotes the planning and implementation of Taiwan's international health action abroad in order to facilitate the participation of Taiwan in the WHO.

Accomplishing these five goals, in partnership with other Taiwanese and international health actors, is a means for the TaiwanIHA to help Taiwan become more coordinated and, in turn, more efficient in its answer to the needs of people in difficulty abroad.

Several concrete accomplishments

The TaiwanIHA has already achieved several concrete accomplishments, which have not always been highly visible in the national and international media. Thanks to the efficiency and speed of response of the TaiwanIHA and its partners, notably the Taiwanese air company China Airlines, Taiwan was the first country to deliver emergency health kits to the Philippines after the mudslide disaster in Leyte, in February 2006. Through a deep and efficient partnership between the TaiwanIHA and the Taiwan Medical Association, Taiwan continues to help Malawi reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, notably in supporting the HIV/AIDS Center at the Malawi Central Hospital and in using a fingerprint recognition system. The TaiwanIHA also worked in cooperation with the International Center for Migration and Health (ICMH) to provide training and education materials on bird flu to other countries. At the beginning of April 2006, a TaiwanIHA team left for Burkina Faso to help the African nation control an outbreak of avian influenza. The team provided medical supplies such as protective gowns, gloves, masks and disinfectants. Another delegation recently attended the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Re-development Conference (April 10-12), which is an important annual event for international humanitarian assistance organizations.

In the coming years, the TaiwanIHA wants to create both a solid national team of medical assistance and health training and a group of experts on infectious diseases, ready and trained to work abroad. It also desires to strengthen public health training cooperation with other countries in order to share Taiwan's considerable experience in this area.

Despite being a relatively new organization, the TaiwanIHA has, in a very short time, achieved significant, high-impact, tangible results, and is working hard to do more. This task force reflects Taiwan's deep involvement in and commitment to improving both global public health and responses to international humanitarian crises. In other words, as Hou Sheng-mou, Taiwan's Minister of Health said recently, "The TaiwanIHA will make the nation a true participating partner for global health in the future."

TaiwanIHA Dispatches Medical Relief and Rescue Team to Assist Victims of Indonesia's Catastrophic Earthquake

In the morning of May 27th, a strong earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale struck Indonesia's densely populated province of Central Java inflicting catastrophic disaster and causing the deaths of nearly 6000 people. Deeply concerned about this tragic incident, Taiwan International Health Action (TaiwanIHA) dispatched two nurses and a 20-member search and rescue team to the disaster area to provide assistance in the relief efforts on the afternoon of the 28th. 200kg of emergency relief medical supplies were shipped to the disaster area to be used by the relief team upon their arrival. At 9am on the 29th, three more professional physicians with vast experience in international disaster assistance and relief work were dispatched. On the 30th, an additional 100kg of trauma injury medical supplies were shipped to the disaster area and a medical triage center was set up in the Bantul region, the most severely hit area near the epicenter of the earthquake.

TaiwanIHA donated a total of three medical supply shipments weighing approximately 500kg, value of more than 200,000 USD. Aside from setting up the medical triage center, TaiwanIHA has also made donations to the Bantul Red Cross, the Yogyakarta City Government Office and public hospital, and the Sardjito General Hospital. TaiwanIHA continues efforts to collect equipment and recruit specialists that are needed to provide ongoing disaster relief and reconstruction assistance to this region.



Physician from TaiwanIHA provided emergency medical services to Indonesia in June.



TaiwanIHA's orthopaedic surgical experts helped evaluate patients in Indonesia earthquake.

Illicit Tobacco Trade in East Asia : *Taiwan Urges International Cooperation*

Taiwan Medical Alliance for Tobacco Control

As indicated by the data collected during 2003-2005 by the Directorate General of Customs and the Ministry of Finance in Taiwan, there has been a decreasing trend in the amounts of illicit trade reported in tobacco products in several ports in Taiwan, including cross-border trades. On the other hand, there have been sharp increases in the amounts of illicit tobacco products in Taiwan bearing the brands of companies registered in China and other South East Asian countries (Figure 1).

The average/ annual growth rate of illicit tobacco trade from China to Taiwan has increased steadily, jumping to 150% between the periods of 2003-2005. What is even more startling is the drastic increase of tobacco brands registered in South East Asia, with growth rates of 150% between 2003-2004, increasing to 320% by 2004-2005 in terms of packet units and monetary amounts (Figure 1).

In 2005, Taiwanese authorities intercepted in their borders more than 1 million packets of illicit tobacco bearing Japanese brands, 0.7 million bearing European/ American brands, 0.7 million with South East Asian brands, slightly more than 2 million bearing Chinese brands, and nearly 4 million bearing illicit tobacco brands from other countries (See Figure 2).

In the Asian-Pacific Region, the factories of counterfeit tobacco products are primarily located in China. The counterfeit products are transported to its neighboring countries through smuggling. On the other hand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar are important countries providing both counterfeit and contraband tobacco products to their neighbors, which are also transported through smuggling. (See Illicit Tobacco Smuggling Routes in Asia)

Apparently, the data collected by the Directorate General of Customs in Taiwan shows only the tip of the iceberg regarding the true amount of illicit tobacco trade occurring in the region. It is imperative that we compare the data collected by neighboring countries in the region with those countries that surround the origins of counterfeit and contraband tobacco productions. Working independently and separately, Taiwan and her neighbors will definitely face greater challenges in effectively controlling and overcoming illicit trade practices. ☹

Figure 1

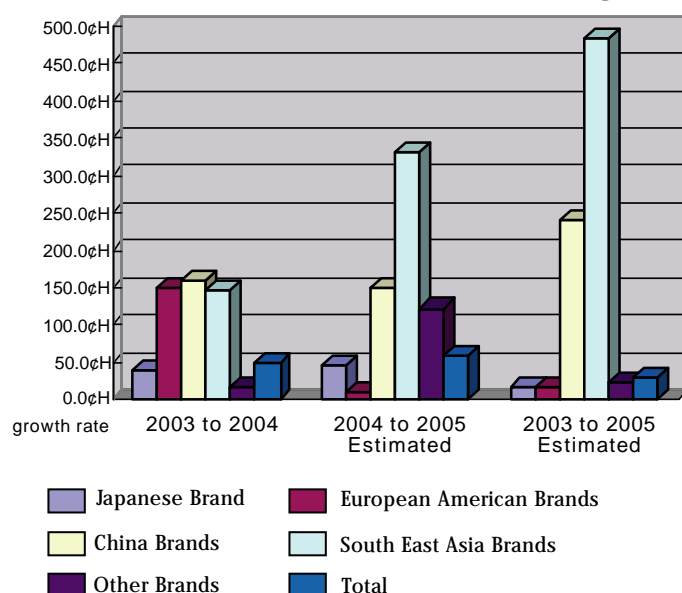
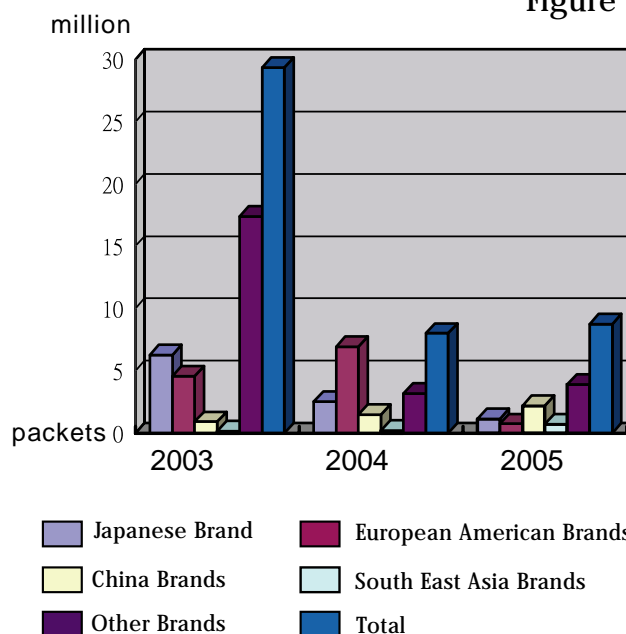
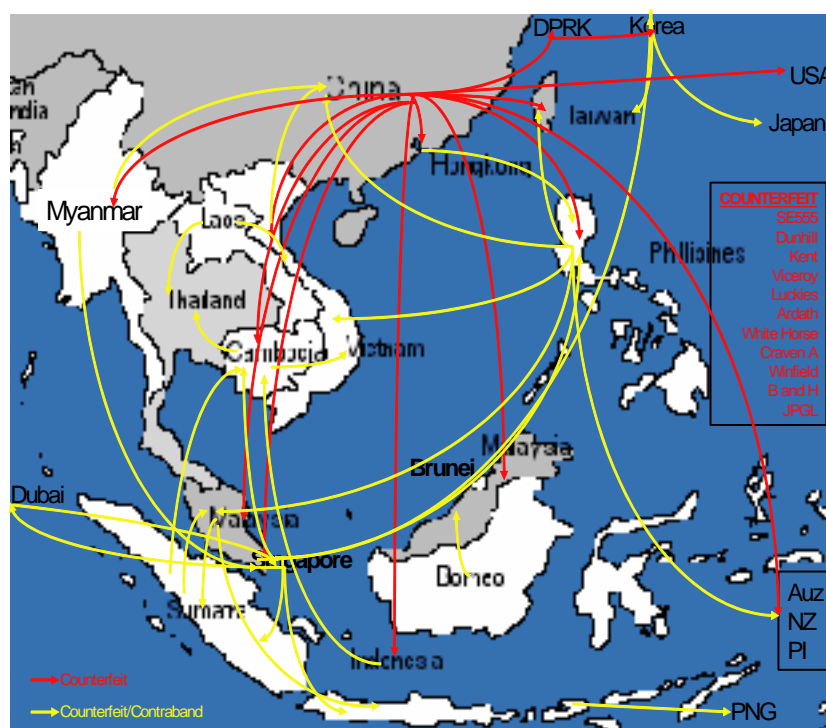


Figure 2



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Illicit Tobacco Smuggling Routes in Asia

Illicit tobacco trade intercepted in Taiwan in packages and monetary values (January 2003 to December 2005)

UNIT: 103 Packet(KP)/ Million USD (M)

	2003	2004	2005	Growth Rate (2003 to 2004)	Growth Rate Estimated (2003 to 2005)	Growth Rate Estimated (2004 to 2005)
Japanese Brands	6,291 KP	2,551 KP	1,174 KP	41 %	46 %	19 %
	2.8 M	0.8 M	0.47 M	29 %	56 %	16 %
European American Brands	4,592 KP	6,950 KP	745 KP	151 %	11 %	16 %
	1.9 M	3.8 M	0.27 M	203 %	7 %	14 %
China Brands	916 KP	1,474 KP	2,195 KP	161 %	149 %	239 %
	0.2 M	0.46 M	0.55 M	209 %	119 %	250 %
South East Asia Brands	149 KP	218 KP	721 KP	146 %	330 %	481 %
	0.4 M	0.06 M	0.19 M	156 %	314 %	487 %
Other Brands	17,403 KP	3,195 KP	3,909 KP	18 %	122 %	23 %
	5 M	0.79 M	1.3 M	16 %	164 %	26 %
Total	29,353 KP	14,390 KP	8,745 KP	49 %	61 %	30 %
	10 M	5.9 M	2.8 M	60 %	46 %	28 %

** the statistic was originally calculated in the unit of NTD and converted into USD at the rate of 1: 33

Support for Taiwan in the 59th World Health Assembly (WHA)

The World Health Organization (WHO) 59th World Health Assembly (WHA) came to a close on May 27 in Geneva, Switzerland. Health minister Hou led a delegation from the Department of Health (DOH), along with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), together seeking observer status for Taiwan.

During the 59th WHA, several nations with no diplomatic relations with Taiwan have argued in its favor at the Assembly. These countries include Australia, Canada, the US, and Mongolia, which voiced support for Taiwan in a Committee meeting, while Japan did so during a plenary meeting.

Fourteen of Taiwan's diplomatic allies issued a joint proposal in support of Taiwan's participation in this year's WHA. They were Belize, Gambia, Malawi, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Nicaragua, Palau, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands, Swaziland and Tuvalu.

During the committee meeting, Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tuvalu and Sao Tome and Principe spoke in favor of Taiwan. Meanwhile, Belize, Gambia, Malawi and Palau argued on behalf of Taiwan against China, Cuba and Pakistan during debates held in the general committee and plenary meetings.

Although Taiwan was again excluded from the WHA this year, but would continue to strive for observer status in the future and need more support from international communities. ☹



Minister Hou (right) met with U.S. Secretary of Health Mike Leavitt (left) in a meeting in Geneva.

Taiwan Delegation Actively Participated in the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Avian Influenza Pandemics in Da Nang, Vietnam



Minister Hou Sheng-mao (middle) with Taiwan's delegation.

Eleven APEC member economies have already incurred outbreaks of the highly contagious virus, influenza A (H5N1), also known as "avian flu," and evidence shows that the virus is spreading into northern Asia, Europe, Central Asia, and Africa. On 4 May 2006, a three-day avian flu ministerial meeting was convened in Danang City, Vietnam, to focus on preventing and controlling the proliferation of the avian flu pandemic and reducing the economic damages inflicted upon APEC nations economies. Taiwan's 17-member delegation was headed by Department of Health Minister Hou Sheng-mao as he led representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal and Plant Health Inspection and Quarantine, and the Department of Health's Center for Disease Control to attend the meeting.

The Taiwan delegation strove for opportunities to present its opinions, took the initiatives to share what have up to now been successful experiences in the prevention and control of the avian flu in Taiwan, and actively responded to each nation's challenges. This delegation also participated in collective simulated exercises at the upcoming June 2006 "Desk-Top Pandemic Simulation Exercise" held in Australia. In addition, Taiwan took a further step toward the heightened prevention and control of the avian flu pandemic by participating in the pooling of each nation's opinions and forming a collective agreement with the other nations to establish the "APEC Action Plan on the Prevention and Response to Avian and Pandemic Influenza." This was the most significant contribution of the ministerial meetings. Our hope is that through continued mutual cooperation the pandemic's impact on these member economies can be minimized, addressed by Minister Hou. The meeting was successfully concluded on May 6. ☺



Minister Hou (3rd from right, front row) in the APEC Ministerial Meeting on Avian Influenza Pandemics.

Relax the Restrictions on Chinese (P.R.C.) Citizens Internally Transferred by Multinational Corporation Employers to Work in Taiwan

On 17 April 2006, the Department of Health announced that "multinational corporations who have operations in Taiwan, fulfill standards-of-scale requirements, and wish to employ Chinese (P.R.C.) citizens to work in Taiwan are permitted to do so based on the multinational corporation free port-of-harbor area principle." Furthermore, under this "corporate internal transfer" principle Chinese (P.R.C.) citizens who are invited by their multinational corporation employers will be granted a "corporate internal transfer" entry permit by the Immigration Office, National Police Agency, Ministry of the Interior, R.O.C., and issued a visitor visa. After visiting Taiwan for 4 months, these visa holders are eligible to participate in the National Health Insurance program.

Children of those Chinese (P.R.C.) citizens described above who accompany their parents to Taiwan and are under 18 years of age and hold an "accompanying relatives" entry permit (an announcement was issued on 2 January 2006 providing long-term residence permit status) shall be filed as a dependent by their parent(s) and after they have stayed in Taiwan for four months they are eligible to participate in the National Health Insurance program. 🍀

Love Transcends Boundaries — *Taiwan sends bloodmobile to Malawi*



The ceremony of bloodmobile donation on April 14, 2006

The Taiwan Blood Foundation and Lions Clubs International District 300A1 donated a blood donor vehicle to Taiwan's medical team in Malawi on April 14. The bloodmobile has already been shipped to Malawi on April 24 by sea, and is the first blood donor vehicle in that country. Before long, the bloodmobile will be roving throughout all reaches of Malawi carrying love from Taiwan. The bloodmobile will assume a vital role in promoting the concept of blood donation and saving the lives of those needing blood transfusions.

The Pingtung Christian Hospital medical team in Malawi reported that each month it conducts nearly 80 surgeries with over half requiring blood transfusions. Unfortunately, the people of Malawi do not understand the importance of donating blood to save lives and the hospital does not have a blood donor vehicle. If a patient is in dire need of blood then a relative or friend must be found to donate blood at that critical moment. However, in that country where 9% of its population is infected with the AIDS virus, blood safety is a major concern. When compounded with other factors, such as malaria and

malnutrition, this leaves only a meager amount of available blood. This scarcity of blood leads to the deaths of many patients because they can't get the blood transfusions needed.

The Pingtung Christian Hospital President Chang, Zhao-Song explains that the donation of the bloodmobile will allow the medical team to take a major stride towards achieving its goal of establishing a blood bank. In regards to other initiatives, the medical team also hopes to resolve problems with diagnosing pulmonary tuberculosis in Malawi. The medical team is now working aggressively to secure funding for a mobile medical vehicle equipped with diagnostic examination, laboratory testing, and surgical equipment. This vehicle will enable the team to penetrate deep into the villages seeking out and assisting those afflicted with pulmonary tuberculosis. It will provide the capacity to effectively treat the disease, and just as important, protect the members of the medical team from becoming infected. 🍌



Calendar

2006 Nursing Leaders Training Program

1-22 Aug. 2006

http://www.twna.org.tw/twma_eng/un10_open/welcome.asp

Pasteur/NHRI/CDC Symposium on Emerging Virus Infections

Tainan, Taiwan

1-3 Sep. 2006

http://pasteur_virus.istar.com.tw

CAM/TM Professional Training Program

Taichung, Taiwan

18 Sept. ~ 3 Oct. 2006

Deadline for application :

10 July 2006

<http://www2.cmu.edu.tw/%7Ecncucos/index-9-5.htm>

International HIV/AIDS Conference -The 8th Taipei International Conference on HIV/AIDS

Taipei, Taiwan

9-10 Sep. 2006

<http://www.2006aids.org>

International Symposium on Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine

Taipei, Taiwan

21 Oct. 2006

<http://www.nhri.org.tw/nhri11/2006ISSCRM.htm>

Advanced Clinical Acupuncture and Traditional Medicine (ACCTM) Training Program

Taipei, Taiwan

7-12 Nov. 2006

Deadline for application :

30 Sept. 2006

<http://www.icim2006-taipei.org.tw>

18th Taipei Int'l Show on Medical Equipment, Pharmaceuticals & Bio-technology

Taipei, Taiwan

9-12 Nov. 2006

<http://www.taipeitradeshows.com.tw/mediphar>

28th World Congress of International Medicine/Taiwan Society of Internal Medicine

Taipei, Taiwan

10-14 Nov. 2006

<http://www.icim2006-taipei.org.tw/>

Asia-Pacific Congress on Lung Cancer in Conjunction with the 10th Annual Meeting of Taiwan Cooperative Oncology Group

Taipei, Taiwan

2-3 Dec. 2006

<http://www.nhri.org.tw/nhri11/95TCOGADV.pdf>

Taiwan's Annoucement of Voluntary Early Compliance with IHR 2005



Dr. Steve Kuo, Director of CDC, Taiwan, announced in a press conference in Taipei] 15 May, 2006^, jointly with Dr. Peter Chang, Director for International Corporation of the Ministry of Health, Taiwan.



Taiwan acknowledges with appreciation the World Health Organization (WHO) Resolutions WHA58.3 on the revision of the International Health Regulations (IHR) and WHA58.5 on strengthening pandemic influenza preparedness. It also commends the adoption of Article 3 of the IHR (2005) which stresses that “the implementation of these Regulations shall be with full respect for the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons” and that “the implementation of these Regulations shall be guided by the goal of their universal application for the protection of all people of the world from the international spread of disease.”

Although Taiwan is not a member of the WHO, Article 2 of the IHR (2005) states clearly that “the purpose and scope of these Regulations are to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.” As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and as the 16th largest trading nation on the globe, Taiwan has the responsibility to help ensure sound public health practices without disrupting international trade and traffic directly linked to Taiwan.

It is clear that the IHR (2005) are needed to help ensure that the earliest epidemiological signals of increased transmissibility of the virus among humans are not missed, and we are aware that several provisions in the IHR (2005) would be useful in ensuring a strengthened and coordinated response on the part of the international community both to the present situation and a possible pandemic.

Taiwan hereby declares its voluntary early compliance with all the provisions of the IHR (2005). It has to be emphasized that Taiwan is making this declaration of early voluntary compliance to the IHR (2005) strictly for public health purposes only, so as to ensure optimal national and global health security. 🌐

