

# Taiwan Health in the



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## Taiwan Launches New International Medical Task Force to Join the World



On March 30 2006, President Shu-bian Chen and others announced the formal establishment of Taiwan International Health Action as part of the nation's drive to become a partner for global health. In the photo, from left to right were former President of the Taiwan Medical Association Yun-tung Wu, Minister of Foreign Affairs James Huang, President Shu-bian Chen, Legislative Speaker Jin-pyng Wang, Minister of Health Shan-mou Hou and President of the Foundation of Medical Professional's Alliance in Taiwan Shuh-min Wu.

Taiwan International Health Action, **TaiwanIHA** was established on March 30, 2006. The founding vision of TaiwanIHA is to give back to the international community. By integrating, and effectively managing the domestic manpower, material resources, and equipment available for health aid, TaiwanIHA helps developing nations with their everyday medical and health needs, and can also provide timely humanitarian aid anywhere in the world when disaster occurred.

Taiwan has always been one of the first to respond to disasters in recent years and that Taiwanese medical personnel have provided much assistance to victims such as those affected during February's mudslide in the Philippines and the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia.

To celebrate the World Health Day in April 7, the establishment of Taiwan IHA is a fitting endowment to the international health community and with a goal to coordinate relief efforts for countries in need. TaiwanIHA will propagate generosity and kindness in Taiwan society. 🌐

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## TaiwanIHA in Action:

### Emergency Health Kits for the Philippines Landslide Disaster

Torrential rains caused a massive landslide on the Central Philippines island of Southern Leyte in the Guinsahugon Village of St. Bernard Town on 17 February 2006 at 9:00am. The entire village was buried under soil and debris, and thousands of people are expected to have lost their lives. Acutely concerned about the damages suffered in this disaster, Taiwan's government immediately responded by providing medical assistance in the form of emergency health kits costing NT\$3 million. On February 18, medical relief supplies were airlifted to the Philippines and donated to its government. This action represents Taiwan's devotion to its responsibility as a member of the international community.



Emergency Kits to Philippines

Each emergency health kit contains 177 items, which can provide 10,000 people with three months of basic emergency medical supplies. Taiwan complied with WHO recommendations following the South Asian tsunami disaster as local organizations cooperated to assemble 10 kits. A complete emergency health kit consists of 24 boxes with one basic unit of boxes numbered 1-10, each weighing 45 kg and containing all the basic medical supplies disaster medical assistance personnel need, such as aspirin, gastrointestinal medication, and trauma supplies. The supplementary units, boxes numbered 11-24 and weighing a total of 410 kg, contain supplies for primary and secondary referral hospitals. Contents include antibiotics, anti-depressants, hypnotics, infusions, medical instruments, extra supplies, and equipment. At the time of the tsunami disaster, 7 kits were donated to Sumatra, Indonesia, to assist rescue work. This humanitarian aid clearly represents Taiwan's devotion its role as a member of the international community. ☺

### Taiwan Contributes Their Efforts in Sri Lanka on the Reconstruction of Villages

Sri Lanka is one of the most damaged countries by the tsunami of December 2004. In this disaster, nearly, 50,000 people were killed in this country and many communities were destroyed from the tsunami. Soon after the disaster, Taiwan's government and NGOs initiated the humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka. Over 4 million USD have been sent to Sri Lanka in the past one year for emergent relief and community's redeveloping. The Taiwan's NGOs played the most important role about this action. The Taiwan Red Cross and Dharma Drum Mountain Charity Foundation built a Taiwan Village in Hambantota. One hundred houses with full equipment will accommodate the tsunami victims. The Red Cross Taiwan also has performed a sanitation program to provide clear water for tsunami's victims. The Buddhist Sangha Health Care Foundation donated a hospital with medical facility in Tissamaharama too. It will provide modern medical service to the Northwest region in Sri Lanka and help the development of communities in this region. Besides, Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps had emergent medical mission soon after the disaster. Over 3,500 people have received the aids in this action. Although Taiwan has taken action for redevelopment of Sri Lanka, the humanitarian aid will be continued from Taiwan to Sri Lanka in the future. ☺



Taiwan medical service team provided modern medical service to the northwest region in Sri Lanka



## Foreigner-Friendly Hospital—Taoyuan General Hospital

Reported by Edward A. Goka

In an effort to provide foreigners living in Taiwan with convenient health care services, the government of Taiwan established foreigner-friendly services at the Taoyuan General Hospital on 1 December 2005. This is the first step towards making all hospitals in Taiwan more friendly to foreigners, said Dr. Hsien-Wei Ting, coordinator of the project at the Taoyuan General Hospital.

### Capacity and services :

The hospital currently has a comprehensive range of medical departments and administrative offices, including Internal Medicine, Surgery, Neurosurgery, Pediatrics, Gynecology and Obstetrics, Ophthalmology, ENT, Dentistry, Orthopedics, Rehabilitation, Urology, Dermatology, Senior Healthcare, Neurology, Family Healthcare (General Practitioner), Anesthesia, Medical Testing, Radiology, Pathology, Pharmacy, Nursing, Emergency Care, Medical Records Room, Office of Nutrition, Office of Social Services, Administrative Office, Office of Human Resources, Accounting Office, Office of Administrative Ethics, and temporary offices for Information Technology and Inpatient Administration. The hospital is staffed with a total of 1061 personnel, including 152 doctors, 452 nurses, 143 additional medical staff, 312 administrative staff, and two research assistants.

International health care is integrated into all existing medical departments services in the hospital. The hospital reception has a desk staffed by multilingual volunteers. They currently are able to give multilingual services in Chinese, English, Vietnamese, Thai and Indonesian, and plans are underway to include French and Spanish. The operational documents and notes have been or will soon be translated into all these languages. Furthermore, each department has multilingual service documents and a multilingual volunteer to help visiting international patients explain his or her illness to the doctor to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment. The volunteers are trained to operate according to the highest standards of medical ethics and to safeguard the patient's privacy.

Most intriguing, on the 10th floor of the main hospital building, there is a ward specifically reserved for international patients. The ward is dubbed "the International Healthcare Garden" and even has a V.I.P. wing. If there is, for example, a maternity case, delivery service will be offered in the Obstetrics and Gynecology department's maternity ward and then the mother and the newborn baby can be admitted to the International Healthcare Garden. Special cases demanding that the patient be admitted in the specific department's wards are handled as normal.

### The Future :

Plans are underway to establish a multilingual accessible interface website with interactive multimedia. The website will open by April 2006. Among other services, the website will offer an integrated online patient registration system. The hospital also plans to offer special medical services like foreign medical referral and care, medical staff training, international medical meetings and special lectures, as well as medical informatics and research.

For more information, please visit the hospital website at <http://www.tygh.gov.tw/english/>



Opening ceremony of the International Healthcare Garden in Taoyuan General Hospital on 1 Dec. 2005. The 2nd from the left is the Minister of Department of Health - Prof. Sheng-mou Hou

International ward in Taoyuan Hospital

## Our Goal is to Provide Every Foreigner with the Best Quality of Health Care

Reported by Sidi Coulibaly



Prof. Wen-Ta Chiu, Superintendent of Wan-Fang Hospital and Vice-President of Taipei Medical University.

With the constant growing number of non-English speaking foreign brides and migrant workers moving to Taiwan these last few years, because of the language barrier, they have been facing tremendous difficulties to communicate with the medical personnel. The department of Health of Taiwan, through its policy to promoting a good quality of care in Hospitals in general and to providing every foreigner with the good quality of care has proposed the project of “Facilitating Health Care Accessibility for Foreigners in Taiwan.”

In order to know more about this health service, we had an interview with Prof. Chiu—the Superintendent in his office at Wan-Fang Hospital.

**1. Question ( Q ) : Dr Sidi Coulibaly (S.C.) : Prof. Chiu, What is the main goal of the project “Facilitating Health Care accessibility for foreigners in Taiwan and your expectation?”**

**Answer (A) : Prof. Wen-Ta Chiu :** The purpose is to provide every foreigner with good quality of health care. Therefore the Taiwan College of Healthcare Executives proposed the project “Facilitating Health Care Accessibility for Foreigners in Taiwan.” The goal is to provide best quality of care and, patient safety for all new immigrants.

In Wan-Fang Hospital we began by setting up a service team for foreign people with volunteers. We have 3 language services for foreigners. They are Vietnamese, Thai and Indonesia. Although the number of these 3 groups of populations is increasing very rapidly, our strategy is not limited within these 3 groups. We will extend to English and Japanese. Our goal is to establish an international hospital to assist in smoothing the whole process of outpatient clinic for foreigners, to improve patient safety and the quality of care, enhance equality of medical care for everyone, encourage new immigrant’s spouse to get trained and provide services, inspire more hospitals to provide multiple language interpreter, offer faster and safer medical service to foreigner, show our



Main building of Wan-Fang Hospital

The main purpose of "Facilitating Health Care Accessibility for Foreigners in Taiwan" is to provide every foreigner with good quality of health care.

deep concern for human right and medical ethics, and attract attention from the public regarding this important issue.

**2. Q : Dr S.C. : What are the main activities in Wan-Fang Hospital ?**

**A : Prof. Wen-Ta Chiu :** We continue to be one of the nations leading hospitals that emphasizes most on patient safety, medical quality, community healthcare, humanities in healthcare and medical information systems. We shoulder our social responsibility by taking part in over a hundred programs related to public health. When you walk in the hospital you can see in the lobby that the Quality of services is our priority. Quality is to give patients better outcome, and includes 4 aspects : The first aspect is to give patient good process and outcome in term of diagnosis and treatment. The second aspect is to give patient satisfaction and explanation. The third aspect is to get good record and good documentations. And the forth aspect is to have good leadership e.g. create a good vision mission, goal and objective.

3. Q : Dr S.C. : What is your general impression about health system in Taiwan ?

A : Prof. Wen-Ta Chiu : I think the Department of Health is doing very good job various aspect. But the system reform is very important. We know that our Health Insurance System has a lot of shortcoming. It has been already 11 years since the National Health Insurance (NHI) System was settled, so we need further reform otherwise the system is going to collapse. For the government point of view they just emphasize on financial issue. We should look at many issues such as humanity. Nowadays, NHI is based mostly on financial issue. For instance we can take example on Singapore Health Insurance. Finally I do believe that we have to do more for our international guests, much more convenience and safer environment. 🍌

## Taiwan's Active Involvement in the International "Stop TB Partnership" for the Prevention and Cure of Tuberculosis

According to WHO statistics, last year there were 9 million new tuberculosis cases in the world and 2 million people died from this disease. This is the world's leading cause of death arising from a single-agent infectious disease.

In Taiwan, about 1,500 people die from tuberculosis every year, a mortality rate higher than AIDS or SARS. In 2006, the Center for Disease Control, Department of Health, began promoting a control plan to reduce tuberculosis by half in ten years and also became an active participant of the international "Stop TB Partnership."

The primary mission of the "Stop TB Partnership" is to provide assistance in eradicating tuberculosis throughout the world. Currently, 463 member organizations have joined in hopes of raising US\$56 billion to invest in the prevention



and cure of tuberculosis throughout the world. This year Taiwan's Center for Disease Control, Department of Health, has budgeted NT\$190 million in investment funding. Once a TB case is detected, the patient must be hospitalized and receive two weeks of treatment, and continue to be regularly monitored upon returning home. 🍌

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Dr. Edwin Antonio Paz (left) and Dr. Tzay-Jinn Chen Deputy Minister of DOH in the press conference on March 24, 2006.

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## The Establishment of the Institute of Cancer Research

In order to fulfill the mission of establishing the National Cancer Research Center, the Division of Cancer Research, National Health Research Institute (NHRI) has been renamed the "Institute for Cancer Research" at the 4th board meeting of NHRI in November 2005 and became official on 1 January 2006.

Established 10 years ago, the Division of Cancer Research was the very first division within the National Health Research Institute. Since its establishment, the Division made numerous outstanding achievements and effectively promoted the standard of cancer research in Taiwan.

The Institute for Cancer Research is now engaged in further cooperation with Tri-Service General Hospital. On 24 February 2006 they jointly opened 50 beds of a Cancer Cooperation Ward in Tri-Service General, offering clinical treatment for cancer patients. They both hope that this professional cooperation will bring hope to cancer patients. 🍌

## Taiwan Joins "EINet Spread of Infectious Diseases Preparation Plan" International Video Conference

On 20 January 2006 at 10:00am Taipei time, the EINet (Emerging Infections Network) under the direction of the APEC Health convened the spread of infectious diseases preparation plan international video conference. Participants in the conference included ten APEC members along with Taiwan. The conference extensively discussed and exchanged opinions on topics involving the international preparation plans, emergency response measures, international epidemic information



exchanges, transnational multilateral cooperation for the spread of emerging infectious diseases, improving epidemic information exchanges, and strengthening regional cooperation in the defense against infectious diseases.

This video conference was transmitted on a platform established by Washington University (U.S.A.). It linked synchronous connections and provided channels for interactive dialogue among Taiwan, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, China, South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The main topics discussed were “preparing for the spread of emerging infectious diseases,” “economic impact and response measures,” “epidemic prevention and control materials and medical resource stockpiles,” and “strengthening disease monitoring and joint defense of borders.

Considering the rapid spread of the Asian bird flu epidemic, EINet sent a letter in October 2005 inviting Taiwan to participate in this international video conference. It is hoped that video conference technology will help to better integrate information, develop more effective responses to the serious threats presented by epidemic outbreaks and bioterrorism, and protect the economic stability of each APEC member. It was a perfect way to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the EINet conference.

Taiwan’s segment was sponsored by the National Health Command Center, Department of Health. Apart from Department of Health officials and health officials from other countries, international representatives participating in the conference included EINet Director Dr. Ann Marie Kimball, the head of the APEC Health Affairs Subcommittee Mr. Ian Shugart, the Dean of the College of Public Health at Washington University (U.S.A.) Dr. Pat Wahl, and the conference chairperson, Washington University professor Dr. Carl Osaki. 🐼

## Taiwan Participates in APEC HTF Meeting

The third APEC HTF (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Health Task Force) working meeting was held at Melia hotel of Hanoi in Vietnam from February 27 to 28, 2006. Taiwan had their delegation from the Bureau of international Cooperation and the Center for Disease Control from the Department of Health together with the Division of International Affairs of Taiwan Institute of Economic Research to attend this meeting.

The main purpose of this business tour was to discuss with other member economies about the tasks and activities of the working plan for the next two years, as well as the potential arenas that could be explored in the future. Besides, coordinators or representatives for the finished, on-going, and scheduled proposals also gave reports about their progresses.

The new chairman of APEC HTF, Mr. Ian Shugart, had focused on the 2006-2007 working plans, in par-



Representatives from Taiwan and Canada in the APEC Health Task Force meeting held in Mela hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam from February 27-28, 2006.

ticular projects of the past, current, and tentative which related to the three themes : “Fighting against HIV/AIDS ,” “improving health outcomes through advances in health information technology” and “enhancing avian and human pandemic influenza.” The chairman had also invited the APEC secretariat, ABAC, UNAIDS, LSIF, TFEP…etc. representatives from both inside and outside APEC institutions to exchange ideas for future cooperation.

The delegation from the Department of Health, Taiwan, had reported to all of the member economies about the two finished projects which were conducted by them : the HTF website and the Avian Influenza and Dengue training courses and Symposium in 2004. The project of the HTF website has received great compliments from members; and the chairman also agreed that he would inform the secretariat to allow the official launch of the website. In addition, this delegation had exchanged ideas with representatives from other members about the budgets for this and next years four proposals:

- 1 ) APEC workshop on digital opportunity,
  - 2 ) Health-sector logistic and supply infrastructure,
  - 3 ) A symposium on the conflict communication of food safety issue: case study,
  - 4 ) Regional cooperation project on avian influenza control and prevention,
- so that our proposals could be well supported. 🐼

## Taiwan’s NGOs in the FTCT-COPI

The first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was held from 6-17 on February 2006 in Geneva. Since its entry into force on 27 February 2005, the Convention has attracted a high number of Parties and has become one of the most widely embraced treaties in the history of the United Nations. All Contracting States for whom the Convention will have entered into force by the period of the session will participate in the COP with voting rights. A regional economic integration will also participate as a Party. Other States, including signatories to the treaty,

## Calendar

2006 International Hospital  
Federation Asian Pacific  
Regional Conference  
Taipei, Taiwan  
2~5 April 2006  
[www.ihftaiwan2006.org](http://www.ihftaiwan2006.org)

8th International Taipei AIDS  
Conference  
Taipei, Taiwan  
9~11 Sep. 2006  
[www.cdc.gov.tw](http://www.cdc.gov.tw)

28th World Congress of  
International Medicine/Taiwan  
Society of Internal Medicine  
Taipei, Taiwan  
10~14 Nov. 2006  
[www.icim2006-taipei.org.tw/](http://www.icim2006-taipei.org.tw/)



Director-General Jong-wook Lee (middle) with Taiwan's NGO experts in the Conference of the Parties (FTCT-COPI) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which was held from 6-17 on Feb. 2006 in Geneva.

will participate as observers. Non-governmental organizations in official relations with WHO and International intergovernmental organizations will also participate as observers to the first session.

Three Taiwan Non-governmental organizations, John Tung Foundation, Taiwan International Medical Alliance (TIMA), and Taiwan Alliance for Tobacco Control (TATC) also had representatives to attend COP. The representatives were Dr. Sea-Wain Yau, Wayne C.W. Kao (John Tung Foundation), Dr. Chang-Chuan Chan (TIMA), and Dr. Chih Pang Wen, and Dr. Meng-Chih Lee (TATC). During COP, Taiwan NGOs not only attended each meeting but also collected most update information about the implementation of the Treaty such as the establishment of the permanent secretariat, funding and financial support and monitoring and reporting on implementation progress, and the possible elaboration of protocols, among others.



### Taiwan Announces Updated Classification of Five Infectious Diseases : “Smallpox,” “Lassa Fever,” “Marburg Viral Fever,” “West Nile Fever,” and “Rift Valley Fever”

In compliance with International Health Regulations (IHR), on 6 February 2006 Taiwan officially announced the updated classification of five infectious diseases: smallpox, Lassa fever, Marburg viral fever, West Nile fever, and Rift Valley fever. This announcement adheres to the revised IHR stipulations, follows the precedence of WHO member nations, and aligns with international epidemic prevention and control practices. The updated classification of these five infectious diseases will help strengthen the monitoring and management of Taiwan's epidemic prevention and control system's effectiveness in combating these infectious diseases.

The revised IHR stipulates 14 infectious diseases that member nations must monitor and report. Among these 14 diseases, Taiwan has already complied with the prevention and control standards for the following 9 contagious diseases : small pox, new strains of influenza, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), cholera, tuberculosis of the lung, yellow fever, Ebola hemorrhagic fever, dengue fever, and meningococcal meningitis.

We welcome your feedback !  
Please forward comments,  
suggestions, or questions to us  
and if you need a copy of this  
newsletter, please contact us at  
[info@taiwaniha.org](mailto:info@taiwaniha.org)





### Minister Offers Views on World Health Day

The following is the full text of a speech by Health Minister Sheng-mou Hou (侯勝茂) during a ceremony marking 2006 World Health Day held in Taipei on April 6.

Health Minister Sheng-mou Hou



Dear Director-General Dr. Lee, World Health Organization, dear Ministers of Health of the Member Countries of the WHO, and Presidents of Professional Associations, friends and colleagues :

On this World Health Day of 2006, I would like to celebrate with all of you, as well as with my fellow health professionals, with great enthusiasm, as this day reflects the essential contribution to human health and development offered by health professionals around the world. The Director-General and the WHO Secretariat should also be congratulated for correctly focusing on "Working Together for Health" as the main theme of this WHO and taking this as the main challenge we all face. I particularly agree with Director-General Dr. Lee for addressing the priority areas of actions : to strengthen public trust in health systems, and to sustain high quality and supreme accessibility of health care for all human beings.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your kind support on various health issues in the recent past, particularly during the SARS outbreaks in 2003 as well as the new threat of H5N1 avian influenza in birds and humans. Due to political reasons, my fellow health professionals have not been able to participate in the WHO for the past 34 years. During this period, we were fortunate to evidence several significant developments in our health care which have improved the lives of the more than 22 million citizens, as well as half million of migrant workers, in Taiwan. Our health professionals, with the help of international aid and technical support, were able to eradicate malaria in 1965 and poliomyelitis in late 1980s, ahead of many other nations in our region, and initiated one of the earliest nation-wide vaccination programs for hepatitis B virus infection in the mid 1980s. In 1995, we also established one of the earliest national health insurance schemes in Asia, which aimed to provide the essential health needs of all our citizens, throughout the country. Through the tireless efforts of our health care professionals, this system has proved to be one of the most comprehensive and effective health services in the world, and rated number two by the Economist. These achievements and services have been made possible by more than 200,000 health care professionals in Taiwan, many of whom have received international recognition for their compassion and commitment to their fellow citizens.

Moreover, many of Taiwan's health care professionals have also contributed significantly to global health programs abroad. As you may well know, there are dozens of them working in medical missions in Africa, volunteering to provide emergency rescue and reconstruction aid in tsunami affected countries around the Indian Ocean, and working in earthquake devastated areas. In the past two decades, thousands more of our fellow professionals have worked for various terms in remote villages and developing countries that were in great need of assistance from health care workers. Many of our health leaders are also prominent figures in the World Medical Association, International Council of Nursing, Federation International Pharmaceuticals, International College of Surgeons, Federation of Internal Medicine, and many other organizations, and contribute their experiences and expertise without reservation. I hope they can join your fellow professionals in developing better health programs and together meeting the difficult challenges in the years to come.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for the support of the Secretary of Health and Human Services of the United States, and the Minister of Health of Japan, for supporting our participation in the WHO; and the European Union countries in urging the WHO to take actions in "providing better access by WHO experts to Taiwan, and to strengthen and deepen this cooperation that the health concerns of the people of Taiwan are met, and the Secretariat and others organizing technical meetings and working groups under the WHO auspices show flexibility in finding mechanism to allow Taiwanese medical and public health officials to participate in these activities."

Let us strengthen our collaboration and communication to respond to the threat of an avian influenza pandemic and to maximize the effectiveness of the global health system. Let us join the Director-General in his "no-gap" policy by linking all the health professionals in their daily work of excellence and let us establish stronger partnerships with your appropriate organizations for exchanges of disease information, development of prevention strategies in public health, as well as the promotion of early compliance with the International Health Regulations. 🍏