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The opportunities and
challenges in the future of
Taiwan-India relations

TAEF
Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation
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From The Editor

The emergence of the Indo-Pacific has brought about several tremendous changes in the international system. Two developments are noteworthy: several countries are exploring opportunities to cooperate with the like-minded countries with common interests and shared concerns. Second, bilateral ties have also taken shape. Taiwan is an indispensable part of the Indo-Pacific, and its bilateral ties with countries such as Japan, India, Australia are witnessing an upward trajectory.

Through New Southbound Policy, Taiwan is diversifying its partnerships and providing a policy framework in the Indo-Pacific. Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and its approach in the Indo-Pacific are complementary to other like-minded countries' approach who are also advocating for a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. Additionally, Taiwan's upholding of the democratic values, its ability to successfully deal with the COVID-19, and its willingness to engage countries in the immediate and extended neighborhood have presented Taiwan as a credible partner in the Indo-Pacific.

One of the most promising partnerships in the region is that of Taiwan and India. There are visible signs of improvement in ties and to step up the momentum, both Taiwan and India are working towards maximizing the potential of the relations. The special issue of TAEF Quarterly thus features a cover story titled "*Partnering across the Two Oceans: The Opportunities and Challenges in the Future of Taiwan-India Relations*", showing our readers how this partnership is mutually beneficial, and the two sides are showing keenness to engage each other purposefully.



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Taiwan Night Markets Find Ways to Get with the Times

Photo credit: Taiwan News



In attempt to stay relevant and appeal to Taiwan’s growing number of Muslim residents and visitors in recent years, Kaohsiung’s Liuhe Night Market has begun promoting halal food at its stalls. It is collaborating with the International Muslim Tourism Industry Development Association (IMTIDA) to help an increasing number of Muslim-friendly street food vendors process foods that meet the requirements of Islamic law, making them suitable for consumption by members of the faith.

As part of the New Southbound Policy, the government has encouraged tourism from Southeast Asia and in 2019, an estimated two million visitors from this region visited Taiwan. Of these, approximately 15% are Muslims, who represent a potential collective spending power of NT\$2 billion during their stay.

The Kaohsiung Mosque, one of the oldest and biggest in the country, serves as a center for the Muslim community in southern Taiwan.

There are also many Muslims, mainly from Indonesia, working in refineries and factories and as domestic helpers.

In 2019, the government provided subsidies to a number of Liuhe Night Market stall holders to encourage them to apply for halal certification from the International Muslim Tourism Industry Development Association, guaranteeing that their food meets the requirements of Islamic law.

Taiwan, US bond to empower women



Photo credit: Taiwan News

Taiwan and the US have teamed up to take part in the Women’s Livelihood Bond 3 (WLB3) initiative — a collaboration that American Institute in Taiwan Director Brent Christensen touted as “a testament to the United States’ and Taiwan’s commitment to the shared value of promoting women’s development and prosperity.”

The Women’s Livelihood Bond Series is a series of debt securities to empower women in Southeast Asia by creating sustainable livelihoods. WLB3 would assist 175,000 to 185,000 female entrepreneurs and socioeconomically disadvantaged women in Indonesia, India, Cambodia and the Philippines by

financing loans, marketing and production and living expenses.

Taiwan is participating in the WLB3 as a responsible member of the international community, and to reinforce ties in the region and bolster the government’s New Southbound Policy, as well as strategic cooperation with the US in the Indo-Pacific region.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, WLB3 microfinancing would encourage female entrepreneurs to engage in domestic manufacturing that breaks the cycle of poverty and fosters economic resilience.

Australia's top envoy details work priorities in Taiwan

Jenny Bloomfield, Australian Representative to Taiwan, hopes to promote more trade, investment, closer people-to-people links and deeper dialogue in areas of common interest during her posting. In terms of economic partnership, bilateral trade between Australia and Taiwan reached AU\$20 billion (US\$14.82 billion) in 2019 and two-way investment passed AU\$30 billion in 2020. The de facto Australian ambassador to Taiwan observed that despite the lack of a free trade agreement between the two economies, trade and investment have grown steadily, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bloomfield also aims to work with Taiwan to strengthen gender equality,

indigenous cooperation, social innovation and digital technology, strong governance, and human rights. On the issue of global supply chains, the seasoned diplomat said the pandemic has shown clearly Taiwan's importance, particularly in semiconductors, adding that Australia's role as Taiwan's top energy supplier and a major food and agriculture supplier makes its exports a crucially important component in Taiwan's supply chains and helps support its energy and food security. Both economies have seen even more clearly how close their supply chain relationship is during the pandemic.

India-Taiwan ties are quietly cementing amid friction with China

Taiwan is quietly increasing its investments in India from the current \$2.3 billion. The Telangana government proposed setting up a Taiwan specific industrial cluster in the state to attract more investments from Taiwan. Several Taiwanese contract manufacturers including Foxconn, Wistron Corp and Pegatron Corp have already set up their manufacturing facilities in India.

According to a Reuters report, these companies have drawn up plans to plough in \$900 million in India over the next five years to tap into the government's production-linked incentive plan. Though New Delhi and Taipei have no diplomatic ties at present, India is one of the 18 countries under its New Southbound Policy that Taiwan is expecting to expand its bilateral and economic ties with. Taipei's New Southbound Policy under Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen is also in sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Act East Policy.

In fact, last year, thousands of Indians took to the social media to celebrate and mark the National Day of Taiwan in October despite the Chinese embassy issuing a letter to the Indian media organisations to honour the "One China" policy.

Taiwan extends visa-free entry for Philippines, three other countries

The visa-free treatment of tourists from Thailand, Brunei, the Philippines and Russia will be extended for another year, from Aug. 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022. The decision was taken in preparation for the resumption of international travel in the post-pandemic era. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that the policy is separate from Taiwan's ongoing ban on the entry of foreign tourists due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been in effect since March 19, 2020.

Under the government's "New Southbound Policy", the ministry first granted visa-free treatment to tourists from Thailand and Brunei on Aug. 1, 2016. The privilege has since been extended each year, with the Philippines and Russia added to the list. Another decision reached after the April 12 meeting was to extend the Project for Simplifying Visa Regulations for High-end Group Tourists from Southeast Asian Countries (觀宏專案) until Dec. 31, 2022. Under the project, which was first introduced in 2015, tourists from India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos are allowed to visit Taiwan using electronic visas if they are in a group of at least five and travel via an accredited travel agency.



Photo credit: TAITRA

Taiwan Expo ignites Taiwan-Malaysia business opportunities

The Taiwan Expo in Malaysia 2021 Online debuted on Aug, 4th, exhibiting products and technologies from 160 Taiwanese companies. The expo has garnered the attention of more than 200 Malaysian businesses with more than 1,000 registrations for online business matchings. This year's expo focuses on six major pillars: Electronic Mobility, Post-Pandemic Era, Industry 4.0, Taiwan Lifestyle Products, Tourism & Culture and Halal Taiwan. Both online and offline channels have

launched their promotions to give Malaysians who love Taiwanese brands the opportunity to buy these deals.

The Taiwan Expo is organised by Taiwan's Bureau of Foreign Trade and supported by 15 local associations, including the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers. There are exhibitions in Thailand, India, and Indonesia to promote international trade.

Taiwan eyes a greater geo-economics role to assert its presence in the international arena Manik Mehta

Taiwan has built up its image as an economic powerhouse and a vibrant democracy, with a thriving global trade, underscoring its important role in global supply chains. Indeed, trading with the entire world, despite being denied diplomatic recognition from the majority of nations, has become Taiwan's forte.

Taiwan has established itself as Asia's semi-conductor and electronics hub. Taiwan is an important logistics center, a gateway to the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region and China, providing a strong industrial cluster and IPR safeguards, etc.

The Taiwan government's "New Southbound policy" was ironed out to reduce the heavy dependence on

trade with China by diversifying to important markets and partner countries in the south. Taiwan wants to reduce this dependency and build ties with countries of South and Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand. There are 18 countries with whom Taiwan is currently trying to intensify its relations with. They include members of the ASEAN group, South Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Trade with these countries has crossed the US\$ 114 billion threshold. Taiwan's investments in these countries exceeded US\$ 100 billion, with investment into Vietnam, India and Indonesia continuing to rise. "Investments into Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines are also growing.

Experts agree EU, ASEAN should seek closer ties with Taiwan



Photo credit: Taiwan NextGen Foundation

A group of international analysts said the EU and ASEAN should decouple from China and seek closer ties with Taiwan. European parliamentarian and Christian Democratic Union of Germany member Michael Gahler said the EU notes the “increasing assertiveness” of China and is assessing how far it can deepen relations with Taiwan without infringing its “One-China” policy. He suggested the EU pursue “everything but formal diplomatic recognition” — beginning with more bilateral investment agreements. He added that even though the EU is economically dependent on China, it can still criticize Beijing. With regard to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) relationship with Taiwan, Gahler said member nations should “join forces for more economic integration.” This would strengthen the organization when facing China and allow Taiwan to forge relations with the organization more easily, as it would no longer have to deal with individual countries. Gahler said the EU should seek “all options” when deepening ties with Taiwan without damaging China relations and also encourage partners in Southeast Asia to do likewise, in a united approach. “We need to make it clear that Taiwan matters.”

Pro-Taiwan Formosa Club to launch Indo-Pacific chapter 250 lawmakers from 17 countries expected to join



Photo credit: CNA

An estimated 250 legislators from 17 countries are expected to sign up when Taiwan launches the Indo-Pacific chapter of its Formosa Club on 16th May. The pro-Taiwan association already has branches covering Europe, Africa, Latin America, and West Asia, with hundreds of member lawmakers working to improve relations and enhance ties with the country.

Taiwan has since 2016 been working to increase links with countries in the region through its New Southbound Policy, and China’s aggressive stance toward Japan, Southeast Asia, India, and Pacific island nations has increased sympathy for the country.

MOFA’s East Asian and Pacific Affairs Department chief Larry Tseng (曾瑞利) said he expects the latest chapter of the Formosa Club to be helpful in expanding Taiwan’s international participation. Taiwan’s campaign to attend the annual World Health Assembly as an observer has been gaining support overseas, in particular, due to its performance in combatting the coronavirus.

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*The opportunities and
challenges in the future of
Taiwan-India relations*

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The emergence of the Indo-Pacific has brought about several tremendous changes in the international system. China's rising aggression is driving countries closer to find a collective response. Two developments are noteworthy: several countries are exploring opportunities to cooperate with the like-minded countries with common interests and shared concerns. Second, bilateral ties have also taken shape. Taiwan is an indispensable part of the Indo-Pacific, and its bilateral ties with countries such as Japan, India, Australia are witnessing an upward trajectory. Due to China's attempts to poach Taiwan's diplomatic allies and shrink its international space, Taiwan is excluded from all the major international groupings and organizations.

Through its flagship foreign policy initiative, New Southbound Policy, Taiwan is diversifying its partnerships and providing a policy framework in the Indo-Pacific. Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and its approach in the Indo-Pacific are complementary to other like-minded countries' approach who are also advocating for a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific. The importance of peace and stability in Taiwan Strait is intrinsically linked to the security of other major stakeholders. Additionally, Taiwan's upholding of the democratic values, its ability to successfully deal with the COVID-19, and its willingness to engage countries in the immediate and extended neighborhood have presented Taiwan as a credible partner in the Indo-Pacific.

One of the most promising partnerships in the region is that of Taiwan and India. India-Taiwan ties have gathered unprecedented momentum in the past few years. There are visible signs of improvement in ties and to step up the momentum, both Taiwan and India are working towards maximizing the potential of the relations. This partnership is mutually beneficial, and the two sides are showing keenness to engage each other purposefully.

Policies Enhance Indo-Pacific Ties

Author

**Sana Hashmi
Alan Yang**

The article was published in *Taipei Times* on 18th July 2021.

During the five years of the New Southbound Policy, Taiwan's flagship foreign policy initiative, the nation has been successfully nurturing ties with the countries within the policy's framework. The new avatar of India's Act East Policy has completed seven years, and includes countries from East Asia to the Pacific Islands, with ASEAN at its core.

There is synergy between India's Act East Policy and Taiwan's New Southbound Policy. Both were borne of their respective needs to engage the countries in their immediate and extended neighborhood. A careful analysis of the two policies shows that they evolved to meet needs in a regional context.

The previous iterations of the Act East Policy (the "look east" policy of former Indian prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao) and the New Southbound Policy (the "go south" policy of former president Lee Teng-hui [李登輝]) led to the establishment of representative offices in each other's capitals in 1995, and the beginning of unofficial relations between India and Taiwan. Initiated as moves to engage ASEAN member states, India and Taiwan have reoriented their policies to make them comprehensive and action-oriented.

In 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi upgraded India's engagement with its eastern neighbors by elevating the Look East Policy to the Act East Policy. In 2016, two years after India consolidated its eastward engagement, Taiwan initiated a foreign policy move to

engage India purposefully with the New Southbound Policy. The “go south” policy did not include India and largely focused on engaging some ASEAN countries.

For the first time, Taiwan introduced an official policy for deepening engagement with India along with 17 other countries. Also, it is important to consider that, unlike previous Taiwanese administrations’ efforts, the New Southbound Policy does not merely reduce dependence on China, but reaches out to countries of economic and strategic importance.

The New Southbound Policy is one of Taiwan’s policy moves to secure its rightful place by engaging countries in its neighborhood. The introduction of the policy is a telltale sign of President Tsai Ing-wen’s (蔡英文) emphasis on the significance of engaging South and Southeast Asian countries, along with other major stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific region.

Highlighting the seriousness of Tsai and her administration vis-à-vis the policy, she said at the 2018 Yushan Forum: “Taiwan helps Asia, Asia helps Taiwan” — a slogan that has come to shape Taiwan’s Asia strategy.

Similar vigor has been witnessed in Modi’s promotion of the Act East Policy and India’s Indo-Pacific vision.

Taiwan has placed ample emphasis on India’s importance in the policy. When COVID-19 created havoc in India in April and May, Taiwan extended solidarity by donating

oxygen cylinders and concentrators. Seemingly, India, too, is rethinking its engagement with Taiwan.

With Meenakshi Lekhi as the newly appointed Indian minister of state for external affairs, Taiwan has an admirer. She was one of the two Bharatiya Janata Party lawmakers who attended Tsai’s swearing-in ceremony virtually last year and praised Taiwan for its democratic resilience.

The two countries have taken several steps to recalibrate the focus of collaboration. Last year, the Taipei-based thinktank Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation and India’s National Maritime Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding for promoting dialogue and collaboration between the seven pillars of India’s Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiatives and Taiwan’s five flagship programs of the New Southbound Policy.

Developmental cooperation is an inherent component in the Act East and New Southbound policies. India might also consider taking an active part in the Taiwan-led Global Cooperation Training Framework. This would help the two countries further intensify their cooperation and work toward shared interests.

The Act East Policy has been well received by regional countries. It remains one of India’s most successful foreign policy initiatives, representing its aspirations to reinforce strategic autonomy. While the New Southbound Policy is newer, it has the potential to strengthen Taiwan’s relations

within Asia and promote regional cooperation. The two policies are complementary in nature, and it is only natural that Taiwan is officially included in the Act East Policy. Acknowledging Taiwan in the Act East Policy would give the policy an impetus.

India and Taiwan have been proponents of a free, inclusive and rules-based order. As India has placed its Act East Policy within the broader context of its Indo-Pacific vision, Taiwan should also link its New Southbound Policy and the Indo-Pacific policy. The prospects of the Act East and New Southbound policies will be largely shaped by the two countries’ willingness to expand and modify their respective policies.

The time is ripe for India and Taiwan to take additional steps to bolster their policies and solidify the rules-based order. Facing common challenges imposed by COVID-19, India and Taiwan need to work closely to chart out a prosperous and promising future for Indo-Pacific countries in the post-pandemic era, thereby deepening the prosperity of the region and safeguarding the welfare of Taiwanese and Indians as well.

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Taiwan's Security in the Emerging Indo-Pacific Order

Author

Dr. Sana Hashmi

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The article was published in *The Air Force Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* in March 2021.

The past few years have seen dramatic changes taking place in Indo-Pacific geopolitics, such as China's rise, Beijing's increasingly assertive foreign policy, and the erosion of American supremacy. As the region's two major powers, the changing relationship between China and the United States impacts regional and international security dynamics and the affairs of small and middle powers. After all, most of the small and middle powers of the Indo-Pacific region are reliant on—and have tilted toward—either of the two superpowers.

Amid growing competition between the United States and China, the Indo-Pacific region has gained significant prominence. Interestingly, the countries that are trying to avoid entanglement in the US-China confrontation—which are not interested in choosing one major power over the other—are also supporting the idea of the Indo-Pacific. The recently released Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN) outlook on the Indo-Pacific region, shows a growing acceptance of the Indo-Pacific construct. Several other countries—including those of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)—have embraced the Indo-Pacific as a means to preserve a rules-based order in the twenty-first century. These developments are shaped, in part, by the growing US-China competition that reached a high level during the Trump administration and is likely to be continued under Pres. Joe Biden.

Taiwan's security is directly linked with the United States and its

Notes 1 “President Tsai Attends Opening of 2020 Taiwan-US-Japan Trilateral Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue”, Office of the President of Republic of China (Taiwan), 8 December 2020, <https://english.president.gov.tw/>.

relations with China. Any major change in the regional or bilateral dynamics will have a direct impact on Taiwan. Taiwan has been quick in sensing the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific region on strategic, diplomatic, and economic fronts. As a result, Taiwan has expressed its willingness to play an active role in shaping the region. While Taiwan is yet to devise its own blueprint for the Indo-Pacific region, such a step will likely materialize sooner rather than later. Taiwan’s expression of interest in joining the Indo-Pacific region has been sufficiently showcased by Taiwan’s president Tsai Ing-wen, who on several occasions has stated that Taiwan can play an instrumental role in the region. Speaking at the 2020 Taiwan-US-Japan Trilateral Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue on 8 December, Tsai urged the Indo-Pacific countries to work together toward a resilient and peaceful future. She stated, “Leveraging expertise and capabilities, Taiwan and its like-minded partners in the region can effectively address the challenges ahead.”¹

Taiwan—like other major rule-abiding stakeholders—advocates a rules-based order, inclusiveness, and transparency; its COVID-19 response is an important example in that context. Taiwan’s emerging response seems aligned with the officially declared policies of the US (Free and Open Indo-Pacific), India (Act East Policy), and Japan (Partnership for Quality Infrastructure). So far, only the United States has formally included Taiwan in its Indo-Pacific strategy; while being open to the idea, other leading Indo-Pacific

countries have shied away from officially mentioning Taiwan as a partner country. Nevertheless, the last four years of Tsai’s government have witnessed a stronger relationship between Taiwan and its Indo-Pacific partners.

A key aspect of Taiwan’s strategic ties in the region is its relationship with the United States. Over the past four years, the Taiwan-US relationship has gained in considerable strategic weight. During the Trump administration, Taiwan became more prominent in US foreign policy pronouncements—even though at times Trump appeared to use Taiwan as a card in his China agenda. The pro-Taiwan initiatives brought forth by the Trump administration are, in all likelihood, going to be carried forward by the Biden administration. At least, recent statements by Biden’s advisers are indicative of continuity. There has also been speculation that the Biden administration would pay more attention to Taiwan, as to give it a greater place in the Indo-Pacific deliberations. America’s response has been amplified by Taiwan’s proactive engagement with the Indo-Pacific countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A region as diverse as the Indo-Pacific should not forget the variety of mutual concerns and common interests that include traditional and nontraditional security issues. One such common concern has continued to be the rise of China. If the COVID-19 pandemic made countries of the region realize how interconnected they were on the health front, then the perception of unprovoked Chinese aggression has

Notes 2 “President Tsai attends the Ketagalan Forum-2020 Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue”, Office of the President of Republic of China (Taiwan), 8 August 2020, <https://english.president.gov.tw/>.

led to an increasing realization of vulnerabilities on the security front. Over the past year—amid a global pandemic, no less—China’s trade war with the United States, border conflict with India, trade boycotts of Australian goods, and the encroachment into Taiwanese and Vietnamese territories has portrayed China in an increasingly aggressive light on the world stage.

The idea of an Indo-Pacific region—spurred by former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe’s idea of bringing together the Indian and Pacific oceans—has created anxieties for China. China feels threatened by the emerging Indo-Pacific order—fearing marginalization. While support for the notion of an Indo-Pacific region derives from much more than just shared concerns over China’s rise, it is true that China has played an instrumental role in shaping countries’ respective visions of what the Indo-Pacific region needs to look like. In August 2020, Tsai used her keynote address at the 2020 Ketagalan Forum to state:

*It is time for like-minded countries, and democratic friends in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, to discuss a framework to generate sustained and concerted efforts to maintain a strategic order that deters unilateral aggressive actions. We need a strategic order that encourages cooperation, transparency and problem-solving through dialogue, not threats of war. We need a strategy that avoids war, yet clearly conveys our resolve to protect our democracies.*²

Such statements by world leaders were common throughout 2020, as they struggled with how to deal

with the pandemic. Simultaneously, countries such as India, Australia, and Canada during this time began to feel the brunt of China's aggression. The Indo-Pacific construct has resulted in giving countries a platform to deal with common challenges in a seemingly intractable situation. The Indo-Pacific is not premised on an overtly anti-China component and is even open to including China as a responsible stakeholder in the future. Nevertheless, it is true that growing Chinese aggression has been a common concern for those countries advocating for a rules-based order. It is somewhat puzzling, despite convergent interests and shared concern in the face of the "China threat," that Taiwan—a democratic country that is aligned with the United States and its other allies—is still not often a part of the Indo-Pacific official discourse. Protecting Taiwan's integrity is vital to preserving a rules-based and inclusive order where peace and stability are of the utmost important values.

As the Indo-Pacific region evolves, it will open new opportunities for Taiwan to diversify its partnerships and expand cooperation with countries of the extended region. It is equally important for Taiwan to gather support from fellow democracies in the Indo-Pacific region. While Taiwan has been able to secure bipartisan support in the United States in recent years, the Biden administration's focus, for at least the first few months, is likely to be on containing the pandemic and other domestic issues. This does not mean the Biden administration

will lose interest in the Indo-Pacific. The appointment of an "Indo-Pacific czar" and other renowned foreign policy and security experts in the new administration demonstrates that the United States is attempting a renewed "pivot" to Asia. The Indo-Pacific region will continue to remain the top priority in US foreign policy. It will be critical for Taiwan and other Indo-Pacific countries to reorient its joint focus. It is in the interests of regional powers to facilitate Taiwan's greater participation in collective diplomacy—leading to a robust security network against common threats.

In the twenty-first century, countries are seeking beyond traditional ways of cooperation to elevate relationships. New technologies and new challenges have led to this novel, yet challenging phase in international relations. Some countries are opting for "minilateral" mechanisms within the Indo-Pacific region. The Global Cooperation and Training Framework should be expanded beyond its current membership of the United States, Japan, and Taiwan, to include more Indo-Pacific countries. This will allow more regional powers to learn from Taiwan's best practices and for Taiwan to demonstrate its acclaimed "Taiwan model." Like other major stakeholders, Taiwan's policy has been open, transparent, and inclusive. Its participation in regional frameworks will only strengthen the rules-based Indo-Pacific order.

Most importantly, Indo-Pacific nations must recognize that, if China

escalates a military conflict with Taiwan, then such a move would disrupt the peace and stability of the entire region. This scenario is not in the best interests of the countries of the region. Integrating Taiwan more formally into regional deliberations and processes would make countries more aware about the shared risks of a cross-Strait conflict. In turn, this might pressure the region to find ways to avoid such a situation. As far as Taiwan is concerned, a clearly articulated Indo-Pacific policy would serve its interests better, placing it amid all critical debates of the region.

Taiwan can help; so should India

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The article was published in *Taipei Times* on 15th May 2021.

The 74th World Health Assembly (WHA) is to take place from May 24 to June 1. This meeting is crucial, as several countries are witnessing a surge in COVID-19 cases. Some Asian countries that successfully kept the virus at bay are once again facing the threat of an outbreak. The deadly second wave ravaging India is a reminder that this pandemic is far from over and complacency should have no place in any countries' COVID-19 response. Countries are faltering while dealing with the pandemic, and in such a grim situation, what is most important is to work toward finding a collective solution.

Unfortunately, despite its impeccable COVID-19 response, Taiwan has been unfairly excluded from the WHA and other high-level discussions. In the past year, Taiwan has demonstrated that it is essential to engage with it, and health cooperation should be an important component in the Indo-Pacific region with Taiwan at its core.

Even though it is largely symbolic, Taiwan has lately received immense support for its inclusion in the WHA from countries around the world. On 5th May, G7 foreign ministers issued a joint communique supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in WHO forums and the WHA, and on the following day, the French Senate unanimously passed a resolution in support of Taiwan's participation in international organizations, including the WHO, followed on Friday last week a statement by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in support of Taiwan's inclusion in the 74th WHA.

No country is safe from COVID-19 until every country is safe, but despite this, Taiwan is excluded.

Taiwan's inclusion is important more than ever as it is witnessing a number of local cases for which the source of infections are yet to be determined. Leaving out Taiwan means leaving it to fend for itself, while completely disregarding the 23 million lives there. It is primarily due to Chinese bullying that Taiwan was ejected in 2016 from the WHA, where it participated as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei."

Taiwan's inclusion at the WHA would not magically make COVID-19 go away, but it would expedite a collective response to the pandemic and allow countries to learn from its best practices.

Last year, Taiwan was a rare success in dealing with COVID-19. It not only curtailed the spread of the virus at home, despite its isolation, but it has also helped several countries in their fight against the disease. In the process, it demonstrated empathy and compassion.

Taking the example of India, Taiwan's COVID-19 diplomacy has been a success story. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tien Chung-kwang (田中光), previously head of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India, donated 1 million masks through the Indian Red Cross Society in May last year, and donated masks worth 4.5 million rupees (US\$61,368 at the current exchange rate) to India's Mizoram state in June last year.

On May 2, Taiwan sent the first shipment of 150 oxygen concentrators and 500 cylinders to India, again through the Indian Red Cross Society. On Wednesday last week, Taoyuan and Taiwan's representative of the Adani Group, with the support of the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, announced that 15 cryogenic ISO containers would be sent to India.

Messages on Twitter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) and half a dozen other officials have expressed solidarity, positivity and willingness to provide more help. The hashtags they use, such as #Indiastaystrong and #LovefromTaiwan, further establish Taiwan's image as a compassionate country.

While Taiwan extends a helping hand to India in these trying times, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has failed to acknowledge the timely assistance. The India-Taipei Association, India's representative office in Taiwan, has expressed gratitude for Taiwan's medical aid. The Indian government's lack of response and support for Taiwan goes against its own stated vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" ("with all, development for all"). India's needlessly cautious approach to Taiwan is pointless. Time and again, not only words, but actions have proved that Taiwan could be a potential partner for India.

Taiwan is receiving immense appreciation from Indians. In a country like India, public opinion impinges heavily on foreign policy. Indian policymakers have not yet gauged the people's sentiments and are slow in making visible amends to its Taiwan policy. To secure its long-term interests, India's Taiwan policy has to change. When a number of countries are already speaking up for Taiwan, not engaging it might prove to be a foreign policy miscalculation for India.

India should join the bandwagon

and stand in solidarity with Taiwan, which is not only beneficial for India, but also the right thing to do. India's support for Taiwan would also show more alignment with like-minded countries that have embraced the Indo-Pacific region.

Inclusivity and commitment to a rules-based order is central to India's foreign policy. There should be no two viewpoints that engaging Taiwan is a must, and this could start with India voicing its support for Taiwan's participation in the WHA and other international organizations.

Think tanks can link Taiwan, India

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The article was published in *Taipei Times* on 28th April 2021.

India's top think tank the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) just concluded India's flagship foreign policy dialogue — the 2021 Raisina Dialogue. Over the past six years, the Raisina Dialogue, funded by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, has attracted several heads of states, ministers, policymakers and top academics from around the world.

The impact of the Raisina Dialogue and the discussion revolving around it have proved beyond doubt that think tanks are one of the most important actors in a country's foreign policy projection and decisionmaking process.

The ORF, with its international outreach, has been able to further establish a coherent strategic identity of India worldwide.

India, which has a rich strategic culture, can articulately convey its interests through its vast number of foreign policy think tanks.

The contributions of the late K. Subrahmanyam, India's leading strategic thinker, could not be overemphasized in bolstering the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (now renamed as the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses), a foremost think tank in India with a global voice, and shaping India's strategic culture.

The ministry also funds several other dialogues, such as the Delhi Dialogue and the Indian Ocean Dialogue, the focus of which is fostering a dialogue with the strategic community in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indian think tanks are playing a huge role in conveying India's

geostrategic interests.

To further gather ideas on how to strengthen the security partnership and advance their foreign policy interests, groupings such as the ASEAN-India networks of think tanks and the EU-India Think Tanks Twinning Initiative have been launched.

Over the past few years, Taiwan's strategic culture has been shaped by its desire to engage countries in the Indo-Pacific region. High-level conferences, such as the Ketagalan Forum, the Yushan Forum and the Taiwan-US-Japan Trilateral Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue, are helping Taiwan to increase its outreach, and engage policymakers and academics around the world.

One of the prominent think tanks in Taiwan, the Prospect Foundation, established in 1997, has played a huge role in facilitating Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues between Taiwan and its Western counterparts.

National Chengchi University's Institute of International Relations houses the Taiwan chapter of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific.

Somewhat like India's Delhi Dialogue, Taiwan holds the Yushan Forum focusing on Taiwan's relations with South and Southeast Asia.

It is being curated by the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF), which focuses on Taiwan's relations with New Southbound Policy countries, specifically those in South Asia and Southeast Asia.

TAEF is not only Taiwan's only think tank that is holistically studying the

New Southbound Policy, but in the past four years, it has attempted to build bridges between Taiwan and the policy countries.

The New Southbound Policy, Taiwan's flagship foreign policy, is people-centric. Five years after its initiation, there are visible results.

However, more steps could be taken to bolster the policy. One of the important steps in this direction would be to increase think tank interactions between Taiwan and New Southbound Policy countries.

India is a key focus country in the policy, and an emphasis on elevating ties has been evident since the first term of President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文).

It is important to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Indian and Taiwanese think tanks. TAEF signed one with the New Delhi-based National Maritime Foundation last year.

More such arrangements are needed, but MOUs also need to be accompanied with regular conferences, visits and writing collaborations.

Last year saw a number of Webinars on Taiwan, as well as on Taiwan-India relations, by Indian think tanks.

A few Webinars were jointly organized by Indian and Taiwanese think tanks: two by the ORF and Taiwan's Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research region; a Webinar on the prospects of a deeper India-Taiwan cooperation in the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region; and one by India's Research and Information System and the Prospect Foundation on

cooperation in the fields of science, technology and innovation.

Western think tanks are considering opening Taipei chapters.

The European Values Center for Security Policy's announcement of a potential opening in the second half of this year is one example.

Some Indian think tanks are making strides in the global think tank space. While the ORF opened its US chapter in 2019, India's Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) established its Washington office in 2018. CUTS International also has offices in Geneva, Hanoi, Accra, Nairobi and Lusaka.

With growing interest in Asia, especially India, Taiwan's strategic culture is expanding its horizons. More collaboration between Indian and Taiwanese think tanks is needed.

In the long run, Taiwan chapter of a private Indian think tank would further bolster India's standing in the region, and help India better understand Taiwan, China and the wider East Asian region.

Such a step would generate ideas on how Taiwan and India could further advance their interests within the framework of their "unofficial" relations. Such collaborations would add further volume to Taiwan-India interactions.

While Taiwan still lacks expertise on India, with just a handful of people studying India or South Asia, it has a number of academics who thoroughly understand the US, Japan and China. The Indian strategic community must collaborate with the Taiwanese strategic circle.

Tsai said at the Yushan Forum: “Taiwan helps Asia, Asia helps Taiwan.” Without cultivating new voices in New Southbound Policy studies, Taiwan’s objective of reaching out to South and Southeast Asian countries would remain incomplete.

In the absence of diplomatic ties, representative offices have limitations.

Taiwanese and Indian think tanks could play the role of catalysts for public discussion about India-Taiwan relations, and provide necessary inputs to the governments, and, if the need arises, persuade the governments by helping them set the agenda for engagement.

Constructive interactions between the strategic community can help bridge the gap between the actual and perceived potential of relations by steering the discussion in the right direction.

Democracies need mutual support, not judgemental stances

Author

Sana Hashmi
Alan Yang

The article was published in *Sunday Guardian Live* on 10th April 2021.

A report even identified India as an electoral autocracy. These judgements show harsh criticisms against democratic diversity in Asia.

TAIPEI: Democracy globally is now under siege due to the purposeful export of one-party-rule authoritarianism, rise of dictatorship, and the spread of populism. No man is an island and no democracy should be left alone; democracies need sincere mutual support for safeguarding democratic values and improving the quality of democratic governance, particularly in Asia, where the civilisations, religions, and cultures are so diverse.

Democracy is a term that owes its origins to the Greek term *dēmokratia*, which combines *dēmos* (“people”) and *kratos* (“rule”). With transformative political evolutions taking place over centuries, democracy in the modern times evolved from being just a political system to a way of life and an ideal in itself. In a world where animal instincts of power grabbing and control run parallel to virtues of modern civilisation, it is not easy to run a system as delicate as democracy where weak, vulnerable, and downtrodden are supposed to decide for themselves how they wish to be governed and by whom as their representative. After all, democracy, in the words of Abraham Lincoln is “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”.

Considering that democracies are people and popular opinion-centric, mistakes and mismanagements of democratic governments are debated in public with minimal control. Often even vibrant western democracies are found picking up the pieces in the face of public

protests and media criticisms. Whether that makes such countries weaker is purely dependent on how the issue is perceived.

The Covid-19 pandemic came up with another such occasion where a narrative was built that authoritarian regimes had fared better than democracies. However, peddlers of such narrative fail to understand the ethos of virtues of liberty, equality, and freedom. True, some democracies could not do as good as they should have in dealing with the pandemic, but dealing with the pandemic on a war footing was not the only issue at hand. Welfare of people and compassion on part of the government was another key objective authoritarian regimes failed to sufficiently address.

Assessing the state of political and civic rights, some surveys and reports in the western countries released in 2021 came up with a rather gloomy picture of the state of democracy in the world today. The pandemic has been most lethal in affecting democracy, which is also evident in the fall in overall performance of democracies across the world.

One such report was problematic in terms of categorisation. For one, the very fact that it presents just one list comprising democracies, authoritarian regimes, monarchies and constitutional monarchies, and even dictatorship, is methodologically problematic. Civil rights or not, it is unimaginable to put the US and Russia, or China and Taiwan in one table. These are different systems dealing with their own peculiar challenges. Boxing them all in one is unfair. A very intriguing example in that regard is that of Hong Kong and India. According to one particular

report, Hong Kong has gone down by 3 points as “Beijing imposed harsh new restrictions in a bid to smother democracy protests, and the government postponed elections it was set to lose.” India on the other, surprisingly, lost 4 points as “the Hindu nationalist government cracked down on dissent, driving the world’s most populous democracy into the partly free category.” Another report even identified India as an electoral autocracy. These judgements show harsh criticisms against democratic diversity in Asia as even an informed lay person would be in a position to state that the crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong is far more severe than arguably India. Unlike Hong Kong, people are not fleeing India, and thousands are not put in jails just because they were protesting. Most important of all, in poorly organised democratic systems like India, which is the biggest in the world, numbers are certainly going to be large. Statistical adjustment is one of the basic methods in research that makes the research impartial. The fact that India is a democracy and China is not, should be considered in making such reports as there is a qualitative difference in two systems. Moreover, political and civil rights in an authoritarian regime or a single-party rule cannot be compared with a multi-party democracy like India.

That said, one cannot deny the fact that India (67 points on a scale of 100 in one of the reports) has a lot to do to make its democratic system perfect or the one that can match up to Netherlands (98), Taiwan (94) or New Zealand (99).

Clearly, Taiwan too has gone underappreciated in some of the reports. With such an impeccable performance in dealing with the

Covid-19 pandemic without affecting people’s economic and civic liberties and losing the ethos of democracy is a landmark achievement as the pandemic put democracy globally at risk. One may argue that during the Covid-19 pandemic, New Zealand and Taiwan fared almost equally, and both countries led by two capable political leaders, should be appreciated in equal measure.

Both Taiwan and India are two robust democracies and democracies need sincere mutual help. This is one potential area for Taiwan and India to work together. India is the world’s largest democracy, while Taiwan is relatively younger. The electoral system in both India and Taiwan are examples of the deep-rooted democratic values. However, democracy is not just about casting votes and electing the government representative, it is also about economic, social, and political assimilation. Strengthening grassroots democracy, for instance, is one area where Taiwan could offer some key insights. More importantly, Taiwan could also help India with sharing its best practices in generating more enthusiasm and awareness about democracy and rights attached to it. It is often said that a democracy is as strong as its weakest and most vulnerable member. Strengthening the weakest link in a democracy not only involves imparting education and creating political awareness, it also involves making people economically and socially self-sufficient. Taiwan and India can work on those aspects together, and find new avenues of cooperation. In these difficult times for democracy, which is facing attacks from all fronts, mutual support is the way forward—not judgemental critics about one another. ▲

TAEF-ORF dialogue: Taiwan, India, and the Indo-Pacific Order: Current Trends and Future Possibilities

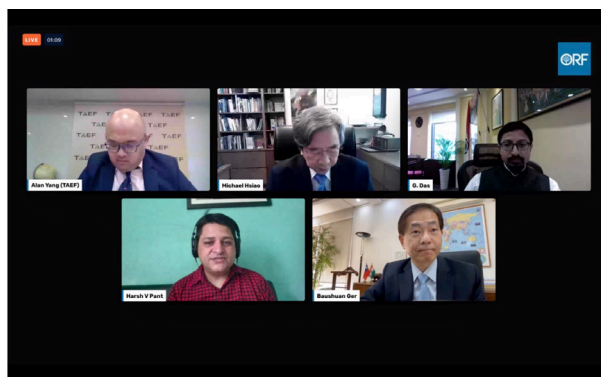


Photo credit: TAEF

The Taiwan Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) on Aug. 19 held a virtual dialogue themed “Taiwan, India, and the Indo-Pacific Order: Current Trends and Future Possibilities” in association with India’s premier think tank, Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

The event was divided into three half-day sessions focusing on different aspects of Taiwan-India relations, according to a TAEF press release issued on Friday (Aug. 27). Director-General of the India Taipei Association Gourangalal Das and Taipei Economic and Cultural Center in India representative Bau Shaun Ger (葛葆萱) were present to inaugurate the forum.

TAEF Chairman Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (蕭新煌) chaired the inaugural session. He underscored the significance of common values in Taiwanese and Indian foreign policies, adding that it is imperative that bilateral exchanges between the two countries are multi-faceted given that they both are dedicated to maintaining a global outlook based on a rules-based order.

Das said that such collaborations between the two think tanks are important because they act as an intermediary between India and Taiwan and help bridge the information gap. Meanwhile, Ger mentioned that scholarly exchanges are useful for advancing bilateral relations.

The first session, which was moderated by Professor Harsh Pant, head of the Strategic Studies Programme at ORF. It focused on the dynamics of the Indo-Pacific and featured four panelists from Australia, Japan, Taiwan, and India who shared their countries’ respective Indo-Pacific policies and attempted to define Taiwan as a significant regional player.

Natasha Kassam, director of the Lowy Institute’s Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Program, opened the discussion by pointing out three trends in Australia-Taiwan relations. Firstly, there has been a positive change in perception in Australia regarding Taiwan due to its successful COVID-19 response and China’s increasing pressure on Taiwan. Secondly, the close U.S.-Taiwan relations have had an impact on Australia’s Taiwan policy; and thirdly, there has been growing regional support for the East Asian country.

Tosh Minohara, an international relations professor at Kobe University and chairman of the Research Institute of Indo-Pacific Affairs, highlighted Japan-U.S. relations and the shared values of Japan, the U.S., and Taiwan.

TAEF Executive Director Alan H. Yang (楊昊) offered Taiwan’s perspective on the Indo-Pacific by saying that China has continuously used military coercion against

Taiwan, which is a growing concern for countries such as Japan and the U.S. He also highlighted the significance of Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy in its outreach and multifaceted engagement towards the countries of the region.

Sana Hashmi, a visiting fellow at TAEF, provided an outline of India’s Indo-Pacific policy and called for more support from the Indian government for Taiwan’s greater participation in the Indo-Pacific.

The second session touched upon Taiwan-India trade, investment, technological, and health cooperation and included experts in those fields. It was moderated by Kuan Ting-chen (陳冠廷), CEO of Taiwan NextGen Foundation.

Kristy Hsu, director of the Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center at the Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research, mentioned Taiwan’s potential role in Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Make in India” campaign and suggested some strategies to strengthen economic ties.

Trisha Ray, an associate fellow at ORF’s Technology and Media Initiative, summarized the extent of bilateral tech cooperation between Taiwan and India. She said she believed cooperation in 5G technology and semiconductor production could be greatly improved given that these two fields

are also areas of cooperation within the Quad and in the Indo-Pacific.

Senior fellow and head of the health initiative at ORF Oommen C. Kurian stressed the importance of health cooperation between India and Taiwan. He said that it was a missed opportunity for India to not advocate for Taiwan's observer status in the World Health Assembly when it assumed the chairmanship.

However, given Taiwan's exemplary response to COVID-19, it is crucial for India to explore ways to strengthen cooperation in the health sector, he added. Medical education is still an untapped area between India and Taiwan.

Taiwan's experience and response to the COVID-19 will benefit India, and therefore, the cooperation in the health sector is mutually beneficial, according to Kurian.

The third session centered on the future of Taiwan-India relations and was moderated by I-Chung Lai (賴怡忠), president of the Prospect Foundation. He lamented that the pandemic has changed how countries are interacting with each other, including India and Taiwan. Lai added that Taiwan-India relations are based on merit and the idea of expanding ties and that it is important to curtail the China factor.

Associate professor and chair of FLAME University's Centre for South and Southeast Asian Studies, Roger Liu (劉奇峰), drew attention to the lack of understanding about India amongst Taiwanese scholars and about Taiwan's strategic role in the global context within the Indian strategic expert view. To bridge this gap, he encouraged the exchange of ideas between Indian and Taiwanese academic circles.

Liu said that Indian and Taiwanese scholars can also cooperate on scientific exploration in the South China Sea. He added that if China and Sri Lanka can work together in the Bay of Bengal, so too can India and Taiwan partner up in the Taiwan Strait and elsewhere.

Premesha Saha, an associate fellow at ORF, said that India-Taiwan relations should be viewed from a broader lens and "should be free from the shackles of the China challenge." She also brought up maritime cooperation, saying that India could engage Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific through several ways, including the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership.

Though the participants offered different perspectives on Taiwan, India, and the Indo-Pacific order, they all agreed that the major stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific should promote Taiwan's greater participation in the region. They all also concurred that India-Taiwan relations should be advanced further.

The 2021 SEASAT Youth Camp kicked off!



Photo credit: TAEF

Jointly organized by Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) and American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the 2021 SEASAT Youth Camp was held from July 27 to 28 in Taipei, encouraging young people to pay attention to global equality in the era of the pandemic.

Under the theme of this year's youth camp, "Home: Global Equality in the Era of the Pandemic," the organizers have invited academics and experts, young entrepreneurs, and NGO workers to share their insights into critical social issues including public health, basic rights and migrant workers, technology development, and the climate change.

Offering crash courses and group discussions, the camp continued to empower participants to engage with the challenges of society while they were staying at home during the lockdown.



Photo credit: KMFA

TAEF Co-organized Exhibition “Pan-Astro-Nesian Arts Festival” with the Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts

The Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (KMFA)' major exhibition “Pan-Astro-Nesian Arts Festival” is scheduled to be launched from mid-July to October 31.

With an aim to continue the museum's long-term devotion to contemporary Austronesia arts, this exhibition has invited 23 individual artists and art groups from Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Pakistan, and France to explore pertinent artistic and cultural issues.

Along with Yayasan Biennale Yogyakarta and National Culture and Arts Foundation ARTWAVE - Taiwan International Arts Network, TAEF is honored to co-organize the exhibition and promote the event through our international networks in New Southbound countries.

In so doing, TAEF hopes to help expand the horizon of Austronesian cultural exchanges, foreground Taiwan's significant position in contemporary Austronesia arts, and build a more solid foundation for future international collaborations.

Southbound Policy options discussed

From left, Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) executive director Alan Yang, Taiwan External Trade Development Council president and CEO Leonor Lin, Minister Without Portfolio John Deng, TAEF chairman Michael Hsiao, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tien Chung-kwang, Liberty Times editor-in-chief Tzou Jiing-wen and TAEF visiting fellow Sana Hashmi pose for a photograph at a forum on the New Southbound Policy in Taipei on 27th August.



A forum in Taipei on 27th August discussed the future of the nation's New Southbound Policy in a post-COVID-19 world.

The policy, introduced in 2016, aims to boost interactions between Taiwan, ASEAN and South Asian nations in human resources, industry, investment, education, culture, tourism and agriculture.

Taiwan should find ways to enhance its strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific region, in addition to attracting economic investment and encouraging talent exchanges, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tien Chung-kwang (田中光) told the forum, which was initiated by the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation and hosted by the Chinese-language Liberty Times (sister newspaper of the Taipei Times).

The New Southbound Policy should be more compatible with policies enacted by other countries in the region, especially as the international community turns its attention toward the Indo-Pacific region amid growing concern about stability in the Taiwan Strait area, he said.

ASEAN policies are focused on strengthening its bloc, while Taiwan's regional policies are geared more toward trade, education and fostering talent, Tien said, adding

that it is perhaps time for Taiwan to discuss how to broaden its scope and view in the region.

Citing how the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in March included climate change, vaccines and emerging technologies, he said that regional policies should not become overly focused on military issues.

"It is of utmost importance that Taiwan's New Southbound Policy find ways to connect with this trend," Tien said.

One option is to expand Taiwan's Global Cooperation and Training Framework collaboration with the US and Japan, he said.

Taiwan has worked with the US under the framework since 2015, holding more than 30 international seminars in fields such as public health, law enforcement, disaster relief, energy cooperation, women's empowerment, the digital economy, cybersecurity and media literacy, attracting 2,500 attendees from more than 90 countries, he said.

Such fields correspond with the government's New Southbound Policy, he added.

Minister Without Portfolio John Deng (鄧振中) said that Taiwan could attract students from the 18 countries included in the policy, to mitigate

the impact of the nation's declining birthrate.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare's relaxation of regulations for the medical industry could also lead to growth, especially with innovations in telemedicine, he said.

Taiwan should also step up its investments in Southeast Asia to benefit from the reorganization of the global supply chain, he said.

Non-governmental organizations such as the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation can play a role in the policy's influence, as foundations have a wider reach than the government, Deng said.

Foundation chairman Michael Hsiao (蕭新煌), who is also a presidential adviser, said that government units and the private sector, led by the foundation, should meet at the end of this year to discuss a new direction for the policy.



(Left to right) Astrid Tsai, Dr. Alan Tze-Luen Lin and Jerry Huang in the session of environmental sustainability. Photo credit: TAEF

Taiwan Launched Asian Dialogue Series, Calling for Building Resilience through Social Innovation

The Taiwan Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) held a virtual dialogue themed: “2021 Asian Dialogue Series: Building Resilient Cities through Social Innovation” on September 4th in association with Impact Hub Taipei. The forum was established for the purpose of gathering experts and stakeholders from the public and private sectors in Taiwan and around the Asia Pacific Region, to reimagine the development of a resilient society together.

The Asian Dialogue Series invited participants and representatives of diverse industries, governments, academics, media, international non-governmental organizations and startups. Speakers from Taiwan and 6 other Southeast Asia and South Asia countries (including Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Thailand) discussed together about the prospect of regional cooperation and building a more resilient city during and after pandemic.



跨國系列座談 Asian Dialogue Series
Keynote | 建構疫後的韌性城市
 Building a Resilient City at the Time of Global Pandemic

Airport City

- Taiwan's gateway to the world
- Access to Asia Pacific
- Taoyuan International Airport and Port of Taipei
- Chair of ICLEI's EcoLogistics Community

與ICLEI地方政府永續發展理事會正式簽約
 Taoyuan entered into agreement with ICLEI

講者 - Wen-Tsan Cheng
 Mayor of Taoyuan City, Taiwan

TAEF
 Sustainable Exchange Foundation
 台灣永續發展基金會

IMPACT HUB Taipei

Mayor of Taoyuan Wen-Tsan Cheng gave the keynote speech.

Photo credit: TAEF

Mayor of Taoyuan Cheng Wen-tsan (鄭文燦) shared in his keynote speech that as Taiwan's gateway city, Taoyuan faces both challenges of imported cases abroad and domestic transmissions of COVID-19. Therefore, how we revitalized the economy and promote sustainability remains key in their city governance. He then shared about Taoyuan's experience in the environment protection, economy, medical care, employment, migrant workers, and education area during COVID-19.

TAEF Executive Director Dr. Alan H. Yang (楊昊) suggested that the outbreak of COVID-19 has shown that it is crucial to take decisive actions while adapting to and recovering from hazards. He also stated that as the New Southbound Policy (NSP) aims to cooperate with like-minded countries and all vibrant civil societies from Southeast Asia and South Asia. Therefore, we should learn from each other's experiences so that innovative solutions can be shared when

tackling global challenges.

Oliver Chang (張士庭), Co-Founder of Impact Hub Taipei, stated as he inaugurated the dialogue that as we hope the public and private sectors to respond to the development of sustainability, we should not forget that it is also the responsibility of every individual, every day.

The forum was divided into three sessions including climate change, youth support and rights of migrant workers. It first talks about reaching net-zero carbon emissions lead by global organizations and corporation representatives. The second session discussed about the extent of the pandemic's economic consequences for younger people, how policy-driven initiatives and interventions can help turn things around, and discover more solutions for young talents in sustainable society. Last but not least, it talked over diverse aspects of migrant workers' challenges in different regions during and after the pandemic.

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