



Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation

臺灣亞洲交流基金會

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Chairperson Hsiao (蕭新煌), National Security Council Secretary-General Lee (李大維), Foreign Minister Wu (吳釗燮), Distinguished guests, Executive Director Yang (楊昊), and members of the Foundation: Good afternoon.

I'm delighted to be here today to inaugurate the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF), and witness this historical moment together with you.

Over the past two years, the government and private sector have worked together to promote our New Southbound Policy. Thus far, we've upgraded our communication and interaction with New Southbound countries at all levels.

We're also deepening exchanges and cooperation in economics and trade, tourism, medicine, agriculture, technology, and education. So our New Southbound Policy implementation is clearly on the right track.

The New Southbound Policy is also reshaping Taiwan's Asia strategy. That strategy has three main characteristics: It's people-centered; it highlights regional inclusiveness; and it's devoted to deepening multilateral partnerships.

We hope to uphold a people-centered spirit--especially in terms of people-to-people understanding and friendship--to promote regional peace and prosperity.

We also hope to emphasize the inclusiveness of Asian culture so that Taiwan's New Southbound Policy can work in tandem with the regional strategies of our neighbors.

It's even more important that we're willing to work together with our neighbors, and other like-minded countries, to deepen partnerships that benefit our region and its people.

To achieve these goals, we held our first New Southbound Policy regional forum--the Yushan Forum last October.

We hope that the Forum will grow into a new, pluralistic, and diversified dialogue platform for the Asian region, with attendees from both the private sector and government.

At that Forum, I announced that we would set up a permanent foundation, the TAEF, to organize and regularly host the Forum. At the same time, this will also give regional opinion leaders from different fields, youth representatives, NGOs, and think tanks a platform for exchanges and cooperation.

Today's formal inauguration of the TAEF represents another important milestone for our New Southbound Policy. We're taking the next step, integrating private sector forces and investing more resources to continue extending the reach and depth of our New Southbound Policy.

I want the TAEF to take on two important tasks after officially commencing operation:

The first task is to give best efforts to organizing the annual Yushan Forum, and increasing the New Southbound Policy's international connectivity and visibility.

That Forum will help more of our international friends see the importance of Taiwan, and hear our success stories.

At the same time, Taiwan and other countries can learn and share experiences with each other through exchanges. That way, whatever will help us build a better Taiwan, will also promote collaborative thinking about a vision for Asia's future.

The Yushan Forum is a platform to share resources, and a platform where Taiwan and other countries can collaborate to embrace the future together. Last year, over 800 opinion leaders from home and abroad participated in this Forum. This year, our theme will be Working Together for Regional Prosperity. I hope that we'll continue to invite domestic and international friends to draw up a vision together, and formulate action plans for regional cooperation.

The second task is to be a key think tank to invigorate the New Southbound Policy.

The continuing transformation of politics, economics, and societies in Asia means that Taiwan has to be very aware of new and emerging models of regional development. We also need a think tank that will help us invigorate our partnerships, and actively participate in regional integration.

The TAEF will work on the front lines to implement our New Southbound Policy, and strengthen Taiwan's overall engagement with Asian society. That engagement includes cultivating relationships with civil society, young people, and think tanks in other countries.

That will help create a dynamic image for Taiwan while promoting institutional links, and initiating new social practice projects between Taiwan and other Asian countries.

In response to an appeal by Chairperson Hsiao, the TAEF and six other representative domestic organizations have formed an Asia Engagement Consortium, which is a mechanism to consolidate private sector cooperation across different areas and disciplines.

I sincerely hope that this Consortium will flourish and grow, highlighting Taiwan's tangible contributions to Asian development. It can also show how the concerted efforts of Taiwan's government and private sector promote stability and prosperity in Asia.

In closing, I want to thank Chairperson Hsiao (蕭), Executive Director Yang (楊), and their professional team for doing all the groundwork to establish the foundation. We're particularly grateful to Chairperson Hsiao. He's been contributing to Taiwan's academic circles for 40 years, and we'll continue to rely on his expertise and wisdom going forward.

I trust that the TAEF will get off to a smooth start. And I hope that Taiwan's partnerships with countries throughout Asia will continue to expand, and create more long-term, mutually beneficial friendships. Thank you.