

## **Remarks at a press conference concerning Taiwan's WHO campaign**

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Minister Chen; Friends from the media: good afternoon!

This year's virtual World Health Assembly will begin today, May 18, at 6 p.m. (Taiwan time). Despite all our efforts and an unprecedented level of international support, Taiwan has not received an invitation to take part. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses deep regret and strong dissatisfaction that the World Health Organization Secretariat has yielded to pressure from the Chinese government and continues to disregard the right to health of the 23 million people of Taiwan.

We know that you are all keenly interested in how the WHA will handle the proposal submitted by Taiwan's diplomatic allies. Due to COVID-19, the agenda for this year's WHA has been significantly shortened. Understandably, countries want to use the limited time available to concentrate on ways of containing the pandemic. For this reason, like-minded nations and diplomatic allies have suggested that the proposal be taken up later this year when meetings will be conducted normally, to make sure there will be full and open discussion. After careful deliberation, we have accepted the suggestion from our allies and like-minded nations to wait until the resumed session before further promoting our bid.

Even though Taiwan has not been invited to take part in this year's WHA, our fellow citizens have witnessed the very strong support for Taiwan in the international community. So far, governments from 29

countries have expressed support for Taiwan's WHO participation. All of our diplomatic allies submitted the related proposal to WHO. And a growing number of world leaders have spoken out publicly for Taiwan. They include Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and New Zealand Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Winston Peters. This is of enormous significance.

Moreover, prominent political figures from 43 countries, including more than 600 legislators from North American, European, and Central and South American countries, as well as the European Parliament, have expressed support for Taiwan's WHO campaign.

International public opinion has seen an outpouring of support for Taiwan's WHO participation. In addition to media reports, commentaries, and letters to the editor, many renowned news organizations from around the world have published editorials firmly backing our country. This support is unprecedented and overwhelming.

Our actions speak for themselves—Taiwan can help, and Taiwan is helping. Our hospitals have shared the successful Taiwan Model with other countries through videoconferences. We have also helped diplomatic allies and friendly nations establish robust defenses against the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, we're working closely with the United States and many European countries to develop rapid testing kits, vaccines, and medicines for COVID-19.

Once we made sure that domestic demand was fully met, we also took the initiative to provide epidemic prevention and containment supplies

to countries in need. As of today, Taiwan has donated 27.5 million face masks, 131 infrared thermal imaging cameras, 35,000 forehead thermometers, and 250 automatic body temperature detection systems.

We are now preparing a fourth wave of international humanitarian assistance. We will donate another 23.5 million surgical masks, 1.16 million N95 masks, 170,000 protective gowns, 600,000 isolation gowns, 80 respirators, 34 PCR test devices, and 500,000 quinine tablets.

Taiwan's big-hearted assistance during the pandemic has benefited more than 80 countries, and the world has taken note. The 23 million people of Taiwan want greater international participation, and the government will take full advantage of the growing momentum in world support to get it.

The people of Taiwan abhor the two-faced behavior of the Chinese government, which claims to care for their health and welfare while actually seeking to deprive them of their right to health at every turn. Our citizens will never relinquish their collective aspiration to participate in international organizations and contribute to the world.

The WHO Secretariat should listen carefully to reasonable appeals from the international community. It should be professional and neutral, resist interference by the Chinese government, and allow Taiwan to take part in all WHO meetings, mechanisms, and activities. UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 and WHA Resolution 25.1 do not address the issue of Taiwan, and they don't authorize the People's Republic of China to represent Taiwan, either. Taiwan is a democratic country, and only its democratically elected government has the right to represent the Taiwanese people in international organizations.

Although we have not been invited to this year's WHA, let me say once

again that adversity only serves to strengthen the determination of the Taiwanese people. We will never give up our quest for international participation. In fact, as the voices around the world supporting Taiwan continue to grow louder, we are getting ever closer to achieving our goal.

Thank you!