

**Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister Jaushieh Joseph Wu
at the meeting with U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS)
Secretary Alex Azar**

August 11, 2020

Secretary Azar, Chairman Moriarty, Director Christensen, distinguished members of the delegation, friends from the press: good morning!

I am truly delighted to welcome Secretary Azar and his delegation, the highest ranking US delegation to visit Taiwan since 1979. On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I am deeply honored to receive you.

Secretary Azar's visit could not be more timely. The world is still suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and many have to face a possible second, even third wave of outbreak. Taiwan, as opposed to some early predictions by international experts, has done fairly well in containing the pandemic. With early deployment of resource and quick responses by all related agencies, our people have been able to continue with their normal life, uninterrupted by the threat of the virus.

In fact, the people of Taiwan are all too familiar with dealing with threats, be it military, diplomatic or the threat of epidemics. These are just parts of our daily adventures. Health officials in our Central Epidemic Command Center, just like the commander-in-chief and our military officials, are always on high alert and stand ready 24-7 to defeat the enemy, visible or invisible. The 2003 SARS taught us a hard lesson, and thanks to those invaluable experience, this time, Taiwan is

able to showcase the world how an open society could deploy democracy and transparency in its combat against virus. In contrast to an authoritarian model where the authority is too crippled to disclose fact, in the transparent Taiwan Model, we simply can't afford to lie or to conceal.

We understand that the Covid battle could not be fought in silos. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan has donated 51 million surgical masks worldwide, including more than 10 million to the US, and other PPEs, to provide sound protection to medical personnel on the frontline. And we asked for nothing in return. Truth is, we even had to deliver these supplies quietly in some occasions to keep the recipients free from trouble, trouble from Beijing.

Taiwan is no stranger to such troubles. Our life have become increasingly difficult as China continues to pressure Taiwan into accepting its political conditions, conditions that will turn Taiwan into the next Hong Kong. However, we are fortunate to have good friends like the US and its enthusiastic members, like Secretary Azar, who was always there supporting each and every fight of Taiwan for international space. We know this is not just about Taiwan's status, but about sustaining democracy in the face of authoritarian aggression. Taiwan must win these battles so democracy prevails.

I would like to express my appreciation to Secretary Azar for leading this substantial delegation. This is indeed a powerful message to Taiwan. As good partners in the free and open Indo-Pacific, we sure do have a lot to share with each other, and I look forward to our discussions. Thank you.