

## Implementation and Breakthrough: Leading Taiwan's International and Diplomatic Endeavors

In September 2012, the TaiwanICDF hosted the International Conference on International Development Cooperation and the Taiwan Experience. In attendance were a number of partner country ministers, representatives of international cooperation and development organizations, and academics and experts, as well as representatives of national aid agencies from the United States, Japan, and other countries. The main issues discussed at the event were trends in international development aid and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Taiwan's foreign aid experience and its implications, and the development of a global partnership for development.

President Ma Ying-jeou gave a speech at the conference and stressed the fact that although the Republic of China (Taiwan) is not a member of the United Nations and has no means of participating in UN projects, it will maintain its commitment to ongoing development cooperation efforts. The president said he hoped that Taiwan would continue to promote development cooperation projects as a partner to other nations in international development and work toward the UN MDGs to help thousands upon thousands of citizens benefit from development cooperation.

Also speaking at the event was Robert B. Zoellick, former president of the World Bank, who set out his own expectations for Taiwan. He emphasized that regional, bilateral and global development cooperation, as opposed to official state-to-state cooperation, would precipitate Taiwan's transition from a provider of traditional forms of assistance to a powerful, intelligent economy that can contribute even more to development cooperation throughout the world.

### **Pursuing Aid Effectiveness through Increasingly Diverse Methodologies**

In the past, foreign aid played a central part of the foreign policy of advanced and industrialized nations. Since the end of the Cold War, however, there has been a growing trend within the international community for the decoupling of foreign aid from foreign policy, and a consensus that foreign aid should be integrated with

issues such as poverty alleviation and humanitarian assistance, spurring a return to humanitarian-oriented assistance methods.

Since the UN adopted the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, the eight MDGs have become important indicators in measuring the effectiveness of development outcomes. In March 2005, members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, putting forward five major guidelines for action in aid and 12 indicators for appraising the effectiveness of such aid. This has provided donors and recipients with a clear approach toward aid and a framework for measuring whether aid commitments have been effectively met.

In addition to actively implementing aid projects in accordance with these standards, many donor countries and international organizations have attempted to diversify their approaches to aid. For instance, donors have allocated authority to their partner countries to take the lead on development strategy and resource allocation, offering support for cooperation organizations and guidance on their implementation procedures and strategies. Donor countries have also sought to make aid initiatives more harmonized and transparent and take better advantage of available synergies, and focused on allocating aid resources and making decisions with a results-oriented approach. Finally, they have worked to achieve greater accountability on the parts of donors and partner countries for more effective development work. Such actions have achieved effectiveness in aid projects by emphasizing the Paris Declaration's commitments to "ownership," "alignment," "harmonization," "managing for results," and "mutual accountability."

### **Consolidating Limited Aid Resources and Continuing to Implement Reforms**

For more than 50 years, Taiwan has been actively involved in international cooperation and development. In 1996, in an effort to consolidate Taiwan's limited aid resources, the Taiwanese government established the TaiwanICDF as the country's dedicated international aid agency. Sixteen years later, the TaiwanICDF continues



to successfully coordinate funding, human resources and technologies, channeling these resources using four implementation methods: lending and investment, technical cooperation, education and training, and humanitarian assistance. This comprehensive project implementation strategy not only provides an effective framework for Taiwan's international cooperation and development but also allows Taiwan to share its experiences and assist developing partners in improving their standard of living while successfully expanding Taiwan's diplomatic space in the international arena.

In 2009, Taiwan published its first White Paper on Foreign Aid Policy establishing a legal, transparent and professional system of foreign aid. This document lays out Taiwan's core foreign aid policy. In June 2010, the government promulgated the International Cooperation and Development Act, clearly defining the content, objectives, and operating principles underpinning Taiwan's international cooperation and development affairs. In more recent years, Taiwan has continued to amend relevant laws and regulations to promote more rigorous and efficient aid operations.

Since 2010, the TaiwanICDF has also implemented a series of reforms designed to establish a professional and results-oriented approach toward cooperation and development and foster a vision and direction for the organization over the next decade. These reforms are being carried out with the hope of developing operational objectives, allocating resources and bringing priority areas of comparative advantage into focus that accurately reflect the organization's mission and core values.

### **Playing to Taiwan's Advantages and Helping Partners to Develop Sustainably**

In today's turbulent, dynamic world, where natural disasters, food shortages, and global economic difficulties are commonplace, rich and poor countries, whose destinies are interwoven due to globalization, have a common interest in helping one another. As a responsible stakeholder in the international community, Taiwan should be more actively involved in foreign aid work.

In addition to providing emergency aid and relief to partner countries during natural disasters, Taiwan should be playing to its advantages and making use of its experience from past successes in the area of international aid. In its priority areas of agriculture, public health, education, environmental protection, and information and communications technology, Taiwan should be planning medium- to long-term cooperation projects that help elevate incomes, reduce poverty, and improve the standard of living in developing partner countries. Taiwan should actively cooperate with international organizations to promote regional, bilateral, and global cooperation while continuing to extend a helping hand to developing partners. All of these activities will allow Taiwan to give back to the international community, fulfill its social responsibility to the world, and demonstrate its soft power to the global village.

Although Taiwan is not a member of the UN and can occasionally be obstructed in the international arena, it must continue to adhere to its core policy of "partnerships for progress and sustainable development." Through more effective foreign aid efforts, Taiwan can continue to strengthen its relationships with existing partner countries and build new friendships with other countries.

It is my deepest hope that the TaiwanICDF can continue to serve as Taiwan's "platform for international cooperation and development." I believe that through professional, transparent, and reliable aid projects, the TaiwanICDF can continue to effectively unite the resources and strengths of government departments and the private sector, strengthen international cooperation, assist friends and developing partners in their economic development, and enhance international friendships and foreign relations. By persistently making breakthroughs and bringing projects to fruition, the TaiwanICDF will always have a bright future ahead of it, filled with promise.

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