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Special Reports

Offering the Taiwan Experience to Others

—Using Knowledge to Draw a Blueprint

❖ International Human Resource Development Department



Interdependence in human resources training can be seen on a national, ethnic, and cultural basis. Cooperation and interaction in this area reaps multiple benefits.

The development of human resources is a common objective of development organizations regardless of their scale. The conceptual basis of human resources development among all these agencies is a respect for human rights, freedom and equality, capacity building, and fostering knowledge and innovation. Simply stated, the objective is to assist developing countries with access to education, empowering people in the fight against poverty, in accordance with the UN's MDGs. Achieving this goal will require advanced nations to provide more assistance and opportunities to developing countries.

With a mission of assisting developing nations in achieving self-reliance, the TaiwanICDF's human resources development activities have consistently tapped into the "Taiwan experience." Taiwan's successful economic and social development experiences are shared with partner countries to cultivate skilled manpower, strengthening development, and fostering interaction between those

countries and Taiwan.

Cultivating Human Resources Lays the Groundwork for Development

Contemporary economists share the belief that labor is one of the most important elements in production. Human resources have an enormous influence on economic development and play a critical role in economic growth.

The human resources required vary depending on the stages of development of a nation's economy. Progress in techniques, productivity, and economic structure are different at each stage of economic development. As such, there are different needs in terms of the quantity and skills of manpower in each phase. The foremost responsibility in cultivating human resources is to nurture the manpower appropriate to each stage.

Taiwan has experienced different phases in its transition from agriculture to industry, as well as varying stages of a service- and knowledge-based economy. The main reason that Taiwan has been able to secure an important spot in the international economy is that it has been able to successfully

coordinate its educational policies with each stage of economic development. The country has been able to set up its education policies to strike the right balance between normal and vocational education in order to fit labor demand. This has enabled it to turn out a moderate workforce to support industrial transition and upgrading, helping to hasten economic development.

Since its establishment in 1996, the TaiwanICDF has focused on using Taiwan's development experience to assist friendly countries in developing their human resources. Each year, the TaiwanICDF holds more than 10 workshops that cover topics such as economy and trade, farming and fisheries, ICT, and community development. These workshops help partner countries nurture the quality of their manpower, providing the expertise they require, and boosting technical standards and management skills. This, in turn, sparks sustainable development and helps to create a relationship between the participants and Taiwan, enhancing future cooperation.

In conjunction with local colleges and universities, the TaiwanICDF initiated its International Higher Education Scholarship Programs for foreign students in 1998. Full scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are provided to students with potential. The courses of study, which are all in English, are designed to meet the requirements for overall economic growth of partner nations. Taiwan's top centers of learning are cultivating experts in such fields as tropical agriculture, aquaculture, electrical engineering, public health and medicine, nursing,



▲ The Workshop on Bridging the Digital Divide provides participants with a view of Taiwan's achievements in ICT development.

precision molding, and business management. Even more importantly, these programs not only bring outstanding foreign students to Taiwan, adding diversity to Taiwan's universities and campuses, but also stimulate comprehensive academic research in international affairs, and connect Taiwan's higher education to the international academic community.

Turning the Digital Divide into Digital Opportunities

The rapid development of ICT has broken down traditional geographic boundaries so that knowledge and information are now transferred across the world with increased rapidity. While this promotes globalization and cultural integration, it has also created a serious digital gap between developing and developed countries. Taiwan is world-renowned in the field of ICT and is a world leader in many products, such as notebook computers. At the same time, the nation has an abundant number of ICT technicians and instructors, as well as significant experience in reducing the digital divide. Many nations throughout the globe, as well as international organizations and NGOs, are contemplating how to assist countries in improving their ICT capabilities so they can stay in step with the rest of the world.

The TaiwanICDF aims to keep its operations in this area consistent with the World Summit on the Information Society's principles of addressing core issues related to the role of ICT in economic development, the eradication of poverty, and the



▲ A seminar is held to explain and introduce the International Higher Education Scholarship Programs.



▲ The focus on sharing Taiwan's successful experiences in various fields helps ensure the popularity of TaiwanICDF Workshops.

realization of the MDGs. Given Taiwan's competitive edge in ICT, the TaiwanICDF is working to make this a focal point of its human resource training agenda. The organization holds short-term workshops on technology-related topics and reducing the digital divide, providing government officials, industry representatives, and academics from partner countries with opportunities to visit Taiwan and learn about Taiwan's experiences. The visitors are thus able to examine Taiwan's technology education and training systems firsthand. Meanwhile, the TaiwanICDF provides assistance over the medium and long term to help partner countries cultivate manpower proficient in the application of technology. The TaiwanICDF, National Tsing Hua University, and other universities renowned for their technology programs, have introduced English-language master's degree curriculums in technology management, and information systems and applications. Under this set-up, foreign students receive full two-year scholarships to study for master's degrees in Taiwan. This helps to hone human resources in the area of decision-making, and advanced technicians in the sector of ICT development.

The TaiwanICDF and the Ministry of Education jointly held the 2007 ICT For a Better Education – Taiwan Experiences seminar in Taipei in mid-November 2007. The conference was aimed at promoting digital application education and sharing Taiwan's experience in this area, reducing the digital divide between urban and rural areas, and stressing

the benefits of information education. Experts explained Taiwan's integration of technology into education, and how it successfully developed digital education within a short period. They also discussed the role of volunteers and cooperation between the industrial and academic sectors in effectively reducing the digital gap between cities and rural areas. A total of 34 high-ranking government officials in the fields of education and technology from 13 nations attended the seminar. The participants exchanged experiences on reducing the digital divide in their respective countries as well as promoting digital education. They also discussed the creation of an international cooperative platform for digital education. The conference is expected to have a substantive impact and positive effect on bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the future.

Community Development Creates New Opportunities

Serving as a platform for international interaction, the TaiwanICDF has consistently facilitated cooperation between domestic and foreign institutions. Since 2001, the organization has cooperated with 11 local governments in Taiwan to hold annual workshops related to community development and the tourism industry. The workshops examine how to promote community redevelopment and emphasize the unique qualities of each community in promoting tourism. In addition, officials from partner countries attend the seminars to share their experiences. The workshops have proven to be an enormous success and have attracted a large number of participants, making them among the most popular held by the TaiwanICDF.

In 2007, the TaiwanICDF cooperated with the Hsinchu City, Hsinchu County, and Miaoli County governments on a workshop to highlight the successes of the ethnic Hakka culture and communities that are so prominent in these areas. The course arranged for participating officials to visit grassroots communities, enabling them to see firsthand how residents have overcome various obstacles and work together to create the best environment possible. Participants also saw the efforts made to highlight local business with



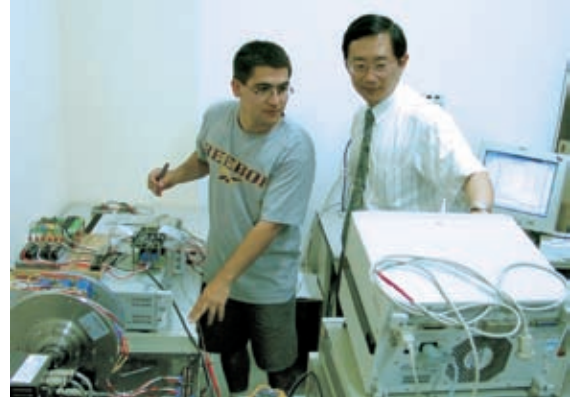
▲ Students participating in the Workshop on Community Development and Tourism Industry get a taste of Taiwanese culture up close.

its unique cultural character, and learned about various Hakka customs.

Community development does not require large amounts of capital or high levels of technology. It does, however, require a concern for people, culture, and creativity. Taiwan's experience in this area has triggered interest among the people of partner countries who are getting to know their environments all over again and are adopting creative ideas to promote them. This type of activity also effectively promotes the internationalization of localities, allowing participants from overseas get to know communities in Taiwan and establish long-lasting ties with them.

Leveraging Knowledge to Underpin a Bright Future

While Taiwan lacks natural resources and has



▲ Taiwan provides its know-how to partners throughout the world. This has sown the seeds for international development and cooperation.

a limited amount of land, its experience serves as an outstanding model for developing countries. International human resource development plays a critical role, both in creating room for Taiwan in the international arena and assisting partner nations in promoting sustainable development.

In the future, the TaiwanICDF will continue to emphasize international human resource development and international education operations. It will initiate a number of innovative training courses and projects to serve as a conduit for the spread of knowledge and Taiwan's experience throughout the world. The TaiwanICDF will also work with international institutions and NGOs in carrying out various programs, seeking not only to expand Taiwan's international participation, but also to remain in step with global development trends.

Sustainable Microfinance to the Poor

—Offering choice to the unbankable

❖ Banking and Finance Department



Despite the economic benefits being brought to many parts of the world by globalization, the uneven distribution of wealth in advanced nations and many developing countries continues to widen. In light of this situation, the UN in 2000 released its MDGs, a framework including eight goals and 18 targets that set the priorities for development assistance work today. One of these goals is eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

Poverty reduction is one of the main objectives of developing countries and international development institutions. The TaiwanICDF's projects are aimed at assisting those without income due to a lack of job opportunities, or those who despite having work still generate insufficient income to meet their basic needs. Most commercial banks have little interest in providing microfinancing to the poor due to the high transaction costs and business risks, as well as the inability of such borrowers to provide marketable collateral for loans. As a result, many microenterprises and individuals that have been considered unbankable have been unable to access financing from formal institutions in the past. This unsatisfied demand has pushed ahead the formation of non-bank FIs with

primarily commercial motivations in reaching low-income clients. These institutions adopt simple procedures in their lending activities and some rely on innovative group lending. This underpins the rapid development of these operations, which over time demonstrate financial viability and create more diversified microfinancing services. Microfinance then enters the commercial stage. In many developing countries, commercial banks now see the high potential of this microfinancing market and are down-sizing their operations to meet the financing needs of MSEs. As the microfinancing system matures, it helps the public in developing countries to engage in micro-, or small-scale production, facilitating self-reliance. Villages, remote areas, and women especially have benefited from these programs.

The benefits of the microfinancing mechanism in reducing poverty are increasingly gaining the attention of international development institutions. The UN emphasized this trend by calling 2005 the "International Year of Micro-credit." When making this announcement, United Nations Development Programme Administrator Mark Malloch Brown said that billions of people could benefit from financial

services, the majority of them women. Creating a revolution at the bottom of society across vast swathes of the developing world, microcredit was empowering people with the opportunity to make economic choices and spending decisions, he said. There was also a direct connection between the opportunity to expand the benefits of microcredit and reaching the MDGs. Malloch Brown noted that 97% of all microloans extended are repaid, which is a rate of recovery that has turned the heads of more than few FIs in developing countries. Meanwhile, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in 2005 attended the Private Capital Symposium in Geneva. In his opening address, he mentioned that, as people continue their efforts to achieve the MDGs, microfinance can and must be part of that picture. Motivated by access to microcredit, or microfinance, poor people no longer have to be passive. On the contrary, they have newfound potential. Microcredit can help to create markets, bringing people who have been marginalized back into the mainstream economy.

In 2006, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Dr. Muhammad Yunus, and the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, of which he is the founder. His success in developing and operating a microfinance mechanism has been lauded the world over. This “banker to the poor” created Grameen in the countryside more than 20 years ago. Since then, the bank has successfully created standardized methods in providing various financial products, and has become a global model in the provision of microfinancing.

The Microcredit Strategies of the TaiwanICDF

The TaiwanICDF’s first involvement in microcredit projects can be traced back to 1995 when it introduced a Cooperative Rural Saving and Credit System Project in Indonesia. That loan was channeled through the Indonesian bank BUKOPIN for re-lending to what are called primary cooperatives, the members of which are then able to access financial assistance for their business activities, effectively helping villages accumulate capital. In addition, the TaiwanICDF launched the Small Farmholders’ Financing Scheme in



▲ BUKOPIN cooperative bank in Indonesia helps provide local fishermen with the funds they need to purchase goods and equipment.

1998. This two-tier model combines agricultural skills training, and funding. Under this innovative model, a revolving fund was set up to assist farmers who participate in projects directed by overseas missions. Local financing NGOs also provided appropriate assistance in carrying out this scheme on a case-by-case basis.

The scheme primarily focuses on providing funding for the acquisition of raw materials, equipment, and working capital needed to carry out production. Increasingly efficient administration, accounting, and fiscal management procedures have been introduced to cooperatives and associations, helping to boost operational management. The idea is to help advance crop diversification programs through the provision of capital, in order to raise farming income and employment opportunities, and ultimately to increase the sustainability of the assistance projects led by the technical missions.

This project is an example of the TaiwanICDF working in conjunction with a technical mission, local FIs, and NGOs. As well as cooperating with local FIs on microfinancing projects, and on small farmholders’ financing schemes across Central America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa, the TaiwanICDF also cooperates with international development institutions to extend its operations. In 1988, the TaiwanICDF and the EBRD jointly established the FIISF. This initiative provides microcredit capital to local FIs in early transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan,

Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova. The funds that are re-lent assist in the development of MSEs in those countries. In 2006, the TaiwanICDF and the IDB's MIF cooperated in the establishment of the Specialized Financial Intermediary Investment Fund. This assists FIs that engage in microfinance business in providing innovative financial services to low-income households, helping to boost incomes and living standards.

The TaiwanICDF adopts a variety of flexible strategies to assist in the development of microfinancing services in friendly nations. Its cooperative partners range from local small-sized cooperatives and non-bank FIs, to commercial banks and international FIs. The TaiwanICDF also tailors its assistance, which includes technical assistance, grants (establishing microcredit seed funds), loans and investment, based on the needs of each country and targeted partner. The goal of the TaiwanICDF is to support developing nations in adding depth to their microfinancing systems. In the meantime, the TaiwanICDF will expand its participation in global microfinance initiatives, utilizing the most effective tools to assist the economically underprivileged in their efforts to become self-reliant.

The Rebirth of Omar Torrijos Cooperative in Nicaragua

The Omar Torrijos Cooperative is located in Sebaco, Nicaragua. The cooperative engages in the farming of paddy rice and the commercial production of unhusked rice. A total of 280 hectares of land is cultivated on the cooperative, which is home to 283 families. The cooperative was on the verge of bankruptcy prior to participating in the TaiwanICDF's Small Farmholders' Financing Scheme. It had debts of about US\$710,000 and its only asset was an old, run-down plow. While the land is extremely fertile, the cooperative lacked irrigation facilities. Nonetheless, as it has ample human resources and a good geographic location, the Technical Mission in Nicaragua decided to provide loans after supplying on-farm management.

After four years of hard work, the cooperative had come back from the brink and was able to operate

efficiently again. Wang Tseng-jui, head of the mission in Nicaragua at the time and the person responsible for carrying out this difficult project, said: "We'd get up each day at 5 a.m. and head to the farm before there was even light in the sky. When we had planes to spray pesticides, we would have to get up even earlier at 3 a.m. to get to the airport." Over a four-year period, the technical mission provided the cooperative with production and marketing technology and also helped to reform the structure of the cooperative, setting up a systematic management committee, establishing an agricultural enterprise system and training members in basic accounting management concepts. Even more important, the technical mission introduced Taiwan's agribusiness concepts, helping the cooperative establish administrative management, accounting systems, material procurement, rice sales, and debt management systems.

Four years later, the Omar Torrijos Cooperative has successfully paid off all its debts, and average rice production per hectare now reaches 6,000 kilograms. Once on the verge of bankruptcy, the cooperative is able to pay dividends to its members and even make contributions to nearby villages. It participates in community welfare activities, and donates rice to local schools, the government, the police administration, and charity organizations. The technical guidance received by members has honed their knowledge to the extent that they are participating in various international seminars and outlining the assistance they received from the TaiwanICDF technical mission. This small-



▲ The provision of loans and on-farm management has brought the Omar Torrijos Cooperative back from the brink of bankruptcy.

scale financing project has not only successfully improved the lives of 283 households, but has also helped spark economic development in the area.

Helping Underprivileged Women in The Gambia

In recent years, microfinance has emerged as an important tool for the TaiwanICDF in its effort to help reduce poverty. The aim of these projects is to enhance institutional capacity and ultimately provide direct support to microfinancing institutions (MFI), enabling them to expand their services and reach new clients. In 1998, a 5-year technical assistance grant was provided to the Gambia Women's Finance Association (GAWFA) to establish a sound FI ahead of loan funding. This technical assistance project aimed to help the GAWFA to expand service areas, increase operational self-sufficiency, and improve staff competency. The TaiwanICDF next helped improve the capacity of the Village Saving and Credit Associations. Once this was achieved, preferential loans were provided to these two organizations and other institutions meeting qualification standards. With funding from the TaiwanICDF, the MFIs then had the ability to begin providing microcredit services.

Kanni Touray, a female villager in The Gambia, has a small egg farm. Prior to applying for a loan, she was able to operate her business only on a limited scale. She would sell the eggs produced at her facility to nearby markets or tourist hotels. Unstable output, high transportation costs, and her inability to

control prices meant that her profits were slim. Kanni then presented a business plan to a local institution operating in conjunction with the TaiwanICDF's microfinancing project. She received a one-year loan of US\$6,200 and used the funds to build three chicken coops and fences, purchase chicks and feed, and have reserve working capital. Since tending to 1,500 hens required a considerable amount of manpower and time, both Kanni and her husband had to operate the farm. In addition, Kanni hired neighbors as guards, maintenance personnel, and egg collectors. As output and sales stabilized, the community as a whole prospered as many of her neighbors began to enjoy stable incomes by working for Kanni. After deducting her various costs, Kanni's monthly net profit was about the same as that of a teacher in The Gambia. Her accumulated profits were sufficient for her to pay off her loan ahead of schedule.

Georgia ProCredit Bank Lending Project

The EBRD is one of the TaiwanICDF's most important cooperative partners in Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. Assistance has been provided to Georgia since 2002 to help it develop its financial system. Three local banks have received technical assistance and funding thanks to international cooperation platforms introduced by the EBRD. The TaiwanICDF has also provided assistance via such a platform, offering capital required by MSEs. One of the notable successes



▲ The Microfinancing and Capacity Building Project in The Gambia focuses on providing group loans. This unique set-up engenders community spirit by making the group as a whole responsible for repayment.



▲ Georgia's ProCredit Bank employees visit a pet store opened by a woman who obtained credit from the bank.

involves ProCredit Bank. The bank began expanding the number of its branches in 1999. At the same time, the number of loan applications it handled and the amount of loans extended grew substantially. Many micro-scale enterprises that had borrowed in euros had grown into MSEs, improving their ability to apply for and receive loans. One woman who borrowed funds had originally been a doctor. Due to a weak economy, she gave up her profession and turned to her neighbors to borrow three euros to buy goods to start a bakery. Initially, she started her business by selling two small cakes. A while later she applied to borrow funds from ProCredit. In less than five years, her bakery operation had developed into a business employing 30 workers, and that operated 365 days a year.

Creating Opportunities and Empowering People

In a 2007 policy report, the World Bank stated that capital is important to the economic development process, and that poverty is sometimes created merely through an imbalance of opportunities. The TaiwanICDF gradually began to introduce microcredit and then – following global trends – microfinancing projects back in 1995. It first set its sights on areas that offered insufficient banking services, helping to reinforce the capacity of FIs in those countries. It also engaged in cooperation with well-known FIs, providing them with the capital they required to engage in loan operations. In the process of carrying out loan projects, the TaiwanICDF has at times faced various challenges. In terms of the FIs, these have included a lack of capacity and management know-how, while problems for borrowers include difficulties repaying loans on time due to natural disasters and a lack of collateral. Despite these setbacks, the TaiwanICDF's efforts to encourage self-reliance and sound saving habits have put borrowers on the first rung of the ladder out of poverty.

In the future, the TaiwanICDF will continue to focus on regions that require microfinance. The organization will look at development projects with targeted beneficiaries in mind and then introduce appropriate microfinance mechanisms, helping to



▲ The TaiwanICDF extends credit to fishermen in Honduras through the Tilapia Cage Culture Project, under its Small Farmholders' Financing Scheme.

expand the benefits of the original projects. At the same time, it will make use of cooperative networks to develop microfinance projects that meet the development needs of these regions. The TaiwanICDF hopes to take advantage of microfinancing mechanisms to safely funnel capital to those in need of it, maximizing the utilization of funds. This will support self-reliance in borrowers, helping to fulfill one of the objectives of the MDGs.

Working for Mutual Benefit

—Establishing Cooperative Partnerships

❖ Policy and Planning Department



The UN's MDGs stress the importance of global cooperation and partnerships in promoting development. As a member of the international community, Taiwan is keen to establish such relationships. An important theme for the TaiwanICDF over this past year has been how best to unite the strengths of the public and private sectors and work in coordination with other multilateral development institutions, bilateral assistance agencies, and NGOs to engage in development assistance. These efforts are aimed at spurring economic growth in developing countries and achieving the global objective of poverty reduction.

Spreading the Seeds of the Taiwan Experience

Looking back at Taiwan's own development experience, the successful development of the island's agricultural sector, SMEs, trade, ICT and medicine, and health is the result of the effective utilization of human resources, flexible innovation, and capacity building. Originally a recipient of assistance, Taiwan is now a provider, with the TaiwanICDF responsible for carrying out many of the nation's development operations and activities. The TaiwanICDF's earliest

projects involved the strengthening of partner countries' agricultural sectors. The organization then began providing assistance in commercialized production, SMEs, trade, and ICT. From the start, the TaiwanICDF's operations have emphasized sustainable development, and its efforts to integrate capital, technology and human resources echo the trends in international development assistance.

The TaiwanICDF cooperates with international organizations in four main areas: Investment and lending, technical cooperation, international human



▲ Taiwan's success in agricultural development has been key to its transition from recipient to provider of development assistance.

resources development, and humanitarian assistance. The organization injects funds into and participates in various projects initiated by regional development institutions. It also cooperates with international institutions in carrying out technical assistance, thereby cultivating human resources and strengthening the capacity of partner countries. Workshops are held routinely as part of bilateral cooperation, allowing Taiwan's educational system and development experience to play a part in the honing of human resources in partner countries. Finally, the TaiwanICDF cooperates with international institutions to help countries recover from civil strife, and natural disasters by offering emergency relief funds and donations of goods.

In the past, the TaiwanICDF generally pursued a cooperation model under which it provided funds to international institutions. In recent years, however, it has increasingly focused on contributing expert advisory and providing technical assistance. One example is the Mongolia Cooperation Fund, which operates under the EBRD and is funded by Taiwan, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Japan. In conjunction with this fund, the TaiwanICDF has conducted a Mongolia SME Workshop. The aim was to utilize Taiwan's considerable experience in the field of SME development to help Mongolia's SMEs carry out corporate reform and replicate the success seen among Taiwan's SMEs.

This type of cooperation makes use of Taiwan's strengths as the starting point for international assistance work. Given Taiwan's expertise in various fields, a number of international organizations have shown a willingness to work with the TaiwanICDF. Meanwhile, Taiwan has the valuable experience of making the transition from recipient to provider of assistance within decades, enabling it to confidently pinpoint the areas worthy of development and address any challenges faced.

Cooperating with the EBRD to Support Eastern Europe's Transition

The rapid pace of economic development in former Eastern Bloc nations in recent years has



▲ The TaiwanICDF and the EBRD carry out a number of cooperative projects, benefiting countless people in former Eastern Bloc nations.

attracted the attention of the world. The enormous business potential of these nations cannot be neglected. Established in 1991, the EBRD aims to assist countries from Central Europe to Central Asia in moving from planned to free market economies. The EBRD has provided in excess of 20 billion euros of funding to these nations and is not only the region's largest international financial institution, but is also at the forefront in promoting international development there.

The TaiwanICDF began cooperation on various financing and re-lending projects with the EBRD in 1996. For instance, the Belarus SME Re-lending Project offered an opportunity to cooperate with the National Bank of Belarus. Funds provided were re-loaned to participating banks, which then used them to aid the development of the nation's SMEs. In 2005, the TaiwanICDF and the EBRD jointly established the FIISF—SBA in the country. This scheme has provided loans to the ETC Non-bank MFI Framework, the ProCredit Bank of Georgia Project (II), and the ProCredit Bank in Ukraine MSME Re-lending Project. In July 2007, the EBRD signed re-lending project agreements with Azerbaijan's Bank of Baku and Bank Respublika. In addition to the EBRD's injection of capital, the TaiwanICDF re-lent funds to the banks via the FIISF. This has successfully expanded the TaiwanICDF's MSME re-lending cooperation blueprint to the Caucasus region. Via its cooperation with the EBRD, the TaiwanICDF is able to participate in offering banking services to emerging markets in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, the

organization has the opportunity to provide Taiwan's banking community with relevant information that will help it expand to new markets.

Cooperation with the OAS' Young Americas Business Trust

The outstanding performance of Taiwan's SMEs has been one of the main factors behind Taiwan's recent economic success. Credit for this can be attributed to the cultivation of highly skilled human resources and an entrepreneurial spirit. To be sure, the development of human resources is crucial in helping developing countries emerge from poverty. The TaiwanICDF in 2003 commenced cooperation with the YABT, an initiative run by the OAS. The organization was established with a mission of creating political, economic, and social stability, along with sustainable growth in the Americas, and via technology, training and the cultivation of young entrepreneurs, creating employment opportunities for youth in Latin America. Both organizations work to expand the leadership networks of young businessmen in the region, and jointly hold international technology assistance seminars. The OAS also recommends students from member countries to participate in an annual training course held by the TaiwanICDF.

In 2004, the TaiwanICDF invited YABT CEO Roy Thomasson to Taiwan to get a firsthand look at innovative models used here to nurture outstanding entrepreneurs. Continuing the series of exchanges between the two organizations, in 2006, the TaiwanICDF invited other high-ranking personnel from YABT to observe the management models adopted by Taiwan's Global Talentpreneur Innovation & Collaboration Association (GlobalTiC). The visitors enthusiastically took what they learned back to Latin America and, in October that year, organized the Talent and Innovation Competition of the Americas. A total of 790 teams from 34 countries took part, making the event one of the biggest of the year for the region's youth.

In May 2007, the finals of the competition were held at the same time as the annual meeting of the OAS in Panama, with backing from the TaiwanICDF.



▲ A new cooperative model integrates capital from Food For The Poor and assistance from the TaiwanICDF's technical missions.

The competition won accolades from member countries and it became the climax of the annual meeting. The TaiwanICDF invited the seven winning teams to participate in the GlobalTiC competition, which was held in Taipei in July 2007, allowing the teams to compete against their counterparts from across the globe. The teams from the Americas put in an outstanding performance, winning four top prizes in eight areas of competition.

Cooperation with Food For The Poor

Founded in 1982, FFP is a U.S.-based Christian relief organization that conducts various humanitarian projects, mostly in Central America and the Caribbean, helping to reduce poverty in the region. With its substantial resources, it is a highly influential NGO.

The TaiwanICDF first cooperated with FFP in 2005 in carrying out a tilapia farming project in Honduras. Given the success of the project, the two agencies decided to expand their cooperation in Central America and the Caribbean, working together in the areas of farming production, tilapia farming, medical services, smallholder lending, social development, and human resources development. As of the end of 2007, the TaiwanICDF and FFP were working together in more than 10 projects in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

October 16, 2007 was designated World Food Day by the UN to remind the world that there are still 854 million malnourished people around the globe

and that attention must be paid to the shortage of staple foods. According to the FAO, lower income “food deficit” countries will spend US\$28 billion in 2007/08 on importing cereals, double what they spent in 2002. Insufficient food will lead to social unrest, casting a cloud on economic progress. In response, the TaiwanICDF and FFP in 2007 cooperated for the first time on a food assistance project. The TaiwanICDF was responsible for coordinating resources and donations of food, while FFP took responsibility for transportation. The items were delivered to countries facing food shortages, helping to alleviate hunger among the needy.

Aggressively Developing New Opportunities for Cooperation

The TaiwanICDF cooperates with many types of international institutions and is always seeking to establish fruitful relationships. Addressing topics of global significance is a means of opening new avenues of communication, through which cooperative experiences can be shared. At the same time, involvement in international dialogue on such issues increases Taiwan’s visibility in the world. Given Taiwan’s diplomatic situation, the forming of partnerships is not always straightforward, making it difficult for Taiwan to contribute. This is directly impacting the international community’s stance that global cooperation is required to achieve development.

The TaiwanICDF forges ahead despite the challenges faced in developing partnership relationships. It continues to pursue opportunities to cooperate with international institutions, and in the future, plans to strengthen existing channels by emphasizing cooperation at the ground level. The technical missions stationed in various countries will work directly with international institutions, bilateral assistance institutions, and NGOs. This will help to maximize the use of Taiwan’s expertise and allow Taiwan to become an important link in international development cooperation efforts in partner countries. It will also let Taiwan fulfill its responsibility as a global citizen, working hand in hand with others to promote the long-term objective of development for humanity.



▲ Global cooperation and development projects have as their main goals the alleviation of poverty, and self-reliance.

Global Cooperation Fosters Development

As the world becomes increasingly integrated, countries are becoming more and more interdependent. Cooperation and collective action is, therefore, all the more necessary to resolve common problems. It is difficult for a single government or agency to solve the various challenges facing the world. Problems can only be addressed and resolved by including international organizations and NGOs in cooperative models, pooling resources to maximize returns.

As Taiwan’s dedicated development cooperation organization, the TaiwanICDF aims to serve as a platform for coordinating and integrating Taiwan’s international development cooperation activities. It seeks to gather knowledge and pool resources so that Taiwan’s international development work can yield the greatest possible rewards. The TaiwanICDF believes that mutual benefit is the conceptual essence in engaging in cooperation with international institutions and NGOs. It hopes to combine the power of the public and private sectors to provide a comprehensive response in terms of international assistance. The TaiwanICDF integrates its four pillars of investment and lending, technical cooperation, international human resources development, and humanitarian assistance in working with international institutions, bilateral assistance institutions, and NGOs to help foster self-reliance within developing countries.

Activities in Medical Services and Health Care

—Providing Multi-faceted Medical and Health Services

❖ Technical Cooperation Department



Life in the modern world has been made much more convenient thanks to technological advances. However, continued poverty and disease throughout the developing world still threaten the survival of people and societies. Many places still lack the basic necessities and services to ensure health and well-being. To be sure, globalization is gradually breaking down national borders. Controlling the spread of infectious disease and comprehensively improving public health are development missions that transcend borders, regions, and nationality.

Health is not only a basic right that should be enjoyed by all, but is also critical to social development and economic growth. The World Bank has observed that the losses to the labor force resulting from malnutrition in developing countries account for about 3-5% of GDP. It is evident that people on the lower rungs of society in these nations, who have long faced malnutrition, and a lack of safe drinking water and access to satisfactory sanitation, have been unable to emerge from poverty. In fact, these factors frequently lead to a vicious circle. In response, three of the UN's eight MDGs are directly related to health care and medicine, namely reducing child mortality,

improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. Quantifiable indicators have been set for all of these goals, with the mission being to allow each person to enjoy the basic right to health without prejudice regarding social standing, sex, or ethnicity.

The TaiwanICDF has long been involved in international development, enabling it to accumulate a substantial amount of practical experience that is reflected in its operational plans. The organization looks to the strengths of Taiwan's medical community in actively participating in international medical service and health care activities. In the past, projects focused mainly on holding clinics for people in partner countries. Assistance has now been expanded to the transfer of technology to reinforce the human resources of partner nations, and help them develop and enact sustainable systems for self-reliance. Training is provided to local medical care personnel, strengthening their clinical knowledge, abilities, and technical expertise. The TaiwanICDF also engages in consultation assistance, helping to draft HIV/AIDS, malaria, and infectious disease prevention projects. The strategic integration of manpower, various

agencies, and disease prevention efforts enables the TaiwanICDF to effectively promote international medical services and health care.

Training of Medical Personnel Boosts Quality of Grassroots Services

Many medical personnel in developing countries lack adequate training and equipment as well as related resources, which exposes patients to high risk. The training of medical workers is therefore one of the fundamental means of assisting partner nations in establishing self-help in the field of medical treatment and services. In addition to addressing the severe shortage of qualified personnel, this assistance helps to improve the efficiency of diagnosis and treatment, and strengthen the quality of health care for patients.

The TaiwanICDF designs and holds training workshops and curriculums based on the needs of partner countries and in reflection of international health care development trends. These workshops share Taiwan's medical expertise with partner countries and give medical specialists in those nations the opportunity to gain practical experience. In 2007, the TaiwanICDF held a Workshop on Healthcare Management and a specialized Workshop on Malaria Surveillance in São Tomé and Príncipe. Representatives from government health agencies and related institutions from partner nations were invited to Taiwan to attend these short-term training courses in which Taiwan shared with participants its considerable experience in medical management and malaria prevention. The TaiwanICDF has also dispatched experts to various countries for short periods to provide on-site training. For instance, Taiwanese experts in the field of malaria prevention were sent to São Tomé and Príncipe and the Orissa area in India to train local malaria laboratory staff. It has also sent MMMs to partner nations to engage in short-term clinical education. This is an important step in cultivating and training local workers in clinical medicine in remote areas.

MMM and permanent medical missions also regularly evaluate the need for training in specific



▲ Mobile Medical Missions not only provide diagnoses and treatment, they also offer clinical demonstrations and training for local health care personnel, helping to boost the medical standards of partner countries.

fields among the personnel in partner countries. They recommend initiatives for the mobilization of members within the IHCSA. A total of 35 hospitals and medical centers are members of the alliance, which was an effort spearheaded by the TaiwanICDF. These members are called into action to jointly carry out training programs in partner countries. The core of these projects is to provide three months of intensive clinical training. Doctors, pharmacists, nurses, nutritionists, physical therapists, medical technicians, lab personnel, and hospital administrators receive training under these projects. A large number of people enroll to receive training each year, with people continuing to sign up even after deadlines.

The TaiwanICDF also provides scholarships for health care personnel, exhibiting a high level of potential, to study for master's and doctorate degrees in Taiwan. The organization cooperates with National Yang Ming University, National Taipei College of Nursing, and Kaohsiung Medical University School of Medicine to offer postgraduate studies in public health, and nursing, and clinical medicine. These programs are an opportunity for aspiring medical personnel to gain invaluable qualifications, which will enable them to make contributions in their native countries upon their return.

Strengthening Hospital Management and Improving Medical Services

One of the keys to ensuring that medical

service and health care assistance is carried out on a long-term basis is to engage in communication and coordination with local partners and to create mutually-beneficial relationships when implementing projects. Taiwan provided medical assistance as far back as 1962 when it sent a medical service team to Libya. The TaiwanICDF now undertakes various medical cooperation projects, dispatching missions and health advisers, as well as volunteers in grassroots nursing, pharmacy, and public health. These talented professionals devote themselves to improving the quality of medical services in developing countries by working closely with local people in the field. Their efforts are instrumental in gradually establishing consensus on types of cooperation, as well as creating a channel for exchanges and interaction.

Medical specialists who are stationed in partner countries participate in the local medical system and provide their expertise and experience in an effort to help improve the quality of health care. These individuals also offer guidance in the formation of community and grassroots public service systems. The establishment of such systems helps to improve hospital and pharmaceutical management mechanisms. In conjunction with the compiling of patient medical histories, and appropriate management of drugs and medical goods, this helps to raise the standards of medical services at partner hospitals and improve their business structure.

One success story is that of the Centro Policlínico de Aqua Grande in São Tomé and Príncipe. After

the Medical Mission in São Tomé and Príncipe was stationed at the center in 1998, clinical services were initiated in a number of fields of medicine. At the same time, the medical mission introduced a systematic clinic registration system and a patient history management mechanism, as well as a standardized fee structure. The medical mission worked in conjunction with the WHO's Bamako Initiative to assist the Centro Policlínico in establishing a sustainable pharmaceutical management mechanism. In addition, the mission helped in the renovation of 40 grassroots health stations and set up two interactive regional medical networks. Members of the medical mission provided technical transfers through clinical education and training. Assistance was provided to communities in setting up their own medical systems, helping to improve the quality of treatment and services. After carrying out these initiatives for a number of years with a high degree of success, the TaiwanICDF is now focusing on the areas of preventive medicine and public health. Thanks to the assistance of the medical mission, the experience in the transformation of the Centro Policlínico has become a successful model for medical centers and clinics throughout the nation to emulate.

Creating a Disease Prevention Network in Grassroots Areas

In the treatment of infectious diseases, the consumption of varying amounts of drugs at irregular intervals can eventually lead to the pathogens developing resistance. This can mean that all the resources and efforts that have been put into treating the disease are wasted. At the same time, many patients do not return to clinics and follow-up procedures are discontinued. This situation is frequently seen in developing countries that have insufficient medical resources. In some African countries, the rates for such losses of contact are as high as 25%. This results in a lack of knowledge about the current state of a patient's health, constituting a gap in data that could be used for reference. The ultimate result is a missing link in the chain to control infectious disease. In response, the TaiwanICDF puts



▲ Health care and medical assistance is helping to alleviate suffering in countries like Burkina Faso.



▲ Bringing love and compassion from Taiwan to all corners of the world, the Mobile Medical Missions strive to improve the lot of those most in need.

extra effort into making sure that contact is maintained with the people participating in its prevention projects, as this has proved to be one of the key elements in whether a project is ultimately successful.

In southern Africa, the TaiwanICDF's Medical Mission in Malawi successfully coordinated resources from a variety of sources in establishing the ARV Rainbow Clinic at Mzuzu Central Hospital. The clinic provides AIDS treatment services, and engages in parallel cooperation with The Global Fund to carry out diagnosis of infants with AIDS, as well as surveys into the resistance of AIDS to drugs. Meanwhile, an electronic recognition and registration system has been established that employs fingerprint recognition technology, making it easier to provide and monitor treatment to patients. Patient histories all have bar codes, which facilitates monitoring of the types and amounts of medicines and treatments that have been provided to patients.

The TaiwanICDF is also focusing on the reasons patients lose contact with clinics. This data is important in helping partner countries to design disease prevention strategies. The Medical Mission in Malawi has spent considerable time tracking down patients who at one time were treated at Mzuzu Central Hospital, or three hospitals in nearby regions. After six months of exhaustive work and analysis, it was determined that the main reason that patients stopped going to the clinics was that they were unable to shoulder transportation expenses. The results of the survey serve as another reminder that the issue of

health care in Africa is not purely one of providing treatment. Rather, it involves a wide range of issues such as poverty, population density, education, and public infrastructure. The survey's findings were published in the July 2007 edition of the WHO Bulletin, providing firsthand information on AIDS prevention topics to countries throughout the world.

Introducing Resources and Developing Partnerships

International medical and health care cooperation has become a focal point of the global development drive. In response, countries and institutions the world over have increased all types of medical assistance to developing nations. Supporting efforts to upgrade the sanitation and medical environments in developing countries is vital to the survival of the people of these nations. Each nation requires different treatments and disease prevention methods. Only by providing the proper assistance will a partner nation be able to put into place a medical environment that meets the needs of its citizens on a sustainable basis. In light of this, the main objective of the TaiwanICDF's medical and health care assistance is to help partner nations enhance their medical personnel and institutional capacities.

Cooperation in this field is a long-term effort. The TaiwanICDF will continue to make use of Taiwan's considerable development experience in this area. It will also engage in technical transfers and promote reform to strengthen the medical systems of partner countries. The TaiwanICDF intends to integrate resources on an even more flexible basis and look for more cooperative possibilities in carrying out international medical and health care assistance. These efforts are expected to improve the quality of medical services and public health in partner countries by strengthening human resources, and enlarging the capacity of institutions.