

Overview





“The best of prophets of the future is the past,” wrote Lord Byron, and ICDF activities in 2001 augur a bright future indeed. The ICDF underwent many changes and marked several milestones during the year, not least of which was observance of its fifth anniversary of operations in July. Numerous foreign envoys, government officials, industry and business representatives, members of NGOs and press personnel enthusiastically participated in the celebration at the organization’s headquarters in Taipei’s diplomatic quarter. Shortly thereafter, in August, Deputy Secretary General Yang Tzu-pao assumed the position of acting Secretary General with the retirement of Secretary General Loh Ping-cheung. Yang is vigorously leading the ICDF toward a streamlined, progressive vision of institutional professionalism.

Humanitarian aid was a focal point of ICDF efforts in 2001. Projects included emergency relief for blizzard-stricken Mongolia, earthquake reconstruction work in El Salvador and Peru, and emergency relief for Afghan refugees. While the funds committed to these undertakings were not large, their source represents an important development at the ICDF, for 2001 was the first year in which humanitarian assistance funding was officially incorporated into the ICDF budget. In addition to essential assistance for the immediate needs of disaster victims, the ICDF promoted the long-term development of human rights and higher living standards by helping host countries create the durable elements of safe, healthy lives and continued productive livelihoods.

Other important ICDF operations this year included extending the purview of its educational program at National Pingtung University of Science and Technology and launching new efforts in cooperation with National Chengchi University; signing a letter of intent that will extend technical cooperation with CABEL; training and dispatching new teams of overseas volunteers and Diplomatic Alternative Service program recruits (the latter represents a wholly new ICDF service area, and is laying the groundwork for the ROC’s future diplomats and overseas technical personnel); supporting the ICDF Alumni Society; conducting seminars attended by scores of students and professionals from nations around the world; and fortifying internal systems to facilitate management, enhance communications, and improve fiscal management and internal auditing.

Helping partner nations spur economic development, realize higher standards of living, and effect social progress are of course core ICDF directives. ICDF development strategy calls for varied types of assistance (often focusing on areas in which the ROC enjoys comparative advantage) corresponding to prevailing economic and social conditions in different regions. ICDF cooperation with Africa emphasizes improving living environments for people suffering from grain shortages and insufficient medical resources. Work in Europe, implemented in conjunction with the EBRD, is helping nations navigate

the transition from planned economies to free market systems, by transplanting the experiences of the thriving SME sector in the ROC. Cooperative projects in Central and South America and the Asia-Pacific region focus on upgrade of industrial foundations, planning of sales and marketing channels, training of technical personnel, promotion of trade ties, and, ultimately, the development of new overseas markets for Taiwanese firms. In one notable development in 2001, the ICDF signed an agreement with three Taiwanese banks to offer credit guarantees for domestic firms investing in nations allied with the ROC. As well, the ICDF helped the Central American Trade Office in Taipei establish improved systems and procedures. Both of these developments will strengthen trade ties and encourage investment in nations allied with the ROC. Such an approach stems from the country's new diplomatic philosophy and principles of reciprocal economic and diplomatic returns.

We will examine the above and many other ICDF projects and programs, internal developments, guiding principles, and vital statistics in this report. Since its establishment in 1996, the ICDF has striven to fulfill its mission by energetically contributing to international society and resolutely adhering to universal principles of altruism, human rights and international progress. Looking to the future, the ICDF commits itself again to this mission and, taking advantage of its growing experience, will continue to work toward new levels of professionalism and expertise in its future operations.