

# Foreword



Over recent decades, Taiwan's economic achievements have been widely recognized around the world. Assistance from the international community played a significant role in the success of our economic development. So today, by sharing the valuable economic and developmental experience we have accumulated over the years with other countries, we will be playing our part in creating an international community defined by prosperity and reciprocity. This is why I adopted "economic prosperity" as one of the three tenets of Taiwan's foreign policy when I assumed the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. International cooperation is an important channel through which economic prosperity can be realized.

In 2003, the International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF-TAIWAN) has made progress in promoting international cooperation, particularly in the following key areas:

## **Having Our Methods of Implementing International Cooperation Recognized**

In recent years, the ICDF has focused its international cooperation on four core business areas, i.e., technical cooperation, investment and financing, education and training, and humanitarian assistance. Its purpose has been to assist the economic development and the building of infrastructure in allied and friendly countries. Taiwan has cooperated and shared its experience with these countries in core fields of expertise such as the development of small and medium sized enterprises, human resources development, the upgrading and transformation of agriculture, and technological development. By sharing our experience, we have established partnerships with a number of countries, enabling them to create wealth, and to move forward towards the worthy goals of friendship, mutual prosperity, cooperation, and development. Consequently, a report published by the Control Yuan last year specifically noted that Taiwan's international cooperation work is in no way an example of so-called "money diplomacy." The same report expressed hope that the government will take further steps to explain the results of our assistance projects overseas to people in Taiwan.

## **Responding to the Trends of International Cooperation; Demonstrating Taiwan's Contributions**

In the United Nations' *Human Development Report 2003*, the eradication of poverty was highlighted as a common goal for the international community. In response to this, the ICDF has actively cooperated with international institutions and NGOs to promote poverty-reduction programs. It has conducted micro-financing projects to help relieve poverty, and has assisted people living in allied countries to create wealth through grass-roots projects, thus directly improving economic conditions in these countries, and even enhancing human rights. The establishment of the Micro-Credit National, SA in Haiti is but one example of this.

## **Emphasizing the Spirit of "Volunteer Taiwan"; Realizing the Ideal of "People's Diplomacy"**

In addition to earnestly promoting the above-mentioned four core business areas, the ICDF has also aligned its work with the general direction of Taiwan's foreign policy. For example, we have sought to promote the idea of "people's diplomacy" by broadening the participation of Taiwan volunteers and members of the Taiwan Youth Overseas Service to developing countries. With personal encouragement from President Chen, Overseas Volunteers and Taiwan Youth Overseas Servicemen have made remarkable contributions to international cooperation. Their selfless efforts have left a deep impression on the international community, and have shown the world what can be achieved by "people's diplomacy."

## **Encouraging Academic Involvement in Foreign Assistance Work, Thus Further Internationalizing Universities in Taiwan**

Taiwan is widely respected abroad for the quality of its higher education. The ICDF has worked with six of Taiwan's most prestigious universities: National Pingtung University of Science and Technology; National Chengchi University; National Tsing Hua University; National Yang Ming University; National Taiwan Ocean University; and National Taiwan

Normal University. The ICDF has cooperated with these institutions in conducting higher education training programs, signing an “Education Strategic Alliance in International Cooperation” (ESAIC) with each of them. Through the ESAIC, international human resources training programs have been introduced into Taiwan’s academic sector. This has not only helped strengthen the ties between the foreign assistance community and academia, but has also helped Taiwan’s universities become more international in scope.

### **Reinforcing Cooperation with NGOs; Strengthening Partnerships between Government and Civil Groups**

Taiwan is home to numerous civil groups dedicated to foreign assistance. Greater levels of coordination and integration between these groups and their resources can result in a greater ability to contribute to humanitarian assistance globally. This is why the ICDF has continued to reinforce coordination and collaboration between the government and civil society in humanitarian assistance projects. The “Love from Taiwan: Material Assistance Distribution Project in Iraq,” jointly promoted by the ICDF and 18 Taiwan-based NGOs, was but one successful example of our efforts in this regard.

### **Fortifying Cooperation with International Institutions; Enhancing Multilateral Participation**

International cooperation not only has the potential to strengthen bilateral relations; it can also serve as a channel for participation in multilateral networks and activities. Last year, for instance, the ICDF cooperated for the first time with the Organization of American States’ Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), sharing Taiwan’s experience in developing small and medium enterprises with Central and South American countries by way of video conferences.

### **Enhancing a General Understanding of and Support for Taiwan’s International Cooperation at Home and Abroad**

The ICDF published a number of books last year, including *Sharing our Fortunes with the World: Eight Stories of the Taiwan Spirit*, *Greening the Sahel: The Taiwan Experience in Burkina Faso*, and *Travel with Love*. The ICDF has also assisted broadcasters in Taiwan to produce programs concerning our work overseas. This has enabled people in Taiwan to learn more about our accomplishments in international cooperation, and has seen our efforts more readily appreciated and recognized internationally. Moreover, our government has cooperated with the governments of allies such as Burkina Faso, Chad, and São Tomé and Príncipe in issuing postage stamps depicting the cooperative projects that we have been undertaking in these countries. The circulation of these stamps has meant that more people around the world have had an opportunity to learn about Taiwan’s commitment to international cooperation.

International cooperation requires not only professionalism and enthusiasm; the support and assistance of ordinary people is just as important. I would therefore like to express my gratitude to all my fellow citizens for encouraging the diplomatic work and cooperative projects we have undertaken overseas. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to all ICDF directors and supervisors for their contribution to the work of this organization over the past year. But most of all, I would like to thank the staff of the ICDF (including both those in Taipei and those stationed overseas), all members of technical missions and the Taiwan Overseas Volunteer Service, and all Taiwan Youth Overseas Servicemen. It is only through the exemplary efforts of these outstanding individuals that the ICDF has been able to innovate, reform, and make lasting contributions to the betterment of humanity.

This annual report introduces the efforts and achievements we have made in international cooperation over the past year. I sincerely hope that this report will inspire the people of Taiwan to “embrace the world and believe in themselves.” I also hope that the international community will come to see Taiwan in a different light, and further cooperate with us. In the future, the ICDF will continue to uphold the principles of institutionalization, transparency, and professionalism. It will strive to become even more effective, and will continue its commitment to international cooperation with expertise, enthusiasm, innovation, and energy.



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