



## Embracing Challenges: Creating a New Era in International Cooperation and Development

In 2008, global events defied all probable expectations. Together with the increasing threat of climate change, food crises and the global financial crisis provoked significant economic and social disruption, challenging the capacity of governments and international development organizations to respond to a series of volatile situations. At TaiwanICDF, these recent events have filled us with a deep sense of the importance of international cooperation. Only by looking beyond boundaries and working together can human societies realize their common goal of sustainable development.

TaiwanICDF is the primary international development and cooperation organization of the ROC. Over the past half-century, we have accumulated a wealth of experience in providing development assistance to our partners to meet the challenge of economic progress and sustainable development. In pursuing our goals, we have also mobilized the resources of many sectors in Taiwan, to help in human resource development and capacity building in our partner nations. Although recent financial turbulence is testing the global drive toward socio-economic development, our own efforts to date leave us well positioned to work in tune with the international community, and well placed to foster sustainable development for the benefit of humanity.

The many crises that persisted throughout 2008 pose a serious challenge to the UN's objective of realizing the MDGs by 2015. We find ourselves in the midst of a synchronized economic slowdown, with a recent World Bank report warning that in 2009, an additional 53 million people might be forced into poverty. Forty percent of the world's 107 developing nations are at risk of a rapid increase in poverty, and infant mortality rates are set to rise sharply. 2008 was an important year for TaiwanICDF team, and we gave priority to the attention of socio-economic growth, employment opportunities, basic services, and infrastructure development in our partner countries.

In May 2008, TaiwanICDF unveiled a number of specific plans in response to international food shortages, implemented by our technical missions in five of the ROC's diplomatic allies facing the most serious problems: Haiti, Nicaragua, Burkina Faso, The Gambia and Swaziland. The plans – designed to increase food production, with immediate effect – are already yielding results. Alongside our missions' ongoing, long-term agricultural and technical assistance projects, these short-term measures have been instrumental in mitigating the impact of rising grain prices.

Simultaneously, TaiwanICDF addressed the various effects of climate change by progressively increasing cooperation projects that focus on environmentally sustainable development. The promotion of

organic compost is reducing the pollution associated with chemical fertilizers, while initiatives are assisting island nations to recycle and take waste reduction measures. We are also involved in forest conservation and afforestation schemes. Other projects are harnessing the power of cutting-edge technologies by investing in solar power systems, and training personnel in partner countries with the skills to exploit the development potential of geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing (RS). Finally, our organization plans to assist our partner countries to engage in carbon financing initiatives — either bilaterally, or through multilateral agreements with other international organizations. All of these projects enhance the abilities of our partner countries to accommodate climate change.

Although the global financial crisis has had a severe impact on the world's most advanced economies, the most vulnerable sections of society in developing and emerging industrial nations have also been hit particularly hard. TaiwanICDF has responded by promoting the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and by continuing the provision of microfinancing services. We are also planning an expansion of projects that will improve our partners' technological and vocational education and training systems, and we will exploit Taiwan's competitive edge in the ICT industry to assist in developing network infrastructure. We will also continue to provide scholarships, and to hold workshops and seminars, focusing our human resource development programs on the range of skills and expertise most needed by our partners. Collectively, these measures are underpinning economic recovery and development in all the regions where we work.

As the effects of events in 2008 continue to echo around the world, societies will continue to face exceptional challenges during 2009. At TaiwanICDF, we are determined to consolidate our mission of advancing co-prosperity through cooperation, sustainable development and humanitarian concern. To this end, our Strategic Review for 2009-11 identifies a series of key areas, critical to our future endeavors: ensuring food security and boosting production; strengthening medical service and public health care; promoting ICT; enhancing human resource training, and technological and vocational education; promoting private sector development; strengthening humanitarian assistance and post-disaster reconstruction; promoting environmental protection and clean energy; expanding cooperation with international organizations and establishing new partnerships. In putting these policies into practice, we will remain particularly mindful of our responsibility to maximize results through an efficient and effective use of resources.

The world is constantly changing. The steeper the challenge, the more innovation and creativity are required in our ideas, and our methods. TaiwanICDF will work together with its partners to realize a coordinated, professional response to future development efforts; and in this way, I believe we will be able to establish a new era in international cooperation and development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lien-gene Chen".

Ambassador Lien-gene Chen  
Secretary General