

MAC Strongly Protests Mainland China's Obstruction of Invitation for Taiwan to Attend the WHA

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) today (May 9, 2017) issued the following solemn statement over the fact that no invitation has yet been issued for Taiwan to attend the World Health Assembly (WHA):

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) is a non-political organization. In recent years, the WHO has invited Taiwan to participate as an observer in the WHA. This is due to Taiwan's major professional contribution to global epidemic prevention, health, and safety, as well as to protect the health and safety rights and interests of Taiwan's 23 million people. It is also based on the WHO's mission to protect the health of every person in the world, as well as the WHO's core concept of health and epidemic prevention without boundaries. Taiwan's participation in the WHA also fully conforms with WHO regulations, is highly supported by other countries, and has become an established practice. However, this year mainland China, for unilaterally asserted political reasons, exerted pressure to prevent the WHO from sending an invitation letter to Taiwan. We express deep dissatisfaction and strongly protest this violation of the WHO mission, pressuring of the government of the Republic of China (ROC), and disregard of the rights and interests of Taiwan's 23 million people.

2. The people of Taiwan have high expectations on participation in the WHA. To prevent the inability of Taiwan to participate in this year's WHA from negatively affecting cross-Strait relations, President Tsai Ing-wen has repeatedly called on the Mainland to duly and carefully handle this matter. Furthermore, in late March and early May this year, the MAC twice expressed to the Mainland side Taiwan's position and willingness to resolve differences through communication. However, the other side has disregarded Taiwan's calls and solemn warnings and still insists on obstructing Taiwan's participation in the WHA. If the WHO ultimately succumbs to Beijing's pressure, it will seriously injure the feelings of the people of Taiwan, provoke a public backlash in Taiwan, and could even widen the divide in cross-Strait relations.

3. Beijing has consistently obstructed Taiwan's participation in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), WHO, and other international organizations. It has pressured

Taiwan for striving for its fundamental right to participate in international organizations and activities, intending in this way to pressure the ROC government and accomplish its political purposes. We will never yield to Beijing's pressure. We also will continue to speak out to the international community to strive for Taiwan's right to participate in the WHA and other international organizations. The voice of the Taiwanese people is the support of the ROC government. We believe that the international community will indeed value Taiwan's indispensable role in global health and safety, as well as other human rights and security issues, and continue to closely watch the issue of Taiwan's participation. We also appeal to the other side to understand that public opinion in Taiwan cannot be lightly insulted. Beijing should carefully consider the serious consequences that could ensue from insisting on preventing Taiwan's participation in the WHA and continuing to suppress Taiwan's international space. Rigid and confrontational policy thinking and approaches should never be allowed to cause great and irreversible damage to cross-Strait relations.