

**Reference Material for Speech by Minister Chang**  
**at the MAC "Welcome Banquet for Hong Kong and Macao**  
**Residents Visiting Taiwan for the 2017 ROC National Day**  
**Celebration"**

October 8, 2017

Acting Delegation Leader Ou-yang Chen, Delegation Leader Chien Ting-tsai, Delegation Leader Li Chun-kuang, Delegation Leader Liu Wo, Fellow Countrymen and Friends from Hong Kong and Macao, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: Good day!

I am delighted to have this opportunity to meet with you again here today. Each year at this time, many good friends of Taiwan come to Taipei from Hong Kong, Macao, and other parts of the world to join us in celebrating the birthday of the Republic of China (ROC). Your visit is a concrete expression of love and support for the ROC, as well as a chance to witness the continuous advancement and development of democracy, freedom, and prosperity in Taiwan. On behalf of the government, I convey to you all our deepest respect and gratitude.

Tonight, I also have some good news to report. In recent years, growing numbers of friends from Hong Kong and Macao have chosen to live in Taiwan due to a feeling of affinity and identification with Taiwan. Delegation Leader Liu Wo is a good example. At the beginning of this year, Mr. Liu received his ID

card. We congratulate him on realizing his wish to become a bona fide Taiwanese citizen.

Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao share similar cultures, customs, and lifestyles. They are also bound by close personnel, trade, and cultural exchanges. This is another reason why so many friends from Hong Kong and Macao like to come to Taiwan.

The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) established the Taiwan–Hong Kong Economic and Cultural Co-operation Council in 2010 to promote official interaction and private-sector economic, trade, and cultural exchanges and contact between Taiwan and Hong Kong. In the seven years since then, the council has contributed greatly to the advancement of Taiwan-Hong Kong exchanges. I would like here to especially thank Chairperson Lu Ping, who joins us today. Over the past year or so, she has led her colleagues to promote council affairs with selfless dedication, enabling relations between Taiwan and Hong Kong to continue to develop steadily.

According to statistics, total bilateral trade between Taiwan and Hong Kong exceeded US\$39.7 billion last year. Taiwan and Hong Kong are each other's third- and fourth-largest trading partners, respectively. From 2008 to 2016, the number of Hong Kong and Macao residents visiting Taiwan increased from 620,000 to 1.61 million. Over the same period, the number of Hong Kong and Macao students studying in Taiwan rose from 4,674 to 13,449, representing the highest number of overseas Chinese students in Taiwan.

Due to the close relationship between Taiwan and Hong Kong and Macao, the government has always attached great importance and been committed to creating a friendly environment for Hong Kong and Macao residents to visit Taiwan. In recent years, we have coordinated with the National Immigration Agency and other relevant agencies to continue to loosen regulations and to introduce facilitation measures for Hong Kong and Macao visitors. In this regard, we have achieved an excellent report card.

For example, from this year, Hong Kong and Macao residents who enter Taiwan and continue their journey by cruise ship can apply for two eVisas at once, providing more options for a richer travel experience. Since October 2, Hong Kong and Macao residents have been able to apply online for entry and exit permits. In addition, the minimum period of passport validity at time of immigration inspection will soon be shortened from six months to three months. In the future, procedures for Hong Kong and Macao visitors entering Taiwan will become even more convenient.

We have also relaxed both restrictions on Hong Kong and Macao students studying in Taiwan, as well as the threshold for such students to remain in Taiwan for work after graduation. This will enable more students from Hong Kong and Macao to study in Taiwan and to work in Taiwan after graduation.

In response to trends in entrepreneurship, the government is also promoting an entrepreneur visa to encourage entrepreneurs from around the world, including Hong Kong and Macao, to live in Taiwan. We welcome all Hong Kong and Macao friends with affinity for Taiwan to come here and to share our democratic and pluralistic values and free lifestyle.

We are all well aware of the vital role played by cross-Strait relations in Taiwan's prospects for development. I would also like to take this opportunity to report that: While there have been some changes in cross-Strait relations since May 20 last year, the government will, with the utmost goodwill, handle cross-Strait affairs based on the existing historical facts and political foundation and in accordance with the ROC Constitution, the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area, and other relevant legislation. We will also maintain the peaceful and stable development of cross-Strait relations.

This year, the MAC produced a well-received animated short film called "Cross-Strait Peace is Precious: Let's Talk." Using the metaphor of a whale and dolphin coexisting harmoniously in the vast ocean, we hoped to send our message to the other side. Sincere, mutual understanding, and rational, respectful and reciprocal dialogue and communication are vital if the two sides are to work harmoniously with each other and together create a better future.

At this challenging time for cross-Strait relations, we need your unwavering support more than ever. It is an indispensable force for Taiwan's continued advancement.

With the Mid-Autumn Festival just passed, I would like to quote the words of Master Hong Yi (Li Shutong): "The branches are full with the spring bloom and the heart is as full as the moon." I have great hopes that Taiwan's relationships with Hong Kong and Macao will reach new heights. I also wish you and your families happiness, good health, and success.

Thank you!