

Speech by Minister Chang at the Opening Ceremony of the 30th Anniversary of Cross-Strait Exchanges Stamp Exhibition

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Political Deputy Minister of Transportation and Communications and Chunghwa Post Chairperson Wang Kwo-tsai, Chunghwa Post President Chen Shian-juh, Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) Vice Chairman Ko Cheng-heng, Chinese Taipei Philatelic Federation President Chen Yu-an, President Hoo Huei-ching of the China Stamp Society's ROC Chapter, Distinguished Guests, Good morning.

I would like first to thank the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) and Chunghwa Post for their active and enthusiastic support of activities for the 30th anniversary of cross-Strait exchanges. This year marks the 30th anniversary of cross-Strait exchanges. This stamp exhibition is one of the events planned by the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) to commemorate this important occasion. It is also an excellent way to recount cross-Strait relations. I would like to thank the MOTC and Chunghwa Post for their cooperation, which made this valuable exhibition possible.

Thirty years represent a long time in a person's life. In 30 years, a new-born baby grows to become an adult. Thirty years ago, the government began allowing family-related visits across the Taiwan Strait. The purpose was simply to allow the people of Taiwan to visit relatives in mainland China and to maintain contact through two-way correspondences. Before family visits were allowed in 1987, Taiwan and mainland China were in a cold war period characterized by a confrontational "one or the other" relationship. However, from 1987, the authorities on both sides realized that they needed to meet the people's demand for family contact. Therefore, the first step in opening up cross-Strait exchanges was to allow homecomings by people to visit relatives.

Thirty years ago, neither the authorities nor the people could have possibly imagined that in three decades cross-Strait relations would become so close or that, through cross-Strait economic and trade exchanges, mainland China would become one of Taiwan's most important trading partners. Nor could they have imagined that there would be 330,000 cross-Strait couples in Taiwan, 330,000 Mainland spouses living in Taiwan, more than 10,000 mainland Chinese students studying in Taiwan, or so many cross-Strait visitors. The past 30

years have brought enormous changes. Consequently, we cannot approach today's cross-Strait issues with the mindset of 30 years ago.

Thirty years ago, there was only an indirect postal service across the Taiwan Strait. In 1988, the Red Cross began arranging an indirect mail service. From 1989, postal units sent letters to mainland China via Hong Kong, Japan, or other areas. Before 1988, there were severe repercussions for sending a letter to mainland China. Today, however, we not only have a convenient postal service, but can even pick up the phone and call mainland China directly. Cross-Strait communication and exchanges made possible the greater convenience and closer contact enjoyed by the people of the two sides today.

In her National Day Address this year, President Tsai Ing-wen specifically stated that, in cross-Strait matters, our commitment will not change and our goodwill will not change. It is right that the two sides should have closer exchanges; and that they should communicate, meet, and engage in exchanges based on reciprocity and fairness. This is crucial to the positive development of cross-Strait relations. Over the years, the relationship across the Taiwan Strait has undergone many stages and processes. I believe that everyone shares a heartfelt hope that cross-Strait relations can develop towards positive and active exchanges in the future. I would like here to especially thank the MOTC for its ongoing promotion of cross-Strait postal exchanges.

Today's exhibition presents an exquisite selection of rare stamps dating from the Qing dynasty to the present. I wish the exhibition, and you all, the greatest success. Thank you!