

Symposium on the 30th Anniversary of Cross-Strait Exchanges: Review and Outlook

Speech by

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Office of the President Secretary-General Wu, Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) Chairman Tien, Foundation on Asia-Pacific Peace Studies (FAPS) Chairman Hsu, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good day!

I would like to warmly welcome everyone to today's symposium. I would like to especially thank Foundation on Asia-Pacific Peace Studies Chairman Hsu and his team for arranging this symposium. My particular gratitude also goes out to Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) Chairman Tien and his colleagues for arranging the photography exhibition on the first floor.

In 1987, the government began to allow the people of Taiwan to make family-related visits to mainland China. This changed the 38-year-long state of isolation across the Taiwan Strait. It was a small step, but one that has led to great strides today. In the last 30 years, cross-Strait relations have experienced highs and lows, ups and downs. The two sides were once in a state of military confrontation and came to the brink of war. However, they have been willing to put aside their political disputes and pursue exchanges and interactions. We believe that as long as the two sides are willing to "set aside differences and seek common ground," they can find new opportunities for cross-Strait relations.

The two sides have chosen different political systems and models of development. Yet this has not posed barriers to cross-Strait exchanges. Academic, religious, economic, and cultural exchanges between the two sides have meaningfully enriched each other's social development. Exchanges between government agencies on the two sides have advanced mutual awareness and understanding. Cross-Strait exchanges and interaction represent a natural expression of feelings that span the Taiwan Strait and offer the people the dream of happiness. Moreover, the soft power, innovation, and diversity evident in Taiwan's economy, trade, culture, medical technology, and way of life, constantly create and link together the well-being of the people on both sides, becoming important elements in the peaceful and stable

development across the Taiwan Strait. This is a positive asset and a hard-won achievement that the authorities on both sides should cherish.

Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once famously said that, "The longer you can look back, the farther you can look forward." Since May 20 last year, cross-Strait relations have faced new challenges and new developments. During this time, the government has held to its position. It has not wavered from its commitment or its goodwill. Nor will it revert to the old path of confrontation or bow to pressure. We will strive to maintain cross-Strait peace and stability and seek further development.

In a moment, you will see highlights from a video commissioned by the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) and produced by National Geographic Channel. The video, which will be shown in 41 Asia-Pacific countries, illustrates how the protagonists of two storylines realize their dreams through cross-Strait exchanges. Indeed, "the greatness of humanity comes from dreams." We are joined today by many who have played important roles in advancing the development of cross-Strait relations. I would like to express my most sincere respect to them. I believe that, with an open mind and mutual respect, the two sides can embrace the power of optimism, warmth, and hope like the characters in the video, the people of both sides can further realize their dreams, and our friends around the world can see the fruits of cross-Strait exchanges and the beauty of Taiwan.

Cross-Strait relations have undergone numerous stages and processes. Going down the road at times it seems that are reached a dead-end, only to turn the corner and gain new hope. The 19th-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once said: "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards." As we look back on the road traveled, we hope that the two sides will not forget their original aspiration. We hope they will cooperate, adhere to the principle of "putting the people first," find new opportunities for cross-Strait cooperation in changing circumstances, jointly consider a new model for cross-Strait interaction, and open a new chapter in the history of cross-Strait exchanges for the next 30 years.

I wish today's symposium the greatest success. Thank you!