

Minister's Speech at the Special Screening of the Film "Strait Dreams"

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National Geographic Channel Vice President Li Min, Academician of Academia Sinica Dr. Fu-Chan Wei, Giant Bicycles Chief Branding Officer Ms. Phoebe Liu, Director Mr. Gary Shi, Distinguished High Excellencies, Representatives, diplomats, friends from the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Afternoon!

Today, I am delighted to have this opportunity to share with you the touching film "Strait Dreams." Produced by the National Geographic Channel under the commission of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), the film is the product of a true story of warmth and goodwill interactions and exchanges between people across the Taiwan Strait. I would like here to particularly thank the National Geographic Channel for helping the MAC to present to the public the achievements of cross-Strait exchanges, while also showing Taiwan's soft powers of economics and trade, medical care, and tourism to the world.

1. Soaring into the Wind with the Courage to Pursue a Dream

Over the past 30 years since 1987, when the government began allowing family-related visits to mainland China, there have been more than 100 million exchanges across the Taiwan Strait. These exchanges have also been interwoven into thousands of touching stories. Walt Disney once said: "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." Indeed, exchanges between the people of both sides, whether for family visits, business, study, tourism, or to explore the far corners of the world for love or to seek out a home, reflect the pursuit of a beautiful dream. They also have the government's fullest support.

One of the protagonists in the film is a little dreamer, just 90 days old, who suffers from cleft lip and palate. He was brought by his mother from mainland China to Chang Gung Memorial Hospital in Taiwan for surgery. This brings to mind the English saying: “No dream is too big, and no dreamer is too small.” It is an apt description of this little fighter’s struggle amidst the adversities of life. This infant would not have had such a smooth journey across the Taiwan Strait for this life-changing surgery were it not for the solid foundation of experience and energy built up through cross-Strait exchanges. I hope this little baby and all other friends of the two sides in pursuit of a dream can fly high against the wind whatever difficulties the future presents. I would like here to especially thank Chang Gung Memorial Hospital for its long dedication to the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

2. Putting the People First, Ushering in a New Era across the Taiwan Strait

This film profoundly moved me. It also gave me a deeper appreciation of the saying: “There are no trivial affairs across the Taiwan Strait.” Why? Because nearly all of the affairs handled each day by the governments of the two sides are matters of significance, they impact the daily lives of the people on both sides. They also demand our redoubled attention and serious treatment.

I am reminded of a statement made by President Tsai Ing-wen on October 25, 2015, during the presidential campaign. She said that her administration would be “people-oriented and people-centered.” She also stressed that the people’s expectations and needs should be priorities to those in power. Recently, Xi Jinping made several mentions of “people-centered” during the 19th Party Congress. I feel that the leaders on both sides have taken to heart the principle that “the people are the first priority” in serving

the public. This is a very good start; one that serves as a common foundation in the ongoing development of cross-Strait relations, communication, and dialogue. It also can change the old way of thinking and frameworks, and map out a new direction and model for cross-Strait relations. The two sides of the Taiwan Strait need to “put the people first and advance in the same direction” if future generations are to enjoy the good fortune of peace.

3. Traveling to the Water’s End, Watching the Rising Clouds

The other main storyline in the movie follows two amateur cyclists from mainland China. They come to Taiwan to test their limits on a ride up Wuling Road, one of the world’s ten most difficult cycling routes. The two set out on this “pilgrimage” in a spirit of respectful awe. There were bound to be some setbacks on the road to realizing their dream. However, they also met many Taiwanese people who offered help and encouragement. I would like here to thank Giant Bicycles, the titan of Taiwan’s bicycle industry, for its assistance during the filming process.

These two cyclists crossed the sea to realize their dream, knowing that “The beauty of life comes from the doing. There is no glory in waiting.” I watched them advancing up the zigzagging road before the break of dawn, finally reaching the peak of Wuling Road, and then among the cloud formations, sharing that joyful moment with friends and family far away in mainland China through a video phone call. My heart welled and I could feel the truth in the saying: “The edge of the world is close at hand, and happiness is in this moment.” But when will this be true of cross-Strait relations? “With magnanimity, we can embrace the world.” If the two sides keep an open mind, have the courage to change, continue to move forward and realize ideas through concrete actions, they are bound to “reach the water’s end” at times, but I think that they can still “sit and watch the rising clouds.”

4. I have a dream that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait can move forward together

The greatness of humanity comes from its dreams. I feel that everyone who crosses the Taiwan Strait to realize their dream, like the little baby in this movie, his parents, and the cyclists, is an ordinary person on a great undertaking. They truly deserve our respect and admiration.

In the famous speech “I have a Dream” by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., there are some words that I feel speak volumes and ultimately can be a source of mutual encouragement to us all. He said: “I have a dream that one day the crooked places will be made straight. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.” I am also convinced that, with continued faith and goodwill and by continually moving forward and refusing to stay in one place, we can fulfill our dreams, from the small dreams of the people of both sides across the Taiwan Strait to the broad direction of the long-term development of cross-Strait relations, and write more beautiful chapters for the future of cross-Strait exchanges.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who planned and was involved in this special screening for their hard work. I would also like to thank everyone joining us here today for your long-term care and encouragement to the MAC. I wish you all good health and success. Thank you!