

MAC: The public affirms the achievements of the Eighth Chiang-Chen Talks

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) announces today (August 31, 2012) the results of its latest routine public opinion survey. Following the Eighth Chiang-Chen Talks on August 9, as high as 72 percent (72.5 percent) of the public support the government's continued handling of cross-strait exchange issues through institutionalized negotiation mechanisms. Moreover, a majority (58.4 percent) of the people believes that the eight Chiang-Chen Talks held and the 18 agreements signed between the two sides over the past four years have been conducive to Taiwan's overall development.

Regarding the Eighth Chiang-Chen Talks, over 60 percent (60.5 percent) of the people believe that the 24-hour notification mechanism under the Cross-Strait Investment Protection Agreement is conducive to protecting the personal safety of Taiwanese investors in the Mainland. The MAC states that the Agreement provides an important basis for protecting Taiwanese businesspeople. The government will actively carry out various preparations for follow-up promotion of the Agreement, promptly establish contact channels, realize the 24-hour notification system, and optimize related mechanisms in order to protect the personal freedom and security of Taiwanese businesspeople, employees and their family members.

The survey also shows that 67.7 percent of the people believe the signing of the Cross-Strait Customs Cooperation Agreement is conducive to cross-strait trade cooperation. The MAC further indicates that the signing of this Agreement will upgrade the efficiency of cross-strait customs clearance, reduce the cost of doing

business, and combat smuggling. It has a positive significance for promoting cross-strait trade and will further expand the benefits of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) for the Early Harvest List products. The MAC also says that the Investment Protection Agreement and the Customs Cooperation Agreement are the first steps in completing the domain of the ECFA. They symbolize the progressive realization of various ECFA cooperation mechanisms and help advance ECFA follow-up consultations on cross-strait trade in services, trade in goods and dispute settlement.

During this latest Talks, the two sides exchanged views on the establishment of reciprocal offices between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). The results of the survey indicate that 71.3 percent of the people approve the establishment of reciprocal offices between the SEF and the ARATS to serve and assist the people on both sides. The MAC indicates that, as cross-strait exchanges have grown steadily more frequent and closer over the past more than four years, the demand for related services by the people of both sides has also gradually increased. The two sides need to jointly consider faster and more convenient ways to pragmatically handle problems encountered by the people of both sides. In the future, the government will plan the establishment of offices in a sequential and sound way while upholding the principles of "parity, dignity, and reciprocity," considering the overall cross-strait situation, and assessing and deliberating the office's functions, position, organizational type, and relevant laws and regulations.

Regarding other cross-strait issues long observed by the MAC, the survey indicates that the great majority of the public (84.3 percent) still advocates "maintaining the status quo defined in a broader sense," a figure that has remained highly stable. As for the current pace of cross-strait exchanges, the highest percentage

of the public (42.4 percent) still believe the pace is "just right," followed by the percentages believing it is "too fast" (28.8 percent) and "too slow" (16.6 percent).

The MAC commissioned the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 and over in the Taiwan Area from August 16 to 19, 2012. A total of 1,072 effective samples were collected, with a sampling error of 2.99 percent based on a 95 percent confidence level.