

MAC: Domestic Public Opinion Affirms Cross-Strait Relations Improvements Beneficial to Expanding Taiwan's International Space and Supports Normalization of Official Interactions and Establishment of Cross-Strait Communication and Contact Mechanisms

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) today (October 21, 2013) announced the results of its latest special survey of public opinion on cross-strait relations and international participation. The survey found that the great majority of the public affirm the improvement in cross-strait relations and believe it helps to expand the international space for Taiwan (75.6%). The majority also approve of participation in international organizations and activities from both sides under the principle of equality and dignity (85.1%) and believe it conducive to peaceful and stable development across the Taiwan Strait (79.1%).

Over the past more than five years, improvements in cross-strait relations and Taiwan's international participation have created a virtuous cycle. The survey found that 72.6% of the public feel former Vice President Siew's emphasis on the importance of Taiwan's participation in regional economic integration while attending this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting to be conducive to expanding Taiwan's international participation. The MAC said that broad participation in the international community has always been the unanimous hope of the Taiwanese people. In line with the "Golden Decade, Cross-Strait Peace" National Vision, the government will expand the spillover effects of easing cross-strait relations and gradually establish a new model for positive cross-strait interaction in the international community. Furthermore, the majority of the people (63.5%) consider the current cross-strait situation to be peaceful and support the government's stance on maintaining the cross-strait status quo of "no unification, no independence, and no use of force" under the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of China (ROC) (73.7%).

For the meeting held between ROC leader representative and Mainland leader at this year's APEC meeting, contact arrangements were made for the first time by the MAC and Taiwan Affairs Office. The survey found that 62.8% of the public consider this to be an important development for cross-strait interactions conducted in the international arena. The meeting between the ROC leader representative and Mainland leader was the first such exchange to be joined by an incumbent Minister of the Mainland Affairs Council, breaking past conventions of no official participants, which was also seen in polls as an indication of cross-strait relations improvement by 56.4% of the public. Additionally, a majority of the public consider the use of official titles in mutual address between MAC Minister Wang and

Taiwan Affairs Office Director Zhang Zhijun during their exchange after the "Siew-Xi Meeting" to be a major breakthrough in cross-strait relations (56.5%) and believe it to be a development that will facilitate official interactions across the Strait (61.1%).

The MAC said that the government's promotion of normalized official interactions across the Strait is consistent with the public's expectations. The survey found that 60% to 70% of the people approve direct contact between officials on the two sides (67.6%) and believe that the establishment of normal communication and interaction mechanisms between the MAC and the Mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office would help facilitate cross-strait affairs (72.7%). Furthermore, the majority of the public expressed support for mutual exchange visits by MAC Minister Wang (60.7%) and Taiwan Affairs Office Director Zhang Zhijun (68.3%) and think that regular meetings between the two sides would be beneficial to the development of cross-strait relations (67.8%).

The steady development of cross-strait relations and orderly operation of negotiations over the past five-plus years has been an achievement based on accumulated mutual trust and positive interactions between the two sides. The recent progress in cross-strait interactions at APEC underscores the virtuous cycle of the government's efforts to improve cross-strait relations and expand Taiwan's international space. In the future, the government will bear in mind the public's opinion while continuing to expand the spillover effects of cross-strait relations improvement. At the same time, it will also promote the establishment of normal mechanisms for official communication and liaison between the two sides to develop benign cross-strait interactions, deepen mutual trust and broaden exchanges so as to establish a solid foundation for peaceful and stable development across the Taiwan Strait.

The MAC commissioned Taiwan Real Survey Co., Ltd. to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 and over in Taiwan from October 11 to 13, 2013. A total of 1,091 valid samples were collected, with a sampling error of plus or minus 2.97% at a 95% level of confidence.