

# **Minister Wang Vows to Continue Strengthening Rights of Mainland Spouses**

January 11, 2013

No. 004

More than 200 Mainland spouses and their family protested at the Legislative Yuan this morning (January 11, 2013) for rights and interests of Mainland spouses and students. Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Wang Yu-chi especially assisted in arranging resting spots for them and was also present on the scene to voice support.

Minister Wang explained to the Mainland spouses the MAC's tasks and latest progress in securing their rights and interests. He noted that, among the ten major demands raised by the New Immigrant Community Development Association of Kaohsiung City two years ago, many have been addressed by lifts in restrictions and some through legalization due to joint efforts by the MAC and related ministries and departments, and the MAC will also continue to promptly address the one or two remaining demands.

Minister Wang mentioned that, during a meeting with the Association's Chairperson Zhan Xiuying in Kaohsiung on January 5<sup>th</sup>, he was informed that some Mainland spouses who have domiciled in Taiwan and wished to return to the Mainland to cancel their Mainland household registration were refused the Taiwan Compatriot Travel Certificates by the Mainland side on the grounds that they still had a Mainland registered household, and were thus prevented from successfully returning to the Mainland. Upon learning this, Minister Wang immediately instructed MAC colleagues to ask the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) to communicate with the Mainland side and an agreement was later secured. Mainland spouses in such situations can now directly apply for a single-entry Taiwan Compatriot Travel

Certificate upon arrival at any of the 31 direct cross-strait transportation link ports in the Mainland. The abovementioned problem has been temporarily resolved, and the MAC will continue discussions with the National Immigration Agency to work out the most appropriate approach in addressing the issue.

Minister Wang stated that the rights and interests of Mainland spouses and Mainland students studying in Taiwan are major concerns of the MAC, and that he hopes to transform Taiwan into a society of greater equality and human dignity. Minister Wang also indicated that after taking office, he has submitted two draft amendments to the Legislative Yuan, out of which, one seeks to shorten the period required for Mainland spouses to obtain a ROC identity card from the current six years to four to eight years, comparable to that for foreign spouses, and the other promotes the inclusion of Mainland students into the National Health Insurance plan, so that they receive fair treatment comparable to that of overseas Chinese and foreign students.

Minister Wang said that he would promote any measures immediately if they seemed feasible. For example, the MAC is currently researching and compiling information for the publication of a "premarital handbook" in order to help Mainland women marrying into Taiwan better understand the Taiwanese culture and society and thus avoid unwarranted expectations. Minister Wang also expressed sincere hope for more efforts in maintaining and elevating rights and interests of Mainland spouses, and determination to put utmost dedication into assisting Mainland spouses resolve difficulties encountered in their daily lives.