

MAC: Ninth Round of Cross-Strait High-Level Talks Successfully Concluded; Two Sides to Jointly Work on Agreement Enforcement and Implementation

June 22, 2013

No. 41

The Ninth Round of Cross-Strait High-Level Talks between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) successfully concluded today (June 22). Accompanied by Chairman Lin Join-sane of the SEF and the negotiation delegation, Minister Wang Yu-chi of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) delivered an achievement report to Premier Jiang Yi-huah at the Executive Yuan, submitted the text of the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement, and later attended the press conference held at the Executive Yuan.

The MAC stated that, the Trade In Services Agreement is only a part of the comprehensive Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). The signing of the Agreement will create development niches for Taiwanese businesses in the Mainland and effectively enhance and expand the specific benefits of the ECFA. On this basis, the government will further promote progress of ECFA follow-up negotiations on trade in goods and dispute settlement issues. The signing of the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement is also beneficial to Taiwan's active participation in regional economic integration as it conveys to the international community the message of further trade liberalization in Taiwan. The MAC stated that it will promptly promote the implementation of related market opening measures after enforcement procedures have been completed so as to substantively realize results of the Trade In Services Agreement.

The MAC stated that the government promotes negotiations between the SEF and ARATS with the interests and well-being of the people in mind. Public opinion surveys conducted by the MAC indicate

that nearly 70% of the public support the handling of issues related to cross-strait exchanges through institutionalized negotiations between the two sides; and 74% of the people approve of the government's negotiations with mainland China on cross-strait trade in services issues. This shows that the government's policy position and course in promoting institutionalized cross-strait negotiations is consistent with the expectations of mainstream public opinion in Taiwan. In the future, the government will continue to formulate related supporting measures to reduce the impact on related industries, while at the same time, it will also strengthen communication with all sectors to dispel people's doubts, thereby gain public support for cross-strait negotiations.

Regarding the negotiation issues for the tenth round of talks, the MAC stated that the two sides have laid a foundation and achieved phased results in negotiations on the ECFA follow-up issues of trade in goods and dispute settlement, avoidance of double taxation across the Strait, and the reciprocal establishment of institutions by the SEF and ARATS. The MAC will also coordinate with relevant competent authorities and carefully deliberate and promote negotiation work on meteorological, earthquake and other issues. As to the signed agreements, the MAC will continue to coordinate with related ministries, review the implementation status, and encourage cooperation and improvements by the Mainland side in order to maximize effects and results of the agreements' implementation.

During the briefing on the results of the talks, Premier Jiang expressed grateful approbation to all personnel involved in the negotiations, and also acknowledged the smooth and successful conclusion of agreement signed in this round of high-level talks. Premier Jiang also pointed out that the signing of the Trade in Services Agreement is beneficial to mutual market opening across the Strait. However, the Premiere said, it is hoped that competent authorities, in conjunction with relevant ministries and departments, will fully coordinate to formulate supporting measures to respond to likely impacts of the service trade agreement, while at the same time increase communication and

explanation to the public on views recently voiced by certain businesses and media.

The MAC stressed that institutionalized negotiations between the SEF and ARATS are now operating in a normalized manner. The government will adhere to the principles of "national demand, public support, and legislative oversight" and the negotiation position of dealing with "urgent matters before non-urgent ones, easy matters before difficult ones, and economic matters before political ones," while at the same time uphold established policy objectives and promote them in a gradual and steady approach. The MAC called on the two sides to jointly establish a peaceful environment for cross-strait development on the current negotiation basis, and to set the improvement of the people's well-being as the core objective in further cross strait development.