

Minister Wang: Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement helps grasp business opportunities in the Mainland and create jobs at home, also gives key boost to Taiwan's inclusion in regional economic integration

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MAC Minister Wang Yu-chi said today that the government's signing of the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement was based on three main purposes: to open up business opportunities for our people in the huge Mainland market; to lure Mainland investors to make job-creating investments in Taiwan; and, especially, to play a key part in securing Taiwan's inclusion in regional economic integration. Without taking this key step, it would be very hard to gain entry to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in the future.

The MAC today held its first "temple door talks" at the Cheng-Huang Temple in Kaohsiung's old city district of Zuoying. The event was led by Premier Jiang Yi-huah and MAC Minister Wang, who explained the effects of the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement to the assembly of more than 500 locals.

Minister Wang said that the Mainland is a very important trade partner of Taiwan. We cannot turn our backs on this market, which has a vital bearing on Taiwan's future survival. The current two-way investment across the Taiwan Strait is imbalanced, with more than US\$120 billion of Taiwanese capital invested in the Mainland versus only US\$700 million of Mainland capital invested in Taiwan. If more Mainland investment was secured in Taiwan, it not only will reduce this imbalance, but also, most importantly, will create more job

opportunities in Taiwan.

Referring to concerns expressed in some sectors about mainland Chinese workers pouring into Taiwan, Minister Wang reiterated that the trade in services agreement only opened Taiwan to Mainland investment, but did not open Taiwan to influx of Mainland workers; the Taiwanese people need not worry in this regard.

Taking the opening of Mainland investment in the catering industry as an example, Minister Wang said that, since the opening of this sector in 2009, there have been only 16 Mainland investment cases. During the past 4 years, only 9 establishments have been opened, with 7 currently still in business. Their business turnover constituted just a tiny fraction of Taiwan's catering industry business, mainly due to the fact that Mainland restaurant operators could not easily cater to Taiwanese people's tastes, and therefore their entry to our market would not impact on local catering establishments too seriously. Minister Wang also alluded to the foods and drinks for which the old city district of Cheng-Huang Temple was famous, such as meat balls, star fruit juice, "black wheel" fish cake, prawn rolls, oyster fritters, and fried rice cakes. These were relished not only by local residents, but also by tourists visiting Kaohsiung. Taiwan's food and beverage sellers attract customers not just by the delicious flavors of their wares, but even more so by the warmth and friendliness of their services, so there really is absolutely no need to be worried about competition from Mainland businesses.

This morning, Minister Wang also accompanied Premier Jiang to attend an explanatory meeting on the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement arranged by Legislator Huang Chao-shun, where the Minister briefed local public figures on the pact's content and effects to dispel recently voiced doubts and misgivings about it.