

Lin Chu-chia: Maintain Peace and Stability in Cross-Strait Relations, Promote Both Regional Integration and Cross-Strait Economic and Trade Relations, Create Better Conditions for Taiwan

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Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Deputy Minister Lin Chu-chia stated today (July 22, 2014) that exchange visits held between heads of cross-strait competent authorities are of great significance to the long-term development of cross-strait relations. The government has promoted cross-strait economic and trade policy and negotiations in line with the principle of "putting people at the core," as well as adopted a parallel strategy of participating in both regional economic integration and cross-strait economic and trade relations so as to prosper Taiwan's economy.

The MAC jointly held a town hall meeting this afternoon with the Eastern Taiwan Joint Services Center, Executive Yuan and Taitung County Government. The activity was co-chaired by Deputy Minister Lin and Taitung County Deputy Magistrate Chang Ji-yi. Officials from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Labor, Financial Supervisory Commission, Council of Agriculture, National Immigration Agency under the Ministry of the Interior and other related agencies also participated. The officials engaged in two-way communication and exchanges with local Taitung residents on cross-strait issues of concern and listened to the views and suggestions from all sectors. These suggestions and views shall serve as important reference for policy planning.

Deputy Minister Lin explained that the first exchange visits and official meetings between heads of cross-strait competent authorities were held in the first half of this year (2014). The two sides reached a consensus on establishing normal communication and liaison mechanisms between the cross-strait competent authorities. This important milestone in the development of cross-strait relations will benefit the communication and promotion of cross-strait affairs, as well as lay a favorable foundation for long-term peace across the Strait.

Deputy Minister Lin said that, since May 2008, the two sides have signed 21 agreements and reached two consensuses through institutionalized cross-strait negotiation channels. Exchanges across the Strait have been conducted in a "building blocks" manner, have created an orderly environment for cross-strait exchanges pertinent to the people's daily livelihood, and have also enabled the public to fully enjoy the substantive benefits of cross-strait agreements implementation. Through

further deepening and broadening of cross-strait exchanges and cooperation while making the best use of cross-strait advantages, Taiwan's participation in regional integration and international interaction may also be further expanded, and Taiwan's potential strengthened. To demonstrate the value placed on communications and consultations with the public on cross-strait negotiations, the government has also promoted legislation for cross-strait agreements' supervision so as to further institutionalize the executive branch's communication with both congress and the public, and thus satisfy public expectations.

During the meeting, representatives of participating agencies responded to respective concerns expressed by participants regarding the impact of the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (including the micro service industry), banking industry, and agricultural products, as well as on issues such as Mainland investment in Taiwan and inclusion of Mainland persons into Taiwan's health insurance system. The MAC stated that, during the negotiations for the Cross-Strait Trade in Services Agreement, the involved government agencies all prudently carried out professional assessment and formulated supporting package measures. After the signing of the agreement, the government also reviewed qualification conditions, guidance measures and the required funding for potentially affected service industries so as to strengthen relevant support mechanisms.

The town hall meeting held today was attended by representatives from local schools, business organizations, and industries, and contributed to improving public understanding and awareness of the government's Mainland policy.