

Deputy Minister Lin: Government will continue to Promote Cross-Strait Official Interactions, Negotiations, and Exchanges and is Committed to Protecting the Public's Well-Being, Rights and Interests, and Maintaining the Peaceful and Stable Development of Cross-Strait Relations

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Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Deputy Minister Lin Chu-chia stated today (October 30, 2015) that the "1992 Consensus" is an important basis for continuous cross-strait official communication and liaison mechanism and also for institutionalized negotiations between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). These communication and negotiation mechanisms enable the effective handling of cross-strait issues relevant to the interests, livelihood, well-being and safety of the people, promote institutionalized cross-strait exchanges, create favorable conditions for positive interaction, and lay a foundation for peaceful and stable development of cross-strait relations.

This morning the MAC and Southern Taiwan Joint Services Center, Executive Yuan (STJSC) jointly held a town hall meeting co-chaired by Deputy Minister Lin and STJSC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Chiang Lin-chun. Officials of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Council of Agriculture and other related ministries and departments also participated in the meeting to communicate and exchange views with and listen to proposals of Penghu residents from various sectors on cross-strait issues of concern to them, in hope that these views may serve as important references for policy planning.

Deputy Minister Lin said that the government has maintained the cross-strait

status quo of "no unification, no independence, and no use of force" on the foundation of the "1992 Consensus" of "one China, with respective interpretations," as well as continued to develop institutionalized cross-strait negotiations and orderly exchanges, resulting in exchange visits and the use of official titles of address between the heads of the agencies in charge of cross-strait affairs on the two sides. This foundation has been a key factor in the progressive consolidation of peaceful and stable cross-strait relations in the past seven-plus years. The normalization of official cross-strait interactions is a new milestone in the course of cross-strait exchanges. Since the holding of the First Meeting between Heads of Cross-Strait Competent Authorities in February last year (2014), the MAC and Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) have met four times and arranged exchange visits. The normal operation of mutual interaction and the communication and liaison mechanisms between the two sides holds deep significance for long-term development in cross-strait relations.

Deputy Minister Lin indicated that the results of institutionalized cross-strait negotiations are also gradually becoming apparent. Over the past seven-plus years, the SEF and the ARATS have held 11 high-level meetings and signed 23 agreements. This "building-blocks" approach has created an environment for orderly cross-strait exchanges on matters concerning the daily lives of people, as well as expanded the niches for Taiwan's overall development. For example, the recently signed Cross-Strait Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Enhancement of Tax Cooperation aims to reduce the burden of double taxation on the people and industries on both sides and increase enterprise competitiveness; and the Cross-Strait Collaboration Agreement on Flight Safety and Airworthiness will strengthen flight safety, enhance passenger convenience, and promote the development of the civil aviation industry. The government is also committed to ensuring that the people enjoy substantive benefits from the signed cross-strait agreements' implementation.

Deputy Minister Lin said that the meetings and normal communication and liaison mechanisms between the heads of cross-strait competent authorities, the SEF-ARATS talks, and the agreement signing prove that cross-strait official

interactions and consultations are not only functioning normally, but also continue to further protect the people's security, well-being and interests. On the Cross-Strait Trade in Goods Agreement, establishment of SEF-ARATS reciprocal institutions and other issues, the two sides have used the existing communication and consultation platforms to achieve increasingly frequent cross-strait exchanges on various levels, continue institutionalized development, create favorable conditions for positive interaction between the two sides, and advance peaceful and stable development of cross-strait relations.

Participants in the town hall meeting today took part enthusiastically in the exchange of views. Some people hoped to further understand the government's overall policy thinking on cross-strait relations, while some participants expressed concern over measures to further facilitate Mainland tourist visits to Penghu and overall plans to upgrade the development of Penghu industries related to cruise travel (such as the inappropriateness of focusing only on the Mainland), supervision of legislation of cross-strait agreements, how to promote and expand public participation in follow-up cross-strait negotiations, cross-strait local government exchanges and cooperation, and how to consolidate the foundation of cross-strait peace. Deputy Minister Lin, CEO Chiang, and other agency representatives gave detailed explanations on each of these issues.