

## **MAC Minister Chang Calls on the Two Sides to Communicate in Good Faith and Seek Common Understanding for Peace in the Taiwan Strait**

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Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Hsiao-yueh Chang today (November 16, 2016) attended an international conference on "Mainland China's Institutional Changes and Strategic Trends" held by the Institute for National Policy Research (INPR) under commission by the MAC. In a keynote speech entitled "Communicating in Good Faith, Seeking Common Understanding for Peace in the Taiwan Strait," she emphasizes that trust-building between the two sides must be a two-way process. Facing the cross-Strait new situation since May 20, Taiwan has embraced a new discussion and direction. The Mainland must break away from old ways of thinking and its standard behavior towards Taiwan. The two sides can unlock the greatest possible space for cooperation by opening the door at the same time and facing up to each other.

Minister Chang indicated that cross-Strait relations should be viewed in a historical context. For nearly 30 years, the policy of the Taiwan government has been to proactively promote the positive development of cross-Strait relations. Since May 20, Taiwan has positively sought to maintain the status quo of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. This has included the proposal of discussion to narrow the cognitive distance between the two sides, maintain friendly exchanges and communication. Based on the legal principle of equality, it has promoted the inclusion of Mainland students in the national health insurance system and cared for the education and daily life of Mainland students and spouses in Taiwan. The Mainland should positively understand the goodwill in Taiwan's words and actions and not deliberately interpret this with excessive negativity. Minister Chang also stressed that pragmatic communication and difference management are needed precisely because there are differences between the two sides. Constructive dialogue based on respect and understanding is the only way to remove barriers.

Minister Chang said that developments in the Asia-Pacific region represent a history of constant change, progress and cooperation. Peace in the Taiwan Strait is an important cornerstone of regional prosperity and development, as a vital member of the Asia-Pacific region, the ROC will more proactively develop Taiwan's geostrategic role and value, take concrete actions to maintain cross-Strait peace, and deepen all-round cooperation with countries friendly to Taiwan. Minister Chang also noted that the reforms and surging power of mainland China are affecting the strategic pattern internationally and in the Asia Pacific region. Deepening reforms and institution-building since the 18th National Congress of

the Communist Party of China are also rebuilding mainland China's political, economic, and social order. Minister Chang appealed to the international community, to convey to Mainland China the importance of maintaining peace during this change, to urge the Mainland to show more flexibility and goodwill, and to encourage constructive dialogue between the two sides to maintain the stability of security in the Asia-Pacific region.

The MAC stated that more than 150 scholars and experts from the United States, Japan, India, Thailand, and Hong Kong attended this conference. Minister Chang fully explained to the participants the important implications the ROC's cross-Strait policy and the policies and measures taken by the ROC government to promote the development of cross-Strait relations.