

# **Explanations Concerning the Forthcoming Second Chiang-Chen Talks**

Mainland Affairs Council, October 2008

## **I. Objectives**

### **1. Our overriding priority is to revive harmonious relations across the Taiwan Strait.**

Dialogue and negotiations are indicators of normal development of relations across the Taiwan Strait. Since taking office, the new administration has jettisoned previous patterns of confrontational thinking and behavior in cross-strait relations. We have proactively pushed to revive systematic negotiations, which have been in hiatus over the past decade.

Consequently, the two sides have achieved considerable progress in negotiating a number of important issues and establishing channels of communication, thereby building mutual trust and laying a foundation for constructive interaction. These initiatives, which have garnered the support and affirmation of the majority of our people, are of great significance in reducing the potential for miscalculation by either side, easing long-standing cross-strait tensions, and ensuring a stable and harmonious cross-strait relationship. We regard pursuit of these goals as our top-priority mission and responsibility.

### **2. Our short-term objective is to develop a cross-strait relationship based on mutual benefit and reciprocity.**

Through regular negotiations and dialogue, the two sides will exchange views and reach consensuses on major issues of concern to each side. Through cooperation and complementing each other's strengths, the two sides can work to resolve problems facing our peoples and realize our respective developmental goals for the immediate future. We shall move forward in a manner that will enable both of our peoples to reap benefits and create a win-win situation based on reciprocity.

### **3. Our long-term objective is to build a peaceful, stable relationship in an orderly process.**

Fostering two-way communication and mutual understanding is the key to advancing cross-strait relations. Doing so, moreover, is conducive to enhancing regional stability while serving the interests of the international community. Recently, leading nations of the world have responded positively and optimistically to the two sides' negotiations in pursuit of peaceful and orderly interaction.

This administration will push forward systematic cross-strait negotiations with the aim of accumulating experience and fostering mutual trust. Through institution of mechanisms for all manner of exchanges and cooperation, we aim to expedite comprehensive normalization of cross-strait relations. We will work with mainland China to achieve an equilibrium in the advancement of cross-strait interests, reciprocity and co-prosperity so that cross-strait relations can move in the direction of orderly development with healthy interaction, and an environment can be created to nurture peaceful development, freedom of choice, mutual assistance, and mutual respect. The two sides must negotiate with the aim of building a dynamic, peace-and-stability framework to bring about lasting peace and prosperity across the Taiwan Strait.

## **II. Approaches of this Government**

### **1. "Putting Taiwan first for the benefit of the people" is the guiding principle of our cross-strait policymaking.**

In formulating cross-strait policies and arranging a proper sequence of negotiation topics, this government upholds the principle of "putting Taiwan first for the benefit of the people." We will not overlook the importance of managing potential risks and coping with strategies that might be employed by Beijing. The people of Taiwan therefore need not worry that our sovereignty might be compromised. We insist that promotion of relations across the Taiwan Strait be premised on respect for the decisions of our people and preservation of our sovereignty. Beijing must face this reality and accommodate the operations of Taiwan's democratic polity.

### **2. Unnecessary restrictions on cross-strait exchanges should be removed in order to expand opportunities for normal interaction.**

Previous governments imposed a number of restrictions to manage cross-strait exchanges. In order to adapt to ever-changing cross-strait conditions, measures concerning cross-strait interaction must be designed so as to facilitate Taiwan's integration with the international community and enable it to keep in step with developments in the process of globalization. Upon reassessment of prevailing conditions and needs, this administration has adjusted relevant regulations and eased restrictions so as to give Taiwan greater space for free and lively interchange that can more fully tap its potential for development. We will also strive to create a more orderly environment for cross-strait interaction.

**3. We will continue to promote systematic negotiations in order to energize the development of cross-strait relations.**

Long-term, close exchanges between Taiwan and mainland China on multiple levels have given rise to structural changes in the cross-strait relationship, and have stimulated interaction between, and mutual influence of, the two sides' cultures, social systems, and lifestyles. By promoting systematic negotiations between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) chaired by Chiang Pin-kung and its mainland Chinese counterpart headed by Chen Yunlin, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), this administration aims to deepen and broaden the scope of cross-strait exchanges. Such development, furthermore, will play an important role in deepening our system's influence over, and maintaining a harmonious relationship with, mainland China.

**III. Anticipated Results of the Second Chiang-Chen Talks**

**1. We hope to sign agreements that benefit Taiwan and cross-strait relations.**

Pragmatic handling of the many issues arising from cross-strait interactions has been a top priority for the previous administrations of different political parties. Confrontational, antagonistic thinking, however, has prevented the two sides from reaching agreements on issues of major concern. In response to the changing cross-strait situation, this administration will give priority to dealing with issues that benefit Taiwan's development and ease cross-strait relations. Adhering to the principle of dealing with easier-to-resolve issues before tackling more difficult ones, and focusing on economic issues before political ones, we shall pursue

negotiations and sign agreements that fully protect the rights and interests of the people of Taiwan.

**2. We look forward to resolving issues of concern to diverse parties.**

Success in resolving cross-strait issues while protecting our people's rights and interests requires good communication and joint decision-making. We cannot act alone. Since the two organizations resumed negotiations, the SEF and the ARATS have intensively consulted on and dealt with several cross-strait issues, including the personal safety and rights of people on both sides of the strait; arrangements for SEF-ARATS talks; mainland tour groups' visits to Taiwan; weekend cross-strait passenger charter flights; contaminated milk powder produced in mainland China, and relief efforts following the Sichuan earthquake.

Additional issues that await systematic negotiation and signing of agreements in order to protect our rights and interests include sea and air transport and postal cooperation (such as expanding the scope of passenger charter flights, with more flights, destinations, and new routes that enhance convenience without endangering national security; and launching cargo charter flights and direct shipping); food safety; combating crime; and developing financial-sector interaction. It is for the purpose of addressing these and other substantive issues that ARATS representatives have been invited to visit Taiwan and consult with the SEF.

**3. We hope ARATS representatives will gain an appreciation for Taiwan's pluralistic, democratic society.**

ARATS Chairman Chen Yunlin's upcoming visit to Taiwan and the agenda for the Chiang-Chen talks have been arranged so as to safeguard Taiwan's dignity and its people's rights and interests.

Further, it is anticipated that the arrangements made will give the mainland visitors a full understanding of Taiwan's free, democratic, pluralistic, and open society, and enable them to experience its people's warmth, hospitality, and courtesy, which will contribute to mutual understanding between Taiwan and mainland China.

Recently, various individuals and groups have expressed reservation about the timing of Mr. Chen's visit, and it is possible that protests will be staged by the opposition. This government calls on all people to take a rational, pragmatic view toward the upcoming talks, as protests cannot resolve problems. Only through communication can they be pragmatically resolved.

The resumption of systematic SEF-ARATS talks and negotiations on cross-strait affairs are goals that the previous government worked for. We should therefore all look forward to their realization. It is hoped that as people in Taiwan strive to draw international attention to Taiwan's democracy and pluralism, they will concretely manifest these in their personal behavior. Only in so doing will we gain the world's respect.