

# Peace and Goodwill: Putting the People First

## The Government's Cross-Strait Policy in the Current Stage

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#### Foreword

On May 20, 2016, Taiwan accomplished its third transition of political power. In response to the expectations of the people of Taiwan for peace and stability in cross-Strait relations, the government is conducting cross-Strait affairs pragmatically, making commitments, and showing goodwill to prevent confrontation between the two sides. It has used communication and negotiations to lessen misjudgment and differences, shown the sincerity and determination to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, and endeavored to lead cross-Strait relations on a road to mutual trust, reciprocity, prosperity and peace.



between the two sides and to show the greatest goodwill and flexibility, avoid provocation and surprises, and establish consistent, predictable and sustainable cross-Strait relations.

#### 2. Four fundamental attitudes: No change in commitment, no change in goodwill, no yielding to pressure, and no reverting to a road of confrontation

President Tsai has reiterated numerous times that Taiwan's position has been consistent and firm. The government will not vary from its commitment to maintain the status quo of cross-Strait relations and to show goodwill. Taiwan also will not yield to pressure and will not return to the old path of confrontation. This is the fundamental attitude in maintaining the status quo of cross-Strait relations. It is also a shared aspiration for cross-Strait peace. In the future, the government will deepen democratic mechanisms and take proactive and forward-looking measures to promote constructive cross-Strait exchanges and dialogue in order to build long-lasting peaceful and stable cross-Strait relations.

#### 1. Maintaining the status quo: Respecting historical facts and abiding the existing political foundation

President Tsai clearly stated in her May 20 inaugural address that the government will continue to promote the peaceful and stable development of cross-Strait relations on the existing facts and political foundation. It will also conduct cross-Strait affairs in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of China (ROC), the Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area, and other relevant legislation. The existing political foundation brings together four key elements: The first element is the fact of the 1992 talks between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS), when there was joint acknowledgement of setting aside differences to seek common ground. The second is the existing Republic of China constitutional order. The third is the outcomes of over twenty years of negotiations and interactions across the Taiwan Strait. The fourth is the democratic principle and prevalent will of the people of Taiwan. Both sides need to show patience and wisdom to safeguard the status quo of peace and stable development in the Taiwan Strait. In her May 20 inaugural address, President Tsai endeavored to narrow the gap



### 3. Resolving differences pragmatically: Requires opening a wide door for communication and negotiations

Dialogue and communication are the most important keys in achieving and maintaining peace and stability in cross-Strait relations and establishing mutual trust between the two sides. Mainland China adheres to the "1992 Consensus" that "both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China" as the political foundation for cross-Strait interactions. It has also limited the operation of existing cross-Strait mechanisms, presenting challenges for recent cross-Strait official interactions and institutionalized negotiations. President Tsai continues to appeal for the two sides to sit down and talk as soon as possible, leaving the table open for discussion on any matter conducive to the development of cross-Strait peace and the welfare of the people on both sides. The government has also continued to maintain a friendly atmosphere for cross-Strait interaction and proactively liaised with the Mainland on important matters. It is believed that constructive dialogue between the two sides without preconditions can help both sides resolve their differences, avoid misjudgment, gradually build up a basis of mutual trust, and promote the benign development of cross-Strait relations.

### 4. Establishing a new model for interaction: Showing mutual respect and building mutual trust

Maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is the common responsibility of the two sides, it is also the hope and greatest common denominator of the people on both sides and the international community. Taiwan has a functioning democracy and has steadily developed a civil society and pluralistic public opinion. Both sides have chosen their own lifestyles and value systems. The political differences between the two sides will be difficult to eliminate overnight. However, it is hoped that they can be effectively and properly controlled. We hope that the two sides will jointly face the changing "new situation," jointly respond to a "new answer sheet," and, through communication and dialogue, jointly consider the establishment of a "new model" for cross-Strait negotiations, exchange, and interaction to seek benign cooperation and peaceful and stable development in cross-Strait relations.

### 5. Encouraging orderly exchanges: Coping with risk and deliberating supporting measures

Through the efforts of both sides, the SEF and ARATS have signed 23 agreements, of which 21 are in force. Their contents are all closely related to the safety and well-being of people on both sides. The government continues to

review the status of the agreement implementation with the competent authorities for these pacts. It has also maintained communication with the other side and duly responded. In the future, the government will continue to welcome Mainland tourists and students to come to Taiwan for tourism and study. It will also encourage cross-Strait exchanges and interaction in various fields. Moreover, the government protects and cares for the basic rights and living circumstances of Mainland students and spouses in Taiwan. At the same time, it will carefully deliberate the risk of the potential impact of interference with the implementation of cross-Strait agreements and private exchanges, as well as strengthen coping strategies and supporting measures to safeguard the interests of the people on both sides.

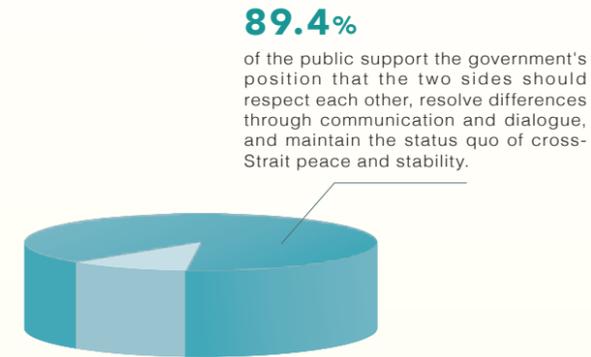
### 6. Solidifying the legal system for negotiations: Implementing legal norms for cross-Strait interaction

The government has proactively cooperated with Legislative Yuan to promote legislation of the Cross-Strait Agreement Supervisory Act. In addition to communicating with the public to defuse concerns, it has liaised with the Mainland at appropriate times through channels or scholars in hopes that the Mainland may fully understand and appreciate this. After completing a supervisory act that best meets the needs of society and is effective and feasible, the government will consider developments in cross-Strait relations and understand the views of Congress and all sectors of society as a basis for promoting follow-up negotiations on the cross-Strait trade in goods and environmental protection, as well as for promoting cross-Strait cooperation in related fields.

### 7. Respecting public opinion: Putting the well-being and interests of the people first

Taiwan is a democratic society. President Tsai has repeatedly stressed that there will be no change in the commitment to maintaining the peaceful and stable status of cross-Strait relations. The government will also make the utmost effort to maintain mechanisms for cross-Strait dialogue and communication. In keeping with the broadest and most recent public opinion, the government will conduct cross-Strait affairs according to democratic principles and procedures. According to a MAC public opinion survey announced on June 8, 2017, showed that nearly 90% of the public support the government's position that the two sides should respect each other, resolve differences through communication and dialogue, and maintain the status quo of cross-Strait peace and stability (89.4%). More than 80% of the public agree that both sides should put the rights, interests and well-being of the people on both sides first and promote positive interaction, exchanges, and cooperation

between the two sides (86.2%). The two sides should commit to putting the people first, align and pace the development of cross-Strait relations to the public's expectations, and deeply cultivate a solid foundation for relations and peaceful and steady development across the Taiwan Strait.



### 8. Building regional peace: In the joint interests of the two sides and the Asia-Pacific region

Cross-Strait relations form a key factor in building an Asia-Pacific security network. Maintaining a policy stance of peaceful and stable cross-Strait relations corresponds with cross-Strait and regional interests. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, US Secretary of Defense James Mattis, senior director for Asian affairs in the US National Security Council Matt Pottinger, and acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton have all expressed adherence to the Taiwan Relations Act, as well as support for Taiwan's democratic government and the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues in a manner acceptable to both sides. The US encourages Beijing and Taipei to engage in constructive dialogue based on dignity and respect. Japan and the European Union also believe that peaceful and stable cross-Strait relations accord with cross-

Strait and regional interests. In the future, Taiwan will strive to play the roles of "staunch guardian of peace" and "proactive communicator for peace." It will continue to communicate with all parties and seek the support of all sides, including mainland China, to constructively promote international affairs and participate in international organizations. The government is willing to exchange views with mainland China on issues related to joint participation in regional development and building regional peace and prosperity. In keeping with the Guidelines for the New Southbound Policy, it has also promoted good faith interaction and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait and explored various possibilities for cooperation and collaboration so that both side can play to their strengths and jointly contribute to the international community.

### Conclusion

Facing the new cross-Strait situation, the government will continue to open a wide door for cross-Strait communication and dialogue, work to create a friendly atmosphere, break deadlocks, take various approaches to reduce possible doubts and misunderstandings between the two sides, and honor its commitment to maintaining the peaceful and stable development of cross-Strait relations. The government began allowing family-related cross-Strait visits 30 years ago. Looking to the future, we hope that mainland China can recognize that the discrepancies between the two sides must be resolved through healthy communication, dialogue, exchanges, and interaction. We also hope that the Mainland will face up to the reality that the Republic of China exists, as well as respect Taiwan's dignity and the Taiwan people's firm faith in the democratic system, cherish the cumulative outcomes of communication and interaction over the past 20 years, maintain the effective operation of the existing mechanisms for interaction, and work together with Taiwan to seek the greatest good for the people of both sides and establish constructive and harmonious cross-Strait relations.

