



Chapter 8.

International Cooperation



8



Chapter 8. International Cooperation

At a time when Taiwan has become one of the developed countries, the promotion of international cooperation in health and medical care is not only a matter of world trend, it is also a vital key to whether Taiwan can stand out conspicuously on the international stage. The Department, in accordance with the Organization Act of the Department of Health, the Executive Yuan, established in August 2004 the Bureau of International Cooperation to be responsible for some major duties such as the planning, promotion and coordination on matters concerning international cooperation and exchange and policies governing international aid; collection of relevant information; participation in international organizations; enhancement of Taiwan's international image; recruitment of specialists, and manpower development for international health.

In the future, more innovative and pluralistic approaches will be taken to develop more diversified models of international cooperation. In the execution of various international health cooperation programs, more substantial and direct contact with developed countries and international organizations can be maintained to facilitate opportunities for communication. Models of international contact most suitable to Taiwan will be developed. Using international health cooperation as a means, Taiwan can fully execute in the global community her functions in aiding the distressed and supporting the tottering to attain the ultimate goal of feeding back and contributing to world health.

Section 1. Participation in the World Health Organization

Efforts to re-enter the World Health Organization (WHO) as a member began in 1997 without success yet due to the strong obstructions of China. However, by way of our ceaseless effort, this issue has become a focus of world concern, and the world is made aware of the unfair treatment that Taiwan has encountered. To link with the world community in the areas of health and medical care, Taiwan will continue to strive to join the World Health

Organization as a member.

1. The Republic of China (Taiwan) was one of the founding nations of the WHO. In 1945 at the United Nations San Francisco Conference, representatives of the Republic of China and Brazil proposed to hold as early as possible the world health conference to realize the establishment of a world health organization. As the WHO confirms that "health" is a "basic human right", in its Constitution, it clearly states that "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, political belief, economic or social condition".
2. In 1972, Taiwan was forced to withdraw from the WHO. Since then, the people of Taiwan have always adhere to the spirit of the WHO to promote the health standard of her people, and to fulfill her duties in health and medical care as a member of the international society.
3. To promote participation in the WHO, a special Executive Yuan task group on participation in the WHO was set up on April 25, 2001, to effectively integrate and utilize various resources, and using medical care, health care and humanity as main appeals to actively seek for international sanctions to attain the ultimate goal of becoming again a member of the WHO. Since 1997, every year in May when the World Health Assembly (WHA) is in session, delegations are sent to Geneva of Switzerland where the WHO headquarters is located to win over support of all circles to Taiwan's appeal of becoming an observer of the WHA. Nations friendly to Taiwan are requested to motion to invite Taiwan to participate in the World Health Assembly as an observer. The motion is, each year, discussed intensively at the General Council meeting. For the strong objections of China, the motion has not yet been placed on the agenda of the Plenary Session of the WHA.
4. The efforts of Taiwan to join the WHO have lasted for ten years. During this period, there had been enterovirus and SARS outbreaks, and the

legitimacy of Taiwan's participation and international support has grown day by day. For the vicious pressure of China, Taiwan's wish may not come true yet. Taiwan has, however, participated actively in various international conferences and activities, and at the same time, fulfilled with good intentions her duties as a member of the global village to gain support and recognition from other countries. Through international exchanges, experience and new knowledge in health management, medical technologies and health sciences are gained to improve the health of the people.

5. Action has been taken to actively participate in WHO-associated meetings and activities, to maintain close interaction with the WHO and major international health organizations, to participate in international health affairs and cooperation, and to plan for media publicity of Taiwan's achievements in health and medical care.

Major achievements in 2005 are as follows.

- 1) Efforts have been made to include the "principle of universal application" in the amendment of the International Health Regulations (IHR). The WHO, realizing that the years-long IHR can no longer confront the threats of the current emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases, announced in January 2004 the first draft amendment, and called in November 2004, and February and May 2005, meetings on the amendment. In the meantime, Taiwan has actively organized specialists groups to come up with substantial recommendations on the contents of the regulations. Many member states of the 58th WHA were in support of the suggestion that the IHR include the "principle of universal application", and that the regulations should not discriminate against anyone. The resolutions were unanimously adopted at the Plenary Session. In Point 2, by quoting the articles, member states of the WHO and the Secretary General should, in the execution of the IHR, conform to the provisions of Article 2 and Article 3 (the principle of universal application). This amendment should lay the legal foundation for Taiwan's future participation in the WHO.
- 2) Several bilateral meetings have been held. On the occasion of the 58th WHA, meetings with health leaders of friendly countries were held to establish and develop personal relationship in international health, to discuss possible health issues for mutual cooperation, to plan for collaborative projects with other countries, to extend spaces for international participation, and thus to lay foundations favorable for Taiwan's participation in the WHO.
- 3) An international symposium and exhibit on AIDS was held when the WHA was in session. The meeting was attended by some 200 members of embassies, and leaders and representatives of some major international organizations. The leader of Taiwan's medical team to Malawi made a presentation on Taiwan's assistance to Malawi in the control of AIDS. Color pictures and videos on Taiwan's international health aid programs were also presented to advocate Taiwan's efforts in international medical aid.
- 4) Major health policies formulated by the WHA were fully understood. The WHA is the highest authority of the WHO in the formulation of major global health policies. Participation in the WHA can facilitate exchanges with representatives of member states and major international organizations, and to discuss in depth with them health issues of importance. The major issues of 2005, except the motion of inviting Taiwan to participate in the WHO, included: love dearly every mother and child, amendment of the IHR, control of communicable diseases, research and development of vaccines for several communicable diseases and their supply and demand, and traditional medicine and pharmacy. They should be useful for Taiwan in formulating relevant health policies, and to develop relevant strategies to link and synchronize with the international community.
- 5) The efforts to re-enter the WHO in 2005 were overturned again by the strong obstructions of China. There were, however, a number of countries friendly to Taiwan, more than the last few years, expressed directly and indirectly on various occasions support to Taiwan, including for

the first time, the US, Japan and the European countries. This was a major breakthrough.

- 6) The World Medical Association (WMA) passed in May 2005 a resolution to officially declare support to Taiwan's appeal to participate in the WHA as an observer; and that the IHR should include Taiwan.
- 7) Since the 58th WHA meeting, medical and pharmaceutical experts of Taiwan can now participate on conditions and by invitation in the WHO-associated professional and technical conferences. Delegations were sent to the WHO extended international meeting on avian influenza held in Geneva on November 7-9, 2005.
- 8) The World Federation of Chiropractic passed a resolution on December 6, 2005, to support Taiwan's observer status with the WHA, and also her participation in the IHR.
- 9) Publicity materials in English such as, Taiwan Health Outlook 2005 ;v Global Medical Instruments Supporting and Service Program (GMISS), the Globe (a monthly newsletter of Taiwan in global health), Hospital Care in Taiwan, Health Life in Taiwan, Small Island with a Great Heart, My Taiwan: Connected to the World (VCD), have been produced.

Section 2. International Exchanges and Cooperation in Health

The purposes of international exchanges and cooperation in health are to strengthen medical cooperation with countries friendly to Taiwan, to help them improve their standards of health and medical care, to fulfill Taiwan's duties as a member of the international society, and to win over the understanding and attention of the international community to Taiwan. International organizations such as APEC (in Asia), PAHO (Pan American Health Organization, in the Americas), WAHA (Western Africa Health Organization, in Africa), and EHFG (European Health Forum Gastein) and OECD (in Europe) are fully utilized to appeal to the international media Taiwan's humanitarian medical



Signing of Memorandum with Israel

aid programs and substantial exchanges in medical care with various countries, and thus to improve Taiwan's international visibility. Activities of international exchanges and cooperation in 2005 include the following:

1. Signing of Memorandums and Agreements of Cooperation

- 1) On March 17, a cooperation agreement on health was signed with the Mongolian Health Ministry to promote exchanges in health with Mongolia and to promote substantial cooperation.
- 2) On November 25, the Bureau of National Health Insurance signed a memorandum of understanding with the Korean National Health Insurance Group. The memorandum includes periodic exchange of personnel and information between Korea and Taiwan, improving attention of countries on the experience of Asian countries in health insurance, publication on international occasions and journals findings of joint research projects, and learning from each other to improve and upgrade the health insurance programs of both countries.
- 3) A Sino-US memorandum was signed. Dr Michael Malison of the US CDC is invited as advisor. Training programs in avian flu, tuberculosis and Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) are discussed with the US CDC.
- 4) A Sino-Japan memorandum was signed. Bilateral symposiums will be held annually with the Japan

Infectious Disease Research Institute. Studies on bacillary dysentery and dengue fever will be conducted jointly.

2. International Conferences and Symposiums

- 1) On April 18-20, an international symposium on AIDS was held in Malawi jointly by the Department's medical mission in Malawi and the Malawi National AIDS Control Committee.
- 2) A "2005 Global Forum for Health Leaders" was held in Taipei from November 28th to December 3rd. 36 health leaders from 35 countries were invited to discuss health matters with some 200 local and international experts and domestic medical and pharmaceutical groups, teachers and students. Visits to various institutions of the Department were also arranged to help the visitors understand the health and medical care systems of Taiwan, and thus to promote exchanges and cooperation between countries.
- 3) On the 10th anniversary of the National Health Insurance, the Bureau of National Health Insurance held on March 18-19, 2005, an international symposium to invite some 30 renowned international guests such as Vice Minister of Health of the Czech Republic, Vice Minister of Planning of Turkey, President of the Korean Health Insurance Bureau, President of the Philippine Health Insurance Company, and President of the Indonesian National Health Insurance Company, the Pt. ASKES, to meet with some 800 local specialists and scholars for discussion. Practical experience and constructive recommendations on health insurance were brought up at the symposium.
- 4) On June 24-25, the 20th Symposium on Natural Medicines was held. Top researchers on herbal medicines from the US, Japan and Taiwan were invited to present some 50 research papers and 103 poster presentations. The symposium was most valuable to the development of Chinese medicine and pharmacy in Taiwan.
- 5) On August 23-24, an International Forum on the Development and Clinical Trial of Medicinal Plants was held.
- 6) On August 27-29, the Fourth International Symposium with the Global Alliance of Chinese Herbal Medicines was held jointly with the National Health Research Institutes. Some 200 participants come from the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, Singapore, the mainland China, and Taiwan.
- 7) On March 15, a meeting on the new trend in drug abuse research, epidemiology, toxicity and laboratory testing, was held to discuss and exchange comments on issues such as the control of precursors, addiction cessation, alternative treatment, and supply of needles.
- 8) On July 26, a symposium on the substitution therapy for drug addiction, getting the most out of buprenorphine, induction and detoxification protocol, was held to share the experience of Australia in the practice of substitution therapy.
- 9) On August 9-14, a symposium on the Introduction of IHRA and Harm Reduction Principles; Harm Reduction Principles and Experience; the Global Trend of Harm Reduction, was held for exchange of experience in matters concerning harm reduction for toxic substances.
- 10) On September 20-22, the "2005 International Conference on Drug Abuse Epidemiology and Prevention" was held for the exchange of information on latest drug abuse situations and their surveillance systems in different countries. The outcomes of the conference should be helpful in the future promotion of the community-based drug abuse surveillance systems, and also to the prevention and control of drug abuse in Taiwan.
- 11) On November 2-3, a roundtable meeting on Quality Assurance for Laboratories and Quality Control, and a Symposium on Laboratory Testing of Hair, were held to discuss and exchange experience on the quality assurance and quality control for urine testing, and the contents and development of the laboratory testing of hair.
- 12) On November 22-24, the 2005 Taipei International Conference on Drug Control and Addiction Treatment was held to share experience on four main issues, models of drug addiction treatment, trend of harm reduction of drug abuse, co-morbidity of drug-addicted patients, and the practice of substitution therapy.
- 13) The Taiwan Nurses Association was subsidized to

host the International Council of Nurses 23rd International Convention of Nurses and the 7th Conference on International Nursing and Midwifery Regulations. Some 4,000 participants from 148 countries came to the meeting to share professional knowledge and experience of nursing.

- 14) Three working meetings held by the WHO Traditional Medicine Department were attended. One was held in Nanning of Guangxi Province on July 5-7, 2005, on the GACP specifications for the farming and harvesting of herbal medicines. The second one, the WHO Inter-Regional Workshop on GACP and GMP for Herbal Medicines, was held in Shanghai on September 20-23, 2005. The third one, the Fourth WHO Consultation on Selected Medicinal Plants, was held in Italy on October 3-6. These meetings serve in a way channels of direct communication with others. At the same time, they were a breakthrough for Chinese medicine and pharmacy in Taiwan to demonstrate their achievements thus far.
- 15) The 2005 Third Meeting on the Promotion of Oral Cavity Health for Schoolchildren of Asia was held for some 500 local and international scholars and experts, and medical and nursing personnel.
3. International medical cooperation programs are implemented. 25 physicians of the Sao Paulo University Medical School of Brazil were accepted for training in Chinese medicine and acupuncture in Taiwan; the DOH Taipei Hospital was subsidized. The National Taiwan University Medical School and the Sao Paulo University Medical School have become sister schools. The Kaohsiung Medical University Hospital, the Corporate Chiayi Christian Hospital, the Corporate Changhua Christian Hospital, the National Yang Ming University have respectively become sister schools of the Mongolian, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea hospitals and medical schools.
4. To establish channels for cooperation with international organizations or communicable disease control institutions of various countries, Taiwan has actively participated in the many

WHO-associated meetings or activities. Since the amendment of the IHR2005, delegates have been sent to the WHO avian flu-associated meetings held in Geneva, and the International Bio-safety Conference held in Beijing. Channels for mutual visits and communication have been established with five communicable disease control institutions, the National Institute of Infectious Diseases of Japan, the US CDC. WHO/APEC, Ministry of Health of Vietnam, the Tropical and Epidemiology Research Institute of Vietnam, and the Ministry of Health of Indonesia. Information of contact point is provided by the US, Canada, Portugal, Turkey and the Executive Council of the EU.

5. To reinforce international exchange and for personnel training, the Center for Disease Control of the Department has sent 88 person-times of staff members abroad for practical study in tropical medicine, epidemiological investigation and control of communicable diseases. The Center has also held four international symposiums on tuberculosis, dengue fever, malaria and counter-bioterrorism, and 98 local and international experts participated in all.
6. Private sector organizations have been subsidized to implement a technical cooperation plan for tobacco hazards control in Cambodia to improve Taiwan's international visibility in the control of tobacco hazards.
7. The DOH Taoyuan Hospital started in November 2005 international patient wards; the DOH Taipei Hospitals set up an international health and medical center to promote international medical care services, and to strengthen care for alien patients. The Center also accepts medical care personnel from other countries for exchanges.

Section 3. International Medical Aid

Since the withdrawal from the WHO in 1972, Taiwan's close link with the international health society has been unhooked. Facing the trend of globalization, and the challenges of the new era that health sees no limit and diseases are without boundaries, Taiwan has made all efforts to promote international cooperation in health and international

medical aid as a means to knock the door of the world, and to facilitate the international society to know in depth about Taiwan, with a hope to build up step by step Taiwan's health diplomacy. International medical aid activities encompassed the following:

1. Earthquake and tsunami hit the Southeast Asia and South Asia areas on December 26, 2004 to resulted in serious damages to many countries, Taiwan has, for humanitarian concerns, soon commenced disaster relief in the South Asia region. By April 2005, the Department had flexibly dispatched medical teams and disease control teams to the stricken countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Maldives for humanitarian medical aid.
2. For relief of the earthquake disasters in the Philippines, on February 28, 2005, the Department, at a ceremony held at the Philippine Ministry of Health, donated medicines and medical devices, and also signed a letter of donation for the earthquake disasters.
3. To aid the Majuro Hospital of the Marshall Islands from the big fire, the Department donated some NT\$ 500,000 worth of medicines to the Hospital. A donation ceremony was held at the Hospital on December 30, 2005.
4. Medical Aid to Malawi
 - 1) Facilities for the laboratory testing of AIDS and

seven sets of finger print identification computer systems have been purchased to assist Malawi to start a free AIDS treatment center ;v the Rainbow Clinic. More software facilities for the medical team stationed in Malawi have also been purchased.

- 2) More facilities for midwifery services such as delivery kits and bicycles have been provided for the training of midwives in Malawi by the medical team stationed there.
- 3) One multi-purpose bus has been purchased for the Malawi medical team.
- 4) Drug counting plates are donated to the Malawi Health Ministry to help their hospitals in the pharmaceutical services.
5. Disease control teams was dispatched to Sao Tome and Principe to assist in their control of malaria.
6. In response to the appeal of the WHO, some 600,000 doses of Tamiflu have been donated to Vietnam to help in the control of avian flu.
7. Health promotion programs for Tibetans in exile in South Asia have been implemented; oral cavity medical teams have been dispatched to Tuvalu, Kiribati and Fiji; assistance has been given to Peru and Ghana schools of public health to set up health information facilities.



Emergency Medical Care in Indonesia after the Earthquake



Emergency Medial Care in Indonesia