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TMIL/RG-0095
April 8, 2024

The Rt. Hon. Riina Sikkut
Minister
Ministry of Health
Republic of Estonia

Dear Riina,

Re: Requesting your continued support for Taiwan's participation in the 77th WHA

As the 77th World Health Assembly (WHA) is scheduled to take place from May 27 to June 1 in Geneva, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), I am writing to inform you that a delegation led by the Ministry of Health and Welfare will be in Geneva during the Assembly to launch Taiwan's annual campaign to join the WHA as an observer, as well as meet with officials and medical experts from diplomatic allies and like-minded countries.

In 2023, Taiwan's WHO bid received greater international recognition and support that over 10,000 officials, political figures, parliamentarians, and opinion leaders from nearly 100 countries and the European Union spoke up for Taiwan in and outside WHO. Taiwan's 12 diplomatic allies submitted a proposal item to invite Taiwan to participate in the WHA as an observer. The United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Luxembourg spoke up for Taiwan. Estonia echoed Taiwan's appeals in a direct reference to Taiwan at your WHA General Discussion speech, while Latvia showed its support to Taiwan's bid by emphasizing the goal of inclusiveness, for which we are very grateful.

However, regardless of such wide support, Taiwan was invited to a mere 7 WHO meetings per year on average from 2012 to 2023. Political tactics employed by China are largely responsible for Taiwan's exclusion from WHO, supplemented by WHO's own political considerations. Overall, Taiwan's participation in WHO technical meetings continues to be sporadic and limited, leaving significant room for improvement. To date, WHO has refused to display the contact point information of the Taiwan Centers for Diseases Control on the IHR intranet, which has seriously jeopardized the global health net.

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In a world of entangled challenges, Taiwan is willing and able to help wherever there is a need. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to solicit your understanding and kind assistance in making the following requests possible:

1. Kindly instruct your delegation/mission based in Geneva to meet with Taiwan's health officials for a bilateral talk and attend professional fora and welcome reception (details are as attached). If this is agreeable to you, the name and the title of the designated official for the talk and the medical issues your delegation would like to include will be needed.
2. Please instruct your delegation/mission to send letter, co-sign the US-led joint letter or make joint démarche with like-minded countries to the Director-General and the Secretariat of WHO, and voice your support directly in any bilateral or multilateral platforms.
3. Please consider favorably asking your delegation/mission to work with other like-minded countries to join a collective effort in support Taiwan's bid on different occasions in and outside the WHO fora during the Assembly.

For your kind reference, enclosed please find copies of professional fora and a copy of position paper entitled "A comprehensive global health network must include Taiwan: Support Taiwan's participation in the WHA and WHO meetings, mechanisms, and activities."

Your kind attention and prompt assistance is greatly appreciated. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew H.C. Lee', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew H.C. Lee

Representative

Encl: a/s

**A comprehensive global health network must include Taiwan:
Support Taiwan's participation in the WHA and WHO meetings,
mechanisms, and activities**

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the end of COVID-19 as a global public health emergency in May 2023, a postpandemic economic, social, and political order has come into being. Learning from the COVID-19 experience and developing a coherent global cooperation framework are necessary to prepare for and adequately respond to potential future pandemics. Taiwan calls on allies and like-minded nations to support its regular inclusion in WHO meetings, activities, and mechanisms, as well as its participation as an observer in the World Health Assembly (WHA), to remedy the geographic gap in global health security and construct a comprehensive global health and disease prevention network.

In December 2021, WHO member states established a process to draft and negotiate a new convention, agreement, or other international instrument on more robust future pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response measures. Now called the WHO Pandemic Agreement, the document may be adopted at the 77th WHA in May. Yet while Taiwan makes great contributions to global health security, it may be excluded from the agreement.

WHO leads global development of public health and is the main international organization defending the right to health. However, WHO continues to exclude Taiwan due to unreasonable political considerations, jeopardizing the right to health of Taiwan's 23 million people. The organization is thereby undermining its own efforts to make global health architecture more comprehensive, hindering health emergency prevention,

preparedness, and response efforts.

Taiwan's participation in WHO remains limited

From 2012 to 2023, Taiwan was invited to a mere seven WHO meetings per year on average. Obstructionist tactics employed by China are largely responsible, supplemented by WHO's own political considerations. Overall, Taiwan's participation in WHO technical meetings continues to be sporadic and limited, leaving significant room for improvement.

For its part, Taiwan has applied to participate in a number of WHO mechanisms, among them the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) and the Global Digital Health Certification Network (GDHCN). It has sought to obtain WHO Listed Authority prequalification certification and to create a national focal point for noncommunicable diseases, but it has received no response. Taiwan is also seeking to participate in the International Health Regulations (IHR) on an equal footing with WHO member states.

The GDHCN is built on regional networks for COVID-19 certificates and utilizes the infrastructure of the European Union Digital COVID Certificate (EUDCC) system. The GDHCN may be used as a building block to support additional applications, such as digitalized International Certificates of Vaccination or Prophylaxis, verification of prescriptions across borders, international patient summaries, verification of vaccination certificates within and across borders, and certification of public health professionals. Taiwan became a member of the EUDCC in December 2020. However, only WHO member states are eligible to join the GDHCN.

With Taiwan unable to join the GDHCN, its authorities and health facilities

are unable to verify and issue digitalized certification documents in line with international standards. Were a new global pandemic to arise, Taiwan's exclusion would mean the vaccination verification burden in many countries would increase, and it could create difficulties for Taiwanese working overseas and foreigners living in Taiwan seeking medical treatment or medication. (In 2019, 28.83 million Taiwanese traveled overseas and 28.75 million foreign tourists visited Taiwan. Nearly 58 million passengers would thus be affected every year. In 2021, there were approximately 320,000 Taiwanese working overseas, and about 800,000 foreigners living in Taiwan.) If the GDHCN digital verification model is implemented, the international community may completely switch to digital certificates. Taiwan's inclusion in the EUDCC is solid proof that Taiwan's quality of medical information and communications technology has been internationally recognized. WHO should allow Taiwan to join the GDHCN and other mechanisms.

To date, WHO has refused to display the contact point information of the Taiwan Centers for Diseases Control on the IHR intranet. As a result, IHR contact points in other countries cannot directly report pandemic information to Taiwan, nor can they receive the important pandemic information Taiwan provides to WHO. This adversely affects pandemic prevention efforts.

Taiwan remains a geographical gap for global health security challenges

Despite making significant contributions to the world during COVID-19, Taiwan was prevented from drafting and negotiating the WHO Pandemic Agreement and does not have ready access to pandemic-related resources

and materials, the WHO Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing System (PABS), and the Global Pandemic Supply Chain and Logistics Network.

The PABS system was created because real-time information sharing is crucial when combating emerging infectious diseases. Taiwan has a comprehensive and high-quality infectious disease surveillance system. As a responsible member of the international community, in 2013 and 2017, Taiwan made notification of and shared information on H6N1 and H7N9 avian influenza cases as well as virus gene sequences once they were confirmed to help other countries make appropriate preparations. Taiwan was the first country to alert WHO about a possible disease outbreak in China in 2019. This was confirmed in the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response investigation report. However, Taiwan has had no reply to its application to join GISRS, first made in 2006.

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan donated masks, isolation gowns, thermometers, and other medical equipment and pandemic prevention materials to countries in need. Taiwan manufacturer Medigen Vaccine Biologics Corp. licensed its COVID-19 vaccine technology to the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and the United Nations-backed Medicines Patent Pool (MPP). Medigen was the first private manufacturer to participate in C-TAP and the MPP. This demonstrates that Taiwan has world-class biotechnology and medical treatments that can contribute to global health security. Taiwan's exclusion from the Global Pandemic Supply Chain and Logistics Network is a great loss to global health security.

Taiwan can help build a more comprehensive global health framework

Taiwan is committed to universal health coverage. Over the past few

decades, Taiwan has improved its health care and public health system in line with WHO recommendations. These efforts have included enhancing primary and oral health care as well as combating communicable and noncommunicable diseases. For COVID-19, Taiwan established response measures that harnessed artificial intelligence, big data, and surveillance networks. More broadly, Taiwan has made significant advances in and contributions to universal health coverage and is committed to sharing its experience and expertise with the world to help achieve health for all.

In a world of entangled challenges, Taiwan is willing and able to help wherever there is a need. In response to health emergencies in Ukraine, the people and government of Taiwan donated tens of millions of US dollars and hundreds of tons of medical and humanitarian relief supplies. It also dispatched healthcare workers to provide frontline services in Ukraine. Looking forward, Taiwan will continue to work to bolster the resilience of the global health network.

We urge WHO to be open and flexible, adhere to the principles of professionalism and neutrality, and include Taiwan in the WHA as well as WHO meetings, activities and mechanisms, including participation in the Pandemic Agreement.

It is time to include Taiwan in WHO and the WHA

The COVID-19 pandemic and health crises stemming from geopolitical conflicts have highlighted the crucial importance of international cooperation. All stakeholders in public health, Taiwan included, must unite to effectively respond to global threats to public health. A collective effort is necessary to achieve health for all.

Taiwan made significant contributions to the work of WHO and discussions at the WHA when it participated in the latter as an observer from 2009 to 2016. Taiwan's exclusion from the WHA since 2017 has impeded its ability to obtain assistance from WHO and to contribute to global health efforts.

Taiwan remains firmly committed to its professional and pragmatic approach and to playing an active role in global health initiatives. It seeks robust engagement with the global health security network and collaboration with WHO to strengthen the resilience of the global health system.

The inclusion of Taiwan in WHO and the WHA transcends political considerations—it is a practical necessity. Once again, Taiwan urges WHO to uphold professionalism and neutrality, reject political interference, and invite Taiwan to participate in the WHA as an observer. Taiwan also calls on WHO to seek appropriate methods for Taiwan's institutionalized participation in WHO meetings, mechanisms, and activities to achieve greater health for all people everywhere.

Climate Change and Health

Background

For the first time in history, the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) organizers hosted the first-ever Health Day on 3 December 2023 to reinforce the climate-related health crisis affecting at least 3.5 billion people – nearly half of the global population.

Extreme weather events not only place direct threats to human health but also disrupt the food supply and fuel the spread of infectious diseases, putting enormous pressure on health systems and workforces around the world. Therefore, a new COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health was signed by over 130 countries at the Conference. The Declaration advocates for more engagements in political and financial commitments, and concrete action to protect people from the catastrophic health impacts of the climate crisis.

Since COP26 in November 2021, health initiatives on developing climate-resilient and low-carbon sustainable health systems were anticipated to be implemented globally. Foreseeing the growing climate crisis could potentially reversing decades of progress in global health, the World Health Organization (WHO), together with global health partners, mobilized the signatures of over 40 million health professionals calling for bold health and climate action at the Conference. WHO also released an Operational framework for building climate-resilient and low-carbon health systems, as a blueprint for a future-proof and sustainable health sector in an ever-changing climate.

Introduction

As extreme weather events tend to increase in scale, frequency and intensity, climate change has become the single biggest health threat facing humanity, which affects not only physical environment but also all aspects of both natural and human systems – including social and economic conditions and the functioning of health systems.

These weather and climate hazards affect health both directly and indirectly, increasing the risk of deaths, noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and health emergencies.

According to WHO, 3.6 billion people already live in areas highly susceptible to climate change. It is estimated that from 2030 to 2050, climate change might cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from undernutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress alone. Although it is unequivocal that climate change affects human health, it remains challenging to accurately estimate the scale and impact of many climate-sensitive health risks on different diseases. As climate change aggravates health conditions, we must explore the clear connections between climate change factors and diseases. To alleviate the devastating impacts of the climate crisis, policies for addressing both climate change and public health should be aligned synergistically. Moreover, for those existing preventive measures will need to adopt new interventions or strategies to dealing those newly emerging climate-related obstacles.

Objective

Advocate the climate change impacts on health. By sharing knowledge on connections between climate change and health, promoting policies and strategies that could mitigate the impacts, and adopting new measures/ideas for the prevention of reverse health events, such as NCDs and undernutrition.

Date: May 28th, 2024

Time: 18:00 – 19:20 Geneva Time

Venue: InterContinental

Agenda

Time	Topic	Moderator / Speaker
18:00 – 18:05	Welcome and introduction	Moderator from CHAI (TBD)
18:05 – 18:10	Opening remarks	Minister of Health and Welfare, Taiwan (TBC)
18:10 – 18:20	Keynote: Climate change and Health – how is this major global crisis of our time intertwined with human health?	Speaker recommended by USAID (TBD)
18:20 – 18:30	Let health be the center of climate action - framing policies and strategies to improve public health under	High-ranking officer from Ministry of Health, St. Lucia (TBC)

	climate crisis.	
18:30 – 18:40	NCD prevention during the climate crisis – adopting new strategies for old topics.	TaiwanICDF
18:40 – 18:50	Impact of climate change on reducing dietary diversity and increasing malnutrition among under 5 children.	Terre des hommes
18:50-19:00	Climate Change and Health	Representative from SICA (TBC)
19:00 – 19:15	Q & A	Panels
19:15 – 19:20	Closing remarks	Secretary General, TaiwanICDF

Lessons learned from Formulation of WHO Pandemic Agreement and Revision of International Health Regulations

Background

The unprecedented global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed the World Health Organization (WHO) and its member states to critically evaluate and recognize the limitations of the International Health Regulations (2005) in effectively managing COVID-19 and emerging infectious diseases. This critical evaluation has initiated proactive steps towards the revision of these regulations and the development of a novel Pandemic Agreement, targeted for ratification at the 77th World Health Assembly (WHA).

Despite Taiwan's exclusion from direct participation in relevant international discussions and processes, Taiwan acknowledges the transboundary nature of viral threats. Consequently, Taiwan remains integral to the global pandemic response framework. As a devoted member of the international community, Taiwan pledges to align with the revised International Health Regulations and the newly established Pandemic Agreement, as will be endorsed during the 77th WHA.

This forum is organized to facilitate a comprehensive exchange on the possible roles, opportunities, and challenges presented by the updated International Health Regulations and the new Pandemic Agreement in the context of future pandemic preparedness and response. By extending an invitation to participants to engage in this open dialogue, we aim to collectively enhance our global capacity to effectively manage and mitigate the impact of future pandemics. Through shared insights and collaborative discussions, we seek to fortify our international readiness, ensuring a coordinated and robust response to global health threats.

Lessons learned from Formulation of WHO Pandemic Agreement and Revision of International Health Regulations

Agenda

Date: May 28, 2024

Time: 13:00-14:30

Venue: InterContinental Geneva – Paris

Participants: Members of WHA Delegations, technical experts, or members of Missions in Geneva (By Invitation Only)

Moderator: Dr. Yi-Chun Lo, Deputy Director-General, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control

Time	Program	Speaker
13:00-13:05 (5 mins)	Opening remarks	Dr. Jui-Yuan Hsueh, Minister of Health and Welfare, Taiwan
13:05-13:25 (20 mins)	Advancing equity, solidarity, and inclusiveness in the post-pandemic era: the role and function of the WHO Pandemic Agreement and International Health Regulations	Prof. Lawrence O. Gostin, Distinguished University Professor, Georgetown University, U.S.A.
13:25-13:45 (20 mins)	What Can Be Expected for a Good Governance from the WHO Pandemic Agreement	Prof. Chang-Fa Lo, Permanent Representative of the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Mastu to the World Trade Organization
13:45-14:00 (15 mins)	Navigating Future Pandemics: Challenges and Opportunities in Taiwan's Response under the WHO Pandemic Agreement and International Health Regulations	Dr. Yung-Ching Lin, Chief Medical Officer, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control
14:00-14:30 (30 mins)	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Prof. Lawrence O. Gostin· Prof. Chang-Fa Lo· Dr. Yung-Ching Lin

Dental Services for Vulnerable Populations

Background

Oral health is a key indicator of overall health, well-being, and quality of life. As the World Health Organization has indicated, oral health is integral to general health, and the WHA74.5 resolution on oral health targets achieving universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030. Oral diseases are the most widespread noncommunicable diseases, disproportionately affecting vulnerable members of societies across the life course.

Achieving the highest attainable standard of oral health is a fundamental right of every human being. However, vulnerable populations face persistent and systemic barriers to accessing oral healthcare. This international forum, "Dental Services for Vulnerable Populations," scheduled for May 29, 2024, will focus on oral healthcare for vulnerable populations from public health and multi-country perspectives. Speakers will include delegates from the World Federation of Public Health Associations, the Asia Pacific Dental Federation, the past president of the World Dental Federation, and delegates from Taiwan and Japan. They will share valuable experiences on how to overcome oral health inequality and achieve UHC for vulnerable populations. For instance, the Integrated Dental Care Program for People with Special Needs in Taiwan has established a regional special dental network consisting of seven special dental care centers and twenty-five networking hospitals. In 2023, this program provided treatment to over 49,000 patients. We sincerely invite WHA delegates, representatives of international organizations, non-state actors, experts, and academics to participate and share their valuable experiences.

“Dental Services for Vulnerable Populations” Agenda

- **Location:** Hotel InterContinental Geneva, Switzerland
- **Date:** Wednesday, 29th May, 2024
- **Time:** [GMT+1] 9:30-11:30
- **Moderator:** Dr. Jiann-Juh Chen
- **Participants:** Delegates of Ministry of Health and Welfare, experts from non-government associations, dental schools etc., totaling approximately 30-40 people.
- **Agenda:**

Time	Session	Moderator / Speaker
09:00-09:30	Registration	
09:30-09:35	Opening Remarks	Dr. Jui-Yuan Hsueh, Minister, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan
09:35-09:40	Group Photo	
09:40-09:55	Reducing the Disease Burden of Vulnerable Populations - An Urgent Need for Global Oral Health Action	Prof. Bettina Borisch Executive Director, World Federation of Public Health Associations, Switzerland
09:55-10:10	Global Perspectives on Dental Services for Vulnerable Populations	Prof. Gerhard K. Seeberger President and NLO to FDI of Italian Dental Association, Italy
10:10-10:25	Dental Services for Vulnerable Population in Asia-Pacific	Prof. Fernando Fernandez Secretary General, Asia Pacific Dental Federation, Philippines
10:25-10:40	Dental Services for Vulnerable Populations, experiences in Japan	Prof. Atsushi Saito Professor and Chair, Department of Periodontology, Tokyo Dental College, Japan
10:40-10:55	Dental Services for Vulnerable Populations, experiences at Tzu Chi Hospital	Prof. Yu-Chao Chang President, Taiwan Association Dental Science, Taiwan
10:55-11:00	Oral Health Policies in Taiwan's Health System	Dr. Yung-Ming Chang Secretary General, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan
11:00-11:30	Panel Discussion	Prof. Yu-Chao Chang President, Taiwan Association Dental Science, Taiwan
11:30	Closing Remarks	Dr. Hsi-Jen Chiang President, Taiwan Dental Association, Taiwan

International Forum on Holistic Health: Navigating the Future of Well-being and Care

Background

Taiwan, along with other member States of WHO, has been actively embracing the World Health Organization's (WHO) initiatives. The WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014–2023, initiated over a decade ago in response to World Health Assembly resolution WHA62.13, reflects a significant shift towards recognizing and integrating traditional and complementary therapies within global health systems. This strategic move underscores the increasing acknowledgment of diverse healing practices and the importance of holistic care approaches in contemporary medicine. Following the pandemic outbreak in 2020, WHO's designation of 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers further underscores the global commitment to supporting health care personnel, highlighting the essential role of caregivers in achieving health for all.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare in Taiwan has been at the forefront, promoting integrative health strategies, including therapeutic healing measures such as reflexology, championing a cherishing nursing campaign to take care of our nurses, and integrating holistic health approaches into our healthcare systems. This commitment is further reflected in our Nursing Workforce Strategy Plan for 2024 to 2030, aimed at retaining skilled nursing personnel.

This forum is dedicated to enhancing the preventive care competencies and capacities of nurses and caregivers by leveraging the development of nursing human resources in Taiwan. It seeks to explore the future resilience of healthcare by fostering international exchanges on holistic care and well-being. Sharing experiences and insights from countries like Taiwan, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the forum will provide a platform for forward-looking discussions on integrating resilience, digitalization, and holistic practices into future healthcare systems.

**International Forum on Holistic Health:
Navigating the Future of Well-being and Care
Draft Agenda**

Date: May 28, 2024

Time: 09:30 – 11:30

Venue: Hotel Intercontinental Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland (To be confirmed)

Organizer: Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan

Co-organizer: Corporate Synergy Development Center, Taiwan

Time	Program	Speaker
09:30–09:45 (15')	Opening Remarks	Minister Jui-Yuan HSUEH, Health and Welfare, Taiwan Dr. Pamela F. Cipriano, President, ICN Dr. Lian-Hua Huang, 3 rd Vice-President, ICN
09:45–10:15 (30')	Nursing Development in Taiwan	Moderator: Dr. Pamela F. Cipriano, President, ICN Speaker: Dr. Shwu-Feng Tsay, Director-General, Nursing and Health Care, Taiwan
10:15–11:15 (60')	Holistic Care for Well-being - Danish Experience - Norwegian Experience - Swedish Experience	Moderator: Leila Eriksen, Danish Expert in Reflexology for Health Speakers: 1. Anette Hanson, Chair of Danish Integrative Medicine and Representative of the Danish National Committee on Integrative Medicine Standards 2. John Petter Lindeland, Chair of Norwegian Naturopathy; Representative, the National Research Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NAFKAM) 3. Helene Ruhling, Nordic Representative for Integrative Medicine in the EU from Sweden

11:15–11:30 (15')	Panel Discussion	<p>Moderators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Pamela F. Cipriano, President, ICN 2. Leila Eriksen, Danish Expert in Reflexology for Health 3. Dr. Shwu-Feng Tsay, Director-General, Nursing and Health Care, Taiwan <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anette Hanson, Chair of Danish Integrative Medicine and Representative of the Danish National Committee on Integrative Medicine Standards 2. John Petter Lindeland, Chair of Norwegian Naturopathy; Representative, the National Research Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NAFKAM) 3. Helene Ruhling, Nordic Representative for Integrative Medicine in the EU from Sweden