

## Cross-Party Group on Taiwan Meeting

Date: 6:15pm, 09/12/2020

Venue: Online

Co-convenor, Rhonda Grant MSP, chaired the meeting:

- Rhoda Grant MSP welcomed members and friends of the CPG on Taiwan to the meeting.
- The previous meeting minutes dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 has been approved unanimously.

### Greetings and updates to Taiwan's Recent Developments:

- The Director General of Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the UK Edinburgh Office, Mr. Jason C.C Lien greeted members and friends of the CPG on Taiwan to the meeting and provided an update on the recent state of affairs in Taiwan.
- The Director General remarked on the worldwide impact of the global pandemic in the past year. He noted the damage COVID-19 has brought to the global economy and how it has impacted on global efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainability and Development goals and Taiwan can help to achieve these goals.
- On the topic of the current circumstances in Taiwan, the Director General highlighted that there have only been 721 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Taiwan till today (9<sup>th</sup> Dec.) and that currently, daily life is continuing with minimal disruption. He also remarked that Taiwan's economy has interestingly grown compared to last year but notes that the hospitality, travel and tourism industries have suffered a loss.
- The Director General thanked the friends and colleagues of the Scottish Parliament for their continual support during these unprecedented times. In the last year, seven motions have been passed including congratulations to the Taiwan president Tsai Ing-Wen for her re-election and inauguration and paying condolences to the passing of late president Lee Teng-Hui.

### Guest Presentation: "Taiwan's experience in handling COVID-19"

By Vivi Lin, President of Students for Global Health Edinburgh, IFMSA UK branch  
Former Chairperson of the Youth Committee at Global Taiwan Medical Alliance

- The presentation included 3 main topics, (1) Overview of the current situation in Taiwan, (2) The Fast, Fair, Fun Taiwan Model and, (3) Digital democracy.
- Vivi Lin began by outlining the background and current circumstances in Taiwan. Despite the original portrayal of Taiwan to be at high risk of increased infection rates due to the close geographical location to China, confirmed cases in Taiwan were at 721 with the majority being imported and few locally transmitted (at the time of the meeting). There has been no major disruption to daily life in Taiwan as schools and universities remained open (hybrid lessons were advised between February to May) and no lockdown was imposed. Notable changes included the prohibition of social bars for a short period of time and strict rules such as use of face masks and completing ID registration (similar to track and trace) which were well adhered to by the public.
- Vivi Lin introduced the model Taiwan used in the approach towards COVID-19 called "The Fast, Fair, Fun Taiwan Model". The model can be broken down into three sections. The first is 'Fast' which highlights the importance of acting and responding fast to changing threats and facts. Next, the second section is 'Fair' which describes equality in open access to information, fair treatment and alleviation of financial burden. Finally, the last section is 'Fun' which is the idea of a counter-disinformation strategy using humour to combat rumour by creating viral campaigns that spreads faster than rumours.
- Vivi Lin then talks about digital democracy. She mentions that according to the global civil society alliance, Civicus Monitor, Taiwan is the most open society in Asia and that the people are able to

enjoy the openness like other liberal democratic countries but with particular focus on two factors emphasised as key to digital democracy in Taiwan – open government and social innovation. On the topic of open government, the Digital Minister Audrey Tung (also the first transgender minister in Taiwan) described it to be fundamentally about trustworthiness (the concept of transparency and mutual trust between government and people), participation (people being engaged in the fight against COVID-19), accountability (giving account to the ideas received and how they are integrated into policies), and inclusion (ensuring inclusivity of people with technology or language barriers).

- Finally, Vivi Lin concludes with the quote by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, “Ultimately, the greatest lesson that COVID-19 can teach humanity is that we are all in this together.” She finishes with the remarks that this virus can tear up the world, but it will not shake the foundations of humanity’s values and that for a worldwide pandemic that does not discriminate based on borders and nationalities, it is crucial that in times of a crisis like this, we stay stronger together.

### Discussion

- Rhonda Grant MSP asked about the financial feasibility of quarantining in hotels. Vivi Lin responded that prices of hotels were cheaper to compensate for the decrease in tourism with part of the market replaced by individuals who needed to quarantine. The hotel fees are in part subsidised by the government. Individuals also have the choice to quarantine at home if there is access to a separate toilet.
- Dr. Ian McKee asked what the main factor was that kept infected cases down so low and wondered if there was a perhaps a different variant of the COVID-19 virus. Vivi Lin responded that a key factor is early response as speed of spread at a community level is much faster at the beginning.
- Rhonda Grant MSP asked if previous experience and preparations from SARS aided in Taiwan’s quick response. Vivi Lin agreed and explained that both the government and public were very aware of what serious consequences a virus like SARS can cause and the experience helped to facilitate the quick response and co-ordination between the government and the public.
- Margaret Mitchell MSP asked what provision has been made on vaccinations. Vivi Lin responded that the current update is that access to vaccinations will be available once they have been delivered and that in the meantime, vaccinations for the flu are being offered primarily to young child and the elderly population.
- Ronda Grant MSP then asked about travel restrictions. Vivi Lin responded that borders were closed during the time where the pandemic was most intense. Travel was restricted to only Taiwan citizens and special visa holders, but no restrictions were put on domestic travel.

### Attendance

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Margaret Mitchell MSP (Co-Convener)   | 8. Blanca Kao (Secretary, CPG on Taiwan) |
| 2. Rhoda Grant MSP (Co-Convener)   | 9. Danielle Thomson                      |
| 3. James Dornan MSP (Co-Convener)  | 10. Vivi Lin (Guest Speaker)             |
| 4. Kate Fry  | 11. Thomas Tan                           |
| 5. Jason C.C. Lien (Director General, Taipei Representative Office in Edinburgh) | 12. Hsien-lin Ro                         |
| 6. Mindy Chia-Min Chang Taipei Representative Office in Edinburgh                | 13. Dr. Ian McKee                        |
| 7. Daniel Wei-Ting Hu  | 14. Curtis Huang                         |
|  | 15. Victor Wei                           |