

Cross-Party Group on Taiwan

8th December 2021

Minutes

Present

MSPs

- Rhoda Grant MSP
- Jamie Greene MSP
- Jeremy Balfour MSP

Invited guests

- Dr Lin Ching-Yi
- Daphne Wu
- Dr Edward Lee Umeyama
- Felix
- Isabella Galbrovsky
- Joyce
- Kate Fry
- Kelly Chuang
- Lily Wang
- Linda Lee
- Liza Gilhooly
- Miaochen Gray

Non-MSP Group Members

- Jason Lien
- Mindy Chang
- Jenny Chen
- Danielle Thomson
- Chih-Jen Lin
- Dr Chi Can
- Philip Chan
- Robert chou
- Rohsienlin
- Sandy Sneddon

Apologies

- Ian Baxter
- Sammy Tam

Welcome Remarks

- Rhoda Grant MSP chaired the meeting and warmly welcomed members and of the CPG on Taiwan group to the meeting

Comments by Mr Jason Lien

Director General of the Taipei Representative Office in the UK Edinburgh Office

- Mr Lien gave thanks to the co-convenors and members of the CPG on Taiwan for hosting the COP26 delegation in Edinburgh. He also thanked local friends for the support and contributions to the success of the “Taiwan Day” event in Glasgow on the side-lines of COP26.
- He highlighted the purpose of the CPG on Taiwan to serve as an important platform facilitating the political, cultural, educational, and economic links between Taiwan and Scotland. He also expressed his gratefulness to have strong support from the Scottish Parliament through visits and motions, covering topics such as Taiwan’s participation in international organisations and commemorating Dr. James Laidlaw Maxwell’s contributions on his centennial early this year.
- Finally, he thanked the guest speaker, Dr Ching-yi Lin, for graciously agreeing to present at the meeting amidst her busy schedule and Jenny, the Chairpersons of the Scotland Taiwanese Association for assisting in the facilitation of the meeting.

Guest Speaker Presentation by Dr Ching-yi Lin

“Taiwan’s experience on handling COVID-19 and participation in WHO”

Dr Ching-yi Lin, physician, obstetrician, gynaecologist, former ambassador-at-large, and former member of Legislative Yuan (Parliament)

Covid-19 and Taiwan

- At the time of the meeting, Taiwan had recorded no active infective cases of covid-19 for a consecutive 30 days. This is following a spike of cases between May and September 2020.
- There have been less than 1000 deaths recorded. Those who were elderly, male or with chronic disease were worse affected.

- Current public health guidance includes general caution and use of face masks in public areas. All visitors from abroad must quarantine for 2 weeks and tested negative at least 3 times before released for a further 1-week self-quarantine.
- Public life remains largely undisrupted for the majority, with schools remaining open and business continuing with caution.
- First and second dose vaccinations have been completed for ~78% and ~60% of the population respectively.

Why Taiwan was able to tolerate Covid-19

- Experience of SARs in 2003 left a strong impression on the people of Taiwan after witnessing the lives of many succumbing to the virus. Population culture adjusted to reflect the seriousness of the outbreak and the importance of public efforts and alliance. Subsequently, the Taiwan population was ready to abide by covid-19 guidance at short notice.
- After SARs, disease control training was initiated and maintained in medical institutions and health care workers since 2004. The renewal of the communication-disease-control act in 2004 meant central and local governments acted as one to regulate covid-19. Daily reports on covid-19 are broadcasted to allow the speedy release of accurate information and prevention of the spread of misinformation.
- Maintenance of awareness and alertness of disease status in China meant that Taiwan was aware of a “special pneumonia” in late 2019 and able to take early precautions as a result.

Taiwan’s participation in the WHO

- Taiwan was allowed to participate in the WHO under the name “Chinese Taipei” (2013-2016) as observer. Under the current lead DPP (Democratic Progressive Party), Taiwan participation in the WHO is limited.
- Taiwan is left with limited information and opportunities to collaborate and join conferences with other countries due to ‘China’ factor.
- Many policies and guidelines in Taiwan were made in the absence of information that may have been gained from the direct participation in international organisations. Taiwan is grateful to have support from countries such as the US, Japan, UK and Europe for the help in relation to vaccines and information release. Taiwan will continue to pursue and maintain participation in professional organisations and strive to take part in more bilateral and multi-countries conferences in order to ensure healthy lives and wellbeing for all.

General Discussion

“Taiwan can help, and Taiwan is helping”

- This message was highlighted during the discussion. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan sent a donation of \$15,000 (£12,065) last year to aid with the purchase of PPE and necessities for the residents of the CrossReach Care home. The Scotland Taiwanese Association also organised 5000 facemasks to donate to CrossReach and key workers.

Advice on Misinformation and its influence on democratic systems during the pandemic

- Dr Ching-yi Lin responded that following Taiwan’s experience of misinformation and its effects, spread of misinformation was managed by the punishment of those involved and ensuring a direct channel of communication existed between the government and public, allowing for transparency and timely responses.

Updates on reopening Taiwan’s borders

- As announced by the Taiwan minister of Health and welfare, softer border policies may be considered when vaccination rates are over 85%.

G7 and Taiwan

- The Group of Seven (G7) came out in support of Taiwan’s observer status in the WHA during May 2021. Are there any groups from Taiwan that may travel abroad to further promote Taiwan?
- Dr Ching-yi Lin responded that any opportunity to communicate with the population is important. It is also important that communication and a good relationship between parliaments are maintained as this may lead to friendlier policies towards Taiwan.

Next Meeting

- To be confirmed