



# Deepening Progressive Partnerships: TAYLE & PF Young Leaders

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A Young Leaders Conference Report  
of the 2019 Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for  
Innovation and Progress

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## **Pacific Forum**

Founded in 1975, the Pacific Forum is a non-profit, foreign policy research institute based in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Forum's programs encompass current and emerging political, security, economic, and business issues, and work to help stimulate cooperative policies in the Asia-Pacific region through analysis and dialogue undertaken with the region's leaders in the academic, government, and corporate areas. The Forum collaborates with a network of more than 30 research institutes around the Pacific Rim, drawing on Asian perspectives and disseminating its projects' findings and recommendations to opinion leaders, governments, and publics throughout the region. It regularly co-sponsors conferences with institutes throughout Asia to facilitate non-governmental institution building as well as to foster cross-fertilisation of ideas. A Board of Directors guides the Pacific Forum's work. The Forum is funded by grants from foundations, corporations, individuals, and governments. The Forum's studies are objective and non-partisan and it does not engage in classified or proprietary work.

## **Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation**

Founded in 2018, the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) is the first policy-oriented think tank in Taiwan with a focus on Southeast Asian and South Asian affairs. In the spirit of the New Southbound Policy (NSP), the goal of the TAEF is to promote comprehensive ties between Taiwan and the 10 ASEAN countries, 6 South Asian states, as well as Australia and New Zealand through cooperation and exchanges in three major fields – including think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and young leaders – to consolidate a sense of regional community in Asia and establish long-term cooperative partnerships. TAEF is devoted to building new mechanisms for regional cooperation among Asian societies. It is our goal to cultivate common policy blueprints for Taiwan, ASEAN and South Asian countries through frequent regional dialogue, while also highlighting Taiwan's commitment and contributions towards Asia's development through concrete initiatives for cooperation. In addition, the TAEF hosts various international conferences – including the Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress – with the aim of strengthening ties with New Southbound Policy partner states and societies, while also inviting other like-minded countries to participate in regional dialogue.

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## INTRODUCTION

# DEEPENING PROGRESSIVE PARTNERSHIPS: TAYLE & PF YOUNG LEADERS

BY YURI BARAL & ARIEL STENEK

Since beginning our partnership two years ago, the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF) and Pacific Forum have provided meaningful exchanges under our organizations' youth engagement programs, the Taiwan-Asian Young Leaders Engagement (TAYLE) and the Young Leaders Program respectively.

Seeing the potential behind youth-led initiatives and the value of diverse perspectives on contemporary international issues, the TAEF and Pacific Forum hope to broaden the exposure of young leaders from the Asia-Pacific to pressing matters that affect their respective communities and the region at large. Under the TAEF's TAYLE program, select Pacific Forum Young Leaders and peers from Southeast and South Asia are invited to Taiwan to participate in the annual *Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue for Innovation and Progress*, which takes place in October and coincides with the country's National Day celebrations. The theme, "Deepening Progressive Partnerships in Asia," focused on the progressive partnerships and achievements in the areas of economic and technological exchange, talent cultivation, sustainable development, civil society development, think tank collaboration, cultural exchange and youth leadership within the region.

2019 was a very meaningful year for Taiwan and its people. It marked the third Yushan Forum, which has been a successful platform to communicate Taiwan's commitment to promoting lasting partnerships and cooperation with the 18 New Southbound Policy countries—the 10 ASEAN member states, six South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand—and other like-minded states. It also marked the 20th anniversary of the 921 earthquake and the 10th anniversary of Typhoon Morakot, events that heavily impacted the island and other countries in Asia. In commemoration, a special event, "Facilitating Asian Partnership for Disaster Preparedness" was held in conjunction with the 2019 Yushan Forum. It showcased regional efforts in disaster preparedness, management, and relief, and stood as a testament that, in times of disaster, the countries in the region stand as one.

For the 2019 TAYLE-Young Leader cohort, nine promising youths from Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States, were given the opportunity to attend the Yushan Forum's seven thematic sessions over a span of two days, affording them the opportunity to engage international leaders and subject matter experts, as well experience Taiwan from a different lens. Before returning to their countries, the Young Leaders discussed among themselves their key takeaways from the experience as well as possible areas of cooperation between Taiwan and their countries.

In her speech during the Yushan Forum, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen emphasized the importance of exposing young minds to experiences that will broaden their horizons and allow them to help address regional issues from a regional perspective. Answering this call, the following essays offer rich perspectives and pressing concerns from the region's emerging leaders.

Under this partnership between the TAEF and Pacific Forum, we hope to continue providing young professionals and scholars the opportunity to better appreciate Taiwan and its growing role in the Asia-Pacific, as well as to help them realize their potential as leaders and build connections with peers early in their careers. In the spirit of the 2019 Yushan Forum, we look forward to seeing their partnerships deepen to ensure continued regional innovation and progress.

# TAIWAN AND INDIA: ADVANCING TIES IN AGRICULTURE

BY MOHAMMA FAIZ ALAM

Taiwan's New Southbound Policy (NSP) has been introduced by the Tsai Ing-wen administration to advance ties with select regional countries including the 10 ASEAN countries, six states in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan), Australia, and New Zealand as part of the wider foreign policy approach. This holds immense importance and potential for India-Taiwan ties. The policy provides the strategy and impetus to leverage Taiwan's strong cultural, educational, technological, agricultural, and economic assets for regional progress and integration.

Across the wide area of focus, NSP provides opportunities for India-Taiwan partnerships in a number of strategic areas to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations (UN)—a total of 17 SDGs were finalized at the Sustainable Development Summit of the UN in September 2015. To be specific, Goal 2 “Zero Hunger,” which requires sustainable and resource efficient agriculture, presents an opportunity where partnerships and knowledge sharing can bring tremendous benefits.

## AGRICULTURE IN TAIWAN AND INDIA

Despite having stark differences in geography and population, agriculture plays an important and indispensable role in ensuring food security

in both Taiwan and India. In India, agriculture covers 43% of the country's total area of 328.7 million hectares, and it still plays a big role in the economy with 54.6% of the total workforce engaged in agricultural jobs and accounting for 17.1% of the country's gross value product.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Taiwan has transitioned to a more service and manufacturing centered economy with agriculture covering only 20% of the country's total geographical area of 3.6 million hectares and accounting for about 1.7% of GDP and 4.9% of the labor force,<sup>2</sup> much lower from a high of nearly 30% and 50%, respectively, post-World War II.

Taiwan's transition from agriculture to a service and manufacturing oriented economy while improving its food security has been recognized as a positive development model throughout the world, especially for small-scale farming economies<sup>3</sup>. The transition is exemplified by the much higher productivity of rice (staple crop in both countries) at 6.2 tons/ ha in Taiwan against the very low productivity of 2.6 tons/ha in India. This is despite having similar farm size holdings of about 1 ha in both countries, which is usually cited as a hindrance and challenge to modernizing agriculture and increasing productivity.

## TAIWAN'S EXPERIENCE IN FARM MECHANIZATION: INCREASING CROP PRODUCTIVITY

For India, its policy of “Doubling of Farmers' Income”<sup>1</sup> remains the central fulcrum to reduce poverty and increase income for more than half of the country's population; increasing agriculture productivity and resource use efficiency is the primary goal. This is hindered by a low level of mechanization in Indian agriculture. India has a mechanization level between 40-45%,<sup>4</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> Annual report 2018-19. Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. [http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/AR\\_2018-19\\_Final\\_for\\_Print.pdf](http://agricoop.nic.in/sites/default/files/AR_2018-19_Final_for_Print.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/706367/taiwan-distribution-gdp-across-economic-sectors/>

<sup>3</sup> Lu, F.-M., 2009. The Role of Agricultural Mechanization in the Modernization of Asian Agriculture: Taiwan's

Experience. *Engineering in Agriculture, Environment and Food* 2, 124–131. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1881-8366\(09\)80003-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1881-8366(09)80003-7)

<sup>4</sup> Ficci and Grant Thornton (2015). *Transforming Agriculture Through Mechanization*.

<http://ficci.in/spdocument/20682/agrimach.pdf>

lags far behind the level of mechanization in Taiwan, which is estimated to be as high as 98%.<sup>5</sup> Mechanization, which can increase farm productivity by up to 30% and reduce input cost by about 20%,<sup>4</sup> is essential for modern agriculture. In addition, decreasing farm labor, which is estimated to drop to approximately 26% of India's labor force by 2050, further necessitates the increase in mechanization in agriculture.

Taiwan's experience with mechanizing small farms opens lots of opportunities for India. In Taiwan, the process of agricultural mechanization began in the 1970's to overcome farm labor shortages and to increase the efficiency of agricultural production.<sup>5,6</sup> This led to the very high level of mechanization seen today, which has played an indispensable role in agriculture development. Efforts of the last three-four decades have resulted in Taiwan's farm machinery becoming economical and suited for small farmers. Thus, it is a perfect fit for India's agriculture requirements.

Taiwan's well-developed technology represents a potential solution to the lack of mechanization in India. It also presents a good business opportunity for Taiwan's firms with agricultural machinery to access the Indian market, which is estimated at approximately US\$6.5 billion and was expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of over 10% during the period 2013-18.<sup>4</sup> Taiwan already exports agricultural machinery to more than 40 countries.<sup>6</sup> Thus, collaboration in agriculture mechanization with private and public partners in India presents an exciting opportunity. The Indian government with its "Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)" is exclusively focusing on increasing agriculture mechanization in the

country and provides a very good platform to collaborate.

## **BUILDING AGRICULTURE RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND WEATHER DISASTERS**

The agricultural sector, being strongly dependent on climate, is highly vulnerable to climate change and weather-related disasters<sup>7</sup> with strong implications for achieving food security and reducing poverty. For example, floods and droughts accounted for 83% of the total loss of \$80 billion in crop and livestock production due to 140 medium-to-large-scale natural disasters (including non-water related events) that occurred between 2003 and 2013 in 67 countries.<sup>8</sup>

Both Taiwan and India are highly prone to climate change and weather-related disasters. Taiwan is characterized by high temperatures and heavy rainfall and regularly experiences typhoons and floods.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, India with rainfall concentrated in three monsoon months (July to September) regularly faces both floods and droughts. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these disasters further. Thus, there is a clear imperative for both countries to develop better policies and plans to enhance agriculture resilience. For example, without any adaptation, climate change in India could reduce annual agricultural income by up to 20-25%.<sup>9</sup>

Existing policies and programs such as the Taiwan Agricultural Adaptation Program on Climate Change<sup>10</sup> and India's National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) and National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) Program are actively working on agriculture adaptation. Similarity in farm size,

<sup>5</sup> Din-Sue Fon (2005). Technology Development Process and Experiences on Small Farm Mechanization in Taiwan.

<http://www.ftc.agnet.org/library.php?func=view&style=type&id=20110726153225>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.roc-taiwan.org/inmaa\\_en/post/3539.html](https://www.roc-taiwan.org/inmaa_en/post/3539.html)

<sup>7</sup> Turrall, H., Burke, J.J. & Faurès, J.M. (2011). Climate change, water and food security. FAO Water Reports No. 36, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Rome, Italy.

<sup>8</sup> FAO. (2015). The impact of disasters on agriculture and food security. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

<sup>9</sup> India Economic Survey, 2017-18.

[http://mofapp.nic.in:8080/economicsurvey/pdf/082-101\\_Chapter\\_06\\_ENGLISH\\_Vol\\_01\\_2017-18.pdf](http://mofapp.nic.in:8080/economicsurvey/pdf/082-101_Chapter_06_ENGLISH_Vol_01_2017-18.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Council of Agriculture. Annual report 2017.

<https://eng.coa.gov.tw/ws.php?id=2505526>

high paddy area, and emphasis on crop diversification shows that shared experience, knowledge, and technology can be mutually beneficial.

For example, Taiwan's experience with promoting reinforced facilities for agriculture, automation in agriculture with sensor equipment, handling systems for irrigation and collection of rainwater for circular use, and monitoring systems and prevention technologies for diseases and insect pests could be highly beneficial in the Indian context. Similarly, India's long and diverse experience in managing natural resources developed through its decades old Integrated Watershed Management system can be highly beneficial in Taiwan for managing watersheds that are likely to face more variable weather.

Similarly, both countries have developed their own agriculture insurance schemes. However, there is a need for a more robust, reliable, and faster insurance scheme applicable to a wide diversity of crops. India's large array of satellites combined with Taiwan's experience in big data and IoT provide opportunities for developing one. In addition, both India and Taiwan have been working with weather agencies to set up an agro-meteorology observation network to provide weather prediction, warning, and advisory for farmers. Sharing experiences in these areas can help build an effective platform.

## **GOING FORWARD**

India has an explicit policy on international cooperation in agriculture with the mandate to foster mutually beneficial partnerships with other countries in a multilateral as well as bilateral format. This fits well with Taiwan NSP mandate to advance ties with select regional countries in strategic areas. With agriculture's immense importance to both countries in ensuring food security, and the common challenges of climate change that they face, bilateral collaboration and partnership in agriculture is a natural one that can be turned into a long lasting mutually beneficial relationship.

# STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT: LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER'S EXPERIENCES

BY VORRALAK  
DHEERANANTAKUL

“Taiwan can help Asia, Asia can help Taiwan” is perhaps one of the most popular sentences in existing literature related to Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy (NSP). The sentence is President Tsai Ing-wen’s and was stated at both the 2018 and 2019 Yushan Forums. What is most interesting about the sentence, for someone sitting in the audience, is certainly not how Taiwan can and is willing to help out countries in the region, but the pronounced acceptance that Taiwan also needs help from us. This is the key element that makes the proposed relationship between Taiwan and countries in the region a two-way street. With the NSP being a clear-cut give-and-take instead of one-way altruism, Taiwan’s pursuit of international space and recognition is humble, honest, and genuinely refreshing.

The main factor that sets the NSP apart from other foreign policies lies in the emphasis on regional co-prosperity and people-to-people collaboration. Taiwan has made it clear that the NSP is not money diplomacy. It does not attempt to cajole allegiance by giving money or paying for physical infrastructure. This key message was also articulated at the 2019 Yushan Forum, where representatives of the Taiwanese government presented their people-to-people collaborations and panelists from different countries and diverse areas of expertise discussed their know-hows and ideas to advance their development agenda. It would seem, therefore, that by branding the NSP as soft-power and human-

centered diplomacy and setting itself up as a genuine helping hand, Taiwan indeed understands very well the limitations confronted by countries in the region and is masterful in maneuvering terrains while also being respectful of the line which these countries cannot afford to cross.

Given diplomatic constraints that Taiwan and so-called “likeminded countries” would have to operate under, it is essential that Taiwan is genuine and innovative in finding common ground and identifying an issue of mutual interest between Taiwan and an NSP-targeted country. Furthermore, Taiwan would do well to package and market its efforts to build and cultivate partnership as an invitation for *mutual and equal exchange*. The success rate of Taiwan’s approaching a prospective partner in this way will definitely be much higher than if it were to knock on doors and attempt to preach its beliefs and principles. Taiwan’s development experiences and renown as one of the four Asian Tigers is certainly an asset here, but deploying them against China’s growing economic and political clout risks shunning engagement and turning genuine pursuit of development into another demeaning and unpleasant experience of neocolonialism.

With more than 700,000 migrant workers coming from NSP countries, Taiwan’s protection and management of these workers can certainly be common grounds. In fact, the government of Taiwan, through the Ministry of Labor, has already established a platform upon which Taiwan can use to deepen its partnership with a number of NSP countries. This platform is the annual joint labor conference which the Taiwanese Ministry of Labor organizes and is attended bilaterally by representatives from labor ministries of the principal origin countries of Taiwan’s foreign laborers. These are the Philippines (156,248 workers), Indonesia (273,605 workers), Vietnam (224,040), and



Thailand (60,396 workers).<sup>1</sup> At present, the joint labor conference only serves the practical purpose of improving the recruitment and management of migrant workers within Taiwan. As the country of destination, Taiwan can engage directly and constructively with governments of countries of origin. This makes the joint labor conference an effective mechanism to help ensure that operational difficulties and existing gaps can be promptly identified and systematically addressed. This is a crucial step to improve the management and protection of overseas workers.

Nevertheless, against the backdrop of disruptive changes in the world of work and Taiwan's earnest attempts under the NSP to further its regional development agenda, it would appear that there is still plenty of room for Taiwan to maximize its bilateral opportunities. The joint labor conference is already a recognized platform for concrete labor cooperation. It would certainly give leeway, should Taiwan wish to increase its cooperation intensity through exchange and engagement with these countries, on other issues of mutual interest or common challenges arising from major trends in the world of work.

As for Thailand, which now finds itself in the shoes of both a source of and host to foreign workers, our interests and the challenges we face have transformed into something that is very similar to Taiwan's situation. Since the Taiwanese government legally opened its doors and permitted the first ever group of overseas workers from Thailand (about 3,000 workers) in 1989, it now has 714,291 foreign workers<sup>2</sup> from more than six countries. With an average increase in the number of foreign workers every year of 2%, the rising demand for migrant workers in Taiwan shows no sign of slowdown.

The situation is relatable for Thailand. After the first wave of migrant workers in the first half of 1990s, there are now more than 4 million migrant workers within the country. The huge number is partly due to Thailand's porous borders which make patrolling difficult and irregular migration

relatively easy. What's more, Thailand is set to become an aged society. According to the World Health Organization, the proportion of Thailand's population that is comprised of persons aged 65 or older is projected to surpasses 14% by 2025. In labor market terms, this would mean that there will be a fast-growing percentage of pensioners while the working age population continues to shrink. In such circumstances, Thailand's reliance on migrant workers can only go up. The already swelling population of over 4 million migrant workers will soar and strain Thailand's insufficient administrative capacity even further.

For this reason, it would be in Thailand's best interest to engage and exchange experiences and lessons learned in migrant worker management with a country like Taiwan. Taiwan, which has more than 30 years of experience on the issue and has had to deal with similar problems, will also be able to broaden its scope of cooperation and realize its vision for a stronger and more prosperous region. This kind of exchange can start small. An existing platform like the joint labor conference can be used as the first steppingstone upon which Taiwan leverages its development experiences to expand regional collaboration.

When the prospect of real and tangible benefits is clear and the atmosphere is that of a two-way exchange, Taiwan's agenda of deepening partnerships should encounter least resistance and truly contribute to the development efforts of countries in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics, Workforce Development Agency, MOL: Foreign Workers in Productive Industries and Social Welfare by Nationality, September 2019

<sup>2</sup> Statistics, Workforce Development Agency, MOL: Foreign Workers in Productive Industries and Social Welfare by Nationality, September 2019

# DEEPENING TAIWAN-VIETNAM RELATIONS THROUGH TRADE AND INVESTMENT

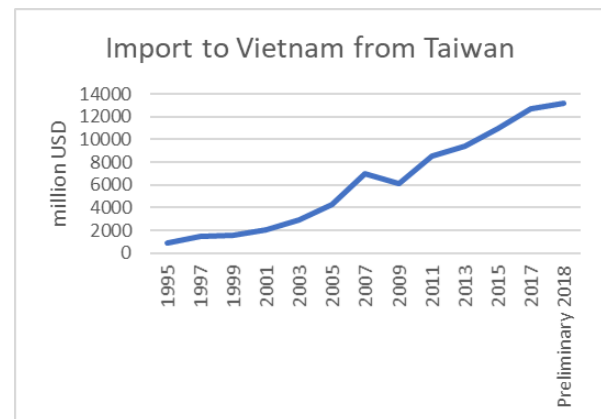
BY HUYEN NGOC THANH TRAN

The New Southbound Policy (NSP) first introduced in September 2016 by Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, aims to promote cooperation between Taiwan and countries in South and Southeast Asia, New Zealand, and Australia in fields such as technology, education, and health care. The NSP's vision is to create a new and mutually beneficial model of cooperation and a sense of economic community through economic collaboration, talent exchanges, resource sharing, and regional partnership.

In the three years since the policy was launched, Taiwan's relations with the New Southbound countries have greatly improved in many ways. Statistically, total trade volume between Taiwan and the New Southbound countries increased from US\$96 billion in 2016 to \$117 billion in 2018, with exports increasing from \$60 billion to \$68 billion, and imports from \$37 billion to \$49 billion. The number of tourists from the New Southbound countries to Taiwan increased by 58%, from about 0.9 million visitors to about 1.4 million, and the number of students in Taiwan from New Southbound countries has grown from 32,000 to 52,000 – an increase of about 60.8%.<sup>1</sup> In the field of healthcare, Taiwan has signed agreements to coordinate and share medical and health information between six hospitals in

Taiwan and their counterparts in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.<sup>2</sup> Taiwan's contracts to build Asian government infrastructure, including metros and roads in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Vietnam, also rose from four in 2015 to 20 in 2018.<sup>3</sup> In addition, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from the New Southbound countries to Taiwan have increased by 66% in three years, from \$236 million in 2016 to \$392 million.<sup>4</sup>

Taiwan and Vietnam have been economic partners for a long time. According to statistics compiled by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, imports from Taiwan have been consistently increasing in value from \$901 million in 1995 to \$13.2 billion, while exports increased from \$439.4 million in 1995 to \$3.15 billion in 2018.



<sup>1</sup> Stacy Hsu, 2019; "Taiwan's New Southbound Policy showing strong results: trade office", Focus Taiwan News Channel, Retrieved from

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201905230017.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Taiwan's Ministry of Health and Welfare; "New Southbound Policy", Retrieved from

<https://www.mohw.gov.tw/cp-4344-46553-2.html>

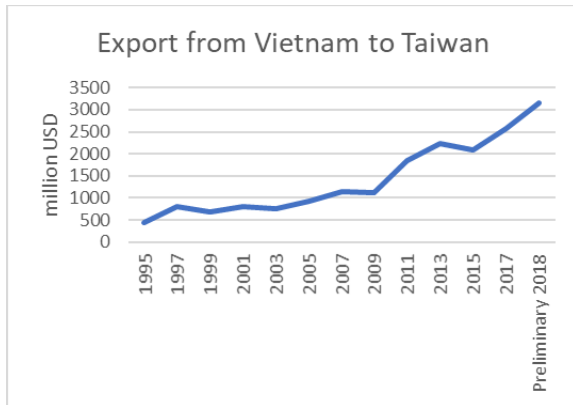
<sup>3</sup> Humphrey Hawksley, 2019; "Taiwan's New Southbound Policy is decreasing its reliance on China", Nikkei Asian

Review, Retrieved from

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Taiwan-s-New-Southbound-Policy-is-decreasing-its-reliance-on-China>

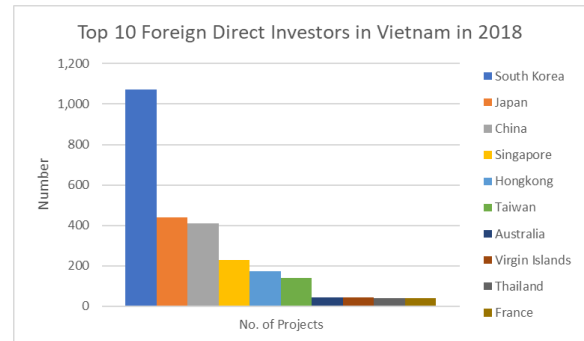
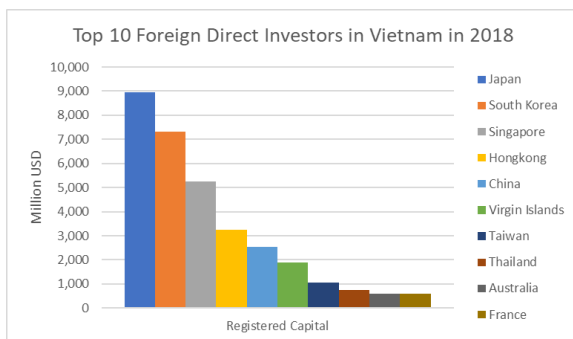
<sup>4</sup> Asialians, 2019; "Taiwan Legal Update: The New Southbound Policy And Cabinet Approves Draft Amendments To Foreign Trade Act", Retrieved from

<http://asialians.com/en/taiwan-legal-update-new-southbound-policy-cabinet-approves-draft-amendments-foreign-trade-act/>



Source: The General Statistics Office of Vietnam

Taiwan has also been among the top 10 foreign direct investors in Vietnam for several years. In 2018, it was the sixth largest investor in numbers of projects and seventh in value with 141 registered projects equivalent to \$1.045 billion. Taiwanese companies mainly focus their investment in manufacturing and processing industries, especially in the fields of textile, footwear, and more recently, smart technologies. The Taiwan Expo 2019 that took place at Hanoi International Exhibition Center in August 2019 gathered more than 200 Taiwanese brands under the Taiwan Excellence campaign ranging from information technology, healthcare equipment to transportation vehicles. The Taiwan Expo 2019 also created a platform for both Vietnamese and Taiwanese companies to discuss further collaboration in the future.



Source: The General Statistics Office of Vietnam

Efforts have also been made to promote cultural and knowledge exchanges between Taiwan and Vietnam.



In August 2019, an 18-meter-long and 1.6-meter-high ceramic mural was inaugurated presenting some of the most iconic features of Taiwan, including Taipei 101, the ancient Queen's head and Alishan national forest. The Environmental Education Youth Excellent Workshop organized by Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration has also brought together Vietnamese universities and young delegates from Taiwanese universities and civil societies to discuss solutions for environmental issues. In the field of tourism, the easing of visa restriction, popular destinations, competitive pricing, and good tour quality are the main reasons the number of Vietnamese tourists visiting Taiwan and the number of Taiwanese tourists visiting Vietnam have greatly increased in recent years. Taiwan had 10 million visitors by the end of 2018, a quarter of which came from New Southbound Policy nations, especially the Philippines and Vietnam.<sup>5</sup> On the Vietnam's side,

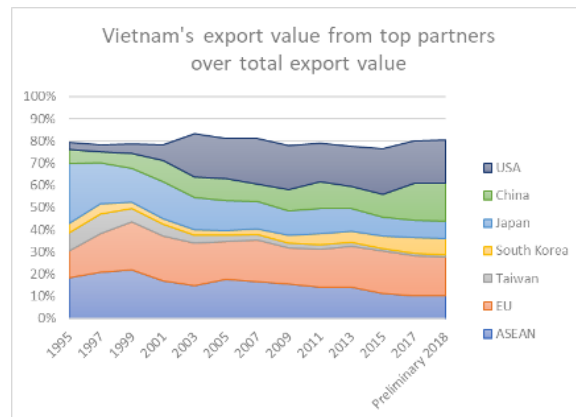
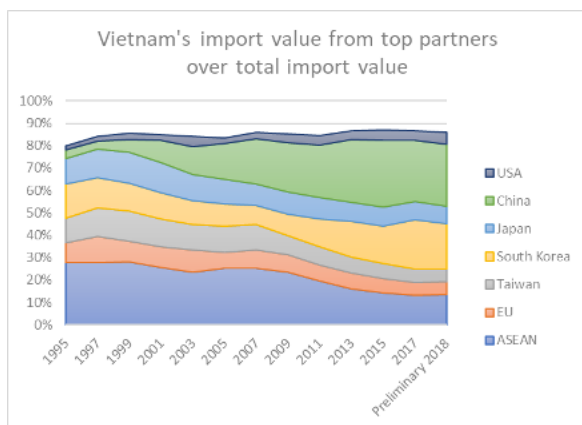
meter-high ceramic mural was inaugurated presenting some of the most iconic features of Taiwan, including Taipei 101, the ancient Queen's head and Alishan national forest. The Environmental Education Youth Excellent Workshop organized by Taiwan's Environmental Protection Administration has also brought together Vietnamese universities and young delegates from Taiwanese universities and civil societies to discuss solutions for environmental issues. In the field of tourism, the easing of visa restriction, popular destinations, competitive pricing, and good tour quality are the main reasons the number of Vietnamese tourists visiting Taiwan and the number of Taiwanese tourists visiting Vietnam have greatly increased in recent years. Taiwan had 10 million visitors by the end of 2018, a quarter of which came from New Southbound Policy nations, especially the Philippines and Vietnam.<sup>5</sup> On the Vietnam's side,

<sup>5</sup> "Taiwan welcomes 10 million foreign visitors for 4th consecutive year", Taiwan Today, 2018, Retrieved from

<https://taiwantoday.tw/news.php?unit=2,6,10,15,18&post=146421>

according to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, Taiwan ranked fourth in number of tourists visiting Vietnam during the first nine months of 2019, increasing 27.8% compared to the same period of 2018.

Based on these facts, Vietnam and Taiwan have a great potential for further collaboration and enhancing their partnership. In terms of trade, even though the absolute import and export value from and to Taiwan continue to rise, the proportion of trade between Vietnam and Taiwan compared to total trade value has been decreasing. Imports from Taiwan to Vietnam used to account for 11% of Vietnam's total import value while exports from Vietnam to Taiwan used to account for 8% of Vietnam's total export value in 1995. Fast forward 23 years to 2018 and imports from Taiwan to Vietnam only took up 6% of Vietnam's total import value, and exports from Vietnam to Taiwan went down to only 1% of its total export value. As such, we should not be complacent with our achievements in increasing the absolute trade value between the two countries, but we must work together to improve the trade proportion as well.



Source: The General Statistics Office of Vietnam

Given the complementary effect between trade and investment, increasing quality FDI from Taiwan to Vietnam could be one measure to promote trade. In recent years, Vietnam has sought to attract FDI in a more sustainable way by prioritizing investors with high technology, creating more added value, and paying more attention to environmental and labor issues. As one of the biggest FDI investors in Vietnam, Taiwanese companies are welcome to experiment with innovative solutions for further enhancing their current portfolio in textiles, automation industries, etc. as well as exploring new industries such as smart cities. While they should focus on investment, innovation, and technology, Taiwanese investors should also pay great attention to adhering to Vietnamese regulations and maintaining and improving environmental and human conditions in local areas. Taking social responsibilities into consideration along with profitability will be beneficial for Taiwanese companies in the long term, especially now that consumers are more and more concerned about the environmental and social footprint of the products and services they are using. On its side, Vietnam must continue reforms and improve human resources quality, infrastructure, and policies to provide a better environment for facilitating businesses and investment.

Vietnam's active participation in new free trade agreements such as Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the European Union Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) also creates a good channel for Taiwan to introduce

products made by its companies to the world. In addition, Vietnam and Taiwan should continue to promote the exchanges of information on managing and developing new products and services, enhance aviation connectivity, and simplify visa procedures. Meanwhile, Vietnamese living in Taiwan and Taiwanese living in Vietnam can be ambassadors, contributing to improved cultural understandings and harmonization between the two countries, as well as sharing their experiences, contributing indirectly to improve the image of both countries when they return to their local community.

I believe the New Southbound Policy can facilitate greater connections between Taiwan and Vietnam and that Taiwanese and Vietnamese people can work together to improve our existing positive relationship. Activities such as the Yushan Forum also create a good platform for discussing programs, vision, plans, and the potential for future collaboration. One area for improvement would be more interaction between the young leaders and other participants at the forum. This could be facilitated by arranging for the young leaders to mingle with the participants during the forum and social events. That way, the young leaders will benefit from increased access to the expert's network brought about by the forum and be able to contribute, in a more active way, their insights and creativity into the discussion.

# MAPPING ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS

BY LIM HOUNG

After receiving the invitation to participate in the *Yushan Forum: Asian Dialogue Innovation and Progress*, I learned that the New Southbound Policy (NSP) is an initiative of the President Tsai Ing-wen government to enhance cooperation with South and Southeast Asian countries through partnerships in a variety of areas, including the economy, technology, talent cultivation, sustainable development, and culture. Cooperation with think tanks is focused on responding to the challenges of international democracy and societal change.

My country, Cambodia, has not had a very strong relationship with Taiwan over the years because the Cambodian government has kept Taiwan at a distance at China's behest to show that it fully supports the "One China" Policy—a diplomatic nod to the notion that Taiwan is breakaway Chinese province rather than an independent state. Nevertheless, because Cambodia needs Taipei's economic engagement it has welcomed Taiwanese companies into the country. However, a government decision in 2017 formally bans any display of the Taiwan flag in Cambodia. According to a recent *Forbes* report, Taiwanese companies invested roughly US\$171 million in Cambodia in 2017, rising to \$181 million in 2018. Last year's sum was the highest in six years. As a young Cambodian, I hope the NSP can build more collaborations to solve regional challenges in a way that is mutually beneficial to Cambodia and Taiwan.

It is my personal view that Taiwan should promote more investment in Cambodia using foreign direct investment (FDI) policies to push economic growth, which could lead to better diplomatic relations. A sincere willingness to help and support each other in the region is needed.

Providing entrepreneurship training and creating a strong network within the region between governments and private enterprises would benefit everyone. This is something the Taiwan government needs to do with Cambodia as well as other countries in the region.

Among the areas suggested during the Forum (agriculture, healthcare, technology, education, civil society, culture, think tank cooperation, and youth engagement), I think the most relevant for Cambodia and Taiwan are the following:

- 1) Youth engagement. Cambodia has many outstanding young individuals who can be future leaders or policy makers. Yet, more ideas from international youth through shared experience would facilitate better solutions and help create countries with prosperity, wealth, and happiness. Both governments should encourage more exchange programs for youth from Taiwan to Cambodia, and from Cambodia to Taiwan to deepen relations and encourage engagement in each society.
- 2) Healthcare. Since the development levels of Cambodian healthcare and social-welfare systems are very low, Taiwan could invest in building a good hospital and provide technical support to improve the living standard in Cambodia. Currently there is a great need for materials and technical expertise.
- 3) Education. Based on my experience at the third Yushan Forum, I have become aware of many student exchange programs between Taiwan with other countries, including in some in Southeast Asia. However, there are no academic exchange program between Cambodia and Taiwan or re-skilling programs being provided by Taiwan in Cambodia. I hope that Cambodian students can get more scholarship to study in Taiwan to learn more about its culture and lifestyle, which would help build stronger

relations. These students could return to their home country and create the alumni associations to maintain the relationship between Taiwan and Cambodia.

Finally, as a TAYLE Young Leader, I can promote a better understanding about the New Southbound Policy and its focus on building peace within region by enhancing relations both formally through the government and informally through the private sector. After returning from the third Yushan Forum, I have shared what I have learned with people in business enterprises and young entrepreneurs. They are looking forward to having the great opportunity to join in next year's program. I welcome all Taiwanese friends or entrepreneurs to visit Cambodia.

Thank you TAEF!



# YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREATER COLLABORATION

BY OSAMA BIN NOOR



At present, the New Southbound Policy facilitates significant cooperation between Taiwan and Vietnam in several areas, but where it delivers the most visible impact is in education. I hope for these two countries continue to build on the positives of their existing relationship to maximize the benefits from the New Southbound Policy for the people of both countries.

When I learned about the Yushan Forum 2019, the aim of which is to strengthen Taiwan's relationship with South and Southeast Asian countries, I was very interested to join. I studied the New Southbound Policy and as a social entrepreneur and youth activist from a fast-growing country, Bangladesh, I realized I knew very little about Taiwan. This encouraged me to study more about Taiwan and the relationship between Taiwan and Bangladesh.

In 2004, the Taiwan government established the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Bangladesh in the capital, Dhaka, but due to some issues, it was unable to offer visa services, leading to its closure on June 30, 2009. One of the keys to deepening the relationship with neighboring countries is to make the visa process easier. Under the visa policy of Bangladesh, Taiwan

citizens with a Republic of China passport can be issued a visa on arrival, but under the visa policy of Taiwan, Bangladeshi citizens now have to obtain a visa in New Delhi or Bangkok, which is the main barrier to collaboration between the two countries, from a Bangladeshi citizen's standpoint.

Trade, cultural, educational, and technological relations between Taiwan and Bangladesh are low compared to the ASEAN countries or India. There are only 40 Taiwanese companies investing in Bangladesh with the largest categories being clothing, shoe, and furniture manufacturing along with aquaculture. Shoe manufacturers are mostly in Chittagong, others are in the Dhaka suburbs. Bangladesh and Taiwan can be good markets for each other's products. Also, I think the prospect for more collaboration between Bangladesh and Taiwan in the areas of trade, education, and culture for inclusive growth with mutual benefits is good.

Meeting Taiwan's president and ministers at the National Day celebration program was a great honor for me. I was very impressed with the government of Taiwan for their very hospitable and helpful attitude. The Yushan Forum helped me learn a lot from the speakers and my fellow participants.



It was eye-opening to know the effort the Taiwan government is making to share its resources with its neighbors. And here are my ideas on possible collaboration between the two countries through multiple youth programs.



**Internship Exchange Program** – The most important element of an internship is the integration of classroom knowledge and theory with practical application and skills in professional and/or community settings. Students are always looking for exciting opportunities to apply their skillset, accumulated over many years of schooling. An internship exchange program might be an interesting opportunity for both Taiwan and Bangladeshi students. Through these exchanges, they will get to learn each other's culture, language, and values and serve as a resource to the host country.

**Taiwan Education Fair in Bangladesh** – Taiwan is providing a huge number of scholarships for international students to study in Taiwan. But many Bangladeshi students are not aware of those scholarship opportunities. Youth Opportunities can bridge this gap by conducting a Taiwan Scholarship Fair in Dhaka.

**TAEF Program Promotion** – TAEF promotes and hosts multiple programs. Youth opportunities can help TAEF reach more youth from Bangladesh. Very soon, we are going to provide Application Tracking System (ATS) to our partners.

**Bangladesh Taiwan Youth Alliance**—Bangladeshi youth do not have deep knowledge and connection with Taiwan, and vice versa. We can create a platform (for example, “Bangladesh Taiwan Youth Alliance”) through which volunteers from different institutions will have a chance to visit Taiwan to join a program, internship, or study visit.

**Youth Opportunities Platform in Chinese Language**—Youth Opportunities is now the largest opportunity discovery portal for the youth across the globe. We have noticed that language is one of the major barriers to gaining access to opportunities and contents. We want to launch a Chinese language version of our platform with the support of TAEF to connect Taiwan youth with global opportunities. Youth Opportunities is

currently available in three languages—English, Arabic, and Bengali.

**Health Tourism**—Taiwan's health services and technology are very advanced. A lot of Bangladeshi patients travel to India, Singapore, and Thailand for better health service. But when it comes to health and tourism together, a lot of people Bangladesh would consider visiting Taiwan if the visa issue could be resolved.

**Special Program for Differently Abled People (Tribal)** —In Bangladesh, we have diverse ethnic minority groups and differently abled people. Unfortunately, these groups of people do not have enough opportunities in Bangladesh. Taiwan is a very promising country for inclusiveness. Taiwan can empower them by providing a special educational scholarship program.

**Essay Writing Competition**—Competition is very exciting for students. We can organize essay writing competitions both in Taiwan and Bangladesh on specific issues. Winners would be recognized by certificate, crest, or maybe an international study trip.

**Local Tech Startup in Bangladesh (Competition)** —Bangladesh is booming in the tech startups area. We have local giant startups solving social problems with a business model. University students are getting very inspired and they also want to solve such problems. Taiwan is very advance in technology. Taiwan can host a tech boot camp in Bangladesh for a week through mentorship and seed funding and Youth Opportunities can provide support as a media outreach partner.

But for any of these to happen, the visa process must be simplified. Under the visa policy of Bangladesh, Taiwan citizens with a Republic of China passport can be issued visas on arrival, but under the visa policy of Taiwan, Bangladesh citizens must obtain visas in New Delhi or

Bangkok.<sup>1</sup> Taiwan could also offer on-arrival visa for those with an invitation, medical emergency or develop a simplified e-visa alternative.

These are a few areas where I believe the Taiwanese and Bangladeshi governments can collaborate for mutual benefit. As a global organization, Youth Opportunities, can provide support in most of them. I don't know the full scope of Bangladesh's policy toward Taiwan, but I know Bangladesh has a strong relationship with China across different sectors. These are some ideas based on my experience at the Yushan Forum. However, I am open to further collaborations outside of those mentioned here. Let's begin!

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<sup>1</sup> "Bangladesh–Taiwan Relations," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified April 9, 2015,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh–Taiwan\\_relations#Visa\\_policy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh–Taiwan_relations#Visa_policy).

# TAIWAN'S PEOPLE-CENTERED NSP FOR REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

BY KELLY PARK

The 2019 Yushan Forum exemplified Taiwan's strong willingness and long-term commitment to become a platform for regional dialogue based on a people-centered approach that represents an innovative public-private partnership. Marking the third year of the Forum, the two-day conference was attended by a diverse group of government officials, business professionals, and scholars<sup>1</sup> from the Indo-Pacific region including ASEAN nations, India, Japan, Korea, United States, Canada, and New Zealand that shared an interest in promoting economic growth, peace, and prosperity in the region. The forum reflected the development of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy (NSP), emphasizing the "people-centered" approach while calling for stronger support from its neighboring partners.

As President Tsai Ing-wen emphasized in her opening remarks, the NSP, which covers 18 countries, has brought more than 50,000 students to Taiwan on educational programs since 2015, 150,000 foreign patients for medical services, and 600 medical experts for training in Taiwan. There was also an increase in trade with the region amounting to \$117 billion in 2018, which is a 20% increase from 2015<sup>2</sup>. A part of Tsai's national development strategy, the NSP aims at strengthening Taiwan's ties with the 10 ASEAN nations, six South Asian countries, New Zealand, and Australia. The Yushan Forum serves as a critical tool in achieving the people-centered

agenda of the NSP and discussing the significant role that Taiwan can play in the region.

Under the theme of "Deepening Partnership for a Progressive Asia," this year's Forum continued to demonstrate Taiwan's soft power strengths in the fields of capacity building, talent exchange, sustainable development, ICT, technology, agriculture, disaster relief, health, and trade. The Forum especially highlighted case studies of existing partnerships between Taiwan and its partners in the areas of agriculture, health, vocational training, and education. While the Forum was a success in depicting "What Taiwan can do for Asia" and sharing common regional issues, the complementary discussion on "What Asia can do for Taiwan" failed to identify potential policy ideas, cooperative strategies, and next steps for furthering Taiwan's partnership with its regional partners.

Nevertheless, there were positive responses from participants, acknowledging and welcoming economic, social, technological, and environmental partnerships with Taiwan. Despite the lack of official diplomatic and government-to-government ties, there were hopeful signs for building impactful people-to-people connections through the NSP and other efforts by organizations such as the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation.

## Taiwan's New Southbound Policy (NSP) and People-Centered Approach

Earlier Taiwan efforts at developing a national policy towards the Southeast Asia region were launched via the Go South Policy of former Presidents Lee Teng-Hui and Chen Shui-Bian in the early 1900s to 2000s. The Go South Policy focused heavily on establishing economic and trade relations with neighbors in Southeast Asia. The New Southbound Policy invigorated by President Tsai since 2016 aims to strengthen

<sup>1</sup> The forum was attended by 1000 participants including 30 ambassadors and representatives from 22 countries. Special speakers from abroad included Former Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, Ambassador Shivshanker, Menon, U.S. Senior official for APEC, Ms. Sandra Oudkirk, Former White House Press Secretary, Sarah Sanders, and Member of

the House of Representatives in Japan, Mr. Keiji Furuya and more.

<sup>2</sup> Lin, Chia-nan. "China Risking Regional Prosperity: Tsai – Taipei Times." *Taipeitimes.Com*, 9 Oct. 2019, [www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2019/10/09/2003723630](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2019/10/09/2003723630).

Taiwan's ties with neighbors in the Indo-Pacific region by focusing on people-to-people connections and goals dedicated to development, peacebuilding, human resources, technology, and knowledge sharing. The NSP also safeguards Taiwan's relationship with its critical partners, such as the US and Australia.

The NSP is a way for Taiwan to independently and peacefully promote its sovereignty, to shift its economic activities in China to the Indo-Pacific region, and to counterbalance the rising pressure from China. Furthermore, given the increasing loss of diplomatic ties between Taiwan and its former partners in Oceania and Africa, the NSP is a critical national policy to revive partnerships with global communities.

It is critical to emphasize that the NSP and the Yushan Forum promote an approach that encompasses long-term investments in building people-to-people connections and institutional and public partnerships through development-oriented agendas that focus on technological, cultural, educational, trade, and sustainability exchanges. While the soft power approach might seem weak, there is hope that the people-to-people connections will have a long-lasting and influential impact on Taiwan's international relations. It is also worth noting that Taiwan's NSP is not intended to destruct existing international organizations but rather complement them by offering Taiwan's unique experiences, advantages, resources, and leadership in the region.

### **The Role of Young Leaders in Support of NSP**

One of the most effective and direct ways of strengthening Taiwan's NSP is working with young leaders in the region. By establishing a network that links emerging young leaders from the Indo-Pacific region with Taiwan's resources and opportunity, meaningful relationships based on trust, mutual respect, and understanding can be fostered. The TAEF is one of the main drivers of this critical effort engaging bright minds from Taiwan and the region for knowledge exchange

and collaboration building. This network will lead to more invitations for Taiwan to participate in global events. Furthermore, the growing network will bring a deeper level of partnerships and participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including government, non-government organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and civil society organizations (CSOs) that can promote Taiwan.

### **What Comes Next for NSP and the Yushan Forum**

Given Taiwan's advancement in technology, vocational training, health, agriculture, and emergency disaster relief, Taiwan should take a proactive approach to utilizing its current capacity in the international forums such as APEC's Human Resources Development Working Group and Emergency Preparedness Working Group. Taiwan should widely share its expertise and take leadership roles to assist regional partners. To transform potential opportunities for collaboration into actual strategic partnership, Taiwan should focus on immigration policy for visa and work permits to ease the mobility of people. Second, Taiwan can create an online one-stop-shop where foreign businesses, government agencies, NGOs, and CSOs can look up information on Taiwan's organizations, contacts, and projects in the areas of the NSP agenda. Third, Taiwan can consolidate efforts of domestic NGOs and institutions to present a cohesive strategy based on each country's needs and Taiwan's advancements. Fourth, in conjunction with focusing on what Taiwan can offer, Taiwan should take a stronger approach in encouraging its neighbors to include Taiwan. For example, collaborating on an online platform or an institutional support unit for Taiwanese companies who are looking to invest in Southeast Asia. Another example would be to discuss environmental policies and legal guidelines that will help Taiwanese companies expand their businesses in Southeast Asia.

Finally, Taiwan can strengthen its presence in the global community by conducting collaborative projects with other like-minded countries that are

promoting Southeast Asia focused agenda, such as South Korea and Japan. South Korea's "New Southern Policy" promoted by President Moon Jae-in since 2017 also carries similar emphasis on people, prosperity, and peace while Japan's strategy toward the Free and Open Indo-Pacific values stability and proactive contribution to peace. Thus, Taiwan can jointly achieve NSP goals while engaging with its Northeast Asian neighbors.

At next year's Yushan Forum, I am hopeful that there will be more fruitful discussions on the progress of emerging partnerships between Taiwan and its neighbors in the Indo-Pacific region. Showcasing collaborative projects that reflect people-to-people connections will signal significant progress toward achieving Taiwan's NSP. As next steps, the success of the third Yushan Forum can be advanced by asking how partnerships are developing, initiating collaborative activities, and presenting the partnerships in global platforms.

Through my participation in this year's forum as a Young Leader of the TAYLE Program, I was able to witness the emergence of Taiwan's leadership in regional development, common challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region, the potential for strategic partnerships, and the high capacity that Taiwan holds for the region. More importantly, it provided me a unique opportunity to personally think about how I can contribute to advancing Taiwan's leadership and position in the world.

# LOOKING TO YOUTH AS CHANGE AGENTS IN ASIA

BY MIN NYAN SHWE

The 2019 Yushan Forum was a tremendous opportunity for me to learn how Taiwan's New Southbound Policy (NSP) can build mutually beneficial partnerships between Taiwan and Asian countries. The NSP is a comprehensive strategy to promote regional exchanges and collaboration through economic development and exchanges. Specific programs Taiwan has used with ASEAN member countries under the policy include development of information and telecommunication systems, vocational training curriculum in educational institutions, medical cooperation, agriculture partnerships, Halal food distribution, and Taiwan Aid support programs.

The NSP is a unique platform that helps open the door between Asia and the global community and creates partnerships that share progressive values. NSP's visa fee waiver can help develop tourism industries, create job opportunities for local peoples, promote diverse cultural celebrations, and increase agriculture productivity in the region. Myanmar has welcomed foreign investment and regional collaboration in economic development, education, and youth and worker development programs. Therefore, Taiwan's NSP can be used to share Taiwan's resources for regional prosperity and influence Myanmar by contributing to local community needs using its information and telecommunication technology and its training programs in agriculture, medicine, and higher education.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Myanmar has contributed to economic development and social issues such as the rehabilitation of the agriculture cooperation program in Rakhine State, including livestock breeding since 2018. Taiwan's assistance has provided meaningful support in changing local

farmers' lives through advanced agricultural technology which has resulted in an increase in crop productivity. In addition, Taiwan NGOs have provided assistance in the following areas: health and welfare support, including free medical services and outreach programs to several townships in the Yangon region; funding for humanitarian aid and disaster relief; computer training courses; and cooperation with the Myanmar government in providing information and knowledge to the people through a mobile library program. This cooperation has had a very positive impact in Myanmar because it addresses significant social issues and moves the Myanmar peace process forward.

Taiwan's NSP is a good opportunity to build a strong relationship with Myanmar. Collaboration for economic development such as shared resources and technical exchange, strengthening manpower through capacity building in vocational training is important. Some specific areas where Taiwan assistance could be provided to Myanmar include the following.

- 1) Taiwan's NSP could address Myanmar's high unemployment through vocational training curriculum and Taiwan companies can invest in Myanmar. Business relations could be improved by supporting key demands in areas such as collaborating in IT business and public-private schools to support and enhance employee skills and capacities.
- 2) Taiwan can build connectivity through institutional cooperation in the Myanmar peace process in areas of technical support for information management to public relations department and state counselor office to enable timely and accurate reporting. There are many sectors in which Taiwan and Myanmar can strengthen relationships.
- 3) Taiwan aid should extend integrated agriculture cultivation technology in Myanmar to support sustainable and

social development. Moreover, Taiwan can participate in education to develop curriculum and teacher capacity and joint research programs.

- 4) Taiwan should be used as a model to develop Myanmar's health system, especially in areas such as health insurance and public-private hospital medical checkup systems. Internship opportunities for medical students and investment in healthcare material industries could also be explored.
- 5) Taiwan can collaborate in natural disaster prevention and reducing the impact of climate change in Myanmar. With the country's ecosystem changing, including forest depletion, rivers becoming silted-up, and the deterioration of dams and irrigation canals, Taiwan can cooperate in environment protection and river management with the latest technology.
- 6) Taiwan, as a world leader in information and telecommunication technology, can invest in sectors such as information and communication technology products and ICT adoption in Myanmar.
- 7) Taiwan can promote young entrepreneur workshops and exchange programs to broaden youth networks throughout Asia and enhance investment with NSP target countries.
- 8) Taiwan should extend a large number of scholarship opportunities for diverse groups in Myanmar to give people a chance to better understand Taiwan's policy, its people and cultural practices, institutions, and social development. Graduates could become change agents and advocates for Taiwan.

Implementing the projects mentioned above will bring substantial benefits to both Myanmar and Taiwan. The two nations can build a strong bond

of friendship and influence other countries as well.

Taiwan's strategy needs to specify how Taiwan will strengthen its partnership with civil society in New Southbound countries to ensure effective collaboration and to achieve mutual benefits. For a country like Myanmar with its unique history and current challenges, Taiwan can create and support an enabling environment for civil society to participate in policymaking and implementation at the local and national levels. It is important to give civil society the necessary space to promote the inclusion of wider aspirations and ensure that the voices and needs of the people are heard. Taiwan can take the role of facilitator and technical supporter, leading the research and providing aid to ensure civil society's voice is heard. This will enable civil society's contributions to the peace process, economic development, diversity and culture promotion, youth education exchange and vocational training, and manufacturing technologies development in Myanmar. By doing so, civil society will legitimize the partnership and enhance Taiwan's reputation as a progressive partner.

The 2019 Yushan Forum could have been more effective if the selection of young leader representatives was more targeted, especially for the societal change in Asia section. Although the Forum gave me wonderful opportunity hear the experiences of young panelists, none of them shared how young leaders have worked together for regional development or related success stories about collaboration among the youth in Taiwan and NSP countries. Therefore, my suggestion for the TAEF team is to consider more carefully in selecting youth leadership panelists in future years to shape the objectives of Taiwan NSP strategy in youth leadership engagement and collaboration between Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries. Hopefully, the TAEF team can continue engaging current youth leaders because it can become a bigger network that will help Taiwan's NSP become a strong alliance and an efficient and effective mechanism for collaboration across Asia and beyond.

As a TAYLE young leader, I can work as an ambassador between Taiwan and Myanmar to influence Myanmar through energetic integration and participation in the NSP strategy. I can work with the TAEF team in youth capacity development and exchange programs; in promoting the young entrepreneurship network; in supporting NGOs in regional community development and long-term cooperative partnerships; and in exploring private sector vocational training, culture exchange research, agriculture development, and healthcare collaboration. I believe Taiwan's NSP will become the best new mechanism for regional cooperation among Asia societies due to Taiwan's friendly commitment to fruitful achievement.



# TAIWAN'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AS CULTURAL DIPLOMATS

BY ARIEL STENEK

Tsai Ing-wen made two major announcements in her inauguration speech on May 20, 2016.<sup>1</sup> In addition to establishing her administration's hallmark New Southbound Policy (NSP),<sup>2</sup> she also set the tone for approaching indigenous issues with an "apologetic attitude" by formally apologizing on behalf of Taiwan's majority Han government to the island's indigenous population.

Four hundred years ago... without their consent, another group of people arrived on these shores, and in the course of history, they took everything from the first inhabitants who, on the land they have known most intimately, became displaced, foreign, non-mainstream, and marginalized.<sup>3</sup>

The apology is an important turn in Taiwan's history, acknowledging the hardship and suffering that Taiwan's "original owners" endured over centuries of foreign emigration and colonization. On the global stage it reinforces Taiwan's national identity as "the world's only culturally Chinese democracy"<sup>4</sup> through the establishment of the Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committees<sup>5</sup> under the Office of the President. This lays the groundwork for Taiwan's 16 (and counting)

ethnic tribes to contribute to the future of their home.

Mention of Taiwan's indigenous community in the 2019 Yushan Forum<sup>6</sup>—the Tsai administration's annual showcase of NSP partnerships—was limited to brief and insignificant references to Austronesian voyages from Taiwan to Polynesia, and the handiwork of tribal arts and crafts. None of these references were made by representatives of the indigenous community. This lack of presence is understandable for two reasons: first, because transitional justice and reconciliation are domestic issues that don't fit within the external-facing NSP; and second, to avoid politicizing a historically disenfranchised group within Taiwan's society. But failing to give them the opportunity to have a voice on an international stage can arguably be as harmful as ignoring their existence. Culture offers an important means of engaging with the world and the Yushan Forum could be an effective platform for supporting Taiwan's indigenous tribes in reclaiming their identity.

The Tsai administration's path towards securing Taiwan's stable and prosperous future through international engagement is outlined in the NSP, which it endeavors to achieve by improving relations with the 10 ASEAN states, six South Asian states, as well as Australia and New Zealand. The fruits of this labor are showcased annually at the Yushan Forum, where panelists present the successes of Taiwan's outreach in areas from technological and economic partnerships, talent cultivation and vocational training, sustainable development, and civil society cooperation to collaboration in the fields of art and culture. Some of the positive trends

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<sup>1</sup> "Full Text of President Tsai's Inaugural Address," Focus Taiwan - CNA English News, last modified May 20, 2016, <https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/201605200008>.

<sup>2</sup> "The Guidelines for "New Southbound Policy"," Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Brunei Darussalam 駐汶萊台北經濟文化辦事處, accessed April 22, 2020, [https://www.roc-taiwan.org/bn\\_en/post/644.html](https://www.roc-taiwan.org/bn_en/post/644.html).

<sup>3</sup> "About the Apology," 原住民族歷史正義與轉型正義委員會, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://indigenous-justice.president.gov.tw/EN/Page/42>.

<sup>4</sup> "The New Southbound Policy," Center for Strategic and International Studies, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/new-southbound-policy>.

<sup>5</sup> "Presidential Office Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee," 原住民族歷史正義與轉型正義委員會, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://indigenous-justice.president.gov.tw/EN>.

<sup>6</sup> "Yushan Forum," Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation 財團法人臺灣亞洲交流基金會, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://www.taef.org/2018yushanforu>.

showcased at the 2019 Yushan Forum highlighted Taiwanese expansion into halal markets, its leading expertise in maintaining National Health Insurance's online platform, and Taiwan's openness towards hosting some of the largest numbers of overseas laborers in the region. The Forum also provides the opportunity for expert views on regional developments, and the impact of youth leaders in shaping the future of Asia.

To be sure, strengthening economic relations in the region and preventing Taiwan's reliance on a single market—China—is the NSP's primary focus. But the importance of soft power shouldn't be overlooked as it is identified as one of the four main links in strengthening ties with the region (in addition to supply chain, regional market, and people-to-people links).<sup>7</sup> Cultural diplomacy, defined by Carla Figueira as “the use of culture and the arts by governments (directly or indirectly via non-state actors) to achieve their foreign policy goals and a prime activity for achieving ‘soft power’ as a relational outcome,”<sup>8</sup> provides a means of engaging with international audiences, building relationships, and cultivating identity and can be achieved by showcasing cultural practices, which Figueira describes as “sports, education, language, creative industries, heritage, and the arts.”<sup>9</sup>

Allowing Taiwan's original owners to have a bigger role in the Yushan Forum benefits several actors, but primarily the government of Taiwan and the indigenous people of Taiwan. For the government of Taiwan, supporting indigenous voices (without coercing what is said and who says it) is important for domestic social cohesion and raises Taiwan's profile as a stalwart of human rights, equality, and diversity in the international

arena. Under the president's Indigenous Justice Committee are numerous subcommittees, including one on culture whose tasks include “collecting information on traditional ceremonies, customs, diet, medical health care and religious rituals,” as well as customs surrounding hunting practices and gathering activities.<sup>10</sup> Sharing findings from this and other subcommittees—language and history—would symbolize the partnership between the government and the indigenous peoples to build a model inclusive society in Asia.

For the 2% of Taiwan's population that is classified as indigenous, having a more active role in the Yushan Forum would provide recognition on an international stage and create deeper links with other regional actors, including other indigenous minorities. Many experts acknowledge Taiwan as the origin of Austronesian languages spoken throughout the Malay Peninsula, maritime Southeast Asia, and Pacific islands.<sup>11</sup> Taiwan already has strong regional ties in the area of education and research, but sharing indigenous cultural practices can open other opportunities in trading indigenous goods and allowing informal linkages to form.

Figueira's definition of culture illuminates the many lines of engagement that can be explored in venues outside of the Forum as well. One notable gathering is the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FESTPAC), “the world's largest celebration of indigenous Pacific Islanders.”<sup>12</sup> This quadrennial gathering includes performances, workshops, live demonstrations, storytelling, and forums for urgent issues—climate change—that the Pacific Islands face. In addition to members from the

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<sup>7</sup> “The Guidelines for “New Southbound Policy,” Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Brunei Darussalam 駐汶萊台北經濟文化辦事處, accessed April 22, 2020, [https://www.roc-taiwan.org/bn\\_en/post/644.html](https://www.roc-taiwan.org/bn_en/post/644.html).

<sup>8</sup> Figueira, Carla. “Indigenous Peoples as Non-State Diplomatic Actors in the Public/Cultural Diplomacy of Taiwan: a Case Study of Dispossession: Performative Encounter(s) of Taiwanese Indigenous Contemporary Art”, *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 3, 1: 66.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>10</sup> “Subcommittee on Culture,” 原住民族歷史正義與轉型正義委員會, accessed April 22, 2020, <https://indigenous-justice.president.gov.tw/EN/Page/52>.

<sup>11</sup> “New Research into the Origins of the Austronesian Languages: Complex Genetic Data Now Confirms That Mitochondrial DNA Found in Pacific Islanders Was Present in Island Southeast Asia at a Much Earlier Period,” ScienceDaily, last modified April 23, 2020, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/01/160128122004.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> The Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture, last modified May 14, 2019, <https://festpachawaii.org>.

Pacific Community's 27 member nations, Taiwan's indigenous groups have been invited to participate in the 13<sup>th</sup> FESTPAC, which will be held in Hawaii in 2021.<sup>13</sup>

Seizing opportunities to allow Taiwan's indigenous people to shape their own identity on an international stage should be encouraged by Taiwan's government. Allowing the indigenous community to be perceived through their own self-fashioning and to communicate their own views is an important way to restore the identity that was obscured by waves of settlers to Taiwan. By providing a forum, the government would be able to secure a soft-power win-win for itself and the indigenous community Tsai has pledged to help.

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<sup>13</sup> "FESTPAC FACT SHEET.docx," Dropbox, accessed April 22, 2020,

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/317hkwoozmjddj/FESTPAC%20FACT%20SHEET.docx?dl=0>.



## APPENDIX A

### Agenda

#### 2019 Yushan Forum, Oct. 8

09:00-09:40	Registration
09:00-09:20	Welcoming Remarks and Opening Speeches
09:20-09:40	Keynote Speech
09:40-10:10	Coffee Break
10:10-11:40	Session I: Mapping Economic and Technological Partnerships
12:10-13:40	Luncheon Keynote Speech
13:40-15:40	Session II: Building Talent Cultivation Partnerships
15:40-16:10	Coffee Break
16:10-18:10	Session III: Promoting Partnerships in Sustainable Development
18:10-20:00	Welcome Dinner
20:00-21:00	End of Day Dialogue (TAYLE Activity)

#### 2019 Yushan Forum, Oct. 9

08:20-09:00	Registration
09:00-10:30	Envisioning Asia: Roundtable Dialogue
10:30-10:50	Coffee Break
10:50-12:20	Session IV: Transnational Cooperation and Asia's Civil Society
12:20-13:40	Luncheon Keynote Speech
15:20-16:50	Session V: Drawing Together-Transnational Perspectives on the International Collaboration of Culture
15:10-15:30	Coffee Break
15:30-17:00	Session VI: Think Tank and the Policy Cooperation-How to Response to the Challenge of the Rise of Populism in the Indo-Pacific
17:00-17:20	Coffee Break
17:20-18:50	Session VII: New Generation Leaders for Societal Change in Asia
18:50-20:00	Farewell Dinner
20:00-21:00	End of Day Dialogue (TAYLE Activity)

#### 2019 National Day, Oct.10

08:00-08:15	Assembly and Bus Boarding
08:20	Bus Departs from Grand Hyatt

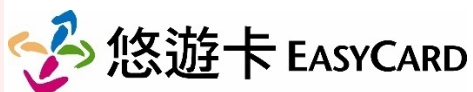


08:20-08:45	Travel to Presidential Office Building
08:45-09:20	Guests are Seated
09:20-12:10	National Day Celebrations
12:20-12:35	Travel to TAEF Office
12:35-13:00	Lunch
13:00-14:30	Debrief & Wrap-Up (TAYLE Activity)
14:30-14:45	Return to Grand Hyatt
16:30-16:55	Travel to Taipei Guest House
17:00-19:00	Cocktail Reception
19:00-19:25	Return to Grand Hyatt
22:00-24:00	TAYLE Socials



Deepening Progressive Partnerships in Asia  
深化亞洲進步夥伴關係

Special Thanks to



## APPENDIX B

### Participant List

1. **Mohamma Faiz Alam** (India)  
Researcher,  
Int'l Water Management Institute
2. **Vorralak Dheeranantakul** (Thailand)  
Labour Officer,  
Ministry of Labour
3. **Lim Houng** (Cambodia)  
CEO & Founder,  
First Solutions (Cambodia) Co., Ltd.
4. **Osama Bin Noor** (Bangladesh)  
Co-Founder,  
Youth Opportunities
5. **Sun Young Park** (USA)  
PhD Student,  
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6. **Azimah Mohd Salleh** (Brunei)  
Compliance Officer,  
Ministry of Finance and Economy
7. **Catherine Setiawan** (Indonesia)  
Regulatory Reform Adviser,  
Cardno International Development
8. **Min Nyan Shwe** (Myanmar)  
Program Coordinator,  
RAFT Myanmar
9. **Ariel Stenek** (USA)  
Director,  
Pacific Forum (YL Program)
10. **Huyen Ngoc Thanh Tran** (Vietnam)  
Consultant on SDG Data,  
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