

October 13th, 2023

CELEBRATING WITH TAIWAN ON THEIR NATIONAL DAY

Introduction

On Monday October 9th 2023, SVG joined with the Republic of China (Taiwan) in celebrating the 112th anniversary of their National Day. It is quite fitting that SVG, one of Taiwan's allies that has benefitted tremendously from the generosity of that country celebrate with them. At a time when the NDP has stated clearly that they plan to cut ties with Taiwan and switch to mainland China if elected, it is most appropriate that we as a people who recognize the value of this relationship, show solidarity with our dependable friend. This week, we feature the address delivered by SVG's Foreign Minister, Hon. Keisal Peters to mark the occasion.

“On behalf of the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, warmest wishes and peace and prosperity to the Government and people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on the celebration of its 112th Anniversary of its National Day.

Today, we celebrated the 112th anniversary of the Republic of China (Taiwan)'s National Day.

The people of Taiwan are a strong and resilient people. Having celebrated 112 years shows the fortitude of a people that believe in their country and its system. We, the Government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, come together on this day, and with combined hearts celebrate with the people of Taiwan.

The Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have had diplomatic relations since August 15th, 1981 under the leadership of our country's "Father of Independence", the late Robert Milton Cato and in August of this year, we celebrated forty-two (42) years of diplomatic relations.

Additionally, over the last two decades, this relationship has blossomed and grown even deeper.

Throughout our relationship, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has continued to advocate for the Republic of China (Taiwan) to be involved in various international organizations, one being the United Nations.

The people of Taiwan deserve the right to have their voices heard in all corners of the international community, without hindrances, pressures or threats from others. As Taiwan celebrates its National Day on October 10th, we are proud to be a part of this celebration. This is a profound occasion which affords Vincentians, the opportunity to stand in solidarity with our brothers and our sisters of Taiwan.

In August 2019, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines established its embassy in Taiwan, because we have trust in the Government of Taiwan, its institution and its people.

Taiwan's involvement, like any other country, is of benefit to the international system and this should not be ignored.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan stood on the world stage assisting in financial relief as well as donations to many countries that would have otherwise been left on the backburner and forgotten. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines alone, the Government of Taiwan contributed a grant of US\$598,470 for the purchase of vaccines and other related equipment to control the spread of the coronavirus; Forty thousand (40,000) surgical masks, six (6) thermal imaging devices, as well as thirty (30) sets of oxygen concentrators; 10,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines; 10,000 Rapid Test Kits, and 10 sets of ventilators.

Taiwan is the quintessential example of a good friend in bad times.

By these selfless acts, the Government of Taiwan demonstrated to the world its ability to do much and even more to keep its country and other countries safe. The slogan that resonated around the globe "Taiwan can help" still rings true to this day. After the volcanic eruption of La Soufrière volcano in 2021, Taiwan assisted in the cleaning up of the volcanic ash and debris, and aided in the purchasing of a new monitoring equipment to continue the monitoring of the volcano.

There are some who may think otherwise, but it is evident that the Republic of China (Taiwan) can stand with the best of them, do just as much, and even more and today's milestone of 112 years of the Taiwanese National Day is confirmation of this.

The recent appointment of Ambassador Her Excellency Fiona FAN, who presented her Letters of Credence on July 26th, 2023, is another sign of the unwavering commitment and trust in the bond our two countries have.

Since establishing relations, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) has cooperated in so many aspects:

- **Health** – in 2022, the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) donated an ambulance;
- Agriculture- In April 1, 2019 the project was launched with the aim to revitalize the banana industry;
- **Technology and Security** - the most recent opening ceremony "Enhancing Public Safety with the Intelligent Video Analytics Project for Saint Vincent

and the Grenadines" on 29th September, 2023 which will help in the advancing of our security in assisting our officers to carry out their functions even more diligently;

- **Finance** – On September 12th, 2023 a contract of US\$120 million was signed to start the National Road Rehabilitation Project and it is anticipated that more than 1000 persons will be employed.
- **Education** - Taiwan has on a consistent basis provided scholarships to Vincentian nationals, and with this year being exceptional in that thirty-three (33) individuals receiving scholarships this year.
- **Human Resource Development** – Taiwan has demonstrated its commitment to the young adults of this country with its investment in SET programme, the YES programme and the newest kid on the block, the ON-SITE Programme.
- **Women's Empowerment** - Recognizing the economic impact which the COVID-19 pandemic had on families, many of whom are led by women, the Taiwanese Government made possible the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme, wherein women receive training ranging from entrepreneurial to skills training.

Suffice it to say that Taiwan has been present at every stage of this country's development following our independence in 1979 and has partnered with this country, in our quest to build a modern competitive many sided post-colonial economy which is at once national, regional and international.

On behalf of the Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I congratulate the Government and People of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and on this National Day of Prayer in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I extend to you our prayers for peace, prayers for harmony, prayers for prosperity and prayers for good well-being on the celebration of your 112th National Day. Thank you for being a friend!"