



北美洲台灣人醫師協會

North American Taiwanese Medical Association
www.natma.org



台灣人公共事務會

Formosan Association for Public Affairs
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北美洲台灣人教授協會

North America Taiwanese Professors' Association
www.natpa.org

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva, Switzerland

April 2nd, 2020

Dear Dr. Tedros,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are the Presidents of three Taiwanese-American organizations, the North American Taiwanese Medical Association (NATMA), the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), and the North America Taiwanese Professors' Association (NATPA).

We welcome the recent decision by the World Health Organization (WHO) to initiate a public discussion on Taiwan's participation, after months of silence and your Assistant Director-General Bruce Aylward's infamous performance during an interview. We sincerely hope your statement this March 29th can serve as the driving engine for Taiwan's full participation in the global health body.

As concerning civil organizations, we however are not convinced of WHO's statement that "the question of Taiwanese membership in WHO is up to WHO Member States, not WHO staff." The WHO's chief executive agency, the Secretariat, has been unilaterally denying Taiwan's observer status and membership by distorting the meeting agenda of past annual Assembly. In other words, your WHO staff have been deciding Taiwan's membership application on behalf of Member States.

Taiwan's participation beyond the annual Assembly is also arbitrarily determined by the Secretariat. Of all the 187 technical meetings Taiwan has applied to attend since 2009, only 30% of them were approved by your staff. When the WHO Secretariat has the full authority to invite Taiwan to join, it fails to do so.

Most importantly, we argue that Taiwan's public health is not a subject to be decided by the WHO Secretariat, nor by the Member States. Human rights of 23.5 million Taiwanese people should not be put up for a vote. Discriminating Taiwan also gravely violates the WHO Constitution, which states: "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition."

Ultimately, we believe that only by correcting WHO's past unjust practices could we achieve the objective of "health for all," especially when Taiwan is a country to give more than to receive. It is in the interests of your WHO and the global community to have a seamless public health network. The failure to listen and share Taiwan's early warning about the new coronavirus on December 31st last year has cost thousands of lives. We shall not repeat this history again.

Sincerely,

Minze Chien (Ph.D.)
FAPA President

PoFu Hsieh (D.D.S.)
NATMA President

Bill Wu (Pharm.D.)
NATPA President