

The Global Health Security Needs Taiwan

Taiwan has been prevented from participating in WHO due to the CCP's continued distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and WHA Resolution 25.1.

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A man enters the headquarters of the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 15, 2021. Sean Gallup/Getty Images



By David Cheng-Wei Wu

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Commentary

Under the international situation of the U.S. raising tariffs and the deadlock of the Russia-Ukraine ceasefire agreement, the U.S. has unprecedentedly criticised the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP)

misuse of UN Resolution 2758 for the first time in the UN Security Council meeting and stressed that the resolution does not preclude Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system and other multilateral fora.

Last year, the Australian Senate and New South Wales Legislative Council respectively passed motions to refute Beijing's misinterpretation of UN Resolution 2758 and support Taiwan's rights to participate in UN agencies and other international organisations.

Moreover, Australian Minister for Health Mark Butler, at the 77th World Health Assembly in May 2024, also recognised the importance of working with all partners, including Taiwan.

He pointed out that health is a human right shared by all, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious beliefs, economic status, or ability.

Australia not only has a substantial bilateral relationship with Taiwan in various areas but also has long supported Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations and conferences, which is clearly stated in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's official documents and announcements.

As the leading nation in health coverage, Taiwan launched the National Health Insurance (NHI) system in 1995. The scheme has reached its 30th year and now covers 99.9 percent of the population.

In an annual survey carried out by Numbeo, Taiwan has been ranked first in the Health Care Index category for seven consecutive years.

To further promote the health of our people, Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te articulated a vision of a healthy Taiwan in 2024. This aims to ensure that people are healthy, the nation is strong, and the world is more ready to embrace Taiwan.

In 2021, WHO released the Global Strategy on Digital Health for 2020-2025. Under this plan, the global health body is seeking the development and adoption of person-centric digital health solutions to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases.

It is also overseeing the development of infrastructure and applications to use health data to promote health and well-being.

Taiwan continues to utilise its prowess in information and communications technology to build effective, high-ROI health systems and services.

The NHI cloud facilitates the more efficient exchange of medical records, while the adoption of international standards such as Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources enhances international medical data sharing.

What's more, despite facing political challenges, Taiwan has continuously participated in international health affairs and has been dedicated to supporting the global health system.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan played a crucial role in sharing supplies, strategies, and experiences, and proved to be a reliable partner of countries worldwide.

Separately, Taiwan's success story in implementing universal health coverage offers valuable lessons for countries worldwide.

As we continue to share our experiences in universal coverage, financial management, and digital health, we hope to facilitate other nations in reaching the WHO's goal of universal health coverage.

In this rapidly changing era, health challenges transcend borders, and global cooperation has become essential to addressing various health crises.

However, Taiwan has been prevented from participating in WHO—the foremost global health cooperation body—due to the CCP's continued distortion of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 and World Health Assembly Resolution 25.1.

Neither of these resolutions mentions Taiwan or declares that Taiwan is part of the People's Republic of China. Therefore, these resolutions have no power to confer upon the PRC any right to represent Taiwan in WHO.



Courtesy of David Cheng-wei Wu

In light of this, and to uphold the core UN values of inclusiveness and universality, we urge WHO and all relevant parties to recognise

Taiwan's considerable contributions to global public health and the human right to health.

It is imperative that WHO adopt a more open-minded approach and demonstrate flexibility, adhering to the principles of professionalism and inclusivity.

Taiwan should be included, as a matter of pragmatism, in the World Health Assembly and all WHO meetings, activities, and mechanisms, particularly those concerned with the WHO pandemic agreement.

Taiwan earnestly hopes to work with the international community to create a future of borderless healthcare that realises the fundamental human right to health stipulated in the WHO Constitution and the vision of leaving no one behind espoused in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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