

Milestone of Human Rights Development History

10 International Human Rights Experts Gather in Taiwan to Release Concluding Observations and Recommendations of Taiwan's Initial Human Rights Reports

The Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights has invited 10 international human rights Experts to Taiwan to review Taiwan's Initial Reports on the implementation of the International Human Rights Covenants (referred to as "Initial Reports" hereafter). This group of Experts took part in the Review Conference of Initial Reports on the Implementation of ICCPR and ICESCR held at Howard Civil Service International House during February 25 to 27. During the conference, these Experts conducted constructive dialogues with the representatives of the Government and met with non-government organizations in order to solicit opinions from the civil society. The ten Experts released their Concluding Observations and Recommendations at the hall at Ministry of Justice on March 1 with their recommendations for the human rights development in Taiwan.

President Ma Ying-jeou on February 24 attended a ceremony to welcome the group of international Experts who were in Taiwan to review the ROC's first human rights report. During the ceremony, President Ma stated that the protection of human rights is a global trend and he also recognized this review conference as a major milestone for human rights development in Taiwan. Despite Taiwan's inability to apply to UN for a review of ROC's initial human rights reports, the Government of Taiwan still has invited international Experts to review the Initial Reports in accordance with the same procedures implemented in the UN review program. This is an indicator of Taiwan's determination to protect freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law. Vice President Wu Den-yih, the convener of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights, during his speech to start the conference,

reiterated the dedication of the Government of Taiwan to protect human rights.

This international review meeting has gathered ten international human rights Experts who were divided into two Review Committees for ICCPR and ICESCR, headed respectively by Professor Manfred Nowak from the University of Vienna School of Law and Professor Eibe Riedel from the University of Mannheim in Germany. The two Committees met at Howard Civil Service International House during February 25 to February 27 and reviewed the Initial Reports following the UN methodology. The Committees also made exchanges with representatives from both the Government and civil groups on issues that the civil society concerns. Professor Nowak gave recognition to Taiwan's dedication in this review meeting. He specifically pointed out that he was impressed with the quick response of the Government of Taiwan to the Committees' questions and also the energy conveyed by civil groups. These are all strong indicators of the development of democracy and freedom in Taiwan.

The international human rights Experts proposed a total of 81 Concluding Observations and Recommendations, which in addition to giving credit to the determination of the Government and people of Taiwan in supervising the Government's efforts to safeguard human rights, also point out that the reports of the Government of Taiwan are valuable, detailed, in line with international convention and very constructive. The Experts also suggest that Taiwan establish a national commission to protect and promote human rights, ensure the implementation of core UN human rights treaties in Taiwan, conduct education and training in human rights, promote corporate social responsibilities and address issues such as gender equality and the rights of the Indigenous Peoples.

The Review Committee for Initial ICCPR Report includes Professor Manfred Nowak from the University of Vienna School of Law, Professor Nisuke Ando,

Director of the Kyoto Human Rights Research Institute of Kyoto University, Professor Jerome A. Cohen from New York University School of Law, Ms. Shanthi Dairiam, Member of Gender Equality Task Force, UNDP and Ms. Asma Jahangir, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan. This Committee offered its recommendations on various issues , such as the right to life, prohibition of torture, administration of justice, freedom of movement, right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and right to marriage and family life.

The Review Committee for Initial ICESCR Report includes Professor Eibe Riedel from University of Mannheim, Professor Philip G. Alston, Professor at New York University School of Law and Co-chair of the NYU Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, Professor Theodoor Cornelis van Boven, Honorary Professor of International Law at Maastricht University School of Law, Professor Virginia Bonoan-Dandan, UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity and Professor Heisoo Shin, Member of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This Committee offered its recommendations on various issues , such as the right to work, migrant workers and their labor conditions, gender equality, minimum wages and poverty gap, trade union system, right to housing, and right to health and education.

The Government of Taiwan will establish a mechanism to eliminate all the deficiencies highlighted in the Concluding Observations and Recommendations and in the meantime monitor and supervise all the measures to protect human rights. The Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights will monitor and supervise all government agencies, conduct follow-ups and deliver follow-up reports periodically in order to further protect human rights.

Attachment 1: Concluding Observations and Recommendations (English Version)

Attachment 2: Concluding Observations and Recommendations (Chinese, draft

translation. Official version will be published later)