


THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
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SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P.S. Res. No. 220

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

**RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SUPPORT
OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO THE
PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD HEALTH
ASSEMBLY THIS MAY 16 – 25, 2005 AND ITS BID TO BE GRANTED
OBSERVER STATUS IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

WHEREAS, the noble goal of achieving good health for every citizen in the world is fundamental to each nation regardless of national borders and geopolitics. The preamble of the World Health Organization (WHO) 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;"

WHEREAS, such lofty purposes cannot be fully realized by excluding Taiwan's 23 million people from the WHO. Globalization has resulted in vast increases in cross-border flow of goods, services, peoples, and ideas. In the field of health security, there exist many dangers. The unimpeded and unobstructed involvement in international health cooperation fora and programs is important, especially today that the world is faced with the grave danger of the spread of various infectious diseases such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), avian influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and others;

WHEREAS, the outbreak of such diseases know no boundaries and accentuate the need for access to the highest standards of health information and services to enable every country to monitor, prevent and respond to such diseases in the soonest possible time. Taiwan's separation from the global health community impinges on the flow of information, technology, and key medical supplies necessary to deal with serious health issues on the island. The enterovirus epidemic that struck Taiwan in 1998 is a case in point having infected over 1.8 million people and causing 80 deaths;

WHEREAS, Taiwan needs free and untrammelled access to the collective wisdom of the international health community in order to prevent, minimize and eradicate such diseases. Despite exclusion from the WHO, Taiwan has managed to make strides to protect the health and welfare of its people as it has its own universal health insurance system – the first in Asia - and a network of health treatment, reporting, and research facilities and fosters an active pharmaceutical industry. It enjoys one of the highest levels of life expectancy in Asia and its infant mortality rates are comparable to those of developed countries. Likewise, it has eradicated infectious diseases such as plague, smallpox, rabies and malaria in the 1950s and no new poliomyelitis cases have been reported since 1983. In addition, it was the first to provide children with free hepatitis B vaccinations and

in the early 80s, established effective monitoring and control system to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

WHEREAS, both the government health experts and non-government health organizations in Taiwan have contributed substantial resources to and have extensive working experience with other countries and organizations in international medical and humanitarian relief efforts. The total financial support given by its government and NGOs for international health promotion efforts amounted to an impressive US\$110 million from 1995-2001. Further, Taiwan has continually expressed its willingness to provide financial and technical assistance in international aid and health activities supported by the WHO;

WHEREAS, there are more than 70,000 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) working in Taiwan and although all of them are entitled to treatment under the Taiwanese national health insurance system, if the latter is not allowed to participate in international health cooperation fora and programs such as those initiated by the WHO, our Filipino OFWs may not receive the full benefit of such international health programs;

WHEREAS, in the wake of the disastrous earthquake and tsunami in South Asia, Taiwan has dispatched medical and relief teams as well as large quantities of medical supplies to the hardest hit areas and has pledged to donate US\$50 million in aid, consisting of food and medical supplies and community-based reconstruction and rehabilitation projects;

WHEREAS, Taiwan's participation as an observer has been strongly supported throughout the international community. The US Congress passed House Resolution 2739 calling for Taiwan's participation which was signed into law by President Bush. The European Parliament passed a similar resolution on March 14, 2002. In addition, groups of parliamentarians from Canada, the Czech Republic, Guatemala, Japan, the United Kingdom and several other countries support the bid, as well as numerous professional medical organizations, such as the World Medical Association, the International Pediatric Association, the British Medical Association, the Standing Committee of European Doctors, the First World Congress of Traditional Medicine, and the Philippine Medical Association;

WHEREAS, Taiwan's accomplishments in the field of public health can be substantially beneficial not only for the people in the Asian region but also all over the world. Taiwan should therefore be given a meaningful participation in the world health fora especially the World Health Assembly which will take place this May 16 to 25, 2005 in Geneva, Switzerland and should likewise be granted an observer status in the WHO;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to express the support of the Senate of the Republic of the Philippines to the participation of Taiwan in the activities of the World Health Assembly this May 16 – 25, 2005 and its bid to be granted observer status in the World Health Organization.

Adopted,


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.
Senator