

2016 Inaugural Address

Esteemed heads of state and guests from our diplomatic allies, distinguished ambassadors and representatives, dear friends, our fellow citizens across the country:

Our Gratitude and Responsibilities

Just moments ago, in the Presidential Office building, Dr. Chen Chien-jen and I were officially sworn in as the 14th President and Vice President of the Republic of China. We must express our gratitude to this land for nurturing us and to the people for placing their trust in us. Most importantly, we deeply appreciate the democratic institutions of this country, which have allowed us to accomplish Taiwan's third transition of political power through a peaceful electoral process. We also overcame many uncertainties throughout a four months-long transition period that concluded peacefully today.

Once again, the people of Taiwan have shown the world through our actions

that we, as a free and democratic people, are committed to the defense of our freedom and democracy as a way of life. Each and every one of us participated in this journey. My dear fellow Taiwanese, we did it.

I would like to tell you that, regarding the results of the January 16th elections, I have always had one interpretation only. The people elected a new president and new government with one single expectation: solving problems. At this very moment, Taiwan faces a difficult situation that requires its leaders to shoulder the burdens without hesitation. This is something I will not forget.

I would also like to tell you that, the multitude of challenges before us require that we face them honestly and shoulder the responsibilities together.

Therefore, this speech is an invitation. I invite every fellow citizen to carry the future of this country.

It is not the leader who makes a country great; it is the collective striving of the people that makes this country great. A president should not only unite her own supporters; she should unite the entire country. To stand united for change – that is my earnest hope for this country. Here, I sincerely call on everyone to

give this country a chance. Let us leave behind the prejudices and conflicts of the past, and together fulfill the mission that the new era has entrusted to us.

At this moment and as President, I declare to the citizens of this country that my administration will demonstrate resolve in spearheading this country's reform, and will never back down.

Building a Better Country for the Younger Generation

The path forward is not a smooth one. Taiwan needs a new government that readily takes on each and every challenge. And it is my job to lead such a government.

Our pension system will go bankrupt without reform.

Our rigid educational system is increasingly out of touch with society.

Our energy and resources are limited, and our economy lacks momentum, with the old model of OEM manufacturing facing a bottleneck. This country urgently needs a new model for economic development.

Our population is rapidly aging, while the long-term care system remains

inadequate.

Our birthrate remains low, while a sound childcare system seems a distant prospect.

Our environment still suffers from severe pollution.

Our country's financial situation is far from optimistic.

Our judicial system has lost the trust of the people.

Our families are deeply disturbed by food safety scandals.

Our wealth disparities are still widening.

Our social safety net is full of holes.

Most importantly, and I must stress: our young people still suffer from low wages. Their lives are stuck, and they feel helpless and confused about the future.

Young people's future is the government's responsibility. If unfriendly structures persist, the situation for young people will never improve, no matter how many elite talents we have. My self-expectation is that, within my term as President, I will tackle this country's problems step by step, starting with the basic structure.

This is what I want to do for the young people of Taiwan. Although I cannot give every young person a raise instantly, I can promise that the new administration will initiate actions immediately. Please give us some time, and please join us on this journey of reform.

To change young people's predicament is to change a country's predicament. When its young people have no future, a country is certain to have no future. It is the solemn duty of the new administration to help young people overcome difficulties, achieve generational justice, and deliver to the next generation a better country.

1. Transforming Economic Structures

To build a better country, going forward, the new administration must accomplish the following tasks.

The first is to transform Taiwan's economic structure. This is the most formidable task that the new administration must take on. We must not think lightly of ourselves, and we must not lose confidence. Taiwan enjoys many

advantages that other countries lack. We have the vibrancy and resilience of a maritime economy, high quality human resources, the pragmatic and reliable culture of engineers, a well-developed industrial chain, nimble and agile small and medium enterprises, and of course, our relentless entrepreneurial spirit.

In order to completely transform Taiwan's economy, from this moment on, we must bravely chart a different course – and that is to build a “New Model for Economic Development” for Taiwan.

The new administration will pursue a new economic model for sustainable development based on the core values of innovation, employment and equitable distribution. The first step of reform is to strengthen the vitality and autonomy of our economy, reinforce Taiwan's global and regional connections, and actively participate in multilateral and bilateral economic cooperation as well as free trade negotiations including the TPP and RCEP. We will also promote a “New Southbound Policy” in order to elevate the scope and diversity of our external economy, and to bid farewell to our past overreliance on a single market.

Furthermore, the new administration believes that the only way for Taiwan to overcome the current economic stagnation is to stimulate new momentum for growth. Our export and domestic demand will serve as twin engines for growth, allowing business production to become closely integrated with the livelihoods of the people, while building close ties between foreign trade and the local economy.

We will prioritize our plans to promote five major innovative industries, with the goal of reshaping Taiwan's global competitiveness. By protecting labor rights, we will also actively raise productivity and allow wages to grow in lock-step with the economy.

This is a crucial moment for Taiwan's economic development. We have the resolve and the ability to communicate. Going forward, we have systematic plans to engage in interagency cooperation, in order to consolidate the strength of the entire country and bring forth this new model.

As we pursue economic development, we must not forget our responsibility to the environment. Our New Model for Economic Development will be fully

integrated with national land-use planning, regional development and environmental sustainability. Industrial planning strategy and national land-use should not be fragmented or shortsighted. We must also pursue balanced regional development, which requires planning and coordination by the central administration. And it requires our local governments to uphold the spirit of regional joint governance.

We must not endlessly expend natural resources and the health of our citizens as we have done in the past. Therefore, we will strictly monitor and control all sources of pollution. We will also bring Taiwan into an age of circular economy, turning waste into renewable resources. We will gradually adjust our energy options based on the concepts of sustainability. The new administration will seriously address issues related to climate change, land conservation and disaster prevention. After all, we only have one earth, and we only have one Taiwan.

2. Strengthening the Social Safety Net

The second area that the new government must address is to strengthen

Taiwan's social safety net. Over the past few years, several incidents of violent crime affecting the safety of children and youth have shaken our entire society. However, a government cannot remain in a state of shock. It must demonstrate empathy. No one can endure the pain and suffering on behalf of the victims' families. However, the government, and especially the first responders, must let the victims and their family members feel that, when unfortunate incidents occur, the government is on their side.

Beyond offering empathy, the government should propose solutions. We must do everything we can to prevent the repeated occurrences of tragedy, by swiftly mending holes in areas such as public safety, education, mental health and social work. The new administration will address these issues with the utmost seriousness and readiness to act, particularly on public safety and anti-drug efforts.

The issue of pension reform is crucial for the survival and development of Taiwan. We should not hesitate, nor should we act in haste. Vice President Chen Chien-jen is spearheading the establishment of a Pension Reform Committee. Previous administrations have devoted some effort to this issue,

but public participation was inadequate. The new government will launch a collective negotiation process, because pension reform must unite everyone involved.

For this reason, we will convene a national congress on pension reform that brings together representatives from different social classes and occupations to engage in negotiations on the basis of societal unity. Within a year, we will offer a workable proposal for reform. Whether you are employed in the private or the public sector, life after retirement for every citizen should receive fair protection.

Furthermore, on the issue of long-term care, we will establish a high-quality, affordable and extensive long-term care system. Like pension reform, long-term care is a process of social mobilization. The new administration's approach is for the government to lead and plan, while encouraging citizens to organize in communities; through the efforts of collective social assistance, our goal is to build an adequate and comprehensive system. Every senior citizen can comfortably enjoy life after retirement in a community they are familiar with. Every family will see their burden of care lightened. We cannot leave

senior care entirely to the free market. We will take up our responsibilities, plan and implement step by step, and get adequately prepared for the arrival of a hyper-aging society.

3. Social Fairness and Justice

The third area the new government must address is social fairness and justice.

On this issue, the new government will continue to work with civil society to align its policies with the values of diversity, equality, openness, transparency, and human rights, so as to deepen and evolve Taiwan's democratic institutions.

For the new democratic system to move forward, we must first find a way to face the past together. I will establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission inside the Presidential Office, to address the historical past in the most sincere and cautious manner. The goal of transitional justice is to pursue true social reconciliation, so that all Taiwanese can take to heart the mistakes of that era.

We will begin by investigating and sorting through the facts. Within the next three years, we plan to complete Taiwan's own investigative report on

transitional justice. Follow-up work on transitional justice will then be carried out in accordance with the truth unveiled by the report. We will discover the truth, heal wounds, and clarify responsibilities. From here on out, history will no longer divide Taiwan. Instead, it will propel Taiwan forward.

Also related to fairness and justice, I will uphold the same principles when addressing issues concerning Taiwan's indigenous peoples. At today's Inauguration Ceremony, before they sang the national anthem, the indigenous children first sang the traditional melodies of their tribes. This means that we dare not forget who arrived first on this island.

The new government will address issues concerning indigenous peoples with an apologetic attitude. My administration will work to rebuild an indigenous historical perspective, progressively promote indigenous autonomous governance, restore indigenous languages and cultures, and improve the livelihood of indigenous communities.

Next, the new government will actively promote judicial reform. At this juncture, this is the issue the people of Taiwan care the most about. The general

sentiment is that the judicial system is not close to the people, and is not trusted by them. It is unable to fight crime effectively, and has lost its function as the last line of defense for justice.

To demonstrate the new government's resolve, we will hold a national congress on judicial issues this coming October. By allowing public participation and letting in social forces, we will advance judicial reform together. The judicial system must respond to the needs of the people. It will no longer be a judicial system for legal professionals only, but for everyone. Judicial reform is not only the business of legal professionals; it must be inclusive. These are my expectations for judicial reform.

4. Regional Peace and Stability and Cross-Strait Relations

The fourth area for the new government to address is regional peace, stability and development, as well as the proper management of cross-Strait relations.

Over the past 30 years, Asia and the world have undergone dramatic changes.

And governments have become increasingly concerned over global and regional economic stability and collective security.

Taiwan has always played an indispensable role in the region's development. But in recent years, regional dynamics have been changing rapidly. If Taiwan does not effectively use its strengths and leverage to proactively participate in regional affairs, it will not only become insignificant, it may even become marginalized and lose the ability to determine its own future.

But where there is crisis, there is opportunity. The present stage of Taiwan's economic development is highly connected and complementary with many countries in the region. If our efforts to build a New Model for Economic Development can be linked to other Asian and Asia-Pacific countries through cooperation, to jointly shape future development strategies, we will not just contribute to the region's innovation. We will also contribute greatly to the region's structural adjustment and sustainable development. Together with other members of this region, we will forge an intimate sense of "economic community."

We will share resources, talents and markets with other countries to achieve economies of scale and to allow the efficient use of resources. This is the spirit

on which our “New Southbound Policy” is based. We will broaden exchanges and cooperation with regional neighbors in areas such as technology, culture and commerce, and expand in particular our dynamic relationships with ASEAN and India. We are also willing to engage in candid exchanges and pursue possibilities for cooperation and collaboration with the other side of the Strait on our common participation in regional development.

As we actively develop our economy, the security situation in the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly complex. Cross-Strait relations have become an integral part of building regional peace and collective security. In this process, Taiwan will be a “staunch guardian of peace” that actively participates and is never absent. We will work to maintain peace and stability in cross-Strait relations. We will make efforts to facilitate domestic reconciliation, strengthen our democratic institutions, consolidate consensus, and present a united position to the outside world.

For us to accomplish our goals, dialogue and communication are absolutely crucial. Taiwan will also become a “proactive communicator for peace.” We will establish mechanisms for intensive and routine communications with all

parties involved, and exchange views at all times to prevent misjudgment, establish mutual trust, and effectively resolve disputes. We will handle related disputes in adherence to the principles of maintaining peace and sharing interests.

I was elected President in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of China, thus it is my responsibility to safeguard the sovereignty and territory of the Republic of China; regarding problems arising in the East China Sea and South China Sea, we propose setting aside disputes so as to enable joint development.

We will also work to maintain the existing mechanisms for dialogue and communication across the Taiwan Strait. In 1992, the two institutions representing each side across the Strait (SEF & ARATS), through communication and negotiations, arrived at various joint acknowledgements and understandings. It was done in a spirit of mutual understanding and a political attitude of seeking common ground while setting aside differences. I respect this historical fact. Since 1992, over twenty years of interactions and negotiations across the Strait have enabled and accumulated outcomes which

both sides must collectively cherish and sustain; and it is based on such existing realities and political foundations that the stable and peaceful development of the cross-Strait relationship must be continuously promoted. The new government will conduct cross-Strait affairs in accordance with the Republic of China Constitution, the Act Governing Relations Between the People of Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area, and other relevant legislation. The two governing parties across the Strait must set aside the baggage of history, and engage in positive dialogue, for the benefit of the people on both sides.

By existing political foundations, I refer to a number of key elements. The first element is the fact of the 1992 talks between the two institutions representing each side across the Strait (SEF & ARATS), when there was joint acknowledgement of setting aside differences to seek common ground. This is a historical fact. The second element is the existing Republic of China constitutional order. The third element pertains to the outcomes of over twenty years of negotiations and interactions across the Strait. And the fourth relates to the democratic principle and prevalent will of the people of Taiwan.

5. Diplomatic and Global Issues

The fifth area for the new government to take up is to fulfill our duty as a citizen of the world and contribute towards diplomatic and global issues. We will bring Taiwan closer to the world, and the world closer to Taiwan.

With us here today are many heads of state and delegations. I would like to thank them for their longstanding assistance to Taiwan and for giving us the opportunity to participate in the international community. Going forward, through governmental interactions, business investment and people-to-people collaborations, we will continue to share Taiwan's experience in economic development and build lasting partnerships with our allies.

Taiwan has been a model citizen in global civil society. Since our democratization, we have persisted in upholding the universal values of peace, freedom, democracy and human rights. It is with this spirit that we join the alliance of shared values and concerns for global issues. We will continue to deepen our relationships with friendly democracies including the United States, Japan and Europe to advance multifaceted cooperation on the basis of shared

values.

We will proactively participate in international economic and trade cooperation and rule-making, steadfastly defend the global economic order, and integrate into important regional trade and commercial architecture. We will also not be absent on the prevention of global warming and climate change. We will create within the Executive Yuan an office for energy and carbon-reduction. We will regularly review goals for cutting greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the agreement negotiated at the COP21 meeting in Paris. Together with friendly nations we will safeguard a sustainable earth.

At the same time, the new government will support and participate in international cooperation on emerging global issues including humanitarian aid, medical assistance, disease prevention and research, anti-terrorism cooperation and jointly tackling transnational crime. Taiwan will be an indispensable partner for the international community.

Conclusion

From the first direct Presidential Election in 1996 to today, exactly 20 years have gone by. Thanks to two decades of hard work by successive governments and civil society, we have overcome many obstacles that emerging democracies must confront. Throughout this process, we have had many touching moments and stories. But like other countries, we have also experienced anxiety, unease, contradictions and conflict.

We have witnessed confrontation within society; confrontation between progressive and conservative forces, between pro-environment and pro-development views, and between political ideologies. These confrontations have sparked the energy for mobilization during election seasons. But also because of these dichotomies, our democracy gradually lost its ability to solve problems.

Democracy is a process. In every era, those who work in politics must recognize clearly the responsibilities they shoulder. Democracy can move forward, but it can also fall backwards. Standing here today, I want to say to

everyone: for us, falling backwards is not an option. The new government's duty is to move Taiwan's democracy forward to the next stage: before, democracy was about winning or losing the election. Now, democracy is about the welfare of the people. Before, democracy was a showdown between two opposing values. Now, democracy is a conversation between many diverse values.

To build a "united democracy" that is not hijacked by ideology; to build an "efficient democracy" that responds to the problems of society and economy; to build a "pragmatic democracy" that takes care of the people – this is the significance of the new era.

As long as we believe, the new era will arrive. As long as our leaders have unwavering faith, the new era will be born in the hands of our generation.

Dear fellow Taiwanese, this speech is coming to a close, but reforms are just about to start. From this moment on, the weight of the country rests upon the new government. It is my duty for you all to see this country change.

History will remember this courageous generation. This country's prosperity, dignity, unity, confidence and justice all bear the marks of our struggle. History will remember our courage. It will remember that in the year 2016, we took this country in a new direction. Everyone on this land can be proud of having participated in changing Taiwan.

In the earlier performance, I was really touched by a verse in the lyrics of a song:

“Today is the day, my brave fellow Taiwanese.”

Dear fellow citizens, dear 23 million people of Taiwan: the wait is over. Today is the day. Today, tomorrow, and on every day to come, we shall all vow to be a Taiwanese who safeguards democracy, freedom, and this country.

Thank you.

美麗島 Ilha Formosa

我們搖籃的美麗島

Our cradle, Ilha Formosa (the beautiful island)

是母親溫暖的懷抱

Is a mother's warm embrace

驕傲的祖先們正視著

Our proud ancestors are watching

正視著我們的腳步

Watching every step we take

他們一再重複的叮嚀，不要忘記，不要忘記

They repeatedly remind us: do not forget, do not forget

他們一再重複的叮嚀，筭路藍縷，以啟山林

They repeatedly remind us: undertake hardships and pioneer the wilderness

婆娑無邊的太平洋 擁抱著自由的土地

Immense is the Pacific Ocean, embracing the land of the free

溫暖的陽光照耀著 照耀著高山和田園

Warm is the sun, shining upon mountains and fields

我們這裡有勇敢的人民 筭路藍縷，以啟山林

Brave are our people, undertaking hardships and pioneering the wilderness

我們這裡有無窮的生命 水牛、稻米、香蕉、玉蘭花

Here we have limitless life: buffalos, rice, bananas and magnolia