

As the world bade farewell to the year gone by and ushered in the new year with fireworks, festivities and new year's resolutions, the nation's political leaders expressed their wishes for the coming 12 months.

"In the coming year, our government's goal is to overcome our difficulties and take Taiwan to new heights," President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) said on Friday at her end-of-year news conference, adding in a video released by the Presidential Office late on Sunday that she wishes everyone in Taiwan happiness and prosperity in 2018.

Premier William Lai (賴清德), in a visit to Taipei's Longshan Temple (龍山寺) yesterday, wished for the well-being of the nation and its people, while Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Wu Den-yih (吳敦義) called for unity in the party and expressed his hope that it would win support in this year's local elections.

People yearn for optimism at the beginning of each new year. While their lists might differ, the overall sentiment is the same: joy, enthusiasm and hope for improvement in all aspects of daily life.

As the saying goes: "Well begun is half done." It is therefore encouraging and comforting to see national leaders, with looks of resolute determination, extending good wishes as they paint a rosy picture and pledge efforts to build a better future.

Looking ahead on issues of critical importance, the government, the governing party and the opposition all have their work cut out for them.

One major political event in the coming year is the nine-in-one local elections, which are to be held either on Nov. 24 or Dec. 1, pending a final decision by the Central Election Commission.

The election of new mayors in the six special municipalities and other cities, as well as county commissioners, could redraw the nation's political landscape and the public is awaiting the

candidates' campaign platforms to see how they promise to serve the public.

On the legislative front, amendments to the Labor Standards Act (勞基法) and the Organic Regulations for Irrigation and Water Conservancy Associations (農水會法), as well as various proposed tax reform packages, economic reforms and other tasks require that lawmakers roll up their sleeves, as these measures are crucial for the nation to remain competitive.

The public is also anticipating progress in implementing the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice (促轉法) that was passed last month.

The law requires that the Executive Yuan set up a nine-member independent committee to implement measures set forth under the act, including investigating human rights abuses under the Martial Law-era KMT regime, rectifying unjust verdicts from that era and retrieving political archives held by political parties and their affiliated organizations.

However, other than an announcement that the Executive Yuan has put Minister Without Portfolio Lo Ping-cheng (洛清成) in charge of overseeing the formation of the committee, no further progress has been made. Time is of the essence so that justice can be served and the reputations of the victims restored.

An equally important task for the government is to boost the nation's visibility in the international arena. The Tsai administration should have a strategy on how to increase Taiwan's international presence while protecting the nation's dignity.

If even the nation's own officials shy away from correctly saying "Taiwan" on the international stage to appease China, how does the nation expect others to voice their support?

Hopefully, government officials will practice what Tsai and Lai have preached and translate their pledges into concrete results, as the public welcomes the new year in the hope that it will usher in a new era of growth, progress and development.

New year's wishes demand action

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 02 January 2018 07:58

Source: [Taipei Times - 2018/01/02](#)