

## Chiang says ECFA signing likely by June

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Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) Chairman Chiang Pin-kung (蔣經國) yesterday said that Taipei and Beijing were likely to sign an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) in June.

As Taipei hopes to ink the proposed pact by the first half of the year, June would be a good time to do so if the SEF and its Chinese counterpart, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), could wrap up negotiations next month or by May, Chiang said on the sidelines of an event marking the SEF's 19th anniversary.

The two sides held the first round of official negotiations on the planned accord in January and Taipei is set to host the second round this month.

Chiang said the time and place for the second round of official talks are being arranged and he was still waiting for authorization from the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) to negotiate with ARATS on three issues during his upcoming meeting with ARATS Chairman Chen Yunlin (陳雲林).

Chiang and Chen agreed in December to address three issues in the next meeting: an ECFA proposal, protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) and avoiding double taxation.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs has drafted an IPR protection proposal, Chiang said, adding that the SEF would proceed to arrange high-level talks for both sides to finalize the wording as soon as the government gives it the go-ahead.

Commenting on rumors that Taipei has cut the "early harvest" items from about 500 to 200, -Chiang said it was just media speculation, adding that negotiations were a matter of give-and-take.

It was natural to make more demands at the beginning and the two sides would not know what the final items would be until the negotiations conclude, he said.

Asked to comment on Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's (溫家寶) remark that Beijing was willing to "yield interests" to Taiwan, Chiang said it was the consensus of the two sides to sign an ECFA as soon as possible.

"The negotiation team's job is to seek the best interests for Taiwan's economic development," he said. "It's hard to determine whether he [Wen] is sincere about what he said until the end of negotiations."

Also present at yesterday's event was Cecilia Koo (鄧文迪), the widow of former SEF chairman Koo Chen-fu (鄧文迪). She tearfully recalled her late husband and his "favorite job" as cross-strait negotiator.

Describing her late husband as the "most patriotic businessman," Cecilia Koo said he

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committed himself to striving for the legitimacy of the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Cecilia Koo said people on both sides of the Strait share the same ancestry and are all yan huang zisun (炎黄子孙), or descendants of emperors Yan and Huang — but added that each side is self-governed and it is important for both sides to get along peacefully.

Source: [Taipei Times 2010/03/10](#)