

NGOs urged to avoid ‘Chinese Taipei’

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A man holds up a scarf at a rally in Kaohsiung on April 7.

Photo: EPA-EFE / DAVID CHANG

Groups participating in international events should avoid using the name “Chinese Taipei,” which could be twisted to mean that Taipei is a part of China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

In guidelines published on Monday last week, the ministry said non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should prioritize using the nation’s official title, the Republic of China, or use the name “Republic of China (Taiwan)” when participating in international events.

The name “Taiwan” is also acceptable in circumstances under which the official title cannot be used, the ministry said.

Titles that demote the nation’s status — such as “Taiwan, Province of China,” “Taiwan, China,” “Taipei, China” or “Chinese Taiwan” — are unacceptable, it said.

If NGOs are unable to use the preferred titles, they could recommend that event organizers refer to all participating nations, teams or groups with the names of their cities or organizations, it added.

The use of the name “Chinese Taipei” should also be avoided due to Beijing’s efforts to promote it as Zhongguo Taibei (“China Taipei,” 中國台北) in Mandarin, the ministry said.

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If NGOs must use the name "Chinese Taipei" as their membership name, they should endeavor to refute or prevent the distortion of the name into "China Taipei" in Mandarin, it said, adding that "Chinese Taipei" should be listed under the letter "T" instead of the letter "C."

While the guidelines mainly target registered NGOs participating in events abroad with help or financial support from the government, they could also apply to NGOs not partnered with the government that have been suppressed due to their membership names, the ministry said.

Taiwanese NGOs participate in international events, but due to Taiwan's special diplomatic circumstances, they often face Chinese suppression, ministry spokesman Andrew Lee (李安德) said.

The guidelines were prepared by the ministry along with other government agencies to provide NGOs with guidance and prevent the nation's status being degraded or the NGOs' participation rights being violated, he said.

The guidelines serve as a reference for NGOs, Lee added.

The ministry had previously set internal guidelines to help NGOs maintain their membership at international organizations, he said, adding that those guidelines, as well as the preferred titles for the nation, have been in place for years.

In 1993, the ministry issued a set of guidelines for civil servants participating in international conferences or events at which Chinese Communist Party members would also be present.

The guidelines list "Taiwan" and "China Taiwan" as "inappropriate titles" for the nation.

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