

Virus Outbreak: Taiwan joins global COVID-19 battle

Written by Taipei Times

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President Tsai Ing-wen speaks at a news conference at the Presidential Office in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

Taiwan, as a responsible member of the international community, is to offer humanitarian assistance to nations hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic by sending them masks and medicine, as well as sharing with them an electronic system that the government has been using to track down people that need to be quarantined, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) said yesterday.

With the nation's daily production having reached 13 million masks and soon to reach 15 million, the government is to donate 10 million masks to medical personnel in nations most severely affected by the coronavirus, Tsai said at the Presidential Office in Taipei.

The nation would donate more masks when production capacity permits, she added.

With a number of clinical reports concluding that quinine can help treat patients with mild symptoms, the government has asked pharmaceutical companies to increase production of the medication so that it can contribute to the supplies of nations in need, Tsai said.

The nation is also to provide technological support, by sharing with other nations a system that uses "big data" to accurately locate people that have come into close contact with those that have tested positive for COVID-19, effectively curbing the spread of the coronavirus, she said.

When the outbreak first occurred, Taiwan had formed a "national team" to combat COVID-19, which is now ready to join the international community in an all-out effort to fight the pandemic, she added.

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Taiwan will step up its cooperation with other nations and not sit idly by while the global fight against the coronavirus continues, Tsai said, adding that the nation is already helping its diplomatic allies, enabling their citizens to acquire medical supplies locally.

“Taiwan can help, and Taiwan is helping,” Tsai said.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement said that the nation is to make a one-time donation of 2 million masks to the US on top of a weekly donation of 100,000 previously announced.

The nation is to donate 7 million masks to the most-affected nations in the EU, as well as to the UK and Switzerland, it said.

It is also to donate 1 million masks to its diplomatic allies, it added.

Academia Sinica and the nation’s leading vaccine companies have entered into talks with the US, the EU, Canada and the Czech Republic on collaborating to develop testing kits and vaccines, the ministry said.

The ministry has collaborated with private firms to donate ventilators, ventilator filters, masks and disinfectant to hospitals in the Czech Republic, it said, while Catholic groups have donated goggles, masks, endotracheal tubes and mucus extractors to Italy.

The British Office Taipei, the Netherlands Trade and Investment Office, the French Office in Taipei and the Polish Office in Taipei thanked the nation for its help on social media.

“#Taiwanhelps is the new hashtag,” European Economic and Trade Office in Taiwan Director Filip Grzegorzewski yesterday wrote on Twitter, also thanking Taiwan.

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The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) shared photographs of AIT Director Brent Christensen meeting Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung (陳時中) with the comment: "Taiwan is a real friend."

In related news, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Prague and the Czech Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei issued a joint statement listing eight areas of bilateral cooperation on COVID-19.

Additional reporting by Lin Chia-nan

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/04/02](#)