

## Taiwan deserves respect: Christensen

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American Institute in Taiwan Director Brent Christensen yesterday speaks at the opening of a two-day US-Taiwan Global Cooperation and Training Framework conference at the Grand Hyatt Taipei.

**Photo: Liao Chen-huei, Taipei Times**

The new director of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) yesterday lauded Taiwan's democratic development and its contribution to the world, which he said are deserving of the international community's dignity and respect.

Brent Christensen made the remarks at the opening ceremony of a two-day international workshop on combating transnational crime and forensic science that is being held in Taipei under the US-Taiwan Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF).

It was his first public appearance since returning to Taiwan on Saturday last week to take up his post.

The workshop, sponsored by the AIT, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice's Investigation Bureau, is the first to focus on law enforcement since the GCTF was established in 2015.

It has drawn 26 participants from 16 nations.

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“Nobody can deny the threat posed by illegal narcotics, counterfeit currency and passport fraud. We can all agree that reductions in crime, the promotion of public safety and more integrated law enforcement networks benefit all our peoples,” Christensen said.

“People in Taiwan respect the law and trust the authorities to protect them. This confidence in law enforcement has not only strengthened the security and stability of Taiwan, but that of the region,” he said.

“That’s why we have included Taiwan in our global entry and visa waiver programs. That’s why our Drug Enforcement Administration and Secret Service officials are here to share best practices to make law enforcement networks stronger,” he added.

The GCTF was a good example of multifaceted cooperation, because it can tackle topics ranging from increasing energy efficiency, fostering inclusive economic development, providing information access through expanded broadband and modernizing how nations confront natural disasters and pandemic disease, he said.

“These are challenges too big to face alone,” Christensen said.

Taiwan’s democratic development and its contributions to the world are deserving of the international community’s dignity and respect, he said, adding that he “cannot think of a better, more important way to spend the coming years than to continue to strengthen the partnership and friendship between the US and Taiwan.”

In his speech, Premier William Lai (賴清德) said the fight against illicit drugs requires transnational cooperation; it cannot be done by a single nation alone.

“The international status of Taiwan is very unique. However, we never avoid any challenges,” Lai said, adding the nation would continue to do its best to be a regional peacemaker and contributor.

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Taiwan has always contributed to the international law enforcement community and welcomed any cooperation from foreign law enforcement on case investigation, training and experience exchanges, Minister of Justice Tsai Ching-hsiang (蔡清彥) said.

“We are keen to build a cooperation platform to enhance the law enforcement capability in countries on the basis of mutual assasinate for mutual benefits,” he said, adding that Taiwan is committed to maintaining regional stability and safety.

Additional reporting by CNA

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