

## US urges the WHO to invite Taiwan

Written by Taipei Times

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The WHO logo is pictured at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, on Jan. 30.

**Photo: Reuters**

The US Mission in Geneva on Friday urged WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to invite Taiwan to a major meeting that the body is to host next week, with the focus expected to be on the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We encourage the WHO to expand its efforts to offer Taiwan increased meaningful cooperation and collaboration with the organization, and this would be a needed step in that direction,” the mission said in a statement.

Washington has been deeply critical of the WHO and Tedros for its handling of the pandemic, saying it is too close to China.

It has said it might withdraw from the world health body.

Backed by the US, Taiwan this year has stepped up lobbying to again take part in the World Health Assembly (WHA) — the WHO’s decisionmaking body — as an observer.

Taiwan, which was praised internationally for quickly containing the novel coronavirus, was not invited to an earlier meeting by the same body in May and it agreed to put off the issue until later in the year.

In Taipei, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday thanked World Medical Association Council chairman Frank Montgomery for his open letter on Wednesday to Tedros urging the WHO to invite Taiwan to the WHA as an observer.

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The association made a similar call in April.

Separately, after 102 members of the European Parliament and four German lawmakers in May issued an open letter calling for Taiwan to be included in the virtual WHA, 106 members of the European Council also wrote to Tedros on Thursday in support of Taiwan's participation in the WHA as an observer.

On Thursday, the ministry said that 144 parliamentarians from the Central American Parliament (CAP) and across Latin America had issued a joint declaration supporting Taiwan's WHO participation.

The parliamentarians, including CAP President Fanny Salinas Fernandez and National Assembly of Nicaragua President Gustavo Porras, made the call at the Formosa Club — a coalition of Taiwan friendship clubs — via video link, the ministry said in a statement.

They praised Taiwan for its success in fighting the pandemic and expressed support for its participation in the WHA, as well as at its technical meetings, programs and events, the ministry said.

Asked on Friday about next week's WHA meeting, WHO principal legal officer Steven Solomon said: "Taiwanese involvement at the WHA as an observer continues to be a question for member states."

The body has previously said that it has no mandate to invite Taiwan, as members disagree on the nation's participation.

The virtual meeting of 194 member states is to begin tomorrow and run through Saturday.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/11/08](#)

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