

World leaders call for Taiwan at WHA

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 29 April 2021 06:36 -



The US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs expresses its support for Taiwan's participation in the upcoming World Health Assembly meeting in a post on Twitter yesterday.

Photo: Screen grab from Twitter

Lawmakers and world leaders on Tuesday joined a campaign using the hashtag #LetTaiwanHelp, calling for the nation's participation in next month's World Health Assembly (WHA).

The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) launched the initiative with a video on Twitter featuring 15 lawmakers from 12 legislatures across Australia, Europe, New Zealand and North America.

The US Senate and House of Representatives committees on foreign affairs joined the alliance in spearheading the 48-hour campaign, which started at 10pm on Tuesday, Taiwan time.

The WHA, the decisionmaking body of the WHO, is to hold its 74th annual meeting virtually from Geneva, Switzerland, from May 24 to June 1.

In the IPAC video, the lawmakers praised Taiwan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, its donations of medical equipment and its support for global health initiatives.

Despite this, Beijing has continued to "politicize" global health by blocking Taiwan's participation in the WHA, creating a "dangerous gap" in global health, while also depriving the world of Taiwan's medical expertise, they said.

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“If Taiwan is left out, we all suffer. It’s time to #LetTaiwanHelp,” the group said, urging others to join the campaign by sharing the hashtag.

In a statement released by IPAC, French Senator Andre Gattolin said that Taiwan’s participation in the WHA “should not even be questioned,” given its vital role in the international community and assistance to other nations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

British lawmaker Iain Duncan Smith said that Beijing’s actions to “politicize global health” were “unacceptable,” and called on “the UK and the free world” to do more to support Taiwan on the international stage.

Lawmakers in the video included US Representative Ami Berra, chair of the House Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia and Nonproliferation; US Senator Marco Rubio; Duncan Smith; and Australian Senator Kimberly Kitching.

The campaign received support from officials worldwide.

The majority of posts came from US lawmakers, who flooded social media with the hashtag.

US senators Bob Menendez and Jim Inhofe urged their colleagues to pass a bill they reintroduced last month that would instruct the US Department of State to assist Taiwan in obtaining observer status at the WHA.

Czech Senator Pavel Fischer shared a resolution that would call on the Czech government to “challenge the WHO deadlock and allow Taiwan to take part” in the WHA.

Some of the nation’s diplomatic allies also lent their voices, including the leaders of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday thanked the participants for their “avalanche of support.”

“Our gratitude to friends from democracies worldwide for recognizing #TaiwanCanHelp realize #HealthForAll,” it wrote on Twitter, using the WHO’s slogan.

In a separate statement it praised the “creative” collaboration that saw unprecedented participation from national leaders and representatives.

The campaign “demonstrates that Taiwan’s inclusion in the global health system is the consensus of most democratic nations,” it said, calling on the WHO to extend it an invitation to the WHA.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2021/04/29](#)