

# Taiwan Health in the



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Minister Dr. Hou representing TaiwanIHA sent the orthopaedic surgical experts to the assistance in Indonesia earthquake rescue in June.

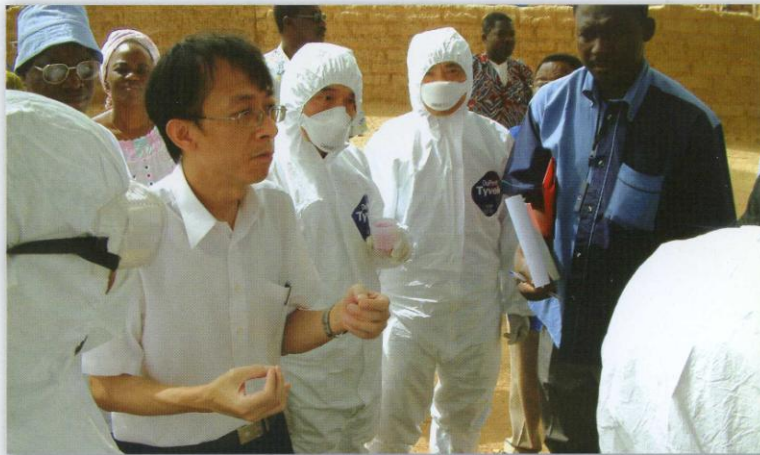
## TaiwanIHA Provided Field Training in Burkina Faso to Help Prevent the Outbreak of Avian Flu

In early April, the deadly H5N1 strain of avian influenza was detected in Burkina Faso. Subsequently, on April 7, four experts representing Taiwan International Health Action (**TaiwanIHA**) were sent with a shipment of sanitation materials and equipments to disinfect the infected areas and provided education seminars. They visited several villages to help the communities in high alertness.

The donation included isolation suits, protective clothings, gloves, masks and disinfectants. At the end of April, Mr. Jean de Dieu SOMDA, deputy minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, represented the Prime Minister Mr. SOMDA in his speech praised Taiwan for the donation and the good relationship between these two countries. He also added that although Taiwan was unfairly excluded from WHO, Taiwan has taken its responsibility and has contributed in positive manner to solve health issues all over the world, and has contributed to humanitarian assistance as well. He mentioned that the materials and equipments received will be used in a very effective way. ●

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TaiwanIHA's disease control experts demonstrated the protection measures to workers in Burkina Faso.



TaiwanIHA team members provided disinfectants to workers in Burkina Faso.



TaiwanIHA experts showed the workers of Burkina Faso hygiene technique in the village.

## Taiwan International Health Action-TaiwanIHA : A better coordination for a better efficiency

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On March 30, 2006, Chen Shui-bian, Taiwan's president; Wang Jin-pyng, Legislative Yuan Speaker; James Huang, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hôu Sheng-mou, Minister of Health, launched the Taiwan International Health Action (**TaiwanIHA**), inaugurating a new step in Taiwan's participation in global affairs.

### Origin and structure of the TaiwanIHA

In response to the increased interdependence and the need for international action in the domains of health and humanitarian emergencies, Taiwan's public and private sectors have been active in providing assistance to international communities. Though Taiwan's international contributions have allowed the nation to help large numbers of people, these activities, thus far, have never been coordinated.

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TaiwanIHA established medical clinic in Java, Indonesia, after the earthquake.

With the goal of increasing coordination, Taiwanese experts have concluded that in line with the World Health Organization's spirit of aiding nations in times of need, Taiwan should create a single institution to increase efficiency and efficacy in the coordination and delivery of health-related assistance programs, involving both the public and private sectors. Progress towards this objective was realized on February 6, 2006 with the establishment of the Taiwan International Health Action (**TaiwanIHA**) by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the approbation of the Executive Yuan. Co-funded by the DOH and the MOFA, the TaiwanIHA is an ad hoc task force whose remit is to integrate the resources and capabilities of the public (government) and the private sectors into a coordinated platform for international medical and health cooperation.

These are the reasons why the TaiwanIHA first established partnerships and alliances with actors, such as the International Cooperation Development Fund (ICDF), hospitals, academic institutions, Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and experts. Further, the TaiwanIHA is open to any suggestions from think tanks and consultants in related areas. The TaiwanIHA is co-directed by two conveners: Tzay-Jinn Chen, Deputy Minister at the Department of Health (DOH) and Dr. Michael Kau, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). There are also two deputy conveners: Richard J.C Fang, convener of the WHO task unit (MOFA) and Peter W.S Chang, Director of the Bureau of International Cooperation (DOH), who is also the Executive Director of the task force.

#### Using our resources efficiently to help nations in need

The TaiwanIHA has five main missions. First, it coordinates the efforts at home and abroad in the areas of international medical and health cooperation in addition to humanitarian emergencies. Secondly, it plans the international health contributions of Taiwan, which has to be comprehensive. Indeed, simultaneously to several medical missions, TaiwanIHA wants to adopt an approach emphasizing on public health education and training in order to progressively help the needy people to be more autonomous to deal with infectious diseases and health crisis. Third, it also allocates qualified human expertise, medicine and medical equipment for Taiwan's international health activities. One of the tools that the TaiwanIHA uses make its allocation of equipment abroad more efficient is the Global Medical Instruments Support and Service Program (GMISS). This program, established in May 2005,



Medical relief materials are ready to dispatch to Indonesia for emergency assistance.

collects pre-used, well-maintained, functioning, medical equipment offered by medical centers and hospitals in Taiwan, and donates it to different countries according to their specific requirements. Fourth, TaiwanIHA pushes for a legal framework, without which Taiwan's international contributions could be jeopardized. This framework relies on agreements and licenses with foreign countries that need help and is particularly important for short and long-term medical and health missions. Finally, TaiwanIHA promotes the planning and implementation of Taiwan's international health action abroad in order to facilitate the participation of Taiwan in the WHO.

Accomplishing these five goals, in partnership with other Taiwanese and international health actors, is a means for the TaiwanIHA to help Taiwan become more coordinated and, in turn, more efficient in its answer to the needs of people in difficulty abroad.

#### **Several concrete accomplishments**

The TaiwanIHA has already achieved several concrete accomplishments, which have not always been highly visible in the national and international media. Thanks to the efficiency and speed of response of the TaiwanIHA and its partners, notably the Taiwanese air company China Airlines, Taiwan was the first country to deliver emergency health kits to the Philippines after the mudslide disaster in Leyte, in February 2006. Through a deep and efficient partnership between the TaiwanIHA and the Taiwan Medical Association, Taiwan continues to help Malawi reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, notably in supporting the HIV/AIDS Center at the Malawi Central Hospital and in using a fingerprint recognition system. The TaiwanIHA also worked in cooperation with the International Center for Migration and Health (ICMH) to provide training and education materials on bird flu to other countries. At the beginning of April 2006, a TaiwanIHA team left for Burkina Faso to help the African nation control an outbreak of avian influenza. The team provided medical supplies such as protective gowns, gloves, masks and disinfectants. Another delegation recently attended the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Re-development Conference (April 10-12), which is an important annual event for international humanitarian assistance organizations.

In the coming years, the TaiwanIHA wants to create both a solid national team of medical assistance and health training and a group of experts on infectious diseases, ready and trained to work abroad. It also desires to strengthen public health training cooperation with other countries in order to share Taiwan's considerable experience in this area.

Despite being a relatively new organization, the TaiwanIHA has, in a very short time, achieved significant, high-impact, tangible results, and is working hard to do more. This task force reflects Taiwan's deep involvement in and commitment to improving both global public health and responses to international humanitarian crises. In other words, as Hou Sheng-mou, Taiwan's Minister of Health said recently, "The TaiwanIHA will make the nation a true participating partner for global health in the future." ❧

### **TaiwanIHA Dispatches Medical Relief and Rescue Team to Assist Victims of Indonesia's Catastrophic Earthquake**

In the morning of May 27th, a strong earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale struck Indonesia's densely populated province of Central Java inflicting catastrophic disaster and causing the deaths of nearly 6000 people. Deeply concerned about this tragic incident, Taiwan International Health Action (**TaiwanIHA**) dispatched two nurses and a 20-member search and rescue team to the disaster area to provide assistance in the relief efforts on the afternoon of the 28th. 200kg of emergency relief medical supplies were shipped to the disaster area to be used by the relief team upon their arrival. At 9am on the 29th, three more professional physicians with vast experience in international disaster assistance and relief work were dispatched. On the 30th, an additional 100kg of trauma injury medical supplies were shipped to the disaster area and a medical triage center was set up in the Bantul region, the most severely hit area near the epicenter of the earthquake.

TaiwanIHA donated a total of three medical supply shipments weighing approximately 500kg, value of more than 200,000 USD. Aside from setting up the medical triage center, TaiwanIHA has also made donations to the Bantul Red Cross, the Yogyakarta City Government Office and public hospital, and the Sardjito General Hospital. TaiwanIHA continues efforts to collect equipment and recruit specialists that are needed to provide ongoing disaster relief and reconstruction assistance to this region. ❧