



## Taiwan urges European Union to sign bilateral investment accord

**Taiwan has urged the European Union (EU) to sign a bilateral investment agreement as soon as possible in order to create a better investment climate for businesses, according to a statement issued November 28 by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA).**

At an annual bilateral economic and trade consultation meeting held recently in Brussels, the two sides discussed technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phyto-sanitary, and pharmaceutical rules, as well as intellectual property rights, the MOEA said in its statement. The two sides also exchanged views on manufacturing, telecommunications, government procurement, cooperation between customs agencies, anti-fraud operations, accords on trade in services and environmental goods, as well as other issues relating to the World Trade Organization, it added. The meeting was jointly presided over by Vice Economic Minister Wang Mei-hua and Mauro Petriccione, deputy director general of the European Commission's Director-

ate General for Trade. The EU is Taiwan's fifth largest trading partner after China, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the United States and Japan, while Taiwan is the EU's seventh largest trading partner in Asia. Two-way trade between Taiwan and the EU totaled US\$46.48 billion last year, with Taiwan exporting US\$23.73 billion in goods to the EU and importing US\$22.75 billion worth of products from the latter.

According to the MOEA, imports of fruit and meat products from EU member countries to Taiwan have seen steady increase over the past three years. Last year, for example, the EU exported US\$100 million worth of pork products to Taiwan, a 33 percent increase from the year before.

*Source: Focus Taiwan, Ministry of Economic Affairs*



## Taiwan, US to cooperate in empowering women through APEC fund

Taiwan's representative to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Summit and US Secretary of State John Kerry said in Lima on November 18 that the two sides intend to set up an APEC Women and the Economy subfund.

The initiative was announced in a joint statement by James Soong, the chairman of the opposition People First Party, and Kerry at a breakfast celebrating the 5th anniversary of the APEC Women and the Economy declaration. According to the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the subfund will promote the key pillars outlined in the APEC Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy as impacting women's economic empowerment. These are capital and market access, skills and capacity building, women's leadership and agency, and innovation and technology. It will also support programs to eradicate barriers to women's participation in the economy and represents a concrete example of Taiwan's meaningful participa-

tion in and contribution to the international community, the MOFA said.

Since joining APEC in 1991, Taiwan has championed the regional economic forum's initiatives and projects. Some of its high-profile undertakings include proposing in 2012 the Innovation for Women and Economic Development, a three-year project aimed at bridging economic and gender development through promoting value-added services of information and communications technology. Women's empowerment is also a key area for collaboration under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, which Taiwan and the United States jointly initiated in June 2015 with a memorandum of understanding.

Source: Focus Taiwan, Taiwan Today

---

## Taipei's National Palace Museum wins F@imp 2.0 Grand Prix

“Giuseppe Castiglione – Lang Shining New Media Art Exhibition” produced by Taiwan's National Palace Museum along with NPM iPalace Channel won the Grand Prize of 2016 F@imp 2.0 (Festival audiovisuel international, multimedia et patrimoine), the best production of any categories at this year's competition, at the award ceremony hosted by the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest November 22.

“I am honored by this award,” Ambassador Tao Wen-lung said while accepting the prize on behalf of National Palace Museum at the award ceremony. Tao explained that the Na-

tionalist government brought with it a vast amount of imperial treasures and precious artifacts when it relocated to Taiwan in 1949. Today, Tao said, the National Palace Museum



Source and photo: Taipei Representative Office in Hungary

houses more than 650,000 articles and is one of the top four museums in the world.



Dr. János Tari, chair of Audiovisual and New Technologies of Image and Sound (AVICOM) under the International Council of Museums (ICOM), said members of

the jury decided to give the grand prix to the work of National Palace Museum that bridges digital technology and Chinese culture, as well as the iPalace Channel Education outreach program.

According to the National Palace Museum, Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), a Jesuit missionary of Milan, Italy, went to China to preach and adopted a new name in Chinese – Lang Shining. Even though he went there as a missionary, he

became a full-time court painter thanks to his excellent artistic skills. As an artist, he served three emperors, Kangxi (1661-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) for 51 years. His many works are now brought “to the digital world in a way that mingles the real with the virtual,” the museum said. This year’s F@imp 2.0, organized by AVICOM, awarded gold, silver and bronze prizes for different categories such as short film, long film, web art, interactive multimedia installation, mobile apps, among others. Participating museums include those from Australia, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Russia, Uruguay and Switzerland.

F@imp, according to the ICOM website, is an international professional event designed to promote the achievements of museums making use of new image and sound technologies. It is a competition refereed by an international jury of experts and is held each year in conjunction with the AVICOM committee annual meeting, which takes place at its international conference. The awards recognize excellence in audio-visual and multimedia creations.

---

## Preserving Native Flora

*By Oscar Chung*

*Taiwan Review*

*Photos: Huang Chung-hsin*

**Government agencies and private organizations have developed conservation programs and public awareness campaigns to protect Taiwan’s indigenous plant species.**

The Kanehira azalea, an endemic plant species, once thrived up and down the banks of Beishi Creek in the area now known as Wulai District of New Taipei City. However, as is the case with countless varieties of fauna and flora both locally and globally, the pink flowering shrub fell victim to the relentless march of urbanization. By the mid-1990s, the plant

had become extinct in the wild as its sole habitat was flooded due to the construction of the Feitsui Reservoir. Yet unlike so many other species, the Kanehira azalea was saved from oblivion. “After conducting field studies in the areas surrounding the reservoir and discovering that the species had vanished in the wild, we set about replanting it in loca-



*Cinnamomum kotoense*: A type of cinnamon native to Lanyu or Orchid Island off the southeastern coast of Taiwan

tions near its original habitat,” explains Yang Chia-dong, chief secretary of the Endemic Species Research Institute (ESRI) under the Cabinet-level Council of Agriculture (COA). Due to these efforts, the shrub is now flourishing along parts of the river once again, serving as a symbol of the nation’s efforts to protect its rich biodiversity.

Since its founding in 1992, the ESRI, which is based in central Taiwan’s Nantou County, has been at the forefront of efforts to record and preserve the country’s native fauna and flora. The institute’s 3.5-hectare Ecology Education Park houses a treasure trove of indigenous plants, and acts as a base from which botanists study native species and attempt to rejuvenate some of those facing extinction.

While the ESRI has achieved many notable successes over the past two decades, much more needs to be done to protect the nation’s numerous varieties of indigenous plants. In total, Taiwan is home to 5,462 known native species of flora, consisting of 4,174 kinds of vascular plants and 1,288 types of moss. According to a preliminary list of indigenous

vascular plants published by the ESRI in 2012, more than 900 of these species are under threat, 324 of which are endemic to Taiwan or its offshore islands.

Oftentimes measures taken to protect fauna also cover the species of flora that support them, notes Kuan Li-hao, director of the Conservation Division at the COA’s Forestry Bureau. For instance, the establishment of the Guanwu Broad-tailed Swallowtail Major Habitat in Hsinchu County, northern Taiwan in 2000 was intended to protect not only the broad-tailed swallowtail butterfly, but also the plants in the area, including Taiwan sassafras trees, whose leaves are the only source of food for the insect’s larvae. Both the insect and tree species are endemic to Taiwan.

Yang notes that it is essential to protect all indigenous plants, irrespective of whether they are directly linked to the survival of endangered creatures. “Each species of flora is a link in an enormous ecological network,” he says. “The loss of a single variety may cause significant disruption to the overall system.”



*Students from a local community college inspect indigenous plants, including an endemic variety of yellow water lily, at a pond in New Taipei City's Yonghe District.*

The completion of the preliminary vascular plant species list in 2012 was an important milestone in efforts to protect the nation's natural environment. The project was initiated in 2008 with the aim of creating a comprehensive record of native species of flora and determining the conservation status of these plants based on the categories and criteria developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

This index of species, known to conservationists as a red list, was compiled by the Taiwan Society of Plant Systematics (TSPS), an academic group established in 2006, under commission from the ESRI. More than 40 botanists, mostly plant taxonomists, took part in the project.

According to the preliminary red list, 908 of Taiwan's native species of vascular plants are threatened. Of these, 163 are classified as critically endangered, 265 are endangered, and 480 are vulnerable. Furthermore, 289 species are listed in the data deficient category. This classification, one of the nine official IUCN categories, indicates that more information is needed to determine the conservation status of these plants.

Currently, more than 80 percent of Taiwan's threatened species are found in areas

such as wildlife refuges, forest reserves and national parks, meaning they are already legally protected. At present, the only law governing the handling of endangered plant species is detailed in the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, which many scientists regard as inadequate. They have petitioned the government to create a new wide-ranging law that uses the preliminary red list as a starting point.



*Large purple orchid*

In terms of their plant preservation programs, officials and researchers are currently focusing much of their efforts on tackling the threats posed by invasive foreign species, such as the mile-a-minute vine. Endemic to South America, this weed



is a type of trailing herbaceous plant. It is estimated to have first appeared in Taiwan around 30 years ago and has since aggressively encroached on areas that were originally home to native plants. "Alien species tend to flourish because the environment in Taiwan lacks the natural enemies that contained their growth in their old habitats," explains Hsu Tsai-wen, director of the ESRI's Division of Botany.

Since the early 2000s, the Forestry Bureau has enacted several measures to impede the growth of this weed, including a monthlong national campaign held in fall every year during which workers and volunteers root out the invasive plant. As a result of these efforts, the total area affected by the vine decreased from more than 51,000 hectares in 2001 to less than 14,000 hectares in 2014. The COA is also drawing up a more forceful law concerning the handling of alien species that "will fill in loopholes in existing regulations and introduce more stringent fines for violators," Kuan notes.

The strong participation of private individuals and groups in the Forestry Bureau's campaign to address the invasive mile-a-minute vine highlights the increasing-

ly significant role that nongovernmental organizations (NGO) are playing in plant conservation in Taiwan. One of the most prominent private research institutions in this field is the Dr. Cecilia Koo Botanic Conservation Center, which was established in 2008 by Koo Cheng-yun, chairman of Taiwan Cement Corp. Named for its founder's mother, the center is home to 16 greenhouses, which occupy a total of 31,481 square meters, spread across 25 acres of the Koo family's farm in Pingtung County, southern Taiwan. It currently contains around 26,110 species and varieties of plants, the majority of which are native to the island.

NGOs are also helping enhance awareness of local species. "Few elementary or high school teachers are capable of educating students about indigenous flora," says James Chen, director of the Taipei-based Taiwan Native Plant Society. To help address this, his group, established in 2005, organizes weekly excursions in northern Taiwan to teach people about the island's plant species. The NGO has also developed its Noah's Ark Project to encourage schools around the nation to replace the alien species of flora on their campuses with native varieties.

---

## Over 150 software developers to attend Taipei Game Show

**More than 150 game software developers from around the world are expected to attend the upcoming Taipei Game Show, displaying their latest innovations and achievements in the business, the organizers said November 24.**

The annual game exhibition, now in its 15th year, is scheduled to kick off January 19 and run through January 24 at the Taipei World Trade Center. It will feature a business to consumer (B2C) display area for players and a business to business (B2B) zone for developers, the organizers said.

They said more than 150 game developers and about 50 game-related groups will attend the event, along with 1,000 potential foreign buyers, which will bring tremendous business opportunities to Taiwan. So far, more than 200 participants from 29 countries, including Croatia, Ire-



land, Israel, Japan, Malta, Pakistan, Serbia, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States have registered to take part in the exhibition, the organizers said.

Among them will be Japan's Pon Pon Games, which won the 2015 Bit Summit Award, a leading Japanese gaming development festival, and US-based Supertype, which won an award in the BIC Fest held in Busan, South Korea in 2015, the organizers said. On display will be innovations



in hardware and software development, while virtual reality and game contests will be highlighted, according to the organizers. In addition, the Asia Pacific Game Summit will be held at the same venue. According to the Market Intelligence and Consulting Institute, the production value of Taiwan's game industry topped NT\$42 billion (US\$1.32 billion) in 2015, making it one of the major pillars of the country's high-tech sector.

Source: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Courtesy of Taipei Game Show

## Taiwan takes part in UN climate conference

Taiwan had achieved realistic participation in the recently concluded United Nations climate conference, holding talks with over 35 countries on global climate issues even though it is not a UN member, an Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) official said November 19.

Exchanges with other countries during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco, had been smooth and free from Beijing's intervention, Chien Huei-chen, executive director of EPA's Office of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Management, told the Taipei-based Central News Agency. Chien said 12 of Taiwan's diplomatic allies also spoke out for the country during the conference, in which Taiwan joined many activities on the sidelines.

"We participated in the event through a 'technical approach,'" said Chien, add-

ing that the results were more fruitful than previously thought. As to the talks with some 35 countries, they had generated concrete and sustainable measures, Chien said. They included a joint-calculation mechanism for carbon dioxide emissions that could be verified by third parties, she said.

In addition, the island's state-run Taiwan Power Co., oil refiner CPC Corp., and China Steel Corp. had participated in more activities at this conference than in previous years, which Chien thinks could improve their ability to adapt to climate change.

Source: Focus Taiwan



## Taiwanese ultramarathoner wins 4 Deserts Race Series title

Taiwanese ultramarathon runner Tommy Chen took second place in the recently concluded 250-kilometer Last Desert 2016 race in Antarctica, to take the crown as champion of the 4 Deserts Race Series this year, making him the first Asian runner to complete the series in one calendar year.



Source: Focus Taiwan, Photo: Tommy Chen Facebook

The four ultra-marathon races also include the Atacama Crossing in Chile, the Gobi March in China and the Sahara Race in Egypt (which was relocated to the Namib Desert this year).

For each race, participants must cover 250 km in seven days over rough terrain, with only a place in a tent and water provided.

Chen took second in the Sahara Race in Namibia in May and fifth in the Gobi March in China in June before coming first in Chile in October.