



# Taiwan INFO

## VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW FOR SDGs UNVEILED IN NEW YORK

**The Republic of China (Taiwan) released its Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals Sept. 15 in New York City, underscoring the country's commitment to joining global efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality, tackle climate change and ensure that no one is left behind.**

Unveiled by Environmental Protection Administration Minister Lee Ying-yuan, the report details the government's measures to advance the 17 goals in the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Taiwan's enforcement mechanisms, implementation achievements and related international collaborative experiences. Lee highlighted in his address several policies coming into

effect from Jan. 1 next year, including a ban on the production of all skin care products containing microbeads and expanded restrictions on the provision of free plastic shopping bags. These regulations, which have drawn praise from the international community, spotlight the country's efforts to continuously strengthen environmental protection, he said.



*EPA Minister Lee Ying-yuan outlines Taiwan's progress in implementing the SDGs during a seminar in New York City. (Courtesy of EPA)*

Taiwan's private sector is also making notable contributions through fostering investment and innovation in green technology, the minister said. He cited by way of example a major plastic bottle recycling system set up by Taiwan expatriate Hung Ching-ling in Romania, as well as the efforts of Taipei City-based Miniwiz Co. Ltd., which has garnered international recognition for its groundbreaking approach to industrial grade recycling.

According to the EPA, Taiwan fares well in comparison to major Western nations in SDG implementation, and outperforms many of them in areas including access to safely managed sanitation services, female political participation, poverty prevention and the provision of universal education and health care.

The minister said the government will continue to monitor the progress of related measures, with top priority being given to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. As President Tsai Ing-wen stated during her inaugural address in May 2016, Taiwan will shoulder its responsibility as a global stakeholder and fulfill

the nation's carbon reduction goals, he added. Lee unveiled the report at an international seminar on the implementation of the SDGs. Jointly organized by Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York, Global Island Partnership, Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University and Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands to the U.N., the event was attended by more than 150 scholars and nongovernmental organization representatives. As part of the country's SDG efforts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the government is also working to promote global partnerships and assist other countries in areas including agriculture, education, environmental protection, information and communication technology and public health.

Adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 2015, the SDGs are intended to end poverty, protect the environment, and secure peace and prosperity around the world. The 17 goals comprise 169 targets across such fields as affordable and clean energy, climate action, gender equality, health and well-being, and sustainable cities.



## MIAO-HUI TEMPLE CULTURE EXHIBITION OPENS IN THE NETHERLANDS

**An exhibition showcasing the architectural beauty of Taiwan's temples and vibrant traditional religious culture is underway at Museumpark Orientalis in Nijmegen, the Netherlands.**

An exhibition showcasing the architectural beauty of Taiwan's temples and vibrant traditional religious culture is underway at Museumpark Orientalis in Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Miao-Hui – Temple Festivals and Folk Cultures in Taiwan runs until Oct. 29. It centers on the annual Mazu pilgrimage taking place in the central and southern parts of the country in the third month of the lunar calendar.

The nine-day pilgrimage, which is described as one of three major religious activities in the world by the Discovery Channel, attracts hundreds of thousands of devotees from home and abroad, according to the MOFA.

Featuring artifacts, drawings and photographs, the exhibition highlights intricate architectural styles and sophisticated carvings employed by temples dedicated to Mazu, the goddess of the sea. Some of the stand-out facilities include Beigang Chao-

Tian Temple in Yunlin County, western Taiwan, Dajia Jenn-Lann Temple in Taichung City and Lugang Mazu Temple in Changhua County, both in central Taiwan. The exhibition also offers visitors the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of temple culture through the use of an electronic fortune-telling device and virtual reality headsets.

According to the MOFA, temples in Taiwan are places for worshippers to practice their beliefs and offer spiritual comfort. It is hoped that by shedding light on this aspect of local society, a greater appreciation of the country's culture will develop abroad.

The next stops on the exhibition's touring schedule are French Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vitre, Nov. 10 to March 11, 2018; 7th District Town Hall of Paris, April 1-30, 2018; Taipei Representative Office in Berlin, May 10-31, 2018; and Gallery @ Oxo in London, June 28 to July 8, 2018.

Source: Taiwan Today

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## CRAFTING WITH PRECISION

**The machinery industry cluster in central Taiwan's Taichung City is helping local companies hammer out a reputation for innovation and quality.**

Taiwan is home to some 13,000 machinery factories that employ about 470,000 people. Many of these facili-

ties are located in the so-called Golden Valley, an area spanning roughly 60 kilometers around the base of Mt.



Dadu in Taichung. The region boasts the highest density of machinery plants in the world.

According to tallies compiled by the Taiwan Association of Machinery Industry (TAMI), the production value of the nation's machinery sector reached approximately NT\$990 billion (US\$32.8 billion) in 2016 and is projected to grow 5-10 percent this year to break NT\$1 trillion (US\$33.1 billion). About 70 percent of the items produced are exported.

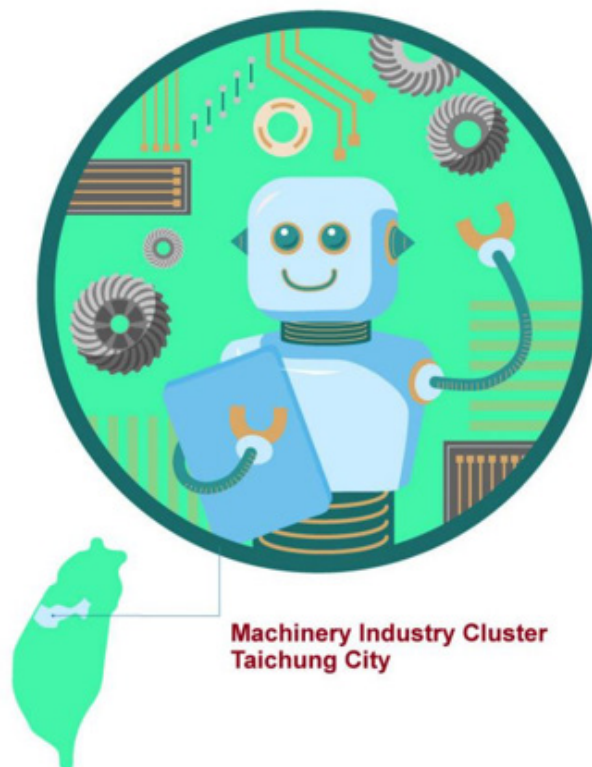
Taiwan is the world's fifth largest exporter of machine tools behind Germany, Japan, Italy and mainland China. It is also among the top 10 exporters of rubber and plastic, textile and wood-working machinery. Much of this success, can be attributed to the Taichung cluster. The business owner said such a grouping increases operational efficiency and productivity. It also facilitates a clearer division of labor and specialization while consolidating resources and reducing production costs.

"The benefits generated by clustering enable Taiwan's machinery manufacturers to churn out products with excellent cost-performance ratios. They're also the main reasons manufacturers stay in Taiwan instead of relocating overseas." The Taichung cluster serves as a one-stop shop where international buyers can get what they want con-

veniently and quickly.

Around 70 percent of the components and parts used by Yang's factories, including ball screws, hydraulic cylinders, tool changers and water coolers, are sourced locally. Additionally, his business group has

established long-term cooperation in R&D with Taichung-based institutions and organizations such as Hsiuping University of Science and Technology and National Chung Hsing University, as well as the Machine Tools Technology Center under the state-supported Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) and the Precision Machinery Research and Development Center (PMC), founded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) and TAMI in 1993.







*Machinery manufacturers in the Taichung cluster produce high-speed, high-precision devices that are utilized by companies around the world.  
(Photo by Chin Hung-hao)*

### REPUTATION FOR QUALITY

Habor Hsu, chairman of the Precision Machinery Development Association, said the country's machinery manufacturers, which are largely small and medium enterprises, must continually improve their technologies to create value-added products and deliver better solutions to customers to stay competitive.

### SMART MACHINERY CHOICES

In recognition of the machinery industry's important role in Taiwan's

economy, as well as the need to stay at the forefront of manufacturing trends, the government has listed the smart machinery sector among its major industrial development objectives. It aims to turn Taichung into a smart machinery hub by offering support in such areas as international cooperation, land acquisition, marketing, R&D and talent recruitment.

Demand is increasing for high-precision and high-speed machines with intelligent solutions, according to YCM. For this reason, the company has developed real-time Taiwan's machinery manufacturers are globally competitive thanks to the quality and reliability of their products, also are particularly adept at accommodating clients that

seek smaller orders of custom-made products, he said, adding that such attributes are increasingly in demand, particularly from the aerospace, automobile, information and communication technology as well as medical sectors. The heavy concentration of machinery firms in and around Taichung has created a dynamic supply chain ecosystem, "This, combined with enhanced government support, can facilitate efforts to offer innovative total solutions and maintain the nation's foothold in international markets."



# ALISHAN FOREST RAILWAY INKS UK COOPERATION PACT

A pact paving the way for expanded cooperation between Alishan Forest Railway and Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway Preservation Co. Ltd. of the U.K. was concluded Sept. 27 in Chiayi City, southern Taiwan.



*Courtesy of The Alishan Forest Railway Branch, TRA*

Under the agreement, the two sides will share experience and technical skills, as well as work together in promoting both narrow-gauge railways in the overseas market. It was signed by Lin Hwa-ching, director-general of the Forestry Bureau under the Cabinet-level Council of Agriculture, and WLLR Chairman Steve Clews.

According to Lin, the pact enables Alishan to learn from WLLR's management practices and serves as a platform for raising the railway's international profile. An additional benefit is greater access to the lucrative European rail tourism market, he said.

Lord Faulkner, who was appointed the first-ever U.K. trade envoy to Taiwan in January 2016, is a member and former chairman of the British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group. In November the same year, he led a sustainable railway development delegation comprising representatives of 17 U.K. companies and organizations to Taiwan to participate in the fifth Taiwan-U.K. Railway Forum. According to

the MOFA, the visit of Lord Faulkner and Lord Shutt will help deepen bilateral ties and cooperative exchanges in related areas.

Taiwan and the U.K. enjoy close relations across the areas of economy, mutual judicial assistance, tourism, trade, transportation and youth exchanges. Last year, Taiwan was the U.K.'s eighth largest trading partner in the Asia-Pacific, while the U.K. was Taiwan's third largest in Europe. The value of two-way trade reached US\$5.85 billion.

The 71.4-kilometer Alishan Forest Railway was constructed during the Japanese colonial era (1895-1945). It is one of the most popular in Taiwan and renowned the world over for its Z-shaped switchbacks through stunning mountain vistas.

Similarly impressive is the nearly 26-kilometer round-trip Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway in rural Wales. Built in 1903 to link farming communities with the market town of Welshpool, the line was shuttered in 1956 but gradually reopened in stages from 1963 by a group of enthusiasts.



# LIVING MUSEUMS

Taiwan's temples are vibrant show-rooms for traditional architecture and decorative crafts.

*Source: Taiwan Review*



*Woodcarvings at Sanxia Qingshui Zushi Temple in New Taipei City's Sanxia District*

A long-held Chinese cultural belief asserts that gods from a devotee's ancestral home confer the greatest blessings. So centuries ago, when immigrants from mainland China set out to build new lives in the unfamiliar land of Taiwan, they brought with them statues of the folk deities worshipped in their communities.

Life was difficult for these early settlers, so initially they were only able to house the idols in ill-suited, shabby surroundings. In time, as they and their offspring grew wealthier, considerable effort was made to expand and renovate the first temples built on the island as well as to construct newer and more ornate places of worship. Believers paid large sums to ship construction materials across the Taiwan Strait, and hired mainland Chinese master craftsmen to transform the supplies into elaborate beams, roofs and decorative carvings.

Some temples adopted the unusual strategy of employing two master craftsmen for the same project, granting each responsibility for building or refurbishing one half of the structure. While this practice meant that the two sides of the temple often ended up with slightly different architectural and design details, it was believed that competition inspired the artisans to produce their best work.

Virtually all long-established temples in Taiwan have undergone multiple restorations owing to factors such as the humid climate and frequency of natural disasters. For many generations, craftsmen employed to complete renovations have typically added their own decorative elements. This eclectic approach has transformed Taiwan's temples into fascinating living museums of traditional architecture and crafts.



*Sanxia Qingshui Zushi Temple was constructed in 1767.*



# TAIWAN, GLOBAL VEGAN CAPITAL — AN ECO-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE

*Ivan Chen*

*/tr. by Bruce Humes*

*Photos: Jimmy Lin*

*Taiwan Panorama*

**In an April 2017 report, CNN once again ranked Taipei among the world's top ten most popular cities for vegan cuisine. This is not the first time that international media have praised Taiwan's vegan fare. Aside from baseball, xiaolong baosteamed buns, night markets and other familiar points of pride, the impact of veganism in Taiwan is not to be underestimated.**

Besides avoiding consumption of food derived from animals, such as eggs, milk, cheese and honey, veganism extends to all levels of the environment, education and lifestyle. The mere absence of animal ingredients does not qualify as “vegan”; rather, it should be defined as a lifestyle that is friendly to the environment, animal life and mankind.

## **VEGANS WORLDWIDE FIX THEIR EYES ON TAIWAN**

Andrew Nicholls, Elbert Gu and Michel Cason hail from Australia, the US and South Africa, respectively. Despite their different nationalities and backgrounds, they became acquainted in Taiwan thanks to their similar vegan concepts. Nicholls, who arrived in Taiwan nine years ago, holds a master's degree in sports science and sports education from Australia, and specializes in coaching athletes. He is also a Pilates International instructor. While reading *Diet for a New America* in 1988, he discovered that the inhumane treatment and killing of animals described in the book closely resembled the scenes of butchery he had witnessed on his family's farm as a child. A practicing vegan for nearly 25 years,

he feels strongly about how veganism has evolved in Taiwan over the last eight years. When he first arrived here vegetarian fare was available but vendors placed little emphasis on nutrition and taste, whereas nowadays it seems as if every month or two a new vegan eating spot pops up somewhere. In Taiwan, Nicholls has found his second home outside Australia.

Now promoting vegan dining in Taiwan via her own restaurant, Michel Cason was inspired to become a vegan thanks to the Taiwanese. She first came to Taiwan purely for travel, but soon discovered the widespread practice of vegetarianism, and the respect and importance accorded to those who do not eat meat, attitudes that are unmatched in other countries. Once she acquired a deeper understanding of veganism's benefits for both human health and animal welfare, she naturally became a member of the vegan tribe. Cason has been in Taiwan for seven years. As a chef, she has been deeply impressed with the rich and varied assortment of vegetables available here. “There are many kinds of vegetables in Taiwan, including Chinese kale,





*In an April 2017 report, CNN once again ranked Taipei among the world's top ten most popular cities for vegan cuisine.*

chayote leaves, water spinach, bird's-nest fern and so on. Variety like this can't be found South Africa," she says. Fruits and vegetables are plentiful year-round, with specific types abundant depending upon the season. Taiwan is indeed blessed with a unique environment.

Based upon experience acquired traveling the world while teaching oil painting and exhibiting his own works, Elbert Gu – who is a visiting scholar at Nanjing University of the Arts – says eating vegan has been no easy feat. He has resided in Taiwan for four years now, however, and to him it seems that at almost every corner one finds food and drink fit for vegetarians. He believes that this is because Taiwan has undergone many different waves of “cultural baptism,” and thus it exhibits an eclectic taste for vegetarian cuisine. Recently he has undertaken an artistic project with vegan overtones, in which he hopes to show that behind the jolly images of animals on meat and dairy product packaging, there lie hidden tragedies and slaughter.

#### **GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN AMONG THE YOUNG**

In Taiwan, members of the younger generation are using their own strengths to respond to the global vegan trend. A table overflows with a banquet of vegan dishes prepared by the hand of Chef Feng Pei-ge. “When I was at university, I simply wanted to take care of three daily meals that were cheap, simple, and healthy. But as things turned out, along the way I became a vegan.” After graduating with an MS from the Department of Food Science at National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Feng worked in vegetarian restaurants for a few years. By virtue of self-study and food-related concepts acquired at university – and after repeated failures and experimentation – he gradually integrated his school learning with cooking ingredients.

“Foreign chefs tend to make good use of bitter, astringent and sour flavors. After careful study, I discovered that they use bitterness to bring out a food's depth and to balance other flavors. They use astringency to endow certain ingredients, orig-



inally very satisfying and luxurious, with a sense of layered freshness.” Whenever he speaks of the art of cooking, Feng virtually radiates with delight, which leaves a deep impression on others. This is how he conveys his response to the vegan way of life.



*Andrew Nicholls with his tasty vegan cheese pie – sans milk or eggs.*

In addition, a band of young people have penetrated to every corner of Taiwan, where they promote the concepts of veganism and of equal rights for animals. They include people like “Wusdom,” the Taiwan organizer of “30-Day Vegan,” who in his spare time uses his own money and efforts, and calls on like-minded volunteers to spread the word on the

streets of Taipei, Taichung and Tainan; or Jessi Chang, consultant to National Taiwan University’s Animal Rights

Club, and Dai Yu-sheng, a fresh graduate from National Taiwan Normal University, both of whom promote the vegan lifestyle via on-campus

speeches, setting up stalls, food-sharing and other activities.

The selfless sacrifice of these young people, and their tenacious adherence to their ideals, also reflect the vitality of the new generation. As the world greets the vegan wave, fortunately Taiwan will not only be present – it also has the potential to serve as the leader of Asia’s green revolution.



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