



## Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

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### **FEATURE: Taiwan battles to keep its name in global arena**

By Tseng Wei-chen and Jonathan Chin / Staff reporter, with staff writer



The headquarters of the World Vegetable Center in Tainan's Shanhua District is pictured on Jan. 2, 2010.

Photo: Wu Chun-feng, Taipei Times

The nation participates in 12 governmental or non-governmental international organizations using the name “Taiwan” or the “Republic of China (ROC),” or about one-third of a total of 37 organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs' records show.

In an effort to limit Taiwan's international space, the Chinese government routinely pressures these organizations to refer to the nation using names other than the “ROC” or “Taiwan,” such as “Chinese Taipei” or the “Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan,

Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu,” the records show.

In 2000, the Asian Development Bank, on Beijing's entreaty, switched from using the “ROC” to “Taipei, China” — a move that Taipei continues to protest at the annual meeting.

However, the nation is recognized as a member named “Taiwan” by seven international organizations: the World Vegetable Center, the Association of World Election Bodies, the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna's Extended Commission, the Egmont Group, the International Council for Information Technology in Government Administration, the International Cotton Advisory Committee and the International Competition Network.

Furthermore, Taiwan is recognized as the "ROC" by five international organizations: the Association of Asian Election Authorities, the African-Asian Rural Development Organization, the Asian Productivity Organization, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, and the Food and Fertilizer Technology Center for the Asian and Pacific Region (FFTC/ASPAC).

Taiwan has representative offices in 57 countries that are not diplomatic allies: 50 of these offices use the name Taipei; six (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Nigeria and Ecuador) are called the ROC; and one (Bahrain) is named Taiwan.

On the other hand, of the non-allied countries that have representative offices in Taiwan, 29 include the name "Taiwan" in their nomenclature, with 21 calling it "Taipei, Taiwan" and five (Finland, Japan, Oman, Papua New Guinea and the US) just "Taiwan."

Taiwan's order of preference in names used in international organizations are the ROC, Taiwan (ROC) and Taiwan, with Chinese Taipei or the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu being the least preferred name, a high-ranking official in the foreign relations establishment said on condition of anonymity.

"The challenges we confront today are immense due to China's aggressive efforts to exclude or downgrade Taiwan," the official said.

In most cases, Taiwan's inclusion in older global organizations can be attributed to the fact that their founding members were either states that recognized Taiwan's sovereign status at the time, or those that recognize Taiwan's significant contributions, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Lo Chih-cheng (羅致政) said.

For example, nearly every country in Central and South America historically recognized Taiwan, which afforded the nation a greater degree of prominence in organizations based in the region, while organizations such as the FFTC/ASPAC and the World Vegetable Center were founded by the Taiwanese government and its then-partners, Lo said.

However, since Taiwan joined APEC as "Chinese Taipei," organizations founded after APEC generally used that model when considering Taiwan's participation as a member, Lo said.

Whether the nation can maintain its name as Taiwan or the ROC in the 12 organizations is an issue that will be determined by the competing influences of Taiwan and China, Lo said, adding that the nature of those organizations might influence the outcome, as the Chinese are not keen on participating in certain organizations in the first place.

Taiwan's conduct of foreign relations during former president

Chiang Ching-kuo's (蔣經國) administration was epitomized by the so-called "flexible diplomacy," and the government was content to post overseas offices without giving much importance to what names they used.

As a result, the government established for diplomatic purposes a variety of organizations, such as the Far Eastern Trade Services Inc, the Institute of Chinese Culture Studies and the Sun Yat-sen Center Foundation, without any apparent unifying rule or order to their nomenclature, he said.

Former president Lee Teng-hui's (李登輝) "pragmatic diplomacy" attempted to bring some unity to the names of these representative offices, but at the time, "Taipei" was used in lieu of "Taiwan," he said, calling the choice "regrettable."

"Many countries are willing to use the word 'Taiwan,' which proves that there is a real opportunity for Taiwan to use the name in the international community. We do not need to limit ourselves on our own initiative," Lo said.