

and use of UN ISO containers in Taiwan. Japanese regulations permit the use of ISO containers for the import of products not produced in Japan, or for export to other countries, but not for transport from plants in Japan to domestic customers. By copying this practice, the Taiwan government is hurting domestic specialty-chemical and gas manufacturers by keeping them from using many types of high-pressure containers for the local market. As a result, chemical manufacturers may prefer to locate new manufacturing facilities outside of Taiwan. Costs are also increased for electronics companies in Taiwan that are the customers for these chemicals, forcing them to buy more expensive imported products and making their supply chain less reliable.

Currently, Taiwanese authorities do not follow the provisions of Chapter 6 of the “Regulations for Safety Inspection of Dangerous Machines and Equipment,” which stipulates that imported containers can be inspected according to foreign standards. Instead, Taiwan requires imported containers to meet domestic Chinese National Standards (CNS) and transportation regulations, which often prevent the inspection and use of imported containers in Taiwan.

We recommend that the CLA refer to the example of South Korea, which previously also followed the Japanese regulatory system, but later changed the legal framework to align with international standards. UN ISO containers have now been used by chemicals manufacturers in Korea for many years.

Like DOT standards, containers with UN ISO specifications are used and recognized globally. In fact, a complete system, the UN Orange Book, is in place to govern their inspection and re-inspection. We recommend that the Taiwan government recognize and follow this system without requiring domestic standards to be met as well, allowing manufacturers in Taiwan to raise their competitiveness by using UN ISO or DOT containers domestically and in exporting chemicals.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

How will Taiwan help its citizens and corporations identify, secure, and exploit their competitive advantage in the new economic order in which developed nations are rapidly transforming from Industrial-Age to Digital-Age economic models?

Over the past five decades, Taiwan’s economic performance has exceeded that of the United States, China, and Hong Kong. But during the last five years, while the rest of the Asian region was enjoying strong growth, Taiwan has lagged behind most of its neighboring countries.

During the 1980s and 1990s, as Taiwan’s labor-intensive industries evolved into world-class manufacturing facilities, both the government and academia played an important role in that transformation. Taiwan became an Asian role model for economic and democratic development, but without the

right infrastructure – including education and training – that would never have been possible.

Now Taiwan is once again at a crossroads. Will it again successfully make the necessary adjustments in its learning models to help its citizens compete with people from other nations?

Until recently, education and training provided individuals with specific sets of skills that could usually last an entire lifetime. In the fast-paced, change-driven Digital Age, that will no longer be the case. Will Taiwanese academic institutions be able to meet the challenge of preparing their citizens to compete in this new environment?

While the Ministry of Education (MOE) has been open to communication and discussion, its responsiveness over the past five years to international trends has been far slower than in other developed Asian countries, chiefly Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea. As a result, Taiwan’s citizens have been deprived of the kinds of opportunities for personal growth and development that have been available in other Asian countries.

Of particular concern to the Committee are the following three issues:

Issue 1: Continue liberalizing regulations governing foreign universities and degrees.

The Committee appreciates the efforts over the past several years to remove some of the barriers to the establishment of foreign schools in Taiwan. For example, the Private School Law was amended by the Legislative Yuan in December 2007 to allow foreigners to serve as the chancellor or chairman of a private school, and to remove the cap on the number of foreign directors permitted to serve on a private school’s board. The Committee also welcomes the Ministry of Education’s decision to allow credits from distant-learning courses to account for up to half of the total required credits for a degree. These are certainly steps in the right direction.

However, the regulations governing foreign university programs in such nearby markets as Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, and China are still far more attractive than the present conditions in Taiwan. In those markets, foreign universities are allowed to set up branch offices and to bring in faculty to deliver courses and programs. The resulting degrees are fully recognized in those countries.

The law here still stipulates that foreign universities may apply to set up full-scale campuses but not branch offices or satellite campuses. Taiwan universities, however, can easily set up satellite campuses or branch offices offering degree programs in the United States and other countries. Furthermore, students attending joint-degree graduate programs taking place in Taiwan will have problems receiving recognition for credits not earned physically at the foreign institution’s main campus. Given such barriers to entry, Taiwan has been unable to attract U.S.-based business schools and other professional schools such as have been operating elsewhere in Asia (for example, the University of Chicago

Business School in Singapore, the National University of Singapore-UCLA joint executive MBA program, or the Johns Hopkins University's Nanjing Center in China). The presence of high-quality, reputable U.S. institutions in Taiwan's education market would do much to spur innovations in the local education sector, and would provide a wealth of choice for Taiwan's students.

The Committee therefore calls upon the government, in line with the spirit of liberalization and internationalization that it has espoused, to permit bona fide foreign universities to operate legally in Taiwan without undue restrictions. In particular, the Committee urges the MOE to:

- Allow accredited Taiwanese schools to partner with MOE-recognized U.S. and other foreign institutions to create joint-degree graduate programs, and to recognize as valid and legitimate any credits and degrees earned in such programs, regardless of the geographic location where the credits toward the degree are earned.
- Allow MOE-recognized U.S. and other foreign universities to establish branch offices or satellite campuses in Taiwan for the sake of offering certificate and degree programs to Taiwanese and international students from all over the world. As long as the programs they offer are identical to those offered at the institution's home campus and are taught by the institution's own qualified faculty via on-line distance learning or on-site in Taiwan, the Committee sees no reason why such U.S. university programs should not be allowed to recruit students and run MOE-recognized academic programs in Taiwan.

It is the Committee's view that the government should revise the law to permit U.S. and other foreign universities offering degree and non-degree programs to operate in Taiwan and to recognize foreign degree programs based on their quality only, regardless of where the instruction is given.

Issue 2: Facilitate greater student mobility and internationalization by removing systemic barriers.

A systemic barrier inhibits the movement and exchange of students to and from Taiwanese post-secondary institutions. Currently, if Taiwanese students wish to enroll in a one-year or one-semester exchange program at an overseas institution, their home institution in Taiwan must have a "twinning agreement" with the overseas school in order for the student to transfer the credits earned overseas back to his or her Taiwanese school. This policy creates several problems:

- Students' choice is limited to a select number of overseas programs approved by their home institution. This occurs even though the MOE recognizes a much larger group of overseas schools as providing quality programs.
- Highly ranked overseas institutions may not necessarily be interested in entering into a twinning agreement with a Taiwanese school, but would be willing to accept individual students from that school for an exchange year. Once again, the current policy limits Taiwanese

students' choices. Similar problems arise if foreign students wish to attend a Taiwanese school for an exchange year.

In order to facilitate greater student mobility and internationalization, the Committee suggests that the system be revised to enable Taiwanese students to attend any overseas school recognized by the MOE, without the need for a twinning agreement with the student's home school. Recognition of individual credits towards graduation requirements would be at the discretion of the student's home institution.

Issue 3: Recognize overseas diploma and certificate programs.

The MOE recognizes educational credentials earned at overseas university/college undergraduate and graduate degree programs, but does not accord the same kind of recognition to overseas diploma and certificate programs in community/junior colleges and universities.

Diploma and certificate programs are typically applied and/or vocational education, focusing on a highly specialized field of job training. People with these skills are in high demand in the Taiwan employment market. Following the upgrading of most junior colleges in Taiwan over the past decade to become four-year degree-granting institutions, there is now an under-supply of personnel with advanced vocational skills. But many prospective students in such programs are discouraged from considering them because of uncertainty about whether the diplomas or certificates will be acknowledged in Taiwan. Clearly recognizing these overseas diploma and certificate programs would help in relieving the shortage of needed talent in the job market, while also providing Taiwan's students with greater overseas educational choices. By withholding such recognition, the MOE is unjustifiably denigrating these shorter-term vocational or applied programs and ignoring current needs in the employment market.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Environmental questions are becoming increasingly important elements in public-policy deliberations in Taiwan as in countries throughout the world. We hope that these vital matters can receive wide attention and discussion in Taiwan as the first step toward forging an effective consensus on how to ensure sustainable development, assuring both environmental protection and economic growth.

This year the Committee repeats two of the crucial issues raised last year – increasing the level of effective wastewater treatment in Taiwan and devising a practical and rational approach to dealing with the challenge of Greenhouse Gas emissions. In addition, we have added a third issue calling for expansion of the Green Mark program to recognize not only products made from recycled materials but also other environmentally friendly products.