

ROC inaugurates Taiwan Girls' Day



Minister without Portfolio Joyce Yen Feng (sixth left, back row) and MOHW Deputy Minister Tseng Chung-ming join representatives from local nongovernmental organizations in launching Taiwan Girls' Day Oct. 11 in Taipei City. (Photo/Huang Chung-hsing)

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Taiwan Girls' Day was inaugurated Oct. 11 in Taipei City, a move expected to strengthen the rights of girls nationwide, according to the ROC Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The development, which is in line with the International Day of the Girl Child adopted by the U.N. two years ago, underscores the government's commitment to creating a friendly environment for girls and pursuing gender equality, Minister without Portfolio Joyce Yen Feng said.

"Taiwan is among the first countries to have adopted a similar measure upholding this core value," she added.

Echoing Feng's remarks, MOHW Deputy Minister Tseng Chung-ming said public and private sector efforts in recent years have seen Taiwan make great strides in gender equality promotion and women's rights protection.

"But there is still room for improvement," Tseng said, adding that the latest initiative is certain to generate more awareness among the public.

"We perceive it as also helping fast-track implementation of the Action Plan for Enhancement of Girls' Rights launched by the Cabinet's Department of Gender Equality in March this year," he added.

Comprising 14 vision statements and 75 strategic measures, the project involves the Ministry of Education, MOHW, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice. It aims to build social support for empowerment and investment in girls, as well as delivering equal opportunities for their self-fulfillment and development.

These opportunities focus on better ensuring physical and psychological health; investing in education and capability building; protecting physical safety; and eliminating bias in the media and cultural traditions.

“Gender bias in the media and cultural traditions is probably the most difficult challenge to tackle when it comes to promoting gender equality,” Tseng said. The plan calls for breaking gender stereotypes portrayed by the media and changing discriminatory aspects in traditional customs.

According to the plan, specific measures include encouraging the production of gender-equal content by the media, promoting gender-sensitive practices in traditional customs and subsidizing related activities.

Another key example is the MOHW’s undertaking to address the gender ratio imbalance in newborns. The ministry began campaigning against gender screening in 2010, and has bolstered its drive with a number of complementary measures.

These include strengthening the monitoring of gender ratio at birth, promoting body awareness and body autonomy of girls and protecting and caring for underage pregnant girls.

The MOE and MOHW are also initiating programs to educate all aspects of society on the need for gender equality; empower girls to fully develop their potential and leadership capabilities; develop sports activities and facilities for girls; as well as reduce gender divergence in educational studies.

As girls are at higher risk of sexual assault, the action plan will leave no stone unturned in building a safe learning and living environment, while protecting their judicial rights.

Under the Cabinet initiative, all relevant agencies will report results of their respective measures every six months to the DGE for review and adjustments in future policymaking. (SFC-JSM)

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