

# International Forum

國際論壇

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## **Moderator :**

Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛) / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University, Taiwan

## **List of the Representatives from each Assembly :**

1. Yoshiaki MATSUDA (松田良昭, President), Yoshiyuki KURIYAMA (栗山欽行, Former Tokyo Councilor) / Representatives for Japanese Local Councilors Alliance (JLCA), JAPAN
2. Gina Gulanes PEREZ (PCL Advocacy Director), Maybelyn Dela Cruz FERNADEZ (ACF Founder) / Representatives for Philippine Councilors League (PCL), PHILIPPINES
3. Dr. H.Edwin Senjaya, SE., MM. / Vice Chairman of Bandung Local City Council, INDONESIA
4. Siliga Atiake KOFE / Chief of House of Clan, Funafuti, TUVALU
5. Khai-loon LEE (李凱倫議員) / Representative for Penang Statw Legislative Assembly, Councilor of Machang Bubuk, MALAYSIA
6. Lalaine MARCOS / Ormoc City Councilor, PHILIPPINES
7. Sunny-wei WANG (王威元議員) / President of Taiwan Councilors Forum (TCF), Councilor of New Taipei City, TAIWAN

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[Live Streaming Video on Youtube](#) (Starting from 03:52:04)

[Japan's Speech Materials](#)

[Indonesia's Speech Materials \(ppt file\)](#)

[Tuvalu's Speech Materials](#)

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**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

All distinguished ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our International Forum. I would like to use this opportunity to welcome all the international guest speakers. Today we have different speakers from 6 countries, and we have 7 presenters here. And since our Japanese speaker is in a hurry to other meeting, I would like to first invite Mr. Kuriyama from Japan to present his ideas and points.

**Yoshiyuki Kuriyama (栗山欽行 / Representative for Japanese Local Councilors Alliance) :**

Good afternoon. It's a great honor to be here today. And also, thank you Professor Chiou, for the wonderful presentation in thr keynote speck session. I think there are lots of

# International Forum

## 國際論壇

COVID-19 cases for us to reference, and it is a great experience which you shared with us.

Since I have limited time, I couldn't go into too much detail in terms of Japan's responses. I want to give you an overview of our efforts. In 2019, we have this unknown virus from Hubei province in China. And because early on we didn't have clear information, and immediately we had this massive infection outbreak around the world. And people panicked.

On March 11, 2020, the secretary general of the WHO announced that COVID-19 was a global pandemic. So, early on, we should have tried to prevent the spread of the pandemic through lockdowns. But the WHO failed their duty as the information sharing platform. So that was unfortunate. But through this period, I think all the countries, based on our only goal and foundation, tried to prevent the pandemic. I think it's not just protecting our own citizens, around the world, governments are also working together or with private sector and organizations. We're trying to control the spread of the pandemic. I would like to once again say thank you to all of you who were working so hard on the pandemic prevention.

In Japan, in terms of the pandemic prevention polices, our constitution doesn't address with an emergency response. When we were carrying out pandemic prevention, we could not enforce or impose regulations because of our laws. We could only encourage people to wear masks or vaccinate. We could only rely on the cooperation of our citizens.

Through vaccination, I think we have achieved a better result in terms of pandemic prevention compared to before. Our new prime minister is committed to achieving higher vaccination rate. And we're using Moderna, Pfizer, AZ. Through giving different kinds of vaccines, until yesterday, we have nearly 100 million who have received one dose of vaccination, which is 79% of our total population, and 97 million who are fully vaccinated for two doses. That's 77.3% of our total population.

Hopefully, by early next year, I think we will be able to administer the third dose of vaccination to all medical professionals. After that, we will start the third does of vaccination for all of our citizens. Right now, we have over 20,000 medical professionals who already received the third dose of vaccination. And today, we will see more people receiving the third dose of vaccination and that we will start vaccinating our citizens for the third dose.

In the future, I think the Japanese government will try to ensure the supply of vaccines and medications. We need to strengthen the identification and treatment, and we should also plan ahead to prevent the next wave of infection. This past summer, we had a wave

# International Forum

## 國際論壇

of infection, and we learned a lot through that experience. So, in the future, we need to be able to prevent more outbreak and we should strengthen vaccination, treatment, medication, identification, testing, and screening.

Hopefully, we can reduce the number of severe cases so that we will have sufficient medical resources. We want to safeguard life and health of our citizens. And in the future, we want to lower the risk of infection and continue to ensure normal activities of our society and economy. If the infected cases doubled or tripled, it will affect our medical system. If in that case, we will have to limit and control the activities of our citizens. We have specific plans and countermeasures to ensure the medical services ready for other patients other than COVID-19 cases.

Right now, we've already detected the latest variant Omicron and we will continue to respond to that as quickly as possible. Compared to the beginning of this year, we now have expended 2 to 4 times the facilities. We have prepared specific beds at the public hospitals and set up a team of medical professionals for the further expansion of the pandemic. We will make full use of the big data capabilities of IT to verify the number of hospital beds. Our government will also transmit resources such as medical institutions, ward conditions, medical personnel conditions, artificial respirators, medical equipment and other resources through G-MIS equipment to make a Mobility and appropriate management, regulation and distribution.

These are the measures that we will take in Japan in the near future. And the relevant laws and regulations are more stringent than other countries, so we've been trying to develop oral medicines for COVID-19. However, the progress has been slower due to stricter regulations. We will try our best to invest 2 billion Japanese Yen in oral medicine. And the experiments are expected to be completed by March next year.

And that really depends on the impact of the Omicron variant to see whether there are more severe cases due to the variant. And if that's the case, then we probably will need more than 350,000 to 500,000 doses for the oral medicine. We hope that by the end of the year, we'll be able to have 200,000 doses ready, and 400,000 doses by next March. And in winter this year (2021), we are planning to take mid-term measures to ensure the medication. And we will also prepare 1 million doses of oral medicine. So, in addition to the 1 million doses of vaccine that we prepared, there are a total of 1.6 million doses of oral medicine and vaccines altogether in preparation for the pandemic next year.

And of course, that relies on the full cooperation of the general public. We hope that the civilians can get the right information to help us, or to join with us to prevent and

# International Forum

國際論壇

fight against COVID-19. Sanitary, the word in Chinese, is actually created in Japan. And it was passed on to other countries. So, sanitation has truly been an important concept.

Nobody holds a positive view towards COVID-19, however, I believe that it actually changed a lot of our lifestyles, including the way we learn and the way we work. It is a revolution, so to speak. It is without question the expansion of COVID-19 has caused a lot of divergence in many aspects in many countries. We can use it as a lesson and to create a new society with a new system.

People around the world will be able to learn the lesson from the pandemic. In addition to the government and the medical institutions, every individual needs to work together to overcome the challenge.

I think this is important for everyone, and the world is closely connected. For example, with the close of the border, our manufacturing business, tourism industry in Japan, and the global supply chain will be interrupted. And of course, Japan is seriously affected by the pandemic and the effect may last very long.

We need to prevent further damage from these impacts during the post-pandemic era. We need to share the proper legal system, political system, and open information to build better relationships and trust between countries, especially in cases like this. Especially for this pandemic which could spread around the world, we need to emphasize on that. So far, we haven't found the root cause of the pandemic, and this is something that we have to do to truly identify the cause to create an environment to prevent such damages from happening again.

We need to build a solid relationship with other countries and also protect the supply chain. I think these are all very important issues. So that made me further recognize the importance of ACF. In the future, I truly hope that we will be able to further develop the influence of the ACF.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Great presentation on how the Japanese government fight COVID-19. You mentioned many different mechanisms for central government as well as local governments to fight with COVID-19.

Here, I would like to use this great opportunity to say thank you to Japan. During this June and July, your government sent 3.4 million doses of AZ to Taiwanese people. We would like to show our gratitude for your government and Japanese people. It's a

# International Forum

國際論壇

friendship between Japanese and Taiwanese people. And thank you so much for your presentation. Thank you for sharing.

Our second presenter will be from the Philippines. It will be from the PCL's chairperson Danilo. Would you please begin your presentation? Thank you very much.

Our Philippine representative, are you ready to speak out?

PCL :

Our chairman cannot log in, due to internet connection problems.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Okay so, any representative or delegate?

**Gina Gulanes PEREZ (PCL Advocacy Director) :**

I would like to invite Maybelyn Dela Cruz-Fernandez, as one of the organizers of the Asian Councils Forum, to speak on behalf of our National Chairman Danilo Dayanghirang.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Yes, welcome Maybelyn, please.

**Maybelyn Dela Cruz FERNADEZ (ACF Founder) :**

Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm very grateful for this opportunity to be part of the Asian Councils Forum again. And as I understand with Gina, the Philippines will be hosting the 6th Asian Councils Forum, and we just want to show our gratitude to everyone for their support of the ACF. I hope that in a few minutes, chairman of the PCL, chairman Danilo will be able to log in. In the meantime, as Mr. Chairman's request, we can do other presentations first, while we wait for him, because he is doing the presentation.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Thank you, Maybelyn. Thank you so much for your ideas. Our third presentation will be from Indonesia, from our distinguished councilman Dr. Edwin.

# International Forum

國際論壇

Would you like to present on the Indonesian case?

**Dr. H.Edwin Senjaya, SE., MM. (Vice Chairman of Bandung Local City Council, INDONESIA) :**

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity. And I would like to say thank you to all the participants and the speakers today.

I'm Edwin Senjaya, vice chairman of Bandung City Council. I'm going to speak about the family and community as well as food security. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many impacts to many aspects of the world as well as unprecedented global challenges. The community restrictions are enforced because of the virus. It means that people do more activity at home. Because it changes the community we have here, they now become more individualist. Another impact of the pandemic is panic buying. They feel very scared, so they stock up on this daily necessities at home, as far as possible before the epidemic starts, to store supplies. The panic buying brings out the ignorance of others. The demand for food in the pandemic is also an issue. Many people want to make sure they have food to fill their needs. Especially food and medicine is demanded. Another negative impact of this pandemic is the high rate of unemployment because the companies and enterprises are forced to stop their businesses. But there is a good side to the COVID-19 outbreak. The epidemic has raised the awareness of the vulnerability of the community to the disease. At the same time, people can use a healthy diet, regular exercise, better sleep, and more regular health checks.

We overcome food problems in a program. It's called Buruan Sae. Buruan Sae is a program to overcome food problems. We have 8 activities of Buruan Sae. First, vegetables gardening. Second, fruit gardening. Third, medicinal plants gardening. Fourth, fish farming. Fifth, poultry farming. Sixth, organic waste management. Seventh, seeding. And the last one is to process the products of Buruan Sae into high economic value products.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have expanded the Buruan Sae by collaborating with many sectors, including municipal cities, communities, media, national NGOs, as well as the Indonesian National Army Force, and the Indonesian Police. Overall, Buruan Sae does not only support the family needs but also the surrounding communities. For the recovery of our community, we have a family green finger program that can increase our happiness index, strengthen the immune system, and make the spirit happy. In the future, we will not only measure the country's progress by GDP growth, but also GDH, the country's happiness index, and GDW, the well-being

# International Forum

國際論壇

index of the people.

With that, the products of Buruan Sae can be traded widely to raise the community income. Here are the pictures of Buruan Sae activities, where the farm can be used to grow various types of vegetables and fruits to meet daily needs. Here we all thought that Buruan Sae is becoming the solution on providing healthy foods. Food supply chain consumes time on getting healthy products, especially during this pandemic period. Buruan Sae contributes to food security and sustainability in this area.

That is all what I present today. Thank you for your attention. I hope that everything is clear in my presentation. I hope that this can be an inspiration for other cities as an effort to prepare for life after the pandemic. Finally, I hope you're always in a good health. Stay healthy and happy. Terima Kasih. Thank you.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Thank you very much, Dr. Edwin, for your wonderful presentation about the food shortage issue in the pandemic. Particularly, I'm amazed with your presentation on the food supplies issues.

Apparently, this is a wonderful activity. You bring that activity from the community-base up, and it provide wonderful fruit for the community. It is a wonderful program.

Particularly, our honorable Vice-chairman mentioned that you are joining the ACF for the first time. Your presentation is very much welcomed. Hopefully, in the near future, you will continue to join this big family of ACF.

Definitely, I agree with you totally that COVID-19 is a crisis, but it is also a reflection that we should do something else. We have to do something innovative to bring our food and education to our communities. In your case, you were talking about the food supply issue. It's quite critical in the world, in Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, and in many other countries. So, thank you for wonderful sharing in this regard. Thank you very much.

Thank you. And please consider joining our ACF, please. Thank you very much.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our next presenter is from Tuvalu. Because Tuvalu is very far away, we have a little bit of difficulty with the communication. So, we have a pre-recorded video. And although Tuvalu is quite far away, this is its third time joining the ACF forums. Let's welcome Chief Kofe. Thank you.

# International Forum

國際論壇

## **Siliga Atiake KOFE (Chief of House of Clan, Funafuti, TUVALU) :**

Tuvalu is lucky so far for it is yet to catch the Covid-19 virus. In what follows I will be sharing the government plans in the event of the virus reaching Tuvalu. I will also mention the plan for after the epidemic has landed and infection running havoc in the local economy.

First, the country has been declared a no-entry zone, banning entry of people except Tuvalu citizens who have been vaccinated against the Corona virus within the last 3 days prior to departure and show negative test results. On arrival travellers are quarantined for 14 days in special facilities provided by government and treatment provided if necessary. Commercial flights have been grounded except approved special flights that bring in medical supplies and returning citizens. Imported-food and fossil fuel are brought in by ships that are granted special passage by government to bring essential cargoes to the only port of entry on the capital island. The control and monitoring of the logistics (transport and movement of goods and people) is the responsibility of the National Covid-19 Taskforce that was appointed at the start of the epidemic in 2020. So far, the taskforce appears to be achieving its protection objective.

One defence against the infectious disease is self-isolation. Some 600 people on their own volition have moved to the outer islands at government expense. On the capital the local government has built new villages on the islands around the Funafuti lagoon hence decentralising the population from the main settlement. The fragile food supply that relies on transport and overseas suppliers has prompted locals to invest in local food gardening. On the outer islands local food gardening has always been there and the Covid-19 event has impelled them to produce for sale and improve the nutrition and food security in the country.

Covid-19 affects the way people live; it is becoming the 'new normal' and people are learning to adjust and live with the pandemic. Cost of living has increased because of the restriction on transport to Tuvalu and the extra effort required to produce more local food as substitute for imported food. The rising cost effect reverberates through-out the local economy making services more expensive.

In future the lockdown terms will be relaxed and open to non-citizen. Quarantine time can be reduced to three days, meals, accommodation and treatment will be provided by the government. Isolation facility will be provided for low symptom cases and high symptom cases will be hospitalised.

The Health ministry has indicated that there is a lot to be done to bring the country up to speed for Covid-19 that will eventually come. For instance foreign staffs leaving at



# International Forum

國際論壇

the end of their contracts left vacancies unfilled and necessitated recycling local staff from elsewhere in Tuvalu creating shortages there and reducing the overall quality of medical service in the country. Some of the outer islands are considering lockdown for their island when Covid-19 is officially in the country.

Thank you.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Thank you, Chief Kofe, for sharing your situation regarding COVID-19. I'm so pleased to hear that Tuvalu is like a heaven during COVID-19. Your country is segregated from other parts of the world. You have very little infection issues. And only three days for quarantine. That's wonderful. You mentioned local economy and food supplies. I think it's a great point to think about how we produce food. To produce food locally, from the grassroot community. I think that is wonderful. Thank you for your presentation.

Yes, I'm curious about our Philippines delegates. Is chair Danilo around here? Not yet? Okay that's fine. We will continue our presentations. I would like to ask our delegate from Malaysia. Li Kai-lun councilman. Distinguished Li Kai-lun councilman, are you here?

**Khai-loon LEE (李凱倫議員 / Representative for Penang Statw Legislative Assembly, Councilor of Machang Bubuk, MALAYSIA) :**

Yes, yes, I'm here.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Thank you so much for being with us. Are you ready for your presentation?

**Khai-loon LEE (李凱倫議員 / Representative for Penang Statw Legislative Assembly, Councilor of Machang Bubuk, MALAYSIA) :**

Yes. I am ready for my presentation. I'm from Penang, the northern part of the peninsula of Malaysia. First of all, I would like to thank everyone for inviting me. Actually, I'm going to speak in Mandarin. I think we have the translation as well.

First of all, I would like to thank Honorary Chairman Lin and Chairman Wang, Minister Chen, and Professor Chiou. Thank you for the keynotes, and great presentations.

I'm attending the 5th Asian Councils Forum on behalf of Penang State Legislative

# International Forum

## 國際論壇

Assembly, and our speaker, Mr. Law Choo Kiang (劉子健). It's a great honor. I'm very happy to see all of you, especially to have this opportunity to exchange with our friends in Taiwan.

I just heard Minister Chen's presentation and Professor Chiou's keynote. I think I learned a lot. Especially when it comes to the pandemic prevention experience of Taiwan, and different measures and responses in different aspects. I think this is a great learning opportunity for us in Malaysia and in Penang. And we understand that this pandemic has impacted Malaysia severely. Early last year, we started okay in terms of pandemic prevention. We immediately implemented lockdown policy. And we pretty much stopped all economic activities. Everyone had to stay home, so early on the pandemic was well under control, and it didn't affect us as much.

But, early on this year, we have had daily confirmed cases. The record was 25,000 confirmed cases in one day, and we hadn't started vaccination yet. We didn't even have a vaccination plan. And all of a sudden, the outbreak almost went out of control and the mortality rate was quite high. Some people even passed away on their ways to the hospital. They weren't even hospitalized. It was quite serious, but now the pandemic is a little bit under control. Right now, the confirmed cases every day, compared to Taiwan, is still quite high, because in Taiwan it's almost zero every day. But right now, in Malaysia, the number is about 4,000 to 5,000 confirmed cases every day.

So, I think the pandemic is still quite serious in Malaysia. However, the fortunate thing is that vaccination rate is rising. Out of the entire population, the adult vaccination rate is 97.2%. As for teenagers age 12-17, our national vaccination percentage is over 86.6%. Also, the central government has prepared 2.6 million booster doses as the third dose. So, the vaccination rate has increased and is accelerating.

But as you all may know, now we have the variant virus, Omicron, which basically stopped our plan of opening the border by the beginning of next year to welcome tourists from all over the world to come to Malaysia.

Because under such circumstances, as we do not know the effectiveness of the vaccine on Omicron, we will try to make adjustments facing the uncertainties. This is something that is still in progress. And Professor Chiou said it well, that the vaccine is like an umbrella, it cannot really eliminate the virus.

If we expect the pandemic to be fully eliminated in 2022 or enter the endemic stage, I think we still cannot be sure that Malaysia can enter the endemic period. So, this is the biggest challenge that we are facing right now. As we all know, it is impossible for us to go back to the stage of full lockdown, stopping all the economic activities. That is

# International Forum

國際論壇

not possible. We still need to ensure high vaccination rate to reduce the infection. And also provide booster dose for the first line medical professionals.

And ACF actually plays a very important role. We need to be prepared for the post-pandemic era. In Penang, the councilors office mentioned earlier about local councilors of the opposition party and what roles they play during the pandemic. In Penang, we have lots of so called service centers of the councilors. They have become the call center. We will call those who are in home quarantine to check on their needs. We can provide some services and consultations. Domestic violence also increased because everybody stayed at home. So, we have a first support point. Those who are victims of domestic violence can call these service center of local councilors. We will also connect with local police and hospitals, in the hope of providing necessary support and assistance to the victims.

And information technology plays a very important role during the pandemic. So, these service centers also act as hubs to provide information to local residents. These are the 3 roles that we play during the pandemic.

I think this is really a critical time for all. It's actually a test for the politicians on how we're able to solve the problems for those who are forced to stay home. And how can the government provide the umbrella and support the needs of the civil society. I think that is what we have to do at this moment. And we really need to identify the problem and solve the problem. So, with that, I would like to conclude my presentation. Thank you very much.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

You mentioned that local councilors can act as call centers and provide sufficient help to household issues, even domestic violence. And it can also serve as great digital communication centers which dispatch information about COVID-19 and news updates. And also, we can tell that in Malaysia, you tried to adjust your national policy all the time when you face new variants. Thank you for your sharing.

And your city, Penang, is famous for your cultural and food diversity. Great food provided by your city. Thank you very much.

Next, how about Maybelyn, would you like to present and say something?

**Maybelyn Dela Cruz FERNADEZ (ACF Founder / Representatives for Philippine Councilors League, PHILIPPINES) :**

# International Forum

## 國際論壇

Thank you for the opportunity to present. We see the pandemic has presented unprecedented challenge for humankind in the past three years. You know, affecting us in a multitude of ways. This pandemic has also changed the way humanitarian communities assist. With the local and central humanitarian is being the forefront of the response.

You know, the interagency task force of the Philippine Emergency Infectious Disease was convened in 2021. On March 7 last year, when we found the first confirmed case and confirmed the spread of the epidemic, the Philippines entered a state of emergency. Our community quarantine was initially put in place for the national capital region, starting on March 2020. Since March 25, the entire city has been closed and quarantined for a long time. The initial quarantine was extended up to April 3rd last year.

Several quarantine protocols were implemented on the evaluation to adjust the measures. These restrictions in mobility between quarantine areas, we called them ECQ, or Enhanced Community Quarantine. It's a stricter quarantine that implemented in the movement of residents. Public transportation is suspended, and only economic activities related to the essentials and community services are allowed. There's heightened presence of uniformed personnel to enforce quarantine protocols, so I think for the first two months into the pandemic, we had ECQ for the entire country. Modified enhanced community quarantine was also implemented as a transition phase between a ECQ and a GCQ (General Community Quarantine).

Strict home quarantine and the suspension of public transportation are still in place. But the mobility restrictions are relaxed for work-related activities. Government officers operate under a skeleton workforce. Manufacturing facilities are allowed to operate with up to 50% of the workforce. And transportation services were only allowed for essential goods and services.

In general community quarantine though, individual without health risk are not allowed to move within quarantine zones. Public transportation can operate at reduced total capacity of passengers. And finally, we have what we called modified general community quarantine. And this is first the transition between GCQ and the new one. All persons are allowed outside the premises with public health standard. Local government units have issued a series of measures to carry out epidemic prevention work.

Right now, we are very grateful. But with the emergence of Omicron, we only have a couple cases of that variant in the country that we have detected. But we have been affected by other variants. In a few weeks, we had a surge of cases in the country.

# International Forum

國際論壇

But probably, because of the massive vaccination program of the country now, we have seen very few cases coming in from the reports. And for that we are very grateful. Millions of doses are now being inoculated to our countrymen and a lot of Filipinos now are more willing to take the vaccine. Now, probably because it seems that the vaccines are working and more Filipinos would want to get vaccines. We are seeing less of cases rising and I think that is a good thing for our country.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Thank you, Maybelyn, for your wonderful presentation.

**Maybelyn Dela Cruz FERNADEZ (ACF Founder / Representatives for Philippine Councilors League, PHILIPPINES) :**

Chairman, my sincere apology. Let me really explain something. I'm supposed to be just a participant in this forum. But I'm very grateful to be talking to everyone today.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

I still remember, you, Chairperson Lin, and Japanese Chair Matsuda, held the first annual meeting in 2016 in Manila together. I have vivid memory about your hospitality. You had a wonderful team working with the delegates of the ACF. Thank you so much.

I'm looking forward to next year's in the Philippines.

**Maybelyn Dela Cruz FERNADEZ (ACF Founder / Representatives for Philippine Councilors League, PHILIPPINES) :**

Yes, we're looking forward to next year's ACF in the Philippines. Actually, we have a member of the city councilors, Gina Perez, who is also presenting at the TCF and would like to add something.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

All right, please. Thank you. Does anyone wants to say something?

**Gina Gulanes PEREZ (PCL Advocacy Director, PHILIPPINES) :**

Yes, I would like to recognize our chief chapter president and also invite Councilor Lalaine Marcos to share with us. Her experiences on the city level as well as the pandemic response headed by one of the most popular mayors in the country, Mayor Richard Gomez. Councilor Lalaine, you may share with us your experiences in Ormoc

# International Forum

國際論壇

City.

**Lalaine Marcos (Ormoc City Councilor, PHILIPPINES) :**

Hello, it's my honor to be able to participate here. I was a participant, not a speaker. Anyway, I come from Ormoc city, it's a little dot in the north of the Philippines, in a corner of an island called Leyte. We have 240,000 residents in Ormoc. And right now, it's been five days that we have zero COVID cases. So we are very proud of our achievement here. Even as we know there could be a rise again, because we have already our restrictions. Ormoc city, headed by Mayor Richard Gomez, who is a very intelligent and visionary leader, closed down its border last March 15, two days earlier than the Philippines President declared.

Our residents can only come home, but they must quarantine themselves. We were lucky enough that we had a facility as an evacuation housing project that was not yet turned over to the BOT user, which we used as our quarantine facility. So, for more than a year, people were going home from outside of our city, would be required to do a 14-day quarantine. It was the government who told us we had to quarantine. Right now, statistics showed that we have had 3,000 positive cases all throughout the two years, almost two years of the pandemic. But slowly it tapered down to 0 last week.

We are hoping to maintain it. We already reached more than 90% vaccination. We are the only city in our part of the Philippines that bought our own vaccines. Other areas just rely on the donations, but we, Ormoc City, decided to buy our vaccines so that we can be sure that we will be able to calculate our populations. We have prepared the third boosters ready. We have already calculated our 12-17 and as for our 5-11 kids, we are hopeful that we will be able to open face-to-face classes fairly early.

This is as far as the Ormoc experience is concerned. We had a problem with how to feed our people when they stopped working during the lockdowns. What we did was give them two sacks of rice each household, which could be able to feed them for six months, and encourage them to be self-sufficient and to barter, such as vegetables. And our distributing kits encouraging people who want vegetables. And those who went home to big cities, or migrate to Ormoc City, because they had problems on where to get the food, and we were able to welcome them briefly.

That is all. As of this time, we have zero COVID, and we hope to keep it that way though we know it would be impossible. Thank you very much.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

# International Forum

## 國際論壇

Thank you very much, Ms. Marcos, for your nice presentations. As you mentioned, many local governments always take initiatives, providing sufficient vaccines and sufficient food for the local needs. That is important for local government and the local council people. That's great.

As our speaker Professor Chiou mentioned, in Taiwan, we did the same thing. Our local government, our mayors, took initiative protecting local people. And you showed us a successful example of how a local government of Philippines protected its people by providing rice and sufficient food for local families. Thank you very much for the presentation. Wonderful case. Thank you.

Is there a presentation from Pakistan? I want to check with you, if you are available, you're more than welcome to present. If not, I would like to present our Chairperson Sunny-wei WANG from Taiwan. Last but not least, let's welcome President Wang.

**Sunny-wei WANG (王威元 / President of Taiwan Councilors Forum, Councilor of New Taipei City, TAIWAN) :**

Thank you, our friends from different city councils from different countries. Originally, we had a ten-minute presentation prepared to share with you on the responses of New Taipei City government for the pandemic. I'll just go over the background. During the pandemic, I think New Taipei City was the most severely hit. Under the leadership of Mayor You-yi Hou, we adjusted on a rolling basis. We have deployment in advance, and we also incorporated the police system into the pandemic prevention. Because of time limitation, I'll just be brief with my presentation.

Unlike other cities, I think our main objective is to sever the chain of infection. Because we believe that we need to first contain the spread to lessen the burden of our medical service and our medical professionals. COVID-19 is a highly infectious virus. It's one person infecting 8 to 10 other people, and it's spreading at a very rapid speed. That is why our main objective is to cut the chain of infection.

And of course, the investigation, screening, testing, are very important. We need to understand and investigate the footprints of the patients. And of course, the police were a great help. Mayor Hou was once the director-general of National Police Agency. So, it's almost like we're monitoring those wanted criminals when we're investigating the footprints of our patients. I want to make sure where they've been to and whom they've come into contact with. We identify all these contacts. We test all these contacts to see if they turn out negative or positive.

And if they have negative results, we ask them to quarantine for a brief period and then

# International Forum

## 國際論壇

we will test them again. Usually, when you come into contact or interacted with a confirmed case, you are required to be quarantined for 14 days. You'll be tested on the very first day, and again on the 14th day. If you get negative results both times, you will be released. In other words, through this method, we effectively identified all the potential source of infection. That's step 1.

And step 2, we utilized scientific analysis to examine the footprints of the confirmed cases and identify hotspots. We established testing stations at these hotspots. Then, we asked all the neighboring residents to come to be tested. It's not compulsory testing but recommended testing, and the highest number was 1,000 per day. 1,000 people came for testing. And of course, if the results turned out negative, those people were released. But if the rapid test results came out positive, then we would investigate their footprints, who they came into contact with, and their family members.

So, we took a very proactive mindset trying to identify all the sources of infection, and to eliminate all the cases. And that was why we were able to achieve 0 confirmed cases 108 days after the outbreak. And of course, once you've achieved elimination of confirmed cases, you will have to control the border and strengthen the monitoring. This is just a brief presentation.

Early on this afternoon, we had the central government and our fellow municipal government officials sharing with us some of our preventive measures. And even though right now in Taiwan we are only in level 1 alert, we still ask our citizens to wear masks at all times, to sanitize their hands, to observe social distancing rules, and to sanitize our environment. We will continue to implement these measures. Hopefully, the pandemic will be over as soon as possible so we can return to normal life, thank you.

**Li-khan CHEN (陳立剛 / Professor of Dept. of Political Science, Soochow University) :**

Thank you very much, Chairman Wang Wei-yuan, for your wonderful presentation. As all our distinguished presenters mentioned, local governments and local councils play the key role in terms of change during COVID-19. From what you've shared, we have seen so many new ways of life: new economy, new food supplies. Personally, I do believe that local government and local community will be an innovative way to cope with COVID-19. We thank you for all the wonderful presentations and sharing from all the communities and from all the local governments. Thank you all for sharing. Thank you for your participation. This is the end of the international forums. Thank you very much.



# International Forum

國際論壇