Taiwan’s Exclusion From the World Health Assembly

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<https://www.state.gov/taiwans-exclusion-from-the-world-health-assembly/>

The United States condemns Taiwan’s exclusion from the World Health Assembly. At a time when the world continues to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, we need multilateral institutions to deliver on their stated missions and to serve the interests of all member states, not to play politics while lives are at stake.

No one disputes that Taiwan has mounted one of the world’s most successful efforts to contain the pandemic to date, despite its close proximity to the original outbreak in Wuhan, China. This should not be a surprise. Transparent, vibrant, and innovative democracies like Taiwan always respond faster and more effectively to pandemics than do authoritarian regimes.

WHO’s Director-General Tedros had every legal power and precedent to include Taiwan in WHA’s proceedings. Yet, he instead chose not to invite Taiwan under pressure from the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The Director-General’s lack of independence deprives the Assembly of Taiwan’s renowned scientific expertise on pandemic disease, and further damages the WHO’s credibility and effectiveness at a time when the world needs it the most.

The PRC’s spiteful action to silence Taiwan exposes the emptiness of its claims to want transparency and international cooperation to fight the pandemic, and makes the difference between China and Taiwan ever more stark. Taiwan is a model world citizen, while the PRC continues to withhold vital information about the virus and its origins, deny access to their scientists and relevant facilities, censor discussion of the pandemic within China and on Chinese social media properties, and casts blame widely and recklessly.