

## Chinese mainland urges businesses to go to Taiwan to discuss investment

XIAMEN, May 17 (Xinhua) -- The Chinese mainland would urge businesses to visit Taiwan to discuss investment plans amid efforts to help the island cope with the global economic downturn, the mainland's Taiwan affairs chief Wang Yi said Sunday.

The mainland would soon organize key businesses of different industries, including electronics, communications, bio-medicine, marine transport, public construction, commercial distribution, textile, machinery and auto manufacturing, to visit Taiwan to discuss investment plans, he said.

Meanwhile, the mainland would encourage Taiwan businesses to expand their markets on the mainland and take part in the mainland's construction of infrastructure and key projects, said Wang, director of the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office.

The mainland would recommend qualified Taiwan businesses to take part in the mainland's construction of infrastructure and key projects, he said. "We will soon put forth specific methods on how to determine qualified businesses."

Wang was speaking at a centerpiece conference of the Straits Forum that opened in the southeastern city of Xiamen on Saturday.

The mainland would expand the buying of Taiwan products, encourage more mainland tourists to visit Taiwan, and promote the plan to set up a cross-Straits economic cooperation mechanism, he said.

The mainland would allow Taiwan law firms to open branches in Fuzhou and Xiamen cities, and beef up agricultural cooperation across the Straits, the official said.

"The global financial crisis is affecting both sides of the Straits, and we are concerned about the Taiwan economy and the Taiwan compatriots' difficulties," Wang said. "We are ready to give all we can to help them out."

In explaining the measures, Wang said the mainland would organize two trips to Taiwan this year to buy fruits, vegetable, aquatic products and processed farm products, and three more trips to buy industrial consumer goods, daily necessities, food and Taiwan craft products.

In promoting cross-Straits tourism, the mainland would try to encourage 600,000 people to visit Taiwan this year, he said.

The mainland was willing to sign an economic cooperation agreement and start consultations as soon as possible, Wang said.

In opening more professional qualification tests to Taiwanese, the mainland planned to add 11 new spheres to the list including statistics, auditing, social workers, land registration agents, environment assessment engineers and company law consultants.

To beef up agricultural cooperation, the mainland would approve the establishment of four more incubators for Taiwan farmers, bringing the total number to 15.

"We believe that so long as the compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Straits make joint efforts to support each other, we will surely surmount the current difficulties and open up a new prospect of common prosperity for both sides," Wang said.

Analysts spoke highly of the new measures.

"Against the backdrop of the global economic downturn, the mainland shows, by putting forth very concrete measures, its sincerity of jointly surmounting the current difficulties with Taiwan," said Tang Yonghong, of the Taiwan Research Institute with the Xiamen University.

Take for instance, Taiwan businesses will be encouraged to expand their markets on the mainland and take part in the mainland's construction of infrastructure and key projects. "That means, like mainland businesses, Taiwan businesses will also be able to share the benefits brought about by the mainland's 4-trillion-yuan economic stimulus package," Tang said.

On the other hand, the new measures can benefit Taiwan economy indirectly, he said.

"Generally speaking, those Taiwan businesses that are capable of taking part in the mainland's construction of key projects have parent companies in Taiwan, so they can repay their parent companies timely once they make profits on the mainland, thus helping Taiwan economy recover soon," he said.

Huang Fucai, a professor from Xiamen University's School of Management, said the 600,000 mainland tourists were expected to spend about 420 million U.S. dollars on the island.

"Their spending will eventually balloon into nearly 1.5 billion U.S. dollars of total tourist revenue to the Taiwan economy by economic calculation," Huang said. "Besides, the tourists will create more than 100,000 jobs on the island."

The Ministry of Commerce and the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office jointly issued a circular Sunday on the procedures which mainland businesses should follow if they intend to invest in Taiwan.

The authorities encouraged mainland enterprises to invest in Taiwan regarding respective advantages and industrial characters to bring about mutual benefits for the both sides.

The circular said that mainland enterprises should carefully understand and obey Taiwan's laws and regulations, respect local traditions and customs, and pay attention to environmental protection.

It mandates that mainland businesses should not jeopardize national security and unification for their investment in Taiwan.

According to the document, the Commerce Ministry will be responsible for reviewing mainland enterprises' applications for investing in Taiwan and it will issue qualified companies special licenses which are necessary for them to go through other procedures to the island.

The Commerce Ministry and the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office will jointly supervise all the process of mainland businesses' investment in Taiwan and have the right to punish violators.