



## TO OUR READERS

In this age of global and economic growth, the acquisition of knowledge is an important key for the success of a nation. The development of a society's human resources is closely linked to the quality and high standards of its system of education.

Taiwan is facing many global challenges as well as domestic challenges including a falling birth rate, an aging society, repercussions from the Internet era, a widening societal economic gap, global competition, the empowerment of local citizen groups, climate change, concerns over the sustainability of our environment, and shifting student and campus changes. We must address these concerns in a timely manner, especially when it comes to strengthening Taiwan's competitiveness through education.

Knowing that 'it takes a decade to grow a tree and one hundred years to properly educate people', the Ministry of Education takes its responsibility seriously. A series of educational reforms have been successfully implemented, including updated web-based teaching facilities to allow students to receive and utilize technology in their studies and learning endeavors; an innovative and compulsory education plan to help accommodate the declining birth rates and in support of smaller class sizes; and maximum teaching, learning and proficiency-building opportunities for teachers and students alike.

On a global level, it is our vision to develop Taiwan as a leading hub in education for Asian nations. Currently, we are successfully recruiting international students to enroll in degree programs in Taiwan, as well as to pursue their Mandarin Chinese language studies at one of our many qualified language institutes.

The fruits of these efforts are already evident. The International Institute for Management Development raised Taiwan's world ranking by two places to number six in its 2011 edition of *The World Competitive Yearbook*, and according to a recent study conducted by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, there are seven Taiwan universities listed among the top 500 universities in the world.

The Ministry of Education continues to pursue effective means for the cultivation of human talent and resources. It realizes that doing so will support the future development of the nation and the advancement of education.

The recently published *Centennial Education Report* focused on four goals: preparing and providing citizens to become internationally competent; innovation; a sense of justice; and sustainability. These are key items in the Ministry's new educational development blueprint, entitled "*A Golden Decade of Education in Taiwan*", along with ten development strategies and 36 action plans for addressing current domestic challenges.

Among the 36 action plans, the launch of a 12-year Compulsory Educational Plan has captured national attention. To assist in bridging the societal economic gap, an all-inclusive education network was set up to provide tuition subsidies for those in need. Five-year-old children will be able to attend tuition-free kindergarten programs, and senior/vocational high school students will have tuition-free education.

Caring for the educational rights of groups with special needs and considerations, life-long learning opportunities for the aging, and instituting teacher evaluations continue to be important objectives for the MOE. Additionally, the Ministry hopes that by gradually cultivating outstanding teaching talent, the overall quality of school learning environments will show continual improvement.

The Ministry of Education is pleased to be a part of the nation's "Golden Decade." Recognizing the necessity to offer Taiwan's children as many opportunities as possible will allow them to face their futures with success, well-developed 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies and confidence. These children will become another Taiwan miracle.

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