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For Immediate Release

### **AmCham Taipei Issues its 2017 Taiwan White Paper**

In its 2017 *Taiwan White Paper* released today, the American Chamber of Commerce in Taipei commended the Taiwan government for improving regulatory coherence by adopting a 60-day notice and comment period and for taking steps to promote innovative industries. At the same time, the *White Paper* raised concerns about the impact of recent amendments to the Labor Standards Law and the lack of a clear roadmap to ensure future energy sufficiency. The document also encouraged the United States and Taiwan to enter into negotiations for a bilateral trade agreement to bolster ties for the benefit of both economies.

AmCham Taipei has published the *Taiwan White Paper* annually since 1996 to provide the Taiwan government with constructive suggestions on how strengthen the business climate. Reviewing the 80 issues from the 2016 White Paper, the Chamber found that although none had been totally resolved, significant progress has occurred on eight issues. Included in this latest edition are 83 sector-specific recommendations from 24 AmCham committees or industry groups. Of these, 12 were designated as Priority Issues for Special Attention in the belief that it would be feasible to resolve them in the coming months.

Briefing the media at a press conference, AmCham Taipei Chairman Albert Chang said the first year of the Tsai Ing-wen administration had been a “mixed bag” of successes and disappointments. He praised the government’s adoption of the 60-day period for stakeholders to respond to prospective regulatory changes by government agencies as a major achievement that should lead to more thoroughly considered, better quality regulations. He noted that the National Development Council has been tasked with helping train government agencies on how to respond to stakeholder comments effectively.

In the *White Paper* Overview section, the Chamber also welcomed the administration’s “5+2 Innovative Industries” program as creating opportunities to boost the economy. But it cautioned that innovation is spawned less by building facilities and other “hardware” than by the “software” of developing a cultural environment that fosters creative approaches to problem-solving.

AmCham Taipei asked the government to rethink the recent changes in the labor law affecting working hours, overtime pay, and other working conditions. By treating professionals and other knowledge workers the same as factory employees, the paper says, the rules will stifle initiative, undermining the government’s objective of promoting an innovation-based economy.

On the energy front, the Chamber notes the challenge facing Taiwan if it intends to eliminate nuclear power by 2025 while also drastically reducing carbon emissions. The high-tech industries on which Taiwan depends for its prosperity require a



sufficient, reliable, and cost-effective energy supply. AmCham Taipei called on the government to share a clear and realistic energy plan with the public, giving industry confidence that Taiwan's competitiveness will not be impaired.

In terms of relations with the United States, the Chamber urged Taiwan to seek a mutually advantageous bilateral trade agreement. Although the Trump administration has been opposed to multilateral agreements, it has left the door open to bilateral pacts, and Taiwan would be a highly suitable negotiating partner as long as it is willing to follow international standards and practices in its trade policies. In the Messages to Washington section of the White Paper, AmCham made a similar argument, encouraging the U.S. government to "deepen the economic relationship with Taiwan by negotiating a bilateral trade agreement."

### **About AmCham Taipei**

Founded in 1951, the American Chamber of Commerce in Taipei (AmCham Taipei) is a non-profit, non-partisan business organization dedicated to promoting the interests of international business in Taiwan. With around 1000 members from more than 500 companies and 26 committees representing various industry interests, AmCham speaks with collective authority on business issues as they affect its member companies operating in Taiwan.

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