

Taiwan Vice President Lai Ching-te
During CALD' s 30th Anniversary

Honorable Chairman Kiko Pangilinan (ki-ko pan-gee-nen) , Vice President Henrik (Hen-reek) Back Mortensen (Mor-ten-sen), Director Moritz Kleine-Brockhoff (Mor-tiz K-leen Brock-hoof) and all friends from the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats. Good morning! I hope you are enjoying your stay in Taiwan. We are honored to host CALD' s 30th anniversary. As like-minded liberal and democratic parties, we have a lot to discuss, and even more to share.

Let me begin by saying that democracy is the greatest unifying force around the world today. Our belief that people are born free, human rights must be respected, and peace is in the common interest, transcends all boundaries. It provides a shared sense of purpose amidst turbulent times.

And this is exactly what CALD has been promoting for the past 30 years. When the council held its first planning meeting in Taipei on October 15, 1993, there was recognition that Asia needed to do more to support our fledgling democracies. Our founders understood that freedom and democracy were not just Western concepts, but universal values that should be supported around the world.

The Democratic Progressive Party is proud to have been part of that founding group. After the DPP was established in 1986, we fought for the lifting of Martial Law, free elections, and freedom of expression within our society. Like CALD, we see freedom and democracy as being part of our DNA. And together, we have succeeded in becoming beacons for the values we champion.

This year' s theme is 'The Future of Democracy in Asia,' a particularly relevant topic as we think about the many challenges in the region. We are faced with the rise of authoritarianism and must respond to increased tensions in the South China Sea and East China Sea. We see not the 'End of History' as Francis Fukuyama had argued, but the beginning of a new era of competition.

Fortunately, as liberal and democratic parties, we do not have to face these challenges alone. This conference proves that we can stand together with purpose and agency. More broadly, we can work together as societies and countries that are bound by shared values and interests. This is our greatest strength and it is also the reason democracies will prevail.

Against a backdrop of growing authoritarian influences around the world, I recently proposed the "Four Pillars for Peace" action plan. I introduced a clear vision of ensuring peace through defense resilience, economic security, international partnerships, and maintaining the cross-strait status quo. I also put forward a new platform for values-based diplomacy, promising to enhance our international engagements through the three core principles of Democracy, Peace, and Prosperity – in other words, D, P, &P, which also happens to be the name of our party. Moreover, Taiwan will present a vision that is centered on human rights and sustainability.

This April, CALD was sanctioned by the PRC for supporting Taiwan. But far from becoming silenced, CALD and its members have remained determined in support of actions that advance democracy, human rights, and the rule of law for all the people of Asia. As a CALD statement said, we will not “shy away in the face of authoritarianism or from those who threaten our freedoms.” We all admire CALD’s courage in the face of adversity. This is not only a testament to the values we share, but also shows the strength of our convictions.

In CALD’s 30-year history, there is much to remember and cherish. From an initial conversation about the values that bring us together, to building an organization that can turn ideas into reality, CALD should be proud of its accomplishments. The DPP was present on the first day and we will continue to stand together every day, far into the future.

This morning, we not only commemorate those past 30 years, but also present a roadmap for the future. This joint statement we are about to sign showcases our enduring commitment to building a more democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Asia. With peace as the lighthouse and democracy as our compass, we will work together to bring a better future for people across this region.

Finally, I hope you all create unforgettable memories of this visit by taking some time to enjoy Taiwan’s diverse culture, beautiful sights, and delicious food. My best wishes for a successful event. Thank you.