

**Text of the Talks between SEF Chairman Chiang Pin-kung
and ARATS Chairman Chen Yunlin**

(Public Version)

November 4, 2008

Chairman Chen, Vice Chairman Zheng, and Representatives of ARATS,
Secretary-General Kao of the SEF, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning. Upon our invitation, Chairman Chen Yunlin has led his delegation to Taiwan to engage with me in this second round of high-level talks between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). Today, I would like to extend to Chairman Chen and his delegation a very warm welcome.

On June 12 of this year, I had a meeting with Chairman Chen in Beijing, where we concluded the *Agreement Signed Between SEF and ARATS Concerning Mainland Tourists Traveling to Taiwan* and the *SEF-ARATS Minutes of Talks on Cross-Strait Charter Flights*, thus penning the prologue to a new stage in cross-strait relations.

During the five months since the first Chiang-Chen talks, cross-strait exchanges have been frequent as usual, and two-way visits have been on the increase. However, such improvements are not entirely satisfactory.

For example, there is still room for more charter flights and mainland tourist visits. Our meeting today offers a golden opportunity for both sides to seriously review the implementation of agreements signed last time. I believe that, based on the existing agreements, we will find a way to meet the expectations of people of both sides, thereby facilitating and deepening bilateral exchanges.

Cross-strait air transportation, shipping links, direct mail services, and food safety comprise the four major issues on our agenda. Thanks to the efforts of SEF and ARATS personnel over the past few months, consensus is within our reach. I look forward to signing these four agreements with Chairman Chen this afternoon, so that we may once again share with the people of both sides a glowing report card. Signing these agreements not only will help to resolve concretely the issue of food safety for which there is widespread concern, but will establish a comprehensive coordination mechanism for resolving problems for both sides, thereby helping to better ensure the safety of our people's lives and property. Further, the signing of the agreements on air and sea transport represents great progress in direct links between the two sides and serves as a milestone in the normalization of cross-strait economic interactions. It will also facilitate bilateral exchanges of people and cargo, including direct mail services.

We will also confirm the agenda for future discussions during today's talks. Issues concerned include jointly cracking down on crime, increasing cooperation on food safety and disease prevention, gradually

promoting agreements on cross-strait financial flows, and signing an agreement on investment protection for Taiwan's businesspeople on the mainland. These are all high-priority issues to be handled in the next stage of negotiations.

The aims of establishing an institutionalized communication channel between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are to "exchange opinions, enhance understanding, increase mutual trust, and promote exchanges."

The resumption of normal contacts and interactions in June of this year is a sign of improving cross-strait relations. It can also serve as the starting point in a move toward active, pragmatic, cooperative, and mutually beneficial relations. This visit of Chairman Chen and his delegation to Taiwan is one instance of the reciprocal exchange of visits and it shows that negotiations are underway on an equal footing. I believe that the normalization of exchanges between our two organizations will help us to resolve matters concerning our peoples' rights and interests appropriately and in a timely fashion. It will also be of great benefit to the long-term stability of cross-strait relations.

In closing, I would like to share my wish that these talks go smoothly and be successful.

Thank you.