Mayor of Taipei Speaks at Tourism Industry Gathering

Mayor Ko Wen-je attended the tourism industry gathering at the Grand Hotel in the evening of May 28. The seminar is co-sponsored by the Tourism Bureau and the Travel Agent Association of the ROC.

During his speech, the mayor pointed out that the city government offered many innovative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Facing the possibility of another pandemic wave in the winter, he warned everyone to be prepared and take precautions early.

Ko stressed that confronting a problem is the first step towards solving it. Up through 2019, Taiwan have received more than 10 million visitors from abroad. However, due to the pandemic, the figures saw a tremendous drop. Taipei alone is the home to 1,486 tour companies, which is roughly one-third of the total in Taiwan. Seeing the detrimental impact of the pandemic, it is important for the city government to take actions. That is why he is here: to listen what people are thinking and exchange thoughts. By knowing what these companies need, the government can then figure out ways to help them.
Regarding the assistance provided by city hall, the mayor explained that there are primarily three aspects: pandemic prevention, relief, and transformation. He cited the policy of setting up pandemic prevention hotels as an example: people returning from abroad have a choice of either having their quarantines at these hotels or going home while their family members stay in the hotels. Through this policy, the city government provides a quarantined individual NT$7,000 for the 14-day stay while the hotel receives business.

In the post-COVID-19 era, Ko believes that the focus should not be stimulus but transformation, since the world will be completely changed. To him, there are two pieces to pandemic prevention – border control and internal control. Taipei City reported 117 COVID-19 cases over the past months, but only 8 cases were contracted locally. This means that border control was too lax in the initial stage, having admitted many people infected with the virus.

As for internal control, he pointed out that no locally contracted case has been reported for nearly 50 days, so as long as those returning from abroad emerge from the quarantine without problem, there will be no need for people to wear face masks in Taiwan. However, since it is impossible for the border lockdown to last indefinitely, we should be prepared for more cases arriving from abroad once traveling resumes.

With the pandemic in Taiwan expected to remain low for the coming months, he remarked that businesses can return to its normal routine and organize promotion activities. However, people should keep in mind that there may be a resurgence in the future and devise plans for risk management beforehand. That is what the city government is working on at this moment.

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