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**Growth of SMEs and railways dominate 9th investment meeting**

Premier Lai Ching-te on Thursday convened the ninth in a series of interministerial meetings aimed at accelerating investment in Taiwan, as part of the government's commitment to remove barriers to investment, attract investors, boost the economy and resolve key problems facing the nation's industrial development. The meeting featured presentations including problems facing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and responsive policy to spur development, key performance indicators for railway construction and maintenance, and the achievements and effectiveness of deregulation.

In discussing responsive policy to solve problems facing SMEs, the premier observed that Taiwan is moving into the digital economy era and must quickly answer the question of how to assist in the transformation and upgrade of SMEs, including enhancing smart technology applications and interdisciplinary innovation to make such companies more innovative and competitive. He directed the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) to provide multilevel guidance and produce an action plan within one month.

With respect to key performance indicators for railway construction and maintenance, Premier Lai said that 38 rail-specific plans are being promoted under the Forward-looking Infrastructure Development Program. Even as the government vigorously encourages construction in the railway sector, consideration must also be given to such issues as the development of home-grown technological capabilities to operate rail networks, as well as the development of the railway industry overall.

In order to advance comprehensive development of the domestic rail industry, the premier charged the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, MOEA and Public

Construction Commission with developing policy solutions in areas including supply and demand in the railway transportation industry, the establishment of standards for railway-related products, and broader participation of domestic firms in railway project bids.

As for the achievements and effectiveness of deregulation, Premier Lai instructed all ministries and agencies to bear in mind the needs of businesses and the public as they carry on with the review of rules and regulatory interpretations that stymie economic development. Where appropriate, the regulatory framework can be relaxed in order to optimize the overall investment environment in Taiwan.