

Chinese president meets top Taiwan official at APEC summit

The Chinese President Hu Jintao had a meeting with top Taiwan official Lien Chan on the sidelines of the annual summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) here, a Taiwan delegate said.

The meeting Saturday lasted 'nearly one hour,' a Taiwan delegate said, but did not give details.

Talks are believed to have focused on cross-Strait trade.

On Friday, Lien pushed for early negotiations with China on the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, saying Taiwan hoped to start formal talks about the deal this year.

So far, Taiwan and China have only been holding informal talks on the proposed agreement to permit the free flow of products, services and capital between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Lien, a former vice-president, was named by President Ma Ying-jeou as his proxy for the informal summit of the 21 APEC leaders in Singapore which kicked off with a lunch Saturday.

Taiwan has been unable to send any of its presidents to the APEC summit since 1993 due to the opposition of China, which regards the island as a renegade province not entitled to attend international events that require statehood.

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