



GREEN TIBET

Annual Newsletter 2007
Environment & Development Desk



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Our Comeback

The first day of February of the leap year 2008, and the first snow fall after a decade! While working on this newsletter in my office at Dharamsala, in this cold dry winter, my colleague noticed some white flakes outside. After a quick gaze through the window, we rushed outside to enjoy nature's wonderful way of blessing us with an amazing scenic sight, which was in a way a kindle to our heart and soul. I could not resist capturing this beautiful food for soul, and rushed home to get my digital camera, well knowing that its production emitted its own share of carbon thereby further accelerating global warming.

As far as I can remember, it has been more than a decade since the last snowfall in Gangkyi — the seat of Central Tibetan Administration. I remember playing with Dharamsala snow back in the late 1990s, when I was a senior secondary student and it has been more than a decade since then. Some people believe it is the climate change and the impact of global warming, whereas others enjoy the warm weather which otherwise would be almost intolerable, like the monsoon in Dharamsala.

Although the region lacks specific scientific studies about global warming and its impact, we cannot deny its possibility. Whatever be the case, winter does consume a lot of energy here in Dharamsala, further contributing to global warming. While the west might argue about reducing carbon emissions through carbon credits and several other measures, people in developing countries such as India are still struggling with surviving the freezing temperatures, more than reducing carbon emissions. And so long as their basic needs remain unfulfilled, India and China ratifying Kyoto seems impossible.

The term "Qinghai-Tibet Plateau" in some of the news reports has been changed to "Tibetan Plateau". Such changes can be seen in square paranthesis []. This is done in order to retain the historical authenticity of Tibet as a nation. Qinghai [Tib: Amdo] is historically a part of Tibet.

Coincidentally, GREEN TIBET — the annual newsletter of the Environment and Development Desk (EDD) also makes its comeback after a decade. Its last issue was seen in 1998. Since then, we were unable to carry on with our newsletter for various unavoidable reasons. We are pleased to be back and keeping the vision of our seniors alive. EDD has a lot of important projects underway which we aspire to succeed in the coming months and years. Although the fact remains that EDD works by monitoring and conducting research on environment and development issues prevalent in Tibet now, we are committed to continue working towards the preservation and conservation of ecology and global environment in general. Any assistance given to us in conducting our research and analysis will be highly appreciated.

We appreciate all kinds of comments, suggestions and feedback on this newsletter in particular and our work in general.

Let's leave this earth as a greener and a safer place for our children and children's children.

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"I feel that it is extremely important that each individual realizes their responsibility for preserving the environment, to make it a part of daily life, create the same attitude in their families and spread it to the community."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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Tibetans say no to Wildlife Products

A press release from the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), New Delhi, reports that hundreds of Tibetans from India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet watched the film "Say No to Wildlife Products" produced by WTI and pledged that they will not use wildlife products and would prevent others from purchasing such products. The gathering was organised at Bodh Gaya in the Indian state of Bihar from 27 December 2006 to 03 January 2007. Tenzin Norsang of WTI who organized the screening said: "The occasion gave an opportunity to present the conservation message of His Holiness the Dalai Lama among the Tibetans". Film, CDs and literature were also distributed among the public. One of the Tibetan participants who came from the Amdo region in Tibet said that Chinese fur traders are collecting fur back from people to whom they had sold it earlier. The traders are hoping that the business would revive soon and they would be able to sell fur at higher prices at a later date.

A Strong Earthquake jolts Tibet

A strong Earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 on Richter scale struck some areas of Ngari in "Tibetan Autonomous Region", reported *Xinhua* news agency on 5th May 2007. The epicenter was 29.7 kms NNE of Lumajangdang Lake. According to the Chinese Seismological Monitoring Network, the Earthquake hit parts of the sparsely populated Ngari region at around 16:51pm local time, causing minor damages. An after shock measuring 5 on the Richter scale was also observed in the Ngari region at 5:11pm on the same day, following several aftershocks within the first 24 hours.

The earthquake shook some of the border areas between Ruthog and Gertse in Ngari. *Xinhua*, the Chinese state media reported that Songshi, Aru villages in Ruthog county and Bare village in Gertse are some of the areas that are worst hit by the quake.

Tourism in Tibet — A Boom or a Curse

According to a news released by *Xinhua* dated 30th November, 2007, the so called "TAR" received 3.72 million tourists within the first 10 months of 2007, which is a 64 percent increase from last year, reported figures released by the Tibet tourism bureau. The development and reform commission of the "TAR" further estimated that the region would receive a record high 4.02 million tourists by the end of 2007. The region's tourism revenue with an amount of 4.4 billion yuan (UK£300m, US\$ 600m, €412m) increased by a record high of 84 percent from the same period last year, cited *Xinhua*.

It further added that Japan remained the biggest source of overseas tourist with 78,000 tourist arrivals within the year followed by United States with 58,000 tourists traveling to Tibet. It was found that Potala Palace in Lhasa received more than one million tourists in 2007.

While the fact remains that Tibet does attract a lot of tourists since recent years, the conservation of the fragile environment and the preservation of its rich cultural heritage is a matter of serious concern. The increasing urbanisation, industrialization and tourism industry badly impacts the ecology of Tibet in various ways. Some eyewitness accounts from Tibet noted the extensive amount of pollution and dumping of wastes as a result of increasing tourism near Terdrom Hot Spring, in Meldro Gongkar County, which for Tibetans is a highly sacred place.

Within merely one year of its operation, a total of 1.5 million people have traveled to Tibet by train, more than half of them were tourists. Whereas another news report by *Xinhua* noted that Tibet is forecasting to receive at least five million tourists in 2008.

Tibetans are not wary of tourism in general, but besides ecological concerns, the question remains 'who will be the beneficiaries, Tibetans or the Chinese?'

Gormo-Lhasa Railway — Another Form of Sugar-Coated Invasion



Gormo-Lhasa railway route

Chinese Troops travel to Tibet using Mountain Railway

Chinese troops travelled on the high-speed railway line Qinghai-Tibet Railway [Tib: Gormo-Lhasa Railway] for the first time since the world's highest railway line was inaugurated 17 months back. The move comes immediately after Chinese troops were reported to have demolished Indian Army posts on its border with Arunachal Pradesh.

The official *Xinhua* news agency quoted an unnamed official of the People Liberation Army as saying that the "railway will become a main option" for transporting troops to Tibet, replacing the air and road routes used since 1950 when Chinese soldiers annexed Tibet.

China has maintained a stony silence over suggestions that one of the purposes of the Tibet railway was to transport troops in larger numbers and at much reduced costs from Mainland China to border regions in Tibet. It also refrained from immediately using the railway for this purpose in order to avoid giving rise to a new controversy. The latest move confirms Beijing's strategic purposes, sources said. *Xinhua* did not mention the number of troops nor the starting point of the troops, who left for Lhasa using the high-altitude railway line. Official agencies claim that 75 percent of the goods moving between Tibet and mainland China are being transported by the new rail link instead of using the traditional road routes.

The rail link, which has cut journey time from more than a week to just two days, has resulted in a high-speed growth of tourism rising 64 percent in the first 10 months of this year as compared to the same time last year. The Tibet train service drew 350,000 foreign tourists in the first 10 months of 2007, which is a 150 percent rise from the same period last year.

The routing of the railway through areas where mineral deposits are located provides clear proof that the railway was never intended by China to benefit Tibetans, but rather to plunder Tibet's natural resources and to lessen China's dependence on mineral imports from overseas. Tibetans have not given their free, prior and informed consent to China's mining activities on the Tibetan Plateau. Until Tibetans are free to determine how their economic resources are utilized, western mining corporations should stay well away from forming partnerships with Chinese companies involved in the ransacking of Tibet.

(Saibal Dasgupta, TNN Dec 1 2007).



The newly built Gormo-Lhasa Railway

China's Railway to plunder Tibet

A report released by *Xinhua* announced that some Chinese government geologists have discovered vast deposits of Copper, Iron, Lead and Zinc along the railway route from Gormo to Lhasa. This news released by the official Chinese News agency further confirms what many Tibetans, Tibetan supporters and environmentalists fear that the railway will be used to extract and plunder Tibet's vast mineral resources.

Qulong copper deposit in Meldrogungkar in "TAR" has a proven reserve of 7.8 m tons of copper which makes it the second largest copper deposit in Tibet and China. As such, this railway route will enable China's mining companies to transport Tibet's vast mineral wealth out of Tibet, while denying the Tibetans any kind of opportunity to profit whatsoever from these resources. Despite being the immediate owners of these resources, Tibetans are neither consulted nor allowed any kind of participatory role to benefit from the extraction of these resources.

Instead, the benefits of these extractions will be used by the booming industries of eastern China, cited *free Tibet campaign* based in London. Matt Whitticase of Free Tibet campaign further adds "Business there are displaying voracious appetite for Tibetan ore and copper. China's mining activities in occupied Tibet amount to daylight robbery." On the other hand, official Chinese statement claims that the railway is intended to and will bring more prosperity and development into Tibet.

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The Inconvenient Truth: Tibet Getting Warmer



Receding glacier in Tibet

Temperatures soaring high in Tibet

Chinese scientists have recently warned that global warming is seriously affecting the fragile ecology of the Tibetan plateau, leading to a faster receding of the Himalayan glaciers. The melting glaciers threaten to unleash massive flooding, followed by severe droughts across South East Asia. China refers to Tibet as "The water tower of China", since the Tibetan plateau is the source of many big rivers in Asia such as Yangtze, Yellow river, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Salween etc.

A report by UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change forecasts that, if the present trends continue, 80 percent of the Himalayan glaciers will be gone in 30 years.

According to some Chinese meteorologists, regions in Eastern Tibet such as Chamdo (Ch: Qamdo) showed a temperature rise of 1.7°C than the previous record set in 1996, whereas Dechen County (Ch: Dengquen) showed an increase of 2.5°C higher than the previous record for the same day in 2001.

According to the Tibetan meteorological bureau Tibetan Plateau is heating up by 0.3°C each decade, which is more than twice the worldwide average.

Xu Xiangde, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences, said in China Daily, "The rising temperature has made us look for answers to a series of questions — how the change will affect the climate in the vicinity, the rest of China, Asia and even the world?"

Another report from *Associated Press* noted that temperatures in Tibet have been up to 5°C (9°F) above average in July 2007. The Tibetan capital Lhasa recorded its highest July temperature in 30 years on 2nd July 2007 with a record high of 29°C, *Xinhua* reported. The spate of the warm weather led to warnings that Tibetan glaciers which are melting at an annual rate of 131 sq km over the past three decades are highly threatened, cited state media *Xinhua*.

Meanwhile, "TAR" experienced its third warmest winter in December 2006 to February 2007 with an average temperature rise of 9°C in some areas such as Nagchu Prefecture. Based on data collected since 1965, Ma Yanxian, spokeswoman and deputy head of regional Meteorological Bureau added that "TAR" reported an average temperature of minus 3°C from the average of minus 4.4°C, showing an increase of 1.4°C between December and February 2007. At the same time, most parts of "TAR" reported a 50 percent decline in rainfall the same period. The warm and arid climate is partly responsible for several forest fires in Chamdo and Nyingtri prefectures. The spokeswoman Ma warned that such unprecedented change in weather pattern is likely to increase the risks of plant diseases and insect pests in summer.

Yellow River drying up in Machu Basin, global Warming, Overdevelopment blamed

Global warming and overdevelopment have decreased the water storage capacity of the Yellow river in Maqu (Tib: Machu) of Gansu province, reported the official *China Daily* newspaper Sep 13, citing local weather authorities. The flow of the country's second-longest river in Maqu has slowed by 64 percent from that of the 1980s, while grassland and wetland areas have shrunk by 45 percent, it cited the Gansu Provincial Meteorological Bureau as saying. The Yellow river originates in the Qinghai province, which neighbours Gansu. Maqu functions as a basin for the river because of its substantial grasslands and wetlands. The report cited experts as saying if the wetlands continue to shrink and water sources dry up, the

ecology of the entire Yellow River Basin could be endangered.

(October 2007, Tibetan Review)

Rising Temperature on Tibet Plateau to have global Impact

Chinese scientists have warned that rising temperatures on the fragile [Tibetan Plateau] could trigger more disasters in China as well as globally as it will hasten melting of glaciers, drying up major rivers like the Yangtze and Bhrmaputra and triggering droughts and desertification. The rising temperatures on the [Tibetan Plateau] also known as the "Roof of the World" will have a rippling effect on climate and environmental changes, Chinese researchers said.

Quoting data collected from the [Tibetan plateau] the scientists said that the region's temperature has risen by up to 0.42°C each decade since 1980s. Xu Xiangde, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences said decades of research on the plateau had found that a change or move in water vapour or clouds above the plateau would create an impact, immediate or remote, on weather conditions in other parts of China, and even the world.

For instance, based on analyses of satellite data, Chinese scientists have traced the cloud clusters that caused the floods in the summer of 1998, the worst in decades in China, back to the strong movement of clouds above the plateau in July that year. One of the worst results of the rising temperature on the plateau could be an ultimate change in the volume of water flowing into the Yangtze, the Yellow, the Bhrmaputra and other rivers that originate in the mountainous region, Xu said adding that the meteorological data from the [Tibetan Plateau] region were not sufficient.

Already, researchers at the China Aero Geophysical Survey and Remote Sensing Centre for Land and Resources have found that the plateau's glaciers have been melting at an average of 131.4 square kilometres a year over the past three decades.

(PTI, Thursday, February 1, 2007)

China's Plan to divert Brahmaputra may spell Doom for Bangladesh

China's plan to construct a dam on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet will lead to a major ecological disaster for Bangladesh within the next few years, experts and environmentalists have warned. According to morphologist Maminul Haque Sarker at the Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), the water flow of the Brahmaputra-Jamuna will decline by one-third if the project is implemented. "Around 15 to 20 small and medium rivers, including Dhaleshwari, Shitalakkha and Balu, will die," he cautioned. China plans to divert 200 billion cubic metres of water annually to the Yellow River (Huang He) by building a dam at Yarlung Tsangpo.

Though Beijing has claimed the project is still at a conceptual stage, confidential sources confirmed that work has already begun with the target to finish it in the next five to seven years, the report said. India has already expressed concern about the scheme, fearing similar effects in its Assam and Arunachal Pradesh states. Experts have said Bangladesh should put pressure on China as the UN convention on Law of Non-Navigation Uses of International Watercourses disallows countries from barring the natural flow of any international river. As the Brahmaputra is an international river, China cannot build dams blocking water flow without prior permission from Bangladesh and India, they said. A group of retired Chinese officials first wrote about the idea to divert the Brahmaputra water in a book titled "Tibet's Water Will Save China" last year.

(News and Analysis, Bombay, May 08, 2007)

With deepest Gratitude

Our desk remains indebted to several people who help us in making our work more productive and efficient. It goes unsaid to thank Mr Gabriel Lafitte for his never-ending guidance and support. We thank him for being our all time consultant. We are also thankful to Mr Nigel Hungerford for sponsoring a desktop computer for our office, which will definitely help to improve the efficiency of our work. Although we cannot name all of you here, but we remain grateful to all our volunteers for sharing their knowledge, expertise and passion towards Tibet's environment. It was great working with you all and we would be glad to have you here again.

Tibetan Rivers the most endangered: World Wildlife Fund

Dharamshala: In March 2007, the global environmental NGO World Wildlife Fund released a report on the ten rivers worldwide in greatest danger. Four of those ten rivers are Tibetan: the Yangtze (Tib: Dri Chu), the Salween (Tib: Ngulchu), the Mekong (Tib: ZaChu) and the Indus (Tib: Sengye Khabab).

Nowhere else on earth is there such a concentrated of endangered rivers, and, as the WWF report says, the threats are many: innumerable plans for hydropower dams, pollution, overfishing, and climate change.

The most dam projects are in China, and those portions of the Mekong and Salween immediately below the Tibetan Plateau, before the Salween flows on into Burma, and the Mekong into Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is keenly awaiting promised responses from China to its urgent request for clarification of China's hydropower dam plans on these rivers, immediately next to the Three Parallel Rivers World Heritage Protected Areas.

(TibetNet, 30 March 2007)

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"Our marvels of science and technology are matched if not outweighed by many current tragedies, including human starvation in some parts of the world, and extinction of other life forms."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Forced Relocation



Tibetans are being moved from houses like this, left, to houses like this, right

100,000 Tibetan Nomads ordered to settle in Towns

Chinese government officials are ordering 100,000 ethnic Tibetans to give up their traditional nomadic habits and settle in towns because their way of life is allegedly threatening the environment. A report from *Xinhua* claims that overgrazing from the Tibetan herders' livestock and the growing number of people living on the grasslands of Qinghai province (known traditionally to Tibetans as Amdo) are endangering the sources of China's great rivers. By the end of this year, 60,000 Tibetans will have been moved into new towns in Qinghai, with the number to grow to 100,000 by 2010, *Xinhua* reports, citing a government document and local environment officials. While *Xinhua* highlighted compensation packages of up to 8,000 yuan (UK£738; US\$1,060; €1,060) a year for families, it acknowledged that not all Tibetans were happy with having to give up the lifestyles their families have known for centuries. While the Tibetans are being moved into towns, the *Xinhua* report did not mention Chinese government efforts to create huge industrial towns along the Yellow River, which environmentalists have warned are also a major threat.

A *Reuters* news reported from Beijing on January 17, 2008, that another 52,000 Tibetan herders will be forced to move to permanent housing this year.

(AFP, 02 October 2007)

China's Relocation of rural Tibetans

An hour's drive outside Lhasa is the village of Caibalang [Tsabarang]. Some people already lived here, along the main road, but others have recently been re-housed from more remote areas. It is a place the Chinese government is keen to show off to visiting journalists. On one side of the road stand spacious new two-storey homes, built with the help of government grants and preferential bank loans. On the other side of the street, surrounded by muddy puddles, are a clutch of one-storey stone hovels, where animals and people share living space. When I looked inside one of these old homes, it was dark and dirty. The only light came from a TV being watched by two children sat on the edge of a bed. A goat was tethered to a piece of furniture on the opposite side of the room.

The message is clear: China is transforming the lives and living conditions, for at least these poor villagers. A Chinese official Sun Baoxiang explains that there have been no case of imposed relocation, but foreign journalists have found it hard to believe it. In June, US-based *Human Rights Watch* urged China to stop moving herders until the project's effects have been fully assessed and critics say the relocation policy is destroying their traditional way of life.

Lacking basic skills, many resettled people have difficulty finding anything other than temporary or menial work, *Human Rights Watch* says. Despite the complaints, the sheer scale of the building work taking place along the Lhasa-Shigatse road suggests China is not going to halt the project.

A Chinese-style development is taking place whether Tibetans like it or not.

(BBC News, Michael Bristow, 13 August 2007)

Resettlement of Nomads — A Crisis in the Making

With various policies such as fencing of pasturelands and resettlement of nomads, China is destroying the traditional Tibetan lifestyle. Besides, the wishes of the common people are hardly considered when undertaking such kind of policies by the Chinese authorities. The Chinese government's policy of resettling the nomads and fencing their pastures greatly undermines the traditional Tibetan pastoral nomadism, which has been the primary and most suitable land use pattern for centuries. While the state increasingly blames the nomads for rangeland degradation and coerces them to vacate their land altogether, the land thus cleared are either used for

the mining of natural resources or for urbanisation and huge developmental projects, which hardly benefits the immediate owners of the land and its resources.

This clearly depicts the top-down authoritative policies of the Chinese government. The relocation of nomads with their fixed addresses in turn helps the Chinese government in managing nomadic population.

Such a kind of imposed relocation forces the nomads to give up their lands and herds, thereby pushing them further into poverty. The new fabricated life completely contradicts the sustainable eco-friendly life they have been living for generations. Since the local Tibetan people lack basic skills and hardly have any knowledge of living a life other than the one they inherited from their grandparents, it becomes harder for them to live a new life, to which they are completely unaware of. Michael Bristow of BBC notes that this transition to a more urban lifestyle is extremely difficult for most nomads. The relocation in turn compels these nomads to sell their herds to the nearest Chinese slaughterhouses which leave them with very limited resources for future survival. This leads to furthermore displacement of Tibetans towards big cities such as Lhasa, while leaving their families behind leading to broken and shattered families.



Tibetans are housed in featureless blocks such as these, which are either located on the side of roads or in newly created urban areas (Photo source: Michael Bristow, BBC)

Forced Relocations tighten China's Grip on Tibet

In a sweeping campaign that recalls the socialist engineering of an earlier era, the Chinese government has relocated some 250,000 Tibetans — nearly one-tenth of the population — from scattered rural hamlets to new “socialist villages”, ordering them to build new housing largely at their own expense and without their consent.

The government calls the year-old project the “comfortable housing program”. Its stated aim is to present a more modern face for the ancient region that China has controlled since 1950.

It claims that the new housing on main roads, sometimes only a mile from previous homes, will enable small farmers and herders to have access to schools and jobs, as well as better health care and hygiene. But the broader aim seems to be remaking Tibet — a region with its own culture, language and religious traditions — in order to have firmer political control over its population. It comes as China prepares for an influx of millions of tourists in the run-up to next year's Summer Olympic Games.

It's pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into road-building and development projects in Tibet, boosting the economy, maintaining a large military presence and keeping close tabs on the citizenry through a vast security apparatus of cameras and informants on urban streets and in the monasteries. Some Tibetans, including farmers interviewed in the village of Zengshol [Tib: Tsashol], say, they are happy to be in better quarters than their primitive, ancestral homes of mud brick. In other villages, Chinese escorts prevented a visiting reporter from speaking with residents.

Other than a state media account that proclaimed that “beaming smiles” were fixed on the faces of farmers and herders as they built and moved into new housing in what it called “socialist villages”, the Chinese news media have given almost no coverage to the forced relocation.

Foreign reporters, under tight strictures that largely prevent them from traveling to Tibet except on once-a-year trips under Foreign Ministry guidance, risk being removed from the region if they openly interview people. This report was prepared while undertaking tourism in Tibet.

The first critical account of the remaking of the Tibetan landscape came from New York-based *Human Rights Watch*. It quoted Tibetans who had fled the country, trekking across the Himalayan mountains into Nepal.

On several trips outside Lhasa last month, a McClatchy reporter traversed 800 miles of roads and witnessed the forced transformation of the countryside. In the new settlements, cookie-cutter houses, striking in their uniformity, lined the roads at regular intervals. The settlements varied in size but were mostly towns, larger than the abandoned villages. The red flag of China flew atop every house. In Zengshol [Tib: Tsashol], the faces weren't exactly beaming, but the farmers were reluctant to voice complaints.

Some experts say the relocations have lifted up the impoverished peasantry and could bring prosperity.

“It's created a building boom,” said Melvyn C. Goldstein, a social anthropologist and expert on Tibet at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. “I think it's phenomenally successful, more than I would've believed.”

Human Rights Watch's witnesses told a different story. Peasants must take out loans of several thousand dollars to pay for the houses, which cost an average of \$ 6,000, even though annual rural incomes hover around \$ 320 in the deeply impoverished region.

“None of those interviewed reported being given the right to challenge or refuse participation in the campaign,” the advocacy group said.

(Tim Johnson, This article first appeared in McClatchy Newspapers <http://www.kentucky.com>)

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Highlights

- **Green Group warns China of glacial Retreat Threat:** According to a May 30 report by *Reuters*, accelerated glacial melting in large parts of Tibet could choke off water sources vital for large parts of China. A report released by the Greenpeace activists stated that the global warming in the Tibetan plateau is speeding the retreat of glaciers, stoking evaporation of glacial and snow run-off, and leaving dwindling rivers dangerously clogged with silt. The environmental group cited *Aone Forecast* that 80 percent of the glacial area in Tibet and surrounding parts could disappear by 2035.
 - **Biggest hydroelectric Power Station starts Preparation:** *China Tibet Information Center* dated November 4, 2007 cited that China has declared the start of the building of the Nyingtri Tiger Mouth Hydroelectric Power Station, a key project of the 11th five year plan. The project due to be completed in 2010 with a spending of 161 million US \$ biggest will have the biggest capacity in "TAR".
 - **Global Warming causes Jump in Tibet's Crane Population:** Global warming has led to a rapid rise in Tibet's population of rare black-necked cranes, Chinese state media reports. But in a twist, *Xinhua* news agency said higher temperatures could eventually cause the demise of the already endangered species. This winter, researchers have counted 6,300 birds, roughly twice as many as in the early 1990s when observers questioned its survival, *Xinhua* reported. One crucial factor contributing to their recovery may be warming conditions in Tibet. But over the long term, climate change could lead to reduced water in Tibet and less wetland areas suitable for nesting waterfowl, the agency said, quoting unnamed black-necked crane experts. (AFP)
 - **China will tap Copper Reserves in eastern Tibet:** As China's demand for copper soars, it is preparing to tap reserves in a remote area of Tibet previously considered inaccessible to develop. Deposits in the Tibet Autonomous Region ["TAR"], close to the Himalayas, contain more than one-tenth of China's reserves of the metal, a crucial ingredient in the country's development and industrialization. (*Wall Street Journal*)
 - **Antelope slowly rebounding, Expedition finds:** A rare Tibetan antelope that has been extensively poached for its prized wool is slowly rebounding, experts report. An expedition team reported that population of the antelope rose from an estimated tally of 75,000 in the mid 1990s to 100,000 as per the latest census. "The large poaching gangs of 1990s, which at times arrested with 600 or more hides of these animals, have largely ceased to exist." (*National Geographic News*)
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- "The environment is important not only for this generation but also for the future generations. If we exploit the environment in extreme ways, even though we may get some money or benefit from it now, in the long run we ourselves will suffer and the future generations will suffer. So, this is not merely a moral question but also a question of our own survival."
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama*

Shethongmon Mining (Ch: Xietongmon)

Two researchers from the Environment and Development Desk (EDD) attended a round table discussion with the representatives of *Continental Minerals Corporation of Canada*¹ which is currently operating in the Shethongmon copper-gold deposit located in "TAR". *TibetInfoNet* organized this meeting on 27th April 2007 in London, UK. Following is an excerpt from the report filed by them after the conclusion of the two-day round table meeting.

The researchers from EDD found that the mining companies *Continental Minerals* and its Chinese state-owned major equity partner *Jinchuan Nonferrous Metals Corporation* do not comply with the *Guidelines for International Development Projects and Sustainable Development in Tibet*² proposed by the EDD. These guidelines, framed in accordance with the environmental protection and sustainable development practices across the world, express the will of the Tibetan people as a whole. They establish general principles and specific practices of development suited to the human needs of the Tibetan people and their environment.

Keeping in mind the tremendous amount of environmental services provided by the natural ecology of the Tibetan plateau, it becomes indispensable to save the environment of this region, which forms the lifeline of several downstream nations. The guidelines provide a clear guidance to all investors, corporations and companies in order to make sure that their projects genuinely benefit and become acceptable to the Tibetan people. Our [EDD] response to this project, is based entirely on these guidelines, and we expect all concerned people mentioned above to comply with these guidelines, which could serve as the basis for a mining code governing this project in all aspects.

According to our [EDD] research study, this project fails to comply with the *Guidelines* provided by us [EDD] for the following reasons:

1. It is on a scale that is too large to be beneficial locally to the Tibetan people.
2. The location is only less than a kilometer from the Yarlung Tsangpo River, which is the great waterway not only of Tibet, but also of downstream nations such as Bangladesh and India. As a matter of fact, Bangladesh already faces an arsenic crisis in its water. If the highly toxic wastes produced by this mine during 40 years of mining, or after mining ceases, should ever seep into the Yarlung Tsangpo, the lives of a hundred million people downstream will be at risk.
3. Mining depletes the heritage of Tibet, with no acknowledgement that all Tibetans, other than some local people, are the losers. There is not even a resources depletion tax.
4. Never before has mining on such a scale happened in Tibet. There is nothing inevitable about a mine that increases China's copper production by little more than one percent, but impacts negatively on an area close to one of Tibet's most historic towns, namely Shigatse. The large number of mines in Tibet, on a much smaller scale, invariably caused destruction, and provided

1. Continental Minerals Corporation, <http://www.hdgold.com/kmk/Home.asp>

2. For a complete version of the *Guidelines*, please contact our office for a free copy, or visit <http://www.tibetgov.net/en/> for a free download.

opportunities for an uncontrolled influx of Chinese immigrant workers into Tibet, which marginalises the Tibetan people in their own land.

5. Local communities in the areas affected by mining have had no opportunity to seek and obtain independent expert advice on short and long term consequences of mining. There has been no satisfactory program of education, in close cooperation with local communities, establishing a local learning community able to consider carefully the many complexities of mining technologies and techniques. Only after a full process of action research run by local people it is possible to contemplate such a project.
6. It depletes precious Tibetan resources for the profit of distant Chinese state-owned partners and a Canadian company, with only modest royalties provided at provincial level and inadequate compensation locally.

The above points, among many others, are only a preliminary listing of our Tibetan concerns. We hope that the companies (*Continental* and *Jinchuan*) can show their good faith by not proceeding with obtaining mining license until all the above matters have been resolved, in accordance with the *Guidelines for International Development Projects and Sustainable Development in Tibet*.

Economic Game outplays environmental Norms

Despite all the concerns mentioned above, in January 2008, Continental's Shethongmon Project (Ch: Xietongmen) received two more approvals for its mining license application from the State government, which includes Environmental Impact Assessment approved by the State Environment Protection Agency and Water and Conservation Plan approved by the Ministry of Water Resources³.

Tibetan people — both inside and outside Tibet — remains skeptical of the Shethongmon Project and will continue to share their opposition to the project as long as the project disregards the well being and interest of the Tibetan people and violates the *Guidelines for International Development Projects and Sustainable Development in Tibet*. As a matter of fact, despite all kinds of discrepancies, projects such as these pose great challenges for the local Tibetan and its environment. There is a strong need to balance the desire for economic opportunities and an equitable share in Tibet's development and to preserve the integrity of their local social fabric and cultural identity.

The bottom line is that there should be a respectful handling of Tibetan environment and its cultural sensitivities. With villages such as Tsurgung and Dongkar deeply impacted by the mining project, a more direct grass root involvement of the local Tibetan population at all decision-making levels and a development model that provides direct and measurable benefits to Tibetans ahead of economic migrants is essential.

3. Continental Xietongmen Project Receives Two More Important Approvals Environmental Impact Assessment And Conservation Plan. Jan 9, 2008.
<http://www.hdgold.com/kmk/NewsReleases.asp?ReportID=280228& Type=News-Releases& Title=Continental>



EDD Publications

TIBET — A HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Environment and Development Desk of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration released a 'Report on the Environment and Development Issues of Tibet' on 10 December 2007, in New Delhi. This is the third comprehensive report on a number of environment and development issues in Tibet ranging from grassland degradation, damming waters and mining to urbanization and forced relocation. The report provides a detailed picture of China's destructive developmental policies in Tibet.

SOKCHAK-KUN-LA-JHAMTSE-II — A Documentary on Wildlife Protection in Tibetan

The Environment and Development Desk of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration released its second part of the documentary on the protection of wildlife and importance of the abandonment of animal products on February 1, 2008.

This documentary contains the bold initiatives taken by the Tibetan people in Tibet in the wake of His Holiness's appeal and the subsequent campaigns led by many animal lovers internationally.

For a free copy of any of the publications, please contact us at the address mentioned on the last page.

HIS HOLINESS THE XIV DALAI LAMA ON ENVIRONMENT — Collected Statements

This is the fourth edition of the collection of statements and speeches made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on environmental protection on various occasions from 1986 through 2006. It also includes the statement made by His Holiness during the 2006 Kalachakra at Amravati, India on the protection of wildlife.

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET — A Crucial Issue

A revised and a second edition of the crucial issue in Tibet was also released by the EDD. Its first edition was published in 2003, following which there has been a number of new developmental policies in Tibet that are threatening the fragile ecology of Tibet. This edition has tried to incorporate and highlight all such issues.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET (In Tibetan)

A Tibetan version of the *Guidelines for International Development Projects and Sustainable Development* in Tibet was published in February 2008. The guidelines provide a clear guidance to all investors, corporations and companies in order to make sure that their projects genuinely benefit and become acceptable to the Tibetan people. A PDF version of the guidelines is available on <http://www.tibetgov.net/en/> and can be downloaded for free.



Environment and Development Desk

Central Tibetan Administration established the Environment Desk in March 1990, which later evolved into the present Environment and Development Desk. EDD operates under the Department of Information and International Relation, Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamsala. The primary goal of the desk is to monitor Chinese policies and practices related to environment and development in occupied-Tibet. Environment and Development Desk works in close coordination with various Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations all over the world, media, experts and advocates on environment to increase international pressure on China to halt environmental destructions in Tibet, which is undermining the long-term sustainability of Tibet's fragile ecology. The desk helps to increase global awareness on environment and development situations in Tibet, and campaign against the environmental degradation in Tibet as a result of China's developmental policies in Tibet. It also conducts research and publishes educational materials. The desk also imparts environmental education trainings, workshops and seminars to Tibetans in exile.

EDD's sphere of activities are mainly focused on Tibet, and its main goals are:

- To monitor and research on environment and development issues inside Tibet.
- To disseminate information and carry out selective advocacy on promoting sustainable development inside Tibet.
- To create awareness and educate public on Tibet's environmental issues in the world in general and the exiled Tibetan community in particular.

EDD Updates

Year 2007 remained another hectic year for the Environment and Development Desk, with lots of projects and campaigns finished successfully, it also saw some new faces whereas we bade good bye to some really dedicated and dear staff members and volunteers alike.

While Mr Tenzin Tsultrim left for his family reunion in the United States of America, Ms Dhondup Dolma went to pursue higher studies on Fulbright program to USA. Their contribution is immense and our desk is indebted to their scholarly works and wisdom.

We sincerely wish them the very best in life and at the same time welcome two new staff members who folded up their arms and spirit to take up yet another daunting journey towards the preservation of the unique and diverse ecosystem of Tibet in particular and preserving global ecology in general.

Mr Tenpa Chonjor has a wide experience of working at various capacities in a number of not-for-profit organizations and has done lot of community services in various Tibetan settlements. He has masters in Economics and Environmental studies. He is voluntarily committed to our desk.

Ms Dolma Yangzom worked as a middle school science teacher in TCV Gopalpur before she left to USA on Fulbright program. She did masters in International Environmental Policy from Monterey Institute of International Studies, California.

Upcoming Projects

1. A documentary movie on the impact of Climate change in Tibet
2. A report on the impact of Climate change in Tibet
3. A report on Gormo-Lhasa railway since its operation
4. An environmental awareness workshop for high school students
5. Annual newsletter

How You can help Tibet through eco-friendly Actions

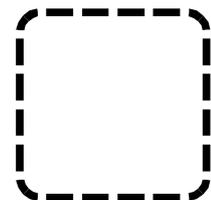
- Write letters to your parliaments informing them about the real situation in Tibet, expressing concern over Tibet's environment under China's colonial rule and its detrimental effect on the situation of your country.
- Write letters to the nearest Chinese Embassy asking them to stop ecocide in Tibet.
- Establish a Tibet Support Group in your community.
- Organize workshops, conferences, video & slide shows and seminars on the environment of Tibet.
- Participate in community meetings on environment and raise the issue of Tibet in such forum.
- Contribute pictures and footage on Tibet's environment and development activities to the Environment and Development Desk.
- Impress upon your government to provide scholarship for environmental research on Tibet and other environmental projects.
- Tell your friends about the situation in Tibet. Email them our Website address <http://www.tibetgov.net/en/> and bookmark our home page.
- If you are too busy, you can let your financial contributions work for Tibet.

Video Footage and Photos needed

We would appreciate all kind of contributions of relevant video footages and photos for the documentary movie on 'The Impact of Climate Change in Tibet' especially from people who have visited Tibet in recent years. Please contact us at our address mentioned below.

To,

PRINTED MATTER



If undelivered, please return to:

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Central Tibetan Administration
Dharamsala
(H.P.) India, 176215

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