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# GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET

## I. OVERVIEW

These guidelines are addressed to donors, lenders and investors who are working in Tibet or might consider becoming involved in Tibet in the future. Whether the motive for working in Tibetan areas is to make grants, lend capital or invest in commercially profitable enterprises, all international interventions come under the scope of these guidelines.

The guidelines articulate the needs of the Tibetan people for a future in which they can maintain their culture and spiritual traditions; fulfil basic human needs with access to services that facilitate a healthy and contented human life; and actively participate in the wider world. These guidelines are intended to ensure that investing agencies and corporations do not further harm the interests of Tibetans and can empower them.

The current resumption of direct contact between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the People's Republic of China (PRC) is encouraging, and it is hoped that this will lead to negotiations in order to resolve the question of Tibet in the best interests of the Tibetans and Chinese. In the meantime, the Central Tibetan Administration believes that it is vitally important for development agencies, NGOs and corporations that intend to become involved in Tibet to understand how their activities may bring benefit or harm to Tibetans in today's complex situation. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure informed decision-making.

Development in Tibet is welcome and much-needed; and Tibet should not be off-limits or beyond the reach of the global community of development and environment organisations. However, development is only productive if it benefits Tibetans themselves. Projects will be opposed by Tibetans if, in their opinion, such undertakings would harm Tibetans, their land or their best interests. We firmly oppose any development projects or activities that promote or result in:

- Violence
- Environmental destruction
- Social exclusion and economic marginalisation of Tibetans
- Direct or indirect population transfer of non-Tibetans to Tibet
- Violations of basic human rights, including involuntary displacement, confinement and eviction
- These guidelines apply equally to development projects in Tibetan communities in India, where they can be, and are, put into practice. They are already a basis for practical action

These guidelines apply to the whole of Tibet, which can be taken geographically as the entire plateau area, or administratively as all townships, counties, prefectures and regions designated by the PRC as belonging to the Tibetan nationality.

## II. RATIONALE

Based on all available facts, including the official Chinese statistics, UNDP, Asian Development Bank and World Bank reports, findings of non-governmental organisations working inside Tibet, Chinese economists and other researchers, it is evident that there is an acute need for a shift in the basic approach towards the development of Tibet. Beijing's approach has led to chronic dependence on subsidies, referred to as "blood transfusion economy" by some Chinese economists. Its focus on urbanisation and infrastructure, plus skills transfer through settling the Tibetan Plateau with skilled immigrant personnel, has not really helped to improve the life of the majority of Tibetans but has increased their marginalisation. Nor has there been a transfer of skills to Tibetans; Tibet still continues to rely on outside aid – both capital and labour.

In the words of a development professional who has worked in the Tibetan region for the past two decades:

Tibet's rapid employment and income growth has been primarily in the modern urban sector, and has been driven by a dynamic, even cut throat private sector in which Han and Hui Muslim populations have been dominant. This urban-oriented growth has contributed to rapidly increasing income disparity between urban and rural areas, and between Han and Tibetan populations (Arthur Holcombe, Testimony to the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 10 June 2002).

We propose the replacement of the single development framework of the past 50 years, which has relied on the industrialisation of Tibet to create general economic growth.

Half a century of imposed industrialisation and urbanisation has not been an effective solution to all the human needs in Tibet. The assumption that industrialisation generates economic growth and benefits everyone, including the poor and excluded, has proven factually wrong. Even where this policy has worked in mainland China, it has failed in Tibet. Senior Chinese economists now frankly acknowledge this. Present realities in Tibet – inequality, marginalisation, deprivation, exclusion and low human development – cannot be blamed on the Tibetans themselves, as if they are inherently ignorant and backward.

More than five decades of attempted industrialisation has made materialism an end in itself. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has pointed out the limitations of this approach:

It has been my firm belief that in order to solve human problems in all their dimensions we must be able to combine and harmonise external material progress with inner mental development. Material progress is certainly highly necessary and is a good thing, as it is of benefit to mankind. I see nothing wrong with material progress provided man takes precedence over progress. Man must be placed above materialism, and we must realise the true value of human beings. Materialism should serve man and not man serve material progress (14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, *Spirit of Tibet: Vision for Human Liberation*, p123).

The Tibetan Plateau is a huge land mass, equivalent in area to Western Europe. A single, top-down strategy allocated by central planners can never substitute the intimate knowledge that Tibetans have of their land and how to render it habitable in sustainable and productive ways. Tibetans traditionally made use of the entire plateau, even the most arid regions, not just clinging to river valleys

and towns. This unique pattern of extensive land use should become the basis for all development work, strengthening the existing knowledge base of social capital that has been accumulated by Tibetans over many centuries of sustainable land use.

It is time for a new approach that is based directly on human needs. The human needs approach is direct, observable, locally-based and not reliant on mammoth investment, grandiose visions or ideological convictions. Furthermore, this approach is sensitive to actual circumstances and has its roots in reality. It is driven by community needs and expectations, offering maximum participation at all stages of development project work.

Development agencies have the opportunity to play a positive and proactive role in facilitating the Tibetans' move towards a decent human life. By fostering local Tibetan initiatives and enterprises, international agencies can help Tibetan communities to become more self-reliant and better able to finance their own growth, as well as build their own schools and health clinics. In this way, the implementation of these guidelines would empower Tibetan people locally, and contribute on a local level to the overall goal of achieving genuine autonomy.

### III. FUTURE TIBET – A VISION

As neighbours, the Tibetan and Chinese peoples have interacted, traded and influenced each other for centuries. Relations were sometimes good, sometimes conflictual. Good relations between the two peoples are necessary and can be mutually beneficial. In reality, for the major part of our long history we have been mutually supportive. In the future also, if they achieve genuine self-rule or autonomy, the Tibetans will nurture cordial relations with the Chinese so that the two peoples can co-exist in a spirit of mutual support and fraternity. This is the vision of His Holiness the XIV<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's Middle Way policy – a very humane concept that transcends political considerations.

In the Five Point Peace Plan, His Holiness has proposed Tibet as a Zone of Ahimsa (a Hindi term meaning peace and non-violence), where the entire Tibetan Plateau would be demilitarised and transformed into the world's largest natural park or biosphere. His Holiness has stressed the adoption of a policy of sustainable development whereby natural resources would be directed towards the active promotion of peace and environmental protection. Organisations dedicated to the furtherance of peace and the protection of all forms of life would find a hospitable home in Tibet.

The following two quotes by His Holiness would sum up the broad vision for a Future Tibet:

Today, more than ever before, life must be characterised by a sense of universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.

...The success or failure of humanity in the future depends primarily upon the will and determination of the present generation. If we ourselves do not utilise our faculties of will and human intelligence, no one else can guarantee our future and that of the next generation...

Hence, we believe in the vision of Tibet as:

A zone of peace, based on the principles of non violence, compassion and protection of the natural environment, deriving its inspiration from the Buddhist principles of compassion, justice and equality, where Tibetans, especially those living in Tibet, bear the main responsibility in shaping Tibet's future. Future Tibet will strive for balance and harmony-both a balance between human and human, and between human and the environment-realising the fact that everything is interconnected. This vision incorporates an attitude of sharing, harmony and co-operation between the people, instead of competition (HH Dalai Lama).

In regard to development in Future Tibet, we would avoid the two extremes of capitalism and socialism. Since both systems are equally unsuitable for the well-being of human society in general, and for the betterment of Tibetan society in particular, Tibet will formulate a unique economic system to suit its own needs. Although there is no appropriate existing model of an economic system which could be adopted by Tibet in the future, the nearest existing model is the "Gross National Happiness" concept already in practice in Bhutan.

Impermanence and the innate worthlessness of wealth – the fact that wealth and material progress are for the people and not vice-versa – coupled with "needs" being distinguished from "wants", will form the central point of the future economy of Tibet. Hence, Tibet's future economic system will be based on the values that are outlined in the following section, which presents the underlying principles of the guidelines.

#### IV. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

These Guidelines for Development Inside Tibet are based on the following principles and values, which are grounded in a worldview that has been developed in Tibet over the thousands of years of human use of the Tibetan

Plateau and coexistence with all nature. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's statement on universal responsibility is a fundamental principle that underlies the guidelines.

There are two types of happiness and suffering, mental and physical, and of the two, I believe that mental suffering and happiness are the more acute. Hence, I stress the training of the mind to endure suffering and attain a more lasting state of happiness. However, I also have a more concrete idea of happiness: a combination of inner peace, economic development, and, above all, world peace. To achieve such goals I feel it is necessary to develop a sense of universal responsibility, a deep concern for all, irrespective of creed, colour, sex or nationality (14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, *Spirit of Tibet: Universal Heritage*, p259).

#### A. Non-violence

By 'an act of violence', we mean offending any living being, including oneself, directly or indirectly, due to hatred, greed or ignorance. No form of violence is justified for any purpose whether in defence of nation, institutions, belief or self. Non-violence is the essential means of understanding truth. It is not a passive state of harmlessness, cowardice or absence of violence but rather an active restraint of violence and an expression of love, wisdom and compassion, of doing good even to the enemy or evil doer, where inculcation of compassion is key to non-violent actions.

To Tibetans, non-violence is the basic tenet to be practised in all its forms in order to promote peace and harmony within and without. Tibetan culture has an especially positive role to play in determining the future development of Tibet. Age-old local knowledge and skills provide a formidable foundation for rural development.

#### B. Environmental safeguards

It is a moral requirement and a practical necessity for us to re-learn how to live sustainably as a part of nature, rather than acting as consumers and destroyers of nature. Materialism does not have self-limits, and natural resources are finite. The tolerance margins or limits of nature must therefore be respected and conserved at all costs, with at least the same vigilance that we would use to guard our own personal resources. In that sense, this principle is based on frugality rather than efficiency, as it not only induces efficiency but also highlights the limits of the efficiency policy. In the past 50 years, growth-oriented development activities have exposed the environment to unnatural degradation which has impacted all forms of life on the plateau. This principle also insists on

harmonious co-existence with nature, in which we humans play a healthy and supportive role in restoring imbalances.

Any forms of activity that are environmentally unsafe or have the potential to harm the biosphere are not to be encouraged under any programmes. Rather, projects should help to restore the degraded environment, so that it gets as close to its original pristine condition as possible. In doing so, we can ensure that the future will be as healthy as possible in terms of access to Tibet's natural capital and the benefits we can accrue from it.

### C. Sustainability

The principle of sustainability is a vehicle for asserting our deep concern over the encroaching consumerist behaviour of our lives, which we will not be able to sustain in the future. On the contrary, we are aware that we must contribute towards the conservation of finite resources so that future generations may also have equal access to these valuable assets. For this to be realised, it is imperative that the concurrent developmental activities are sustainable. Therefore, the principle of sustainability takes both long-term intergenerational justice and short-term activity levels into consideration.

The current consumerist trend increases our dependence on external factors over which we have very little control. In practice, we would like to see development that draws largely on Tibetan resources and knowledge to fulfil the basic needs of the people to live a contented life. Only development of this nature can be sustainable and long-lasting. Hence, at the macro level, the principle of sustainability calls for frugality in the use of the nation's natural resources. This frugality must sustain the nondeclining utility of the biophysical ecosystem for generations to come, as we may need to rely on the renewable part of the resources in the future.

The principal criterion for measuring the sustainability of any project is its ability to benefit the impoverished and marginalised sections of society (poverty factor). In doing so, it should also take into account the benefits and participation of the majority in its design (scale factor). In order to have real benefit from and ownership of the projects, it is important that they are simple and manageable at the grassroots level. The project design should therefore be based on local and traditional knowledge (appropriate technology factor).

### D. Participatory and needs-based development

The usurpation and co-option of public powers by groups or individuals inevitably becomes the self-development of vested interests, rather than addressing the true interests of the people. To ensure that development projects are sensitive and accountable to the needs of the

people, empowerment of the grassroots level populace through genuine participation is essential. Participatory development would naturally safeguard the needs of the local people.

Given the present circumstances, we do understand that it is difficult to undertake needs assessments and impact studies with the open and honest involvement of the local Tibetans. So, when designing projects, it is crucial that the development agencies find skilful and innovative ways to assess the needs and involve the local populace, and at the same time avoid the clear danger of putting people at risk of admonishment by the local authorities. The institutionalisation of procedures and democratic governance at the grassroots level are both essential steps toward genuine self-governance.

### V. CROSSCUTTING PRINCIPLES

All development projects in Tibet should incorporate the following crosscutting guidelines:

- a. Involve Tibetan stakeholders from the identification of a project to formulation through the implementation cycle, by applying participatory tools and techniques such as participatory assessment (PRA) to ensure accountability and ownership.
- b. Prioritize small-scale developments that suit the region and populace rather than capital-intensive developments. Larger operations must adopt measures to ensure sustainability and prevent being a drain on the limited resources of the Tibetan plateau.
- c. Foster self-reliance, and build local project management teams centred on community based organisations (CBOs), through local capacity building.
- d. Conduct feasibility studies, risk management, and environmental impact assessments to identify ways in which in Tibetans stakeholders will benefit from the presence of your establishment
- e. Rely on traditional local knowledge and wisdom, including resource management and survival techniques.
- f. Respect and promote the Tibetans' culture, traditions, knowledge and wisdom about their own landscape and risk management.
- g. Be subject to ongoing on-site monitoring by a third-party, independent agency to ensure that the intended stakeholders benefit, and that benefits and opportunities are not usurped by non-Tibetan stakeholders.

- h. Use Tibetan as the working language of the project.
- i. Neither provide incentives nor in any way facilitate direct or indirect migration and settlement of non-Tibetans in Tibetan regions.
- j. Neither provide incentives nor help facilitate the transfer of land and natural resources to non-Tibetans.

These guidelines are, by their nature, a checklist to enable development agencies to test the suitability of their plans for working in Tibetan communities on Tibetan territory. But checklists also compartmentalise the issues into neat categories; the reality may involve an interdependence of many factors. The Tibetan worldview and modern synthesis of appropriate development practices encourages a respectful, thoughtful approach to development that embraces many factors, rather than a narrow, technical compliance with shallow and literal considerations.

## VI. PRIORITIES

### A. Poverty alleviation

1. Poverty alleviation is a top priority in Tibet. Any project addressing this must look at the multi-dimensional nature of poverty – including health, education status, and forms of exclusion by gender and ethnicity – as well as monetary indicators. Vulnerable groups include those stricken by poverty due to gender, age, geographic isolation, exclusion and disability. They might need specific interventions, particularly in the form of direct transfers based on a policy of guaranteed minimum income support.
2. On the whole, poverty alleviation projects should shift away from charity and emergency relief, and move towards the entitlement to income support for the destitute and absolutely poor. In order that guaranteed income support does not lead to chronic dependence, it should be limited to the destitute. Development agencies can implement pilot projects to demonstrate the feasibility of this approach.
3. Development projects should benefit the poorest, most deprived and excluded citizens who, in Tibet, are overwhelmingly rural. Projects should directly identify and reach this

segment of the population, rather than relying on general growth in the hope of also lifting the incomes and opportunities of the poor.

4. Social capital, traditional knowledge, customary practices of sustainable organic agriculture, and sustainable and productive rangeland management should all be studied, identified, acknowledged and incorporated into development project designs. These are examples of traditional Tibetan solutions to utilising the plateau productively that can serve as the basis for development work.
5. Projects based on the exploitation of Tibetan resources for the benefit of distant, heavy industry cannot be realistically presented as poverty alleviation for Tibetans, or environmental remediation, even if such projects generate local employment and invest in repairing damage caused by the project in minor ways.

### B. Stimulating rural economy and off-farm employment

1. Tibetan carpets, handicrafts, traditional medicines and other Tibetan products – apart from having considerable demand worldwide – have great potential for redressing current inequalities, because they are largely rural-based. To realise this potential, the traditional products need to be enhanced by transferring modern skills in design, packaging, protection of intellectual property, marketing and financing to the Tibetans. This requires considerable investment in training.
2. A real opportunity for redressing the urban-rural divide is to promote the processing of raw, rural commodities by the producers themselves, thereby adding value and increasing their profits. This may involve training farmers and nomads in technologies that are compatible with their way of life, and in the establishment and operation of co-operatives, micro-finance pooling, and planning and operating enterprises.
3. In the long-term, it may be productive to identify the comparative advantages that Tibet has in producing goods that can find distant and highly profitable markets. Comparative advantage has potential in the longer term to

create national and international markets for what Tibet does best, especially in the non-violent production of wool and dairy products. Yoghurt, cheese and wool are in high demand among urban consumers in China's major cities. It may be that products made in Tibet can find a market in the cities, but if Tibetans are to benefit, great care will be needed to train producers in quality control, certification, supply chain logistics, marketing and business planning.

### C. Rural infrastructure

1. Infrastructure development must incorporate appropriate technologies based on local needs.
2. Priority areas of infrastructure development in rural Tibet include local market access roads, clean domestic water supply, irrigation, electricity and communication.
3. Infrastructure development should promote food security, including land improvement projects to enhance food production (such as terracing, shelterbelt tree planting, irrigation canals and grain storage facilities) and access to markets.
4. Rural infrastructure projects need to be small in scale and low in cost, using paid local labour and simple technologies that facilitate easy repair and maintenance; for example, wells and rain storage tanks, small reservoirs or cisterns, terracing and drainage works. Reaching the rural population through small-scale projects is the priority, and such projects, based on diverting water from mountain streams or pumping it from underground sources, can be linked to individual households at a low cost per household. The development projects should also be sensitive to the seasonal nature of farmwork in order to determine when labour contributions should be asked of rural people.
5. Lower grade feeder roads to villages can quickly create significant income improvements for farmers. This overcomes the present reliance of producers on middlemen who dictate the price for products. Village access roads are generally low-cost, narrow gravel roads that are connected to main roads. They are inexpensive to install and often have multiple benefits: increased access to markets, health centres and

schools; reduced marketing costs; lower costs in obtaining agricultural inputs; easier transport of heavy materials; and facilitated installation of valuable infrastructure, such as grid electricity and telephone lines.

6. Decisions on infrastructure projects should include active inputs from the local Tibetans themselves. The poor tend to have least say in any decisions about the type or location of infrastructure. However, they are usually the best placed to know what project would be of greatest immediate benefit. Through involvement in decision-making, and a sense of local ownership, they will be keener to contribute labour and local materials to the project, and more likely to maintain it in the future.

### D. Agriculture and natural resources

1. Agricultural projects should consider not only the intended outcomes, such as intensification of production and higher yields, but also long-term soil quality, erosion control, downstream discharge of pollutants released by applying chemical fertilisers, and opportunities for integrated pest management based on time-tested Tibetan organic farming methods.
2. Grassland projects should not focus narrowly on a single development aspect, such as increasing production, invasive pest control, or introduction of exotic grasses. Projects on the rangelands should adopt a more holistic approach in line with the New Resource Management Policy embraced by most development agencies, in which nomadic mobility, under current circumstances, has the best long-term guarantee of biodiversity conservation, sustainability and productivity.
3. We do not encourage the sedentarisation of nomads, since it results in further rangeland degradation, overstocking, inflexibility and poverty among the former nomads. International development agencies have an opportunity to transfer the lessons that have been learned worldwide from the many failed sedentarisation projects of earlier years, and to explain the danger of damaging the viability of nomadic production through sidelining land and water sources for irrigation, farming and industrial uses.

4. Projects should adopt technologies that strengthen mobility, such as portable solar power. These are preferable to technologies that require settling year-round in one place, such as being connected to an electricity power grid.
5. Setting aside large areas as nature reserves can benefit Tibetans if there training is offered among local communities in skills such as becoming park rangers, tour guides, biodiversity protectors and enforcers of anti-poaching regulations. The establishment of protected areas not only conserves biodiversity and guarantees downstream water purity, it can also contribute directly to development, employment and human capital formation in the protected area. UNESCO is encouraged to investigate suitable areas to be declared as World Heritage Sites or Biosphere Reserves.
6. New hybrid seeds of Tibetan crops and breeds for herds can be introduced through effective agricultural extensions in which farmers and pastoralists are treated as the equal partners of scientists and officials. The higher yields from new seeds and breeds should not require higher inputs of capital, fuel, pesticides or chemical fertilisers.
7. Beijing's reforestation, mountain closure, and grain-to-green programmes, which aim to restore marginal farmland to grassland and forest, must try to benefit local Tibetan communities – this can be achieved through employment and involvement in the care of seedlings, sowing of appropriate grasses and repair of degraded rangeland. Social forestry and local ownership of projects are better models than exclusion, enclosure and subsidies that are directed only to state enterprises, which are staffed by immigrants who were once responsible for felling the same forests. The successful rehabilitation of degraded grassland and reforestation will fulfil the PRC's national goal of safeguarding the water supply, as well as the global challenge of greenhouse gases by acting as a sink for those emissions. This will require considerable training and skills transfer.
8. Even though we oppose any projects that displace or move Tibetan farmers and nomads, in extreme cases, where viability of life is not possible and Tibetans voluntarily accept moving out of ecologically sensitive zones, the

projects should take special measures to ensure that the displaced Tibetans are not denied their basic right to a decent and sustainable livelihood. These projects should ensure that Tibetan farmers and herders who are displaced from their land get adequate and timely training, compensation and support, and effective ownership of renewed grasslands and forest. Only then can they recover their forfeited income, and become willing and active partners in the restoration of the degraded Tibetan lands.

### E. Micro-financing

Micro-finance has been conspicuously absent from Tibet, despite its many successes internationally. Those who have helped the Tibetans to access micro-finance, such as the Tibet Poverty Alleviation Fund, use faults in existing Chinese policies as their starting point:

[These policies]... have made it more difficult for traditional Tibetan urban enterprises to compete with better funded, more experienced and lower cost Han managed enterprises in urban areas. There is growing evidence of Han enterprises, which now constitute about 70 per cent of all enterprises in Lhasa Municipality, squeezing out Tibetan enterprises even in traditional Tibetan product areas such as Tibetan clothing, furniture, painting, restaurants and dry goods and food retailing (Arthur Holcombe, Testimony to US Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 10 June 2002).

Experience around the world shows that micro-finance succeeds in directly providing poor households with affordable credit, thereby encouraging their self-organisation. Micro-finance has become a widely favoured method of poverty reduction, both with governments and among donor organisations.

1. Micro-finance projects should encourage the direct participation of the poor, both in allowing recipients of loans to choose their own investments and in encouraging them to form their own village-level organisations.
2. An integrated approach is needed that combines access to credit with the provision of additional services and training, including marketing advice and technical support for production activities.
3. The micro-finance system should be a tool for the poor to gain control over assets and become economically self-sufficient. Micro-finance

lenders need not subsidise interest rates. The willingness of lenders to spend as well as lend is better directed at subsidising the administrative costs. The very poorest should be designated credit-worthy and eligible for loans. In the present Catch 22 situation, they do not own their land under Chinese law and consequently the Chinese banks will not lend them money, because they technically lack collateral as a guarantee for repayment of loans.

4. In delivering micro-finance services, the involvement of organisations of poor people, such as farmers' associations, rural cooperatives or local self-help groups, either independently or in cooperation with formal financial institutions, are the key to enhancing outreach, effectiveness and sustainability of micro-finance operations. This requires the active encouragement of traditional community-based organisations, which in turn will strengthen their voice and capacities.

## F. Education

According to PRC statistics, the average adult Tibetan has had less than three years of schooling. The PRC's spending on education in Tibet is very low – only 310 yuan (US \$37) per capita per year, including fees and contributions by parents – while per capita spending on education in the municipality of Beijing is six times greater, at 1,810 yuan (US \$219) (National Bureau of Statistics, *China Statistical Yearbook 2002*, Table 20-35).

1. The development focus in education should ensure greater access, and the equalisation and distribution of resources across regions in order to compensate for present inequalities. To address specific local circumstances and needs, including nomadism, more flexible forms of education should be explored.
2. The primary goal should be the practical elimination of rural illiteracy for the younger generation, with the achievement of this target serving as the principal measure of effectiveness. An exceptional percentage of Tibet's population today is very young. Their education needs cannot be met by poor counties and communities alone, as is currently the case. Responsibility for financing education has been downshifted to those least able to pay. The need for external assistance is real and urgent.
3. Culturally appropriate education is a high priority. This requires considerable investment in teacher training, curriculum reform, textbook writing, bilingual education programmes, repair of decrepit physical infrastructure, and adequate salaries for the continued employment of teachers. Since the responsibility to finance local schools has been downshifted to local communities, development projects that effectively reduce illiteracy and improve retention rates can have a high level of local community involvement. Tibetan children not only need a curriculum and medium of instruction that is culturally appropriate to their actual needs and circumstances, but also to prepare themselves to successfully access the modern world.
4. On the rangelands, this means taking education to the children, rather than marshalling the children into centralised boarding schools. It might seem that this is ambitious, yet the example of Mongolia proves that it can be done. Mongolia and Tibet are alike, not only in their religion and culture, but also in being vast, semi-arid lands that are well suited to extensive nomadic pastoralism. The Mongolian education system delivers high levels of literacy to its widely scattered nomads. In a survey for the World Bank, which compiled lessons to be learned from nomadic education around the world, Saverio Kratli concluded that global experience insists on the importance of not separating support for education from support for pastoral livelihood and economy. Development agencies who specialise in education or pastoral production should respect this linkage.
5. In Tibet, development agencies involved in education must find innovative ways to tackle the challenges of training and retaining competent teachers to teach in mostly rural areas. Relocation incentives and the possibility for career advancement, based on performance and long-term commitment, could be ways of attracting quality teachers to rural schools.
6. Vocational training is a major necessity among adults and younger Tibetans if they are to access wider markets, opportunities, jobs and economic niches. The PRC's Constitution (article 122) claims that: "The state helps the

national autonomous areas train large numbers of cadres at various levels and specialised personnel and skilled workers of various professions and trades, from among the minority nationality or nationalities in those areas". In practice, the PRC needs help in implementing this Constitutional clause.

7. Adult vocational training should include not only production but also the distribution and marketing of new products and services. This will ensure a maximum benefit to those who have missed out on an adequate education in recent decades. A generation of Tibetans has reached adulthood without attaining literacy. Vocational education is the best way forward to help them adapt to a market economy. At present, it is largely restricted to the laid-off workers of downsizing state enterprises. This is too narrow a focus.
8. Community-based and financed local schools (*minban* in Chinese), currently under-resourced and receiving little state support, can benefit greatly from international partnerships. This may make it possible to achieve the PRC's goal that all children shall receive nine years of schooling. Schooling, wherever possible, should be available in a way that does not break up families, and which respects the seasonal cycle and need for all family members to contribute labour at peak times. Adopting worldwide best practice models of successful bilingual education will help to reduce the dropout rates, and enable a significant proportion of Tibetans to enter senior middle school and receive post-secondary training.
9. The number of school places available for Tibetan children who complete year nine is extremely limited. The shortage of senior middle schools is a major bottleneck thwarting the advancement of Tibetans. International partners can do much to raise the availability and appropriateness of upper secondary and tertiary education for Tibetans, including the acquisition of functional literacy in a global language other than Mandarin Chinese.
10. Curriculum design should assist Beijing in implementing its policy that minority nationality students should receive education, at least in the primary years, in their mother tongue, in this case Tibetan, while also

attaining literacy in world languages. Curricula should also be expanded to include not only the responsibilities of citizens, but also their rights, now that the rule of law is strengthening across China.

11. Very few Tibetans are currently deemed eligible for international study programmes, on the grounds that their Chinese or English is inadequate. This greatly restricts their opportunities to learn from worldwide experience and discover best practices in a wide range of disciplines. International education programmes can help greatly by providing not only scholarships, but also a bridging-year or foundation-year programme to bring the Tibetans' language skills up to tertiary standard.
12. Tibetan language publishing, arts productions, cultural events, film and television need subsidising in order to restore Tibetan idioms to public life. At present, Tibetan writers and artists struggle for lack of finance, distribution and support to reach audiences keen to encounter new Tibetan artistic output. International cultural development organisations can do much to conserve the threatened and deteriorating Tibetan architectural heritage.
13. Employment opportunities for Tibetans in modern secondary and tertiary sectors will increase with training programmes based on identified needs. The employment of Tibetans, especially in cities, is at present limited to salaried government office work and unskilled work, such as labouring on construction sites. The problem is not that Tibetans cannot be educated, but that, on graduation, there is no career track available. Tibetans who have settled elsewhere in the world have shown themselves capable of quickly learning modern skills, therefore capacity building programmes in Tibet have excellent prospects of success.
14. Scholarships and grants to enable Tibetan students to pursue technical and professional studies, both in mainland China and abroad, would help to increase the general pool of talent and skills in the Tibetan region.

## **G. Skills and capacity development**

1. Development should maximise the transfer of the required training, knowledge, skills and

technologies to Tibetan communities so that they can own, operate and maintain projects successfully, and adapt them to their own purposes. The transfer of non-Tibetan experts to live in Tibet and take charge of development projects should not be necessary, except for short periods in exceptional circumstances.

2. Tibetan communities can become effective partners of international organisations if the traditional community-based organisations (CBOs) of Tibet are recognised and encouraged to articulate what the Tibetans need. There are now many NGOs in China, especially in the environment field. Tibetans need both opportunity and encouragement to establish their own NGOs. An interim step is to help the existing CBOs to attain official recognition. This includes traditional herd management CBOs, such as the *rukor* “tent-circle” and the clan-based *tshowa*. Community enterprises did, and can in future, have positive roles in post-harvest crop buffer stock protection, seed bank genetic diversity maintenance, social welfare, disaster relief and community banking.
3. Economically and ecologically, the Tibetan Plateau is a unit. The whole plateau could benefit from projects which use the Tibetans’ skills and comparative advantage.

## H. Health

At present, the quickest way for a Tibetan to become destitute in Tibet is to fall ill. There is a desperate need for affordable collective health insurance schemes that include subsidies for the poorest of the poor, who at present are quite unable to meet the high user-pays charges of the current system. Leaving the financing of health to the lowest levels of government, and to local communities and individual families, is sure to perpetuate poverty. Health should be the responsibility of higher levels of government, as it was in China until 25 years ago. A good start would be a state guarantee of free health for all who fall below the poverty line. Development agencies have the opportunity to demonstrate, through pilot projects in specific areas, the feasibility of medical insurance for the most impoverished communities.

1. Traditional Tibetan medicine (*sowa rigpa*) is widely trusted, especially by rural Tibetans. It has proved effective, with thousands of years of experience in the delivery of health services. It is cost-effective, making use of locally-

available ingredients, rather than relying on transnational pharmaceutical corporations to whom all users must pay royalties. A plateau-wide expansion of traditional Tibetan medical college education could enable the delivery of a decentralised healthcare system to remote areas. The current health system is urban-biased. The widespread provision of *emchis*-traditional doctors would be an effective way of ensuring that the scattered populace finally gets access to healthcare.

2. Prevention of disease has been much neglected in Tibet, in favour of expensive “modern” cures. Investment in health must focus on essential generic drugs and low-cost interventions. Examples include hepatitis B immunisation, oral rehydration, immunisation of expectant mothers, and the promotion of iodised salt, vitamin A and iron supplements. China’s prevention system – known as epidemic prevention stations – needs fresh finance and revitalisation.
3. Malnutrition is currently common in Tibet, as is the stunting of child growth, according to international experts. Nutrition education, primary healthcare, and maternal and child health services are high priorities. The government should be encouraged to change the hospital subsidy to a scheme whereby the healthcare costs of the poor are directly subsidised.
4. A supply of safe drinking water brings large-scale, immediate benefits that are directly related to people’s health and productivity. A lack of potable water is associated with intestinal and many other illnesses, as well as with certain deformities or disabilities in areas where available water sources have high natural mineral toxicity.
5. There is a crucial need for outside help in researching and combating the diseases that are endemic or specific to certain locales of Tibet – including Kashin-Beck Disease (otherwise known as big bone disease), plague and tuberculosis.
6. An HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention programme needs to be initiated. Sexually transmitted diseases like HIV have become an increasing threat in Tibet since the arrival of the thriving sex industries in the towns and

cities – an impact of urbanisation and the migration of a large, single-male population from China.

7. Delivery of health services should be decentralised as much as possible. This is a basic right, as well as a question of access and equity. Decentralisation need not be expensive, if *sowa rigpa* traditional Tibetan healing is promoted as an integral part of the total healthcare system.
8. Sterilisation, birth control and contraception programmes must pay special attention to informed consent and ensure that anyone who undergoes such treatment does so voluntarily and in full knowledge of the consequences. Coercion, fines and social pressure should not be permitted to force women into an irreversible loss of reproductive capacity.
9. There is need for better supervision mechanisms for village and township biomedicine health clinics in order to eliminate the prescription of unnecessary and expensive drugs. Better training and adequate remuneration for health and social workers is critical to achieving this.

## I. Urban Tibet

Urban poverty is now growing rapidly in major Tibetan towns, due to the urbanisation of farmlands in and around former towns, the migration of rural poor to the urban areas and their consequent social exclusion – especially in the labour market, where there is a lack of education and skills. Further discrimination occurs because the rural dwellers are not permitted to transfer their household registration to urban areas, which makes their status semi-legal, and thus vulnerable to exploitation.

Until now, urban slums have not developed in Tibet to the scale that is common in developing countries, but such slums could soon occur if there is no concerted effort to make rural life more rewarding.

A primary cause of urban poverty is that employment opportunities for Tibetans are available only to a limited number of salaried government employees, or to casual unskilled labourers. Tibetans face constant discrimination, as the non-Tibetans are systematically favoured by the Chinese administration. As Tibet becomes a market economy, such discrimination is sometimes excused, under current Chinese policies, as the natural workings of the market. This is not true – Tibetans are enterprising people.

Available statistics show that a remarkably high proportion of the Tibetan population is very young. Despite the strong emphasis in these guidelines on restoring the viability of rural life, not all young adults will be able to find sustainable livelihoods in rural areas. This is especially true of areas of serious rangeland degradation and sedentarisation, and where communities have been restricted to fixed quotas of grazing land that does not grow as the families grow. Therefore:

1. Vocational training in service sector industries can help Tibetans overcome discrimination. Start-up capital and training in business planning and management can help Tibetans enter market niches, which are increasingly monopolised by better-connected immigrants. A little positive discrimination could do much to prevent unemployed Tibetan youths, unable to make a living in the countryside, from drifting into social vices in towns and cities.
2. Reform of the restrictive household registration system (known in Chinese as *hukou*) could help to grant rural Tibetans legal status in towns, and a chance to dispel discrimination. Such status is readily available to non-Tibetan immigrants from distant provinces, which gives them immediate advantages over the indigenous Tibetan population.

## J. Tourism

We firmly oppose the current mass-packaged tourism industry in Tibet, which is controlled by a small number of state-owned enterprises. Tourism in Tibet today is largely based on the economic exploitation of Tibetan culture – this largely excludes Tibetans, who are best able to explain and interpret their own culture, especially as tour guides.

Tourism could be beneficial to Tibetan communities if the Tibetans are given a say in the running of the tourism industry. Throughout these guidelines, there is an emphasis on the appropriateness of positive discrimination towards the most deprived, neglected and excluded ethnicities in Tibet. Such positive discrimination is especially appropriate in tourism, because the destination is Tibet itself and the product is Tibetan culture, which only the Tibetan people are uniquely qualified to represent.

However, for those who want to get involved in eco-tourism, adventure tours and pilgrimage tours in Tibet, we expect investors to encourage reform of the present state-owned and controlled industry. Instead, new projects

must demonstrate much higher levels of client satisfaction with smaller scale, locally-controlled operations that enable visitors to fulfil their desire for genuine encounters with Tibetan people, land and culture.

To realise this potential, the tourism industry should be structured to create tour circuits that are designed to promote eco-tourism, adventure tourism and pilgrimage tourism in a sustainable manner by respecting the local culture, tradition and landscape. Tourism in Tibet can employ Tibetans not merely as cooks, room attendants, drivers and waiters, as at present. The potential for local involvement is great if Tibetan culture, landscapes and sacred sites are recognised as being the core of what attracts the visitors in the first place. Tibetans are uniquely able to interpret and present Tibet, not as a superficial, exotic spectacle, but as a rich, cultural encounter that meets the desire that visitors have for a unique and authentic experience.

### **K. Investment in commercial projects and current infrastructure**

These guidelines express Tibetan values by opposing unsustainable large-scale infrastructure and industrial projects. This section of the guidelines should not be taken as providing exceptions to this approach. In a region which successfully maintained sustainability by low population densities and extensive land use for centuries, all current large-scale projects threaten this sustainability by concentrating capital, technology and population in a small area, while other areas remain deprived. This inevitably results in widening inequality.

We oppose large-scale projects that are concentrated in small areas since they are not appropriate for Tibet. Large hydro dams, railways, highways, cities, mines, oil and gas pipelines, and heavy manufacturing industries are not what Tibet needs, under the current circumstances. Such projects transfer outputs of Tibetan resources to distant consumers. Tibet gains little revenue, while the local Tibetans, even those forcibly displaced by development, are not compensated, paid royalties or trained in the modern skills suited to such projects. Instead, immigrant settlers flood in. It is hard to see how such projects, which usually originate in the Five-Year Plans of Beijing's central officials, can benefit Tibetans by being financed internationally. Such projects only worsen existing inequalities and rob the land of its natural resources.

The following guidelines apply to a situation in which the central authorities persist in devising major projects, some of them involving international partners. Given this

possibility, it is practical to question what protections could improve the impact of such projects.

1. Investors are well-placed to ensure that the International Labour Organisation guidelines are implemented, and that the Tibetans who are employed in joint ventures receive adequate training in modern skills. Partners can establish standards that include compensation, resource rental taxes and royalties for local communities whose land or resources are taken over for project construction. Where local communities are displaced by development and forced to resettle, international partners have a special responsibility to ensure that adequate land, of sufficient quality, is provided to ensure that the resettlers are not made destitute.
2. International investors have a special responsibility to introduce standards of community participation, environmental impact assessment and gender impact assessment. They must also ensure that an adequate cultural diversity of employment opportunities is generated by major projects. This can set new standards for centrally planned state projects. Such partnerships provide an opportunity to introduce minimum standards of gender and ethnicity employment in such ventures.

### **L. Introducing worldwide best practices to the PRC**

Donors, lenders and investors can all contribute to policy formulation. The PRC wants to learn from the best practice standards used around the world. The international community brings to Tibet not only capital, but also much expertise that has been accumulated from practical experiences of development around the world. Aspects of state policy that could benefit from the collective wisdom and experience of international partners include:

- Defining a coherent population policy for the whole of the Tibetan Plateau and implementing Article 43 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Autonomy, which gives autonomous areas the right to control the transient population
- Promoting the environmental economic inclusion of free public commodities – such as the clean and abundant water and air of Tibet – to downstream and lowland users

- Promoting linkages between the upland poor and the downstream concentrations of wealthy urban users, in order to raise awareness of the dependence of the rich on the natural resources supplied to them by rural Tibet
- Improving agricultural extension services so that farmers and pastoralists can become equal partners with scientists and laboratory technicians in a joint community-owned effort to increase productivity
- Encouraging relevant provincial and regional Peoples' Congresses to promote training and employment opportunities for Tibetans, and to restrict the entry of floating unemployed immigrants to Tibet – as enforced in the Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region – unless the immigrants have specific skills that match an identified need and are willing to transfer those skills to the local communities
- Encouraging central planners to build on what already exists, using the pre-existing base of a subsistence economy that could benefit from

comparative advantage – especially if linkages were created to other regions where there is a demand for what Tibet is best able to produce.

## VII. POSTSCRIPT

Ideally, all development in Tibet should ensure that:

- NOT a single person remains hungry on the soil of Tibet
- NOT a single person lacks the basic human needs of medicine, clothing and shelter
- NOT a single school-age child is denied the opportunity of attending school.

We do not support any development that comes at the cost of:

- Loss of inner consciousness or soul
- Destruction of the environment
- Consumption and use of resources that will deprive future generations of Tibetans.

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