



A REPORT







INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

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from 1990 - 2016**



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS**



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ཐེན་མཆོད་ལྷོ་བཟང་མེན་ཀླུ་།
DR. LOBSANG SANGAY
President

KASHAG

Foreword

The International Conference of Tibet Support Groups deliberates on strengthening the Tibet advocacy and consolidating efforts to further the Tibet cause. The conference in its 8th edition was held in Dharamsala last year with around 200 participants from 42 countries. This report details the proceedings and the action plans of the conference.

The year 2019 marked the 60th year since His Holiness the Dalai Lama set foot into exile. For the last six-decade, we, under the leadership of His Holiness, the unyielding resilience of the Tibetan people in Tibet and support from around the globe, have remained strong and hopeful.

As deliberated during the conference, the ecological health of Tibet today is crucial for tomorrow's Asia and the world at large. The importance of Tibetan language and culture lies in the fact that it serves as the repository of Tibetan Buddhism, which as a science of mind hold capabilities to usher in a more compassionate world. The resolution of Tibet issue through dialogue can prove to be a model at a crucial time today where we are witnessing ever-increasingly grassroots movements for freedom, equality and justice around the world. Tibet is needed not just for the Tibetans, but for humanity at large.

We are always grateful to the members of TSG around the globe and individuals for their unwavering support. I would like to thank the Core Group for Tibetan Cause for convening this conference and to all the participant for taking part in this conference. I also would like to thank each individual whose contributions ensured the success of this conference.

With a renewed commitment, we look forward to working on the action plans and together we can and will fulfill the aspirations of the Tibetans inside Tibet.

Dr. Lobsang Sangay
Sikyong/ President



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS**



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama Audience at His Holiness' Residence

Tibet has a long history and a very rich culture. As far as knowledge about Buddhism is concerned, Tibet has the most advanced knowledge of Buddha dharma and the Nalanda tradition. Although these books are highly controlled at the public level, some Chinese University professors do have the opportunity to read these books. These professors, after reading these books, express that Tibetan Buddhism is the true Nalanda Tradition, and that, it is a very scientific approach that can go side by side with modern science. I feel what these Chinese scholars have expressed is quite true.



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In today's world, there are a lot of problems. Many of these problems are actually of our own creation. So, we need education and knowledge about our inner world, about how to tackle our destructive emotions such as anger and jealousy. Through education of our inner world, we can reduce frustration and other destructive emotions. These are ancient Indian knowledge. Ancient India developed the concept of Ahimsa and Karuna over 3000 years ago. Ahimsa is very much related to our mental level, which is respecting others rights and not harming others. Then there is the motivation level - Karuna which is compassion. So, we Tibetans have invited the Nalanda masters in the 8th century, and since then, we have preserved these knowledge in Tibet.

Unfortunately, since Tibet's occupation by China, the Chinese Communist government, in their attempts to control Tibet permanently, have been trying to eliminate the Tibetan language. Even though several decades have gone by, increasing suppression from the Chinese government has only led to more determination among the Tibetan people. Just like how the Chinese naturally love their own country and culture, we Tibetans too love our country and culture. So, despite 70 years of suppression, the Tibetan spirit has remained very strong inside Tibet, and in the future too, that determination will remain strong. This, I am 100% sure, because our culture is something that many westerners and scientists deeply appreciate. Therefore, this knowledge that is preserved in the Tibetan language and culture, is not just for the benefit of the Tibetan people but is also beneficial to the entirety of seven billion human beings. In fact, you need not even look at it as a religion, but as an academic subject on how to tackle our destructive emotions and how to keep our peace of mind.

Some time back, I met one of my Chinese friends who resides in Peking (Beijing). He told me that since he knew the son of former Field Marshal Chen Yi, and, as his own father was also quite famous, they used to get together on many different occasions. During these gatherings, he said, many Chinese officials express that China's policy on Tibet over the past few decades was unrealistic and wrong. They say that they have to find a more realistic approach towards the Tibet issue. So, even these hardline Chinese Communist leaders are starting to have a dilemma about how to tackle the Tibet issue. It is now over sixty years, and the outside world is still showing sympathy and interest on the Tibet issue. Therefore, it is very important and helpful to have more and more voices from the outside world showing concern for the Tibetan people.

On the one side, Tibetan determination is very strong, no question about that. Since Tibetan determination is very strong inside Tibet, we refugees, although we are just a handful, must carry that same determination. Tibetans inside Tibet, even after going through such difficult circumstances, they have kept this determination. We are in a free country, so naturally, it is our moral responsibility to keep the determination stronger. In the meantime, more voice, more support from the rest of the world is very essential, very helpful. So I want to thank you all on behalf of six million Tibetan people. You have been very kind, thank you.

From time to time, this kind of meeting to express support towards Tibetan struggle is very essential and useful. Regarding the Tibetan issue, on the political side, since 2001 and particularly in 2011, I have totally retired. He (Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay) carries political leadership. So in the political field, he is my boss, but I must jokingly add very quickly that in the spiritual field, I am his boss. As far as the practice of democracy is concerned, we handful of Tibetans are sincerely devoted to it. We can even tell the Chinese communists that we can teach them how to carry out a free election.

Anyways, my responsibility is firstly towards Tibetan culture. I have been meeting with many religious leaders, many professors, scholars from different fields and particularly scientists who are interested in studying the human mind. As far as psychology is concerned, I publicly express that western psychology, when compared to ancient Indian psychology, is still at a beginner's stage. Knowledge about the mind and how to tackle our destructive emotions has been developed over 3000 years in India. This had originally come from religion but now it has become secular knowledge. So whether you are a believer or a non-believer, whether you belong to this religion or that religion, it is just a personal matter. Great Indian scholar Raja Ramannah, one of my old friends who is now no more, used to tell me that quantum physics in the west is something new but in this country it was already developed 2500 years ago. So, this is something that the world needs now. This knowledge that we have kept for over 1000 years as an academic subject is something the world needs today and can benefit from. To that end, my latest commitment these days is the revival of ancient Indian knowledge within India. Modern India pays more attention to modern education. That is materialistic education, more external. However, ancient Indian knowledge is about the mind, about emotions and how to tackle emotions. These things the country must revive through education, not from prayers or worship. So that is my latest commitment.

I am also a human being, one among the seven billion people in this world. According to scientists, basic human nature is more compassionate, it is true. We are all social animals. The survival and happiness of the Individual depends on the community. The way we are born and brought up is through mother's affection without which we cannot survive. Physical hygiene is taught from the kindergarten level, similarly emotional hygiene should also be taught side by side from that level, so that we can be healthy physically as well as healthy emotionally. So for that, Tibetan cultural heritage could make some contribution. Therefore, my number one commitment is to try to promote human warm heartedness. Since basic human nature is compassionate, it is very much possible to promote warm-heartedness through education.

My number two commitment is religious harmony. India is truly an example of religious harmony. Next week, I am going to Amritsar. We are going to participate in the celebration of Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak was from a Hindu background but took pilgrimage in Mecca, I think, more than 500 years ago. That is India's tradition, mutual respect. I am a Buddhist, and I follow India's tradition of mutual respect. So whenever I



visit different places, whenever there is some possibility, I always pay respect and visit the church, mandir, mosque and other houses of worship. So, I feel religious harmony is very important. All major religious traditions carry the same message, the message of love. I usually say that these religions are a human creation. Of course if you believe in a god, then yes, otherwise all these religions are human creation. So naturally, love and kindness is the best thing to practice for us from childhood. But in spite of that, nowadays in the name of religion, some people are killing each other, it is unthinkable. All these religions are supposed to teach us to be compassionate. Moreover, according to monotheistic religions, we all are created by one god. So according to that theory or belief, it makes us, the entire seven billion people, brothers and sisters from one father, which is god. God's nature is infinite love, so if you seriously believe in that notion, then, how can you kill each other? We are all children of God, the same father, and that God's nature is infinite love, so we must love each other. And then non-theistic, no god or creator, but very simple logic. If you help others, you will benefit, if you harm others, there will be negative consequences. That is Karmic theory. In Jainism, there is no creator. In Buddhism also, no creator but rather there is self-creation. So all these major religious traditions have a different philosophy, but all carry the same messages of love, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment, and self-discipline. However, in spite of these, in reality, there are some people killing in the name of religion, it is unthinkable. So we need efforts in promoting religious harmony. Is it possible? Yes, it is. India with a population of over a billion, is a complicated nation but as far as religious harmony is concerned, I think, it is excellent. So because of India as an example, I am fully committed to trying to promote religious harmony.

My third commitment is regarding Tibet. As I already mentioned, regarding political matters, I am already retired. In the seventh and eighth centuries, the entire Tibet was unified under one king but around the late 8th to 9th centuries, the central authority of Tibet collapsed which led to the disintegration of Tibet into different regions. Now fortunately or unfortunately, with my name, the entire Tibet has unified. Tibetans fully trust me as I told you earlier. All six million Tibetans is now unified, they sincerely believe in me and that being so, I have a moral responsibility to think for their future.

We are students of Nalanda tradition. As a result of meeting with many people, including many scientists, I realized that the knowledge that we have kept, originally came from Nalanda, which is something very relevant in today's world. Non-violence and compassion are very relevant in today's world, not just through prayer but through reasoning. From over 3000 years ago, India already had the practice of 'Samatha' and the practice of 'Vipassana' which are analytical meditation techniques, not just faith. So I am trying to revive these ancient Indian knowledge in modern India. That is my latest commitment. Wherever I go, I always tell these things. We have already started some programs in cooperation with government colleges here. And you, as a supporter,

can tell the world that Tibet is culturally, religiously, very rich. The world needs this knowledge and Tibetan issue is something relevant to the world's humanity. It is not just a small country's independence but my main concern is Tibetan knowledge. As our supporters, I request you all to tell more people that Tibetan knowledge is something useful to humanity in a secular way.

I came here as a refugee in 1959. Since then, I have met a number of people including many westerners who showed a real sense of concern about Tibet. So I am very grateful. Thank You.

As I mentioned earlier, even among the top Chinese leadership, there is a call for a more realistic approach to Tibet. I think, within two or three years, we will be able to see some change. I always say that I love freedom and in a way, India's freedom has spoiled me. So I very much prefer a free country rather than a totalitarian country. However, I am still willing to visit China including the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in China. I also want to exchange my thoughts with Chinese scholars on an academic level. So I very much want to visit China and enjoy Chinese food. I think in Europe, Italian food is very good.

Finally, I am now 84 years old. From time to time, I go for a medical check-up. The reports say my physical condition has improved. So, for another ten, fifteen, or twenty more years, I will still be available. So we can meet again. Thank you.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

OPENING CEREMONY



Welcome and Introductory Address by R.K. Khrimey

National Convener, Core Group for Tibetan Cause

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Keynote Address by Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay

President, Central Tibetan Administration

Thank You Remarks by Arya Tsewang Gyalpo

Secretary, Department of Information and International Relations, CTA



Rinchin Khandu Khrimey

National Convener, Core Group for Tibetan Cause-India

Honourable Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Honourable Speaker of Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Shri Pema Jungney, Honourable Chief Justice Commissioner, Sonam Norbu Dagpo, Honourable Council of Ministers of the exile Government, Honourable Deputy Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in exile and other distinguished guests on the dais, former Deputy Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, former speaker of the Australian Parliament, Member of Parliament from South Africa and former members of the parliament, respected and distinguished participants from various countries of the world, the secretaries of the Tibetan Government in Exile and other officials of the Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, and friends:

Good morning and Namaskar to all.

Namaskar is a way of greeting in India. Namaskar is one word which is applicable on all occasions. So, when you are here in my country, India, please greet with Namaskar to any Indian you come across.



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OPENING CEREMONY

First of all, let me welcome all of you to this historic Conference. Before addressing the occasion, let me introduce myself. I am Rinchin Khandu Khrimy, National Convener of Core Group for Tibetan Cause, which is the apex coordinating body of Tibet Support Groups all over India. We have 16 major non-governmental organizations as Tibet Support Groups working for the Tibetan cause. There are almost 300 Tibet Support Groups. These NGOs or voluntary organizations were formed in different times and have been working for the Tibetan cause since His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived in India. They are working for Tibet, Tibetan cause and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland, Tibet.

The first convention for Tibet cause was held in Kolkata in the year 1959 under the leadership of Loknayak Jaiprakash Narayan. Many organizations on Tibet issue were formed and all of them started working for the Tibetan cause. All the organizations were functioning independently at the time and a need was felt for coordinating the activities of all these organizations. Therefore, under the leadership of former Prime Minister of the Central Tibetan Administration Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and through discussions and consultations with the Indian supporters, it was decided to form an apex body to coordinate all the activities and movements of the different organizations in our country. Consequently, the Core Group for Tibetan Cause was set up in 2002 as the apex organization, a non-governmental coordinating body based in Delhi. The Core Group for Tibetan Cause has a National Convener, four National Co-Conveners for the Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern regions and 17 Regional Conveners. This is how we have been coordinating and working with other TSGs all over the country for the cause of Tibet.

The aims and objectives of these organizations are geared towards creating awareness among the people of India especially younger generations on the past and present position and situation of Tibet. TSGs organize programs and events all over the country on important days such as Tibetan National Uprising Day, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday, and conferment anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize on His Holiness the Dalai Lama coinciding with International Human Rights Day, among others.

Friends, all of us know that Tibet was an independent sovereign nation. Unfortunately, in 1959 it was forcefully and illegally occupied by China. Immediately after the Chinese annexation of Tibet, there was a strong conspiracy by the Chinese Government to detain His Holiness the Dalai Lama and I think it is our luck and that of the Tibetan people that His Holiness was able to flee Tibet and seek asylum in India. I feel there are two reasons why the Tibetan movement is getting stronger day by day: Firstly, His Holiness' presence in this country and secondly, the revival of the ancient India Nalanda tradition which was almost extinguished in India. The Tibetan people under the benevolent guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama has revived the ancient Indian Nalanda tradition which is now universally accepted. Therefore, we all stood for the Tibetan cause since its illegal occupation by China.

In June this year, we had organised the Sixth All India Tibet Support Groups' Conference from 15th to 16th June 2019 in Dharamshala which was graced by Honourable Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay as the Chief Guest. We also conducted a meeting of the All India Tibet Support Groups and Regional Tibet Support Groups in every part of the country. I believe, through our activities and campaigns, our wish to see Tibet as an independent country will be fulfilled soon.

History tells us howsoever powerful a country maybe, it cannot continue to forcefully dominate or occupy other countries against the wishes and the will of the people of the oppressed country. Chinese illegal occupation is against the will and wishes of the people of Tibet. So let's all pray and dedicate ourselves to the cause and I am sure that we will definitely succeed on the issue of Tibet. Secondly, this is a fight between the truth and untruth, a fight between non-violence and violence, a fight between love, affection, and compassion versus hate. We are all working with the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama who practices love, compassion, non-violence; who despite the greatest crisis in his lifetime preaches world peace, brotherhood, and oneness of humanity. On the other hand, China believes in violence, practices suppression, repression, and violation of human rights. History also tells us that truth always prevails. Since TSGs movement is based on truth and non-violence, attaining Tibetan independence is not very far.

Let me tell you my friends from all over the world, we have come here to show our support and dedication for the cause of Tibet. By this, we have added a new page in the history of Tibetan Independence struggle. Every one of us is contributing to this noble cause. Therefore, it is very historic and memorable.

We are all human beings. We may not be there tomorrow. We may not be able to see a free Tibet in our lifetime but tomorrow when Tibet gets independence, history will say that we were the people who have contributed to the Tibetan cause.

Therefore, friends, I very heartily welcome all of you to this historic Conference. You must have attended many conferences but here in this Conference, you have come with a commitment and a mission. As I told you we had a meeting of All India TSG; the participants unanimously adopted two resolutions. Firstly, to support the Middle Way Policy adopted by the Central Tibetan Administration under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Secondly, for an immediate resumption of dialogue between the representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Central Tibetan Administration and Representatives of the People's Republic of China.

Tibet's independence will come definitely but the only urgency is that we would like to see some solutions during the lifetime of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama so that he can honourably return to his motherland. It is for that we need to work very strongly, sincerely and with full dedication.



So friends, as far as we Indians are concerned, we have a very powerful and popular Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi who is leading our country and has established himself as one of the most powerful leaders at the world stage in a very short span of time. We have confidence in him. He has done tremendous benefits for the people of our country which are very visible. And most importantly, those of you who have come from abroad must have noticed the sudden major developments of the country under his leadership. We have confidence and full faith in our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi that he will take the lead for the Tibetan cause at a very appropriate time. Only, time is a factor, otherwise he is committed. He would like to see the Tibet issue to be resolved at the earliest because His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been advocating for Tibet for the last 60 years. I am very confident that under his leadership and with the active movement and cooperation from all over the world, Tibet will achieve independence.

As far as the situation inside Tibet is concerned, it's getting worse day by day. We have seen frequent cases of self-immolations in Tibet, calling for the liberation of Tibet from the Chinese tyrannical rule, return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and restoration of religious freedom inside Tibet. Therefore, we must all work to keep the flame of Tibet's freedom alive and see that when the opportunity comes, we must burn down the tyrannical rule of the Communist China.

Finally, I am sure that Tibet will be declared an independent sovereign country soon under the leadership of Dr. Lobsang Sangay and with the blessing of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. With these words I once again welcome all the delegates from all over the world here to this Conference in Dharamshala for the Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups.

Thank you very much. Jai Bharat. Jai Tibbat and Jai Jagat.



Pema Jungney

Speaker, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE), CTA

Tashi Delek and Welcome to Dharamshala. I hope you all had a pleasant journey.

Today, we are gathered here for this important Conference which solely aims to thank each one of you who had over the years worked tremendously hard for the issue of Tibet. This platform specially defines your commitment, time, sacrifices, dedication and loyalty towards the just cause of Tibet. On behalf of all Tibetans in and outside Tibet and the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who have been our support system.

It is indeed a privilege to interact with you from time to time. Your presence in our movement revitalizes the hope of Tibetans inside Tibet and across the world in keeping Tibetan issue alive even after 60 years of exile and working hard towards its resolution.

During our earlier years of exile, Tibetan people and the Central Tibetan Administration received minimum support and attention from the International communities. However, in the late 1980s, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Central Tibetan Administration



and a very few Tibet Support Groups succeeded in gaining attention from international media and public for the issue of Tibet. Thus in 1990, the Central Tibetan Administration held the First International Conference on Tibet Support Groups in Dharamshala to bring more awareness about the issue of Tibet on a broader platform and to garner more support from the international community. Today, we have more than 250 Tibet Support Groups who are working actively towards resolving the issue of Tibet.

Over the years, the Tibet Support Groups advocated the issue of Tibet with their parliamentarians and appealed them to table the matter in their respective Parliaments, created awareness among their people in their respective countries, held rallies, conferences, seminars, strategise campaigns, organised peace marches and many other activities, which surely is noteworthy, and we are indeed very thankful to all of you. Not only that, they pressured policy decision-makers of their respective countries to design policies for the betterment and support of Tibetan movement.

I hereby want to emphasize again that until 1979 the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan people adopted a policy of seeking Tibet's independence since Tibet was an independent country before the illegal occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China. But with the changes in the independent status of countries and nationalities in the world, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama came up with the great vision of Middle Way Approach as the most sensible step in solving the conflicts of Tibet and China in the early 1970s. His Holiness, being very pragmatic in real terms, didn't impose his vision on Tibetan people. On the contrary, His Holiness held a series of discussion with the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (the then Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile), the Kashag (Cabinet) and many scholarly and experienced people on Middle Way Approach that he envisioned as an alternate solution to resolve the Tibetan issue. Particularly in 1979, the late Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's proposal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama that "except independence, all other issues can be resolved through negotiations", further convinced the belief in resolving the issue of Tibet for a mutually beneficial solution. Above that, overwhelming support of the Tibetans in favor of the Middle Way Approach and the concurrent suggestions from Tibet, paved a way towards unanimous adoption of the Middle Way Approach Policy in the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies on 18 September 1997. Eventually, this Approach was adopted democratically and evolved gradually. This peaceful approach meets the realistic interest of both Tibetan and Chinese people and clearly implies not seeking independence but a genuine autonomy within the framework of the constitution of the People's Republic of China; though it is very obvious that historically Tibet has been an independent country. Furthermore, yet again after the majority support on the Middle Way Approach from Tibetan people during the 2008 Special General Meeting held in Dharamshala, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile adopted a unanimous resolution to this policy on 20 March 2010. Therefore, I appeal to each one of you to support the Middle Way Approach in solving the just cause of Tibet and thereby strategise ideas and policies in the interest of both the people of Tibet and China.

Though it is very evident that you all had been actively lobbying on the issue of Tibet with your parliamentarians but we reiterate our appeal to you to inform and update



your parliamentarians about the ongoing critical situation inside Tibet, to urge them to raise their voice in their respective parliaments to call upon Chinese authorities to restart the dialogue process with Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which is at a standstill since 2010. There have been only 9 rounds of talks with the Chinese government since 2002. The Representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama during the 8th round of talks presented the Chinese counterparts a copy of Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People, which clearly outlined the essence and importance of the Middle Way Approach Policy. Then during the 9th round of talks, Note on Memorandum for Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People was presented to the Chinese counterpart wherein it has been explained how the demands of the Tibetan people, as articulated in the memorandum given during 8th round of talk, did not violate the Chinese constitution. After 2010 despite every effort being made by the CTA, there was no positive response from the Chinese authorities for further negotiations. Thus we appeal to each one of you to kindly request your parliamentarians to call upon the Chinese government to restart the negotiations to amicably resolve the Tibetan issue.

In May 2019, we had the 7th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet (WPCT) organised by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in association with Latvian Parliamentary Group for Tibet and International Network of Parliamentarians for Tibet, where Parliamentarians from all over the world declared the urgency of Sino-Tibet conflict resolution and especially urged all parliamentarians to adopt the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act and adopt resolutions in their parliaments towards furthering the issue of Tibet.

Then just recently in October 2019, we had the Third Special General Meeting organised jointly by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the Kashag (Cabinet) wherein a resolution was passed, calling on the Chinese Government that "On the process for the discovery and recognition of the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the entire task and power lies in His Holiness himself and the duly empowered responsible officials of the Gaden Phodrang Trust of the Dalai Lama and in no way can any other entity, be it any nation, any government, any organization of whatever description, or any private individual." And this resolution outrightly rejected the efforts being made by the government of China in the process for the discovery and recognition of reincarnations in Tibetan Buddhism in general and especially its coercive Order No. 5 declared in 2007 on the recognition of reincarnations of tulkus and lamas in Tibetan Buddhism through which it sought to interfere on the recognition of the reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Moreover, it was declared that His Holiness the Great 14th Dalai Lama is the unquestioned leader of Tibetan nation and will continue as the ultimate protector-refuge of utmost recourse both for the present and the future Dalai Lama for a hundred aeons.

Lastly, on behalf of all Tibetans and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, I sincerely extend my utmost gratitude to all the governments, parliaments, non-government organizations and individuals who have so far extended support and offered solidarity in this crucial

period of the Tibetan people. The Tibet Support Groups have consistently supported our Tibetan brothers and sisters in their respective regions and I urge you to kindly continue giving your support and assistance to them.

During these three-day of the conference, I hope all of you will come up with new strategies and framework policies in support of Sino-Tibet relations which is for the betterment of our brothers and sisters inside Tibet who are undergoing brutal repression under China.

With this, I end my speech with a positive attitude and belief that your support will remain with us till the Tibetan issue is resolved. Today, we are gathered here not to agitate or conspire to destroy China but we are here to convey to the Chinese authorities that we are sincerely willing to resolve the long-standing issue of Tibet through peaceful dialogue.

Wish all of you a very fruitful conference.

Thank you once again for your support.



Keynote Address by Dr. Lobsang Sangay

President, Central Tibetan Administration

Introduction

Leaders of the three Pillars of Democracy, Secretaries, Representatives of Offices of Tibet and dear friends from around the world:

On behalf of Kashag, I would like to extend my heartfelt and warm greetings to all of you and Tashi Delek!

We Tibetans believe in omens. We consult gods and deities and look for signs and symbols for anything auspicious. So I asked my staff to bring me all the past resolutions of TSGs. This is the 8th TSG Conference, and the number 8 is significant. Please remember that I will conclude with number 8.

I looked at the Resolution of 1990, the first TSG meeting. The year 1990 represented great things in the world. We have here with us today, a Member of Parliament from South Africa. In 1990 Nelson Mandela was released from prison. He walked tall in his

majestic, elegant way and restored democracy in South Africa. I visited Robben Island where Nelson Mandela spent 27 years of his life in prison, including 8 years in solitary confinement. No one believed it would happen, and it did.

We have representatives from Germany here. Recently we received delegates from Germany. They asked me to give them hope and some inspiring message. I said you are from Germany, you brought down the wall, and that's our inspiration. Now you have come to Dharamshala to seek our inspiration?

We have here with us today representatives from the Czech Republic and Slovakia too. They said we are so pessimistic about Tibet, give us hope. And I replied that Václav Havel drafted Charter 77, the Velvet Revolution. No one believed you would succeed, and you did. You are our inspiration.

The Return of the 1990s Era of People's Resistance Movement

So the 1990s were the good old days. Even for Tibetans, that was the peak stage of Tibetan movement. Why? Mass movements around the world shook the earth and brought democracy and human rights. Now the question is, are we in the 1990s or not? If not, then the movement of Tibet also will be sidelined.

But I will make the argument that we are on the verge of entering or already entered the 1990 stage.

Just a few days ago, I was reading the news, and I am not taking sides here. It said, 'Because of consistent people protests from the grassroots level, the Prime Minister of Lebanon resigned. Because of people's protest in Iraq, the Prime Minister of Iraq is resigning. Similar protests were happening in Prague, the largest since the 1990s and Istanbul, Turkey, Venezuela and everywhere. And of course, our dear friends in Hong Kong have persistently and consistently led the people's protest.

So the 1990s is back, and the earth is shaking for more freedom, more human rights and more democracy. People in Hong Kong are making it loud and clear that they are not there for a few weeks, not for a few months but for the long haul and so are our friends in East Turkestan and Taiwan. Our friends in Taiwan are inching towards the January 11 election of the President of Taiwan. I am not taking sides here, but with the Hong Kong protest, President Tsai Ing-wen saw almost 14 to 18 per cent climb in the poll. So you can clearly see the people's movement is shaking a lot of things around the world. Now, there is a consensus in Washington DC that the Chinese government is a competition and accordingly, they are formulating policies and executing policies as a testament.



The US supports the Tibetan stance on reincarnation

Recently, the CTA invited Samuel Brownback, the Ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom. He came and delivered the most powerful speech in support of Religious Freedom and Reincarnation. The visit just came after 350 Tibetan community leaders from 25 countries convened for the Third Special General Meeting where they unanimously passed a resolution saying reincarnation is an issue of religious freedom. The traditional reincarnation system, Tulku system, dates back to a thousand years. We invented it, so we have complete copyright and patent over it. China can duplicate things, but they can not duplicate the reincarnation system. This is originally ours!

Ambassador Brownback, while agreeing with the resolution, said his speech was approved by the US State Department and the White House. So, the US Government supports the Tibetan stance on reincarnation.

Accordingly, not just the political leaders or intelligence personnel, even the business communities are having second thoughts in doing business with China. German Business Association officially issued a statement saying that China is a systemic competition to German business. Hence, the image that if we can do business with China, we can make profits with China is shifting.

As far as CTA is concerned, as per His Holiness' vision, we want all countries to engage with China, do business and have diplomatic relations with China. We are not up to boycotting anything. Having said that, this is the change in the landscape of the global arena where China is seen or looked more sceptical than a few years ago. In this changing landscape, Tibet Support Groups have to tighten our belts and encourage ourselves to march forward for some more years, for some more activities and some more events around the world, so that we can march towards Lhasa very soon. What do we need to do?

Change in Global Landscape and the Way Forward for TSGs

In the first TSG meeting of 1990, we passed eight resolutions, eight things to do.

No. 1, To work towards His Holiness being invited overseas on state visits and address the United Nations. His Holiness has travelled to 65 countries. He has published more than 100 books and he has received more than 100 awards including the Nobel Peace Prize, Templeton prize for religious harmony and UN Prize for Environmental issues.

No. 2, To establish May 13th as Human Rights Day for China and Tibet.

No. 4, To set up a computer information network. So the first website, Tibet.net, was launched. In the early days, the viewership was estimated at just a few hundred. Now, Tibet.net has an estimate of 8 million viewers in a year. We have also launched TibetTV, which is broadcasted in English, Chinese, Hindi and of course, in Tibetan. So we have fulfilled all that. Having said that Michael Van Walt will be speaking on this more in terms of international narratives.

We are for the Middle Way, but the narrative has to be that Tibet was never part of China and that Tibet was historically and legally an independent country. Based on that fact, we are compromising with the Chinese government, and we are taking a moderate stand where we are willing to take less than what we deserve so that we can reach a win-win proposition. So that China's sovereignty and territorial integrity will not be challenged and we will have genuine autonomy for Tibetans.

So from the 1990s, we have achieved something, but I think as per the campaign of climate change and global warming, Tibet's environment has to be vital. We have an expert from the Tibet Policy Institute who will be speaking on this topic.



No. 6, To campaign effectively with dissident Chinese students abroad. Now we have established at least three Chinese liaison officers in Washington DC, Geneva, Australia and Taipei Office of Tibet and they primarily reach out to Chinese people.

No. 7, To intensify lobbying at the UN through other government and non-government bodies. This remains relevant. We need to make more efforts. At the recent human rights council debates, you might have seen how China is trying to change the definition of Human Rights. They have already passed two resolutions. If their definition of Human Rights succeeds and becomes a statute, then it will be problematic for any country, anybody seeking justice in Human Rights, including us Tibetans. I think we need to do more of this. We have one panel who will speak on how to reach out to the UN.

Lastly, no. 8 To establish an environment desk. We have done that as well.

The eight resolutions from 1990 suggest what we do next. We should stick to the basics and continue to do what we decided to do in 1990. I think we can add some more. We have to reach out to more universities and think tanks. We have to form coalitions with other NGOs to amplify our voices.

Reincarnation was invented by the Tibetan Buddhists. Reincarnation is an issue of religious freedom.

Reincarnation is going to be a major issue in the coming years, and our friends around the world should be prepared because the Chinese Government has a plan which they are already implementing. In 2007, the Chinese Government issued Order no. 5 regulating the reincarnation process. According to the order, for a lama to be recognised, one must submit their application to the district level Communist Party. Only upon the approval and authentication from a district level Communist Party, can one be considered as a Lama. Now for an atheist Government—which says religion is a poison—to issue a certificate for reincarnating lama is in itself an irony but that's the system.

As per the order, if you think you are a higher lama, you can take the district level certificate and go to the state level and say, I am higher lama please issue me a State Level Certificate. And if you think you are the highest one, then you can go to the National Level, and the National Level will issue a certificate. Now, this sounds like a joke, but it is real.

Based on this order, the Chinese government recognised some 300 Lamas. In April 2016, the number increased to 800 and in November 2016, all of a sudden, it jumped to 1300. Historically, we never had more than 545 or 550 Lamas, and now suddenly it has mushroomed or inflated to 1300. The Lamas recognized by the Communist Party of China are given workshops and training. The Lamas must fulfil certain criteria and responsibilities. If you are a true incarnated Lama, you have to be loyal to the Communist

Party of China, you must work towards social harmony, you must be politically correct in what you say, and interestingly, you should not have any contact with the Dalai Lama, and you should not have any contact with international organisations. My goodness, the spiritual leaders have to take so many political responsibilities.

Just a few months ago, the Chinese news media quoted a Lama who was given a workshop saying, “today I am enlightened about my responsibilities as a reincarnated lama, now I know what my responsibilities are.” So these days, Tibetan Lamas get enlightened after the Communist Party gives them a workshop on their responsibilities.

Interestingly, in this list of 1300 lamas, one name that is missing is His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But what they [CCP] are saying is we have rights and responsibility to recognize the next Dalai Lama. Now he is missing in your list, and why are you so interested in recognising the next Dalai Lama. If you want to recognize the next one, put him on the list now, but they say no.

His Holiness has a very good response, “Look, the Community Party is so interested in my reincarnation. If they really believe in reincarnation, first they must search for the reincarnation of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiao Ping and Zhou Enlai. They have done great things for China, so find their reincarnation. Then if I may add, they must be trained in Tibetan monasteries, and when they reach the age of 30, and if they are still monks and spiritual, then yes they can be recognized and enthroned as the reincarnation of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiao Ping and Zhou Enlai.”

I think that’s a good balance because they will be trained in Tibetan Monasteries, they will know about love, compassion, and kindness, and they will be good leaders for the Chinese Government. Once they have certified themselves as someone who can do these things, they can then say that they have proved themselves. Then we will see if we can discuss. Without having done that, they are interfering in our business.

As I mentioned earlier, reincarnation was invented on Tibetan plateaus, 4000 meters high above the sea level, by Tibetans. It has pure air, blessings of gods and deities. There is no pollution in that process. We own it. Now, Chinese are saying, no, we will interfere. They have no right whatsoever.

Many a time when you define a nation or nationality, you always start with a legend or a myth. A nation is defined not just by its territories, geography, government or the population. One of the most important components of a nation is its myth and legend. Hence, there is a myth and a legend about Tibet as a nation and Tibetans as a race. Our father was Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion and our mother was Goddess Tara, the Goddess of Mercy. They came to Tibet and blessed the Tibetan land. And that’s how Tibet and Tibetans originated. By the way, the Buddha of Compassion happened to be a monkey, and our mother was an ogress, a manifestation of the Goddess Tara. So



our father was a monkey which is consistent with the scientific evolution of humanity. The Dalai Lamas are the manifestation of the Buddha of compassion. So as long as there is Buddha of Compassion, there will be Tibet, and as long as there are Tibetan people, there will be Dalai Lamas. So Buddha of Compassion and Tibet are inseparable, and the Dalai Lamas and Tibetan people are inseparable. No matter what the Chinese Government tries to do.

So this is our story, and the Chinese government cannot manufacture this in their factories or the Chinese Communist Party headquarters. We must understand this narrative. When someone asks you what reincarnation is, you tell them that it was invented by Tibetans. Most of the other Buddhist countries do not have reincarnation. Those who have, including Bhutan, Mongolia and others were influenced by Tibetan Buddhist practice. So it is authentically and originally Tibetan, and it relates to Religious Freedom. So what we are saying is as per democracy we all have freedom, freedom to choose. So reincarnation is our business based on religious freedom. Tibetan lamas should choose their reincarnation; the Dalai Lama should choose his reincarnation. That's the argument. If you delve into the complexity and mysticism of the reincarnation process, how the consciousness or soul transfer from one person to another, I always have one answer 'Look if you are a believer, you believe and if you are non-believer, don't believe. We can't convince non-believers, but this is the way Tibetans did it, and this is the way Tibetans want to do it.' We have to bear this in our mind.

Moving forward, the Chinese Government will impose on the whole world their definition and their procedure of reincarnation, and if you think this is their last effort, it is not.

On July 6th, His Holiness' birthday, I met an Indian Journalist in Delhi who was leaving for Tibet as a part of the nine-member media delegation on a 7-day paid trip. After 7 days all the journalists came back, and their articles carried the same headlines which said, 'We the Chinese government will choose the next Dalai Lama and India should not interfere.' If you interfere, you will pay, there will be consequences. India is the second-largest populated country in the whole world, and China is already warning India over the next Dalai Lama. India is a stakeholder. India knows its issue very well. The largest number of Tibetans are in India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama is in India, the Tibetan Administration is in India, and already the Chinese Government is sending warnings to India. So you shouldn't think this will not come to your country or your government, it will come to your government or your country.

We don't want mediators. Our demand is very clear. There can only be one His Holiness the Dalai Lama that is chosen by Tibetans. Some countries propose to mediate and suggest that there can be one Dalai Lama from the Chinese side and one from the Tibetan side.

Thank you His Holiness the Dalai Lama 2020 – A year dedicated to His Holiness

I was in Frankfurt at a small gathering of TSGs to thank them. One Tibet Support Group member said ‘I have been supporting Tibet for 20 years and I am getting old too. The more I make efforts, China keeps growing stronger. The situation in Tibet is becoming worse and worse, and I am losing heart. I am almost thinking of giving up as there is no result.’ But after the Thank You event, he said ‘Look if what I have done is worth saying thank you from your side, then I will continue for another five or ten years.’

Today I want to tell you all that your efforts, big or small, makes a difference. It is worth saying thank you. It is not just in words but deep from my heart. All of you have been with us. Not just for one or two months, not just for one or two years but for more than 10, 20 and 30 years. I am sure like our German friend, many of you have gone through the same thoughts. Your effort is resulting. As His Holiness says “You all are not simply pro-Tibet, but you are pro-justice.” Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. You should take pride that we were the key players in the 1990s when the world changed with more Human Rights. We were key players, the Free Tibet movement was very popular, and Free Tibet was a slogan.

Unrest in Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan—an affirmation of what Tibetans have been saying for 30 years

Today you see the result. In the 1990s, when Free Tibet was the most popular campaign, the International community said yes, Tibet situation is bad, but you are an exception. We have been telling them we are not an exception, we are part of a larger problem.

Today, the Tibet issue is validated by what is happening in Xinjiang. This is what we have been saying for 60 years, and more loudly so in the last 30 years. What happened to us is happening in the rest of China. We are not an exception, look at Xinjiang. But some say Xinjiang is another minority.

Then what's happening in Hong Kong? Hong Kongers are out in the streets for months and months. They are saying whether we are Chinese or Cantonese, we also want



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OPENING CEREMONY

democracy, and we also want basic freedom. Now the whole world is saying yes, Hong Kong is also a problem.

Our friends in Taiwan are saying we are facing threats of war, threats of cyberwar, threats of a propaganda war, threats of a cultural war in Taiwan. Even Taiwanese are saying yes, it is a problem. So we are not an exception. What is happening in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Xinjiang is an affirmation of what we have been saying for the last 30 years. So we all are partners. And today we have Mongolian friends too. When the international community notices that their situation is as bad as in Tibet and Xinjiang, they will also be prepared.

Hence today's conference is very important. The 1990s is coming back, and we are veterans of the 1990s. We should be prepared to share our wisdom, knowledge and expertise with activism around the world, including in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Taiwan, Mongolia and with Chinese dissidents around the world. We will play a pivotal role in bringing changes in China. That day will happen.

Why? We are Tibetans. We believe in symbols and signs from above. Today is the 8th International Tibet Support Group conference. In Chinese, no. 8 is Bā [Chin: 八] which means prosperity, which is why the Chinese Olympic was held on 8 August 2008 at 8.8 pm. Today is the 8th International Conference, its Bā, prosperity for Tibet is going to happen through this conference.

In 1990, 8 resolutions were passed. From this conference, we have to pass 8 different campaigns. Coincidentally, 88 different groups have come to this conference. In 2011, I also took the oath on August 8th, sending a message to China that during my tenure, prosperity after prosperity will happen. And it has. Dharamshala has prospered. The Chinese government cannot criticise this conference as today is the Bā conference, the 8th conference.

If they criticise Bā, they will not achieve prosperity. So today's conference will be applauded even by the Communists, the non-believers.

Bā conference will lead to Bā for Tibet, and that's how His Holiness the Dalai Lama will return to Tibet. Basic freedom will be restored in Tibet and Tibetans in and outside Tibet will be reunited. We will have the 9th TSG conference in Tibet. 9th is also a lucky number for Chinese.

We are the Bā conference moving to the 9th. So it is all good.

Thank you very much.



Tsewang Gyalpo Arya

Secretary, Department of Information and International Relations, CTA

Tashi Delek, Namaste and Good Morning.

Honourable Chief Guest Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Mr. Pema Jungney, the Members of the Parliament, Supreme Court Justice Commissioner Sonam Norbu Dagpo and the Justice Commissioners, President Dr. Lobsang Sangay of Central Tibetan Administration, Honourable Kalons, Election and Public Service Commissioner Wangdu Tsering, Auditor General Pema Damdul Arya, Secretaries of CTA Departments and Representatives of Offices of Tibet, Chairman of the Core Group for Tibetans Mr. R.K Khrimy, Speaker and Members of the International Tibet Support Groups and NGOs from around 42 countries, Press and Media Representatives:

With this, we come to the end of the inaugural session of the Eighth International Tibet Support Groups Conference.

Now I would like to convey the vote of thanks to those who have made this function great and successful. First of all, I would like to thank all the dignitaries and guests on the dais and the members of the International Tibet Support Groups and supporters who have come all the way to Dharamshala to attend this conference. And I would like to thank our Honourable Chief Guest Mr. Pema Jungney, Speaker of Tibetan Parliament in Exile, for his address and especially explaining about the Middle Way Approach. I



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thank President Dr. Lobsang Sangay for the keynote address, his welcome message and briefing on the importance of this conference and his update on some important issues and for those interesting anecdotes that he shared with us.

We especially thank the President for his guidance and supervision for making this Conference happen. Thank you, Kungoe. And Mr. R.K Khrimey, the National Convener of The Core Group for Tibetan Cause, the organiser of this Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, for his welcome and introductory speech. Mr. Khrimey and the other Core Group Members have worked closely with our ITCO India Outreach Office in making this Conference happen on time. We thank Mr. Khrimey and the members of the Core Group and the ITCO staff for their sincere hard work.

Then we have staff of the Department of Information and International Relations who have been working overtime to make the arrangements for this Conference, hotel bookings, vehicle arrangement, etc. Our staff have been allocated with different responsibilities. I thank all the DIIR staff and especially Ms. Donzey and Ms. Tsetan who have been coordinating all the representatives and participants and scheduling the events. I would also like to thank Chief Justice Commissioner Mr. Dagpo who was till recently the Secretary of DIIR and much of the work in organizing this Conference has been because of his guidance. Thank you, Kungoe.

And my thanks to Mr. Surender Kumar, National Co-Convener, Core Group for Tibetan Cause, who had to be the Master of Ceremony today at the last minute and he has done a great job. And TIPA Artist for the presentation of the National Anthem. I may have missed some, to them I offer my apology and at the same time I would like to thank them sincerely for their contribution.

Lastly, I pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and May the sunshine of freedom come to Tibet. May Tibetans inside and outside Tibet reunite at the earliest and may this International Tibet Support Groups Conference be successful and open many doors to resolve the Tibet issue.

Thank you very much and Thukje Che Nang.



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PLENARY SESSION - I



Briefing on:

Eyewitness Account by Namgyal Dolma

Former Tibetan Political Prisoner

Current Human Rights Situation in Tibet by Dukthen Kyi

Head, UN, EU & Human Rights Desk

Department of Information and International Relations, CTA

Moderator : Axel Holger Grafmanns

Executive Director, Tibet Initiative Deutschland, Germany



Namgyal Dolma

Eyewitness Account, Former Tibetan Political Prisoner

Tashi Delek to everyone:

My name is Namgyal Dolma. I am 41 years old and I escaped from Tibet in 2018. I left my homeland in August 2018 and arrived in Dharamshala in October, the same year. I came into exile because of the things that were happening at home.

It was in March 2012 when I was travelling to the county where I was born. We saw that all the vehicles were being stopped by the Chinese authorities. Everyone was removed from their vehicles and were told that we could not proceed further. So my friends and I came out of the vehicle and started walking the rest of the journey. My county was about 20-30 kilometers from where we were stopped.

When I was walking as well as after I reached the county, I noticed that all the businesses, shops, and restaurants were closed that day even in bright daylight. At that moment I did not know what was happening until all of a sudden, a Tibetan lady came in the street and started shouting and calling out to other Tibetans saying that our monks are being arrested by the Chinese authorities and that they are suffering. Later, we came to know that over 50 monks were arrested by the Chinese authorities from a monastery in my village. They had been arrested just because they had participated in a protest against China. Gradually, many Tibetans around the county started gathering and then we marched to the prison where the monks had been detained. For the whole night, we sat outside the prison in protest and demanded the release of the monks. In total, there were about 400-500 Tibetans who were mostly Tibetan nomads because my village was a nomadic village. We stayed outside the prison the whole night shouting for the release of our monks. But around dawn, the Chinese authorities told us that we can come inside and see for ourselves that they do not have anyone inside arrested. And to our shock, we did not see anyone there, not even a single monk. We grew concerned about what may have happened to the more than 50 monks who were arrested earlier. So about two hours later, we did not have any choice but to go back home. When we reached home, we received a call from the local village authorities who said that one member from each family must come for an urgent meeting. In my village, there are about 70-80 families so each one had to go and attend the meeting. At the meeting, there were two Chinese authorities who said that they know a lot of people from this village who had participated in the protest that happened a few hours ago. They warned us of the consequences. However, at that point, they did not know who had participated in the protest so they only hinted that there would be consequences.

Usually, the practice is that some of the police will be walking around such protests and taking films of the protest. This is how they caught me on the camera and said that I had committed the “first crime against the state” and warned me to be careful or I would be punished for the “crime”. They also brought thick sets of documents, all written in Chinese, which I did not know so I did not understand what it said but they forced me to sign it with my thumbprint. It appeared to be an agreement to not indulge in any political protest. I was given copies of government policies and laws. They told me that I had to read through the policies to know what I was not allowed to do. They also said what I had done was a “crime against the state under the law”. This was my first engagement in political issues.

The second time was later around 2013 and 2014. I was a member of a social media group on WeChat. There were over 300 members and our purpose was to help the orphans in getting education, helping the poor who need medical attention and the elderly who do not have anyone taking care of them. Through the WeChat app, we used to collect donations to support them financially. A year later I had to leave the group because the Chinese authorities said that this group was “illegal” and that what we were doing was “illegal”. They even arrested the Admin and some other members of the group in the following months. So I had to leave this group.

Then around 2015 and 2016, I created a similar group on WeChat which was called “Tsera-Chung-Chung” which can be translated as a “small playground”. The group with over 100 members was mainly for entertainment purposes such as sharing folk songs and dances. Later on, we also started fundraising projects to financially help the needy ones in my village. Then one day, the local authorities summoned me once again to the police station because of my engagement in these groups. There were two policemen who interrogated me for almost two hours. They also confiscated my cell phone and said they need to go through my phone. I was told to come to collect my phone a few days later. After two days, I went to collect my phone but the authorities told me to go to the county level office because they had taken my phone to check its content. I went to the county office where I was again interrogated. There was a young Tibetan lady who was translating for me because they were all speaking in Chinese. The questions that they were asking me were very disturbing. They asked me why I created this group, what was the objective of this group, the source of income, and from where I was getting all the money, although it was clear that the money was donated by the members themselves to take care of the needy people. At one point they also asked me if I had any support from the “Dalai Clique” which is a derogatory way of referring to His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as the Tibetans in exile and the supporters. I was asked if there were “Dalai Cliques” behind my group and if I had contacts outside my group. I answered the questions honestly, clarifying that it was only for the purpose of the welfare of the needy Tibetans that I had created this group.

When I went to the county authority, I also learned that they had confiscated cell phones of four more members of the group chat. This interrogation went on for hours and at



times it would go on for 3-4 hours. I was detained for two days at the county level police station. After much interrogation, they came to know that there was nothing political about the work I was doing but they still accused me of “standing up against the Chinese Government” for the second time and accused me of committing “the major crime”. They said that I was opposing the “Chinese policy welfare benefits that the motherland has created to take care of its people”. Because I had created the social group to help the poor people, they accused me of standing and opposing the Chinese policies.

However, at the time, my mother was really ill so after two days of detention, I was allowed to return home. My mother lived at my birthplace so I had to travel to see her but the police authorities had told me that every time I want to travel anywhere, I have to seek their permission for wherever I was going. They told me that I couldn’t move around freely because according to them “this is the second major crime that I had committed “against the state”. They did not return my phone. They kept my cell phone for four months. As I had to contact my mother, I took a cellphone from a relative and tried accessing my WeChat account but everything on the account had been deleted and I was logged out automatically after signing in with credentials.

I am a single mother of two children who had a difficult life raising the children on my own. Therefore I was inspired and driven to extend a helping hand to the needy ones, the orphans, the elders and the infirm in my village.

It was only when I created a WeChat account on my relative’s name that I was able to get access to WeChat again. Even today, I am still using that account. It is clear that the local authorities had blacklisted me as someone “causing trouble” every now and then. It had become problematic for me to live comfortably or move around freely. Every time I had to go somewhere, I had to write an application to the authorities informing them of where I was going.

In my village, the grasslands used to be a free place but it is now being wired up by the Chinese authorities and the fields are being removed by forcibly planting trees so that Tibetans had limited areas to farm. Whether it is in terms of movement or employment, the Tibetans had to depend highly on the local Chinese authorities. It was not only for me that life was becoming difficult in Tibet but my elder son as well. In 2008, he participated in a protest in his school for language rights as the Tibetan students were restricted access to the Tibetan language in their school. In 2012, there was another students’ demonstration when the medium of instruction for the schools changed from bilingual education system to Chinese mandarin system. Removing the opportunity and access to the Tibetan language for the Tibetan students was another major reason why it was becoming difficult for both of us to continue to live in Tibet.

One day when my son asked me if we can go somewhere far away and live in a free country, I decided to escape. I think my journey from Tibet to India has been blessed by

This is how we were able to reach Nepal where we were received at the Tibetan Reception Centre. After reaching Nepal, my son received text messages from the Chinese authorities from the village level, county level and even prefecture level. The messages said that we were a “separatist” who had “run away from our motherland” and “would not be able to come back to the motherland”. It also said that my family members and relatives would face problems.

Even though we arrived in India safely, I still have my younger son in Tibet as well as my other family members. Not long after I arrived in India, my ailing mother passed away. I did not get a chance to see my mother at her deathbed. In October 2018, my relatives started getting messages from the Chinese authorities back in my homeland saying that they will give us one month's time for us to return to Tibet or there would be no second chance. But we decided to stay back in India.

I come from a very small village yet it faces immense repression at the hands of the Chinese authorities. As I mentioned earlier, all the jobs have been taken over by the Chinese and the Tibetans are left with nothing. Our grasslands have been taken away from us and we have no access to them. The lands of many farmers have been taken away as well. They cannot practise their livelihood that they have been practising for generations. Initially, the government provided some kind of compensation though it was a very minimal amount but, later on, that too stopped. The Tibetans have lost their grasslands, homes and are left with nothing.

In terms of religious freedom, possessing a picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is strictly forbidden in our village. When we have group prayers of reciting mantras,



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they would come repeatedly for inspection and would question us about who organised the prayer sessions and why we were doing the prayers. Even for such a small prayer session, they would repeatedly disturb us. The Chinese government does give some kind of welfare benefits but they are not realistic to an extent that would benefit the Tibetan in the villages. This is why we had to raise funds online via group chats to help fellow Tibetans in our village.

I would like to thank all the Tibet supporters, individuals and groups, who have come from different parts of the world for their hard work and efforts in resolving the Tibet issue.

Thank you very much.

Dukthen Kyi

Head, UN, EU & Human Rights Desk

Department of Information and International Relations, CTA

Current Human Rights Situation in Tibet

I will briefly touch upon the current human rights situation inside Tibet. Thank you, Alex, for the introduction.

I will begin with a brief introduction about what human rights desk, DIIR, Central Tibetan Administration is doing. Our main priority is the human rights situation inside Tibet. It is what is going on inside Tibet that we are most concerned about. On a regular basis, we monitor and report on human rights situation inside Tibet and then provide this information in materials and reports to various international human rights organisations such as the United Nations, various governments and parliaments, etc.

Besides the regular monitoring of human rights, our desk is also engaged in advocacy and lobby work around the world. So far in recent years, we have focussed more on advocacy at the UN level. Last year, we had China undergoing its third cycle of Universal Periodic Review at the UN so for that we undertook a week-long lobby at missions based in Delhi as well as in Geneva where the UN missions are based.

It is a growing challenge nowadays to get not just the reports but to verify the information from several sources which we get through our Department of Security. As everyone in this room knows, Tibet this year in the Freedom House report, 2019 was yet again designated as the second least free region in the world. This itself tells us how serious or dire the situation inside Tibet is. China was also named as one of the worst violators of human rights, especially in terms of freedom of religion and belief by the European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion in their report last year. In the same year, there was also a report by the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination where they specifically mentioned their concerns about the racially discriminatory practices especially in the employment of Tibetans as well as advertisement and recruitment processes.

One of the biggest concerns regarding religious repression has been the mass demolition of Yarchen Gar this summer where more than five thousand Tibetan nuns were removed from their Buddhist centre and their houses were shattered to dust. This also happened two years ago at Larung Gar Buddhist institute which is considered as one of the world's largest Tibetan Buddhist centres.



Recently I met a few Tibetans who had arrived from Tibet just a few months ago. They were explaining how Chinese policies have concentrated much on Tibetan monasteries and Buddhist institutes. We have various examples of the mass demolition of Larung Gar and Yarchen Gar but also in terms of restrictions on enrolling new Tibetan monks and nuns. Last year we also received reports of young Tibetan monks under the age of 18 being forcefully removed from their monasteries against their will and made to join communist schools instead.

One of the new arrivals, a monk from Larung Gar, even mentioned that “you are free to die in a Tibetan monastery but you are not free to live in one.”

And then there’s the Chinese government’s interference in Tibetan reincarnation system, which is a much-discussed issue at the moment so I will not elaborate on that much. We all are concerned about China’s meddling in the reincarnation process and our concern rises from the very fact that the 11th Panchen Lama who turned 30 this year has remained unheard of 24 years.

The Central Tibetan Administration marked this year as the 24th year of the enforced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima. It is still an open case with the Committee for the Rights of the Child at the United Nations.

In terms of language and cultural rights violations, the very well-known case of arrest and sentencing of Tibetan language rights advocate Tashi Wangchuk who was sentenced unjustly to five years remains in jail without access to a lawyer is just an example. Tibetan children don’t have the space to learn their own language in schools. Because of this, during the winter break, the Tibetan monasteries voluntarily hold Tibetan language classes and religious classes. However, the Chinese authorities ordered the monasteries to close these informal classes. The imposition of the ban on Tibetan children’s religious studies and language classes violates their right to language and religion.

We have been hearing about all these issues and the concerns of Tibetans living inside Tibet through their continued expression of what’s happening in Tibet, the violation of their freedoms and the Chinese government’s repression in their own homes and villages just as Namgyal Dolma had shared with us. Not only through mass peaceful protests, but we have also seen and received reports of solo protests as well as the continued self-immolations by Tibetans until the end of last year. So, because of this the number of Tibetans being arrested and sentenced continue to rise even to this day. As simple and small as celebrating the birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama can lead to sentencing, as was the case of at least nine Tibetans who were sentenced last year.

We have received another concerning report earlier this year—death due to torture as everyone in this room may know. Just between April to May in less than two months time, we received reports of three Tibetans who have died due to torture they have

suffered while they were in prison. Yeshe Gyatso, Pema Wangchen and Lekshey Thupten all passed away, some of them have suffered prolonged illness while they were serving sentences.

Our Sikyong mentioned earlier, things are worsening day by day inside Tibet and every year we do not hear any good news in terms of human rights inside Tibet. So this is where our work and our role as Tibetan activists or Tibet support groups around the world come in. I also wanted to stress the importance of advocacy at every level whether at the United Nations, the European Union or with governments and parliaments in your own home countries, it always makes a difference.

Since we are running out of time, I think I will leave with just one note that we need to have coordinated advocacy and lobby work. I see many friends and familiar faces here who have already started on advocacy coalition and working on strategic planning. So it must go on.

Thank you very much.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

PLENARY SESSION - II



Briefing on Political Support for Tibet

South Africa: Mkhuleko M Hlengwa

MP, Inkatha Freedom Party

Hong Kong: Joseph Yu Shek Cheng

Researcher and Writer

Uyghur: Zumretay Airken

World Uyghur Congress, Germany

China: Chongyi Feng

Professor, University of Technology, Sydney

Taiwan: Fu-Te Ford Liao

Director, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy

Inner Mongolia: Daichin Aoyama Olhunud

Chairman, Southern Mongolia Congress, Japan

Australia: Micheal Danby

Former Chairman, The Australian Parliament's
Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee

Moderator : Marco Antonio Karam

Director, Casa Tibet Mexico, Mexico

Mkhuleko M Hlengwa

MP, Inkatha Freedom Party, South Africa

Directors of Program, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am here as a friend of peace, justice and freedom. I am a child of South Africa and a friend of Tibet.

The cause for freedom in Tibet is a cause that must be carried by all who believe in the principles of liberty, equality, human rights and democracy. I learned years ago from my leader, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, that a threat to freedom anywhere is a threat to freedom everywhere. I am therefore honoured to participate in this Conference of Tibet Support Groups on behalf of my party, the Inkatha Freedom Party. The IFP champions constitutional democracy in South Africa, and we serve the values of democracy everywhere.

Our support for the Tibetan cause was born out of a long friendship between our leader, Prince Buthelezi, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Prince Buthelezi fought against apartheid in South Africa and was among the protagonists who won democracy for our country. He served for ten years in a democratic government, having been appointed as Minister of Home Affairs by President Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki.

The Prince founded the Inkatha Freedom Party, 44 years ago, as a centre of political mobilisation towards freedom. After leading the IFP for all these years, he now serves in an advisory capacity as President Emeritus of the IFP. But he remains a Member of Parliament, and in that capacity, he still actively champions the Tibetan cause. He has charged us the younger generation in the Party to take up the Tibetan cause in South Africa. This is a charge we accept for we believe in its worth.

Prince Buthelezi has participated in several of the World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet, and when he was not able to attend he sent our senior IFP Members of Parliament to add our voice and our support. Unfortunately, because South Africa was engaged in a national election in May this year, we were not able to attend the Convention in Latvia. We felt it very important therefore that the IFP participate in this Conference.

I want to thank the National Convener of the Core Group for the Tibetan Cause, in India, for extending an invitation to us. This is a valuable opportunity for us to consider the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet, and to share our expertise so that we might design a coordinated and strategic response. I must say, I was honoured to meet the



President of the Central Tibetan Administration, His Excellency Dr. Lobsang Sangay, in South Africa last year. Dr. Sangay was visiting our country for the first time, at the invitation of Prince Buthelezi and the IFP. It was wonderful to show him South Africa's Parliament and to introduce him to our MPs who are sharing the fight for Tibetan freedom.

The IFP hopes to have the pleasure of hosting the Honourable Mr. Pema Jungney, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, during next year's State of the Nation Address and the opening of our Parliament.

I wish I could say that South Africa as a whole is as committed to the cause of Tibet as we are in the IFP. Sadly, over the past decade, the South African Government has denied His Holiness the Dalai Lama entry into our country 3 times, for which Prince Buthelezi took them to court. Our people don't have access to the truth about Tibet.

I believe the South African government acted unconstitutionally when it denied a visa to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, preventing him from visiting South Africa. We have not seen His Holiness on South African soil for more than a decade. The IFP believes that all people have a right to hear him and to freely associate with him. I am ashamed of my Government for bowing to pressure from China.

How many know that Tibet is the least free region in the world, after Syria? How many know of China's exploitation of Tibet's mineral resources that are polluting land, water and air? How many know of the self-immolations of desperate people dying for lack of freedom?

Tibet is more than twice the size of South Africa, and the Central Tibetan Administration represents the aspirations of some 6 million people. When we talk about Tibet, we are talking about the global struggle for democracy, freedom and peace. The reality is that the international community supported South Africa's struggle for freedom; now it must support that struggle for Tibet. We are grateful for the invitation to learn how we can further our support in this struggle. Equally, our voice must be heard in support of those who seek freedom or peace or democracy or independence in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Western Sahara, Syria or Venezuela and everywhere else around the World.

We also remain committed to the pursuit and realisation of the Two-State Solution insofar as the Israel-Palestine question is concerned. And we stand opposed to the annexation of Crimea. The voices of the free and liberated must be heard speaking for those who are oppressed; for their oppression is our oppression and their freedom our commitment.

Our silence is music in the ears of the oppressor.

This therefore, calls for heightened Global Action in all spaces and platforms where we speak and where we have influence. The culmination of our collective efforts will move our course in the right direction.

Long before Prince Buthelezi personally met His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he admired the commitment of His Holiness to non-violence as a means of conflict resolution. The IFP paid a high price for maintaining this principle during South Africa's liberation struggle. We were accused of being puppets of the apartheid regime because we refused to take up arms and engage violence against our oppressors.

It was deeply encouraging to know that leaders of the calibre of the Dalai Lama, and the Mahatma Gandhi, agreed with our approach. When His Holiness finally visited South Africa in August 1996, and again in December 1999, Prince Buthelezi had the privilege of approving his visa, for he was serving as the Minister of Home Affairs in our democratic government. As the Minister, he was also able to intervene in 1997 to enable the Office of Tibet to open in Pretoria, South Africa, from which Tibetan representatives could (and still do) engage with South Africa's political leadership, as well as with our citizens. This has kept the Tibetan cause visible in our country.

Our discussions, as the IFP, with His Holiness both inside and outside South Africa, notably at the World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet in Edinburgh and Rome, were focused around the need to further the cause of human rights internationally. We must therefore continue to openly call for China to recognise Tibet's unique cultural identity, to adhere to international standards of human rights, to be willing to engage in diplomatic negotiations, and to accept autonomy for Tibet. We must speak out against China's exploitation of Tibet's natural resources, which is causing environmental degradation, and their attempt to assimilate Tibetans which is destroying cultural heritage.

I believe that every free individual and nation has a responsibility to promote the freedom of all. The mere fact that human rights abuses continue, anywhere, in a world that embraces democracy and freedom, should concern us all. Our experience, in South Africa, under apartheid of activists 'going missing', never to be heard from again, has heightened my sensitivity to this particular atrocity against human rights. The IFP therefore supports the continuous call by human rights organisations throughout the world for the release of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, recognised as the Panchen Lama in May 1995 by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Panchen Lama is considered to be the youngest political prisoner in the world, having been taken into so-called protective custody by China when he was just 6 years old. If he is indeed in protective custody, that should have ended when he turned 18.



Why was the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child consistently denied access to the Panchen Lama? Where is he? He must be released.

For years the IFP has been concerned that African leaders have underestimated the extent of power they are handing to China for the sake of economic support through trade and investment. There is undoubtedly a strategy behind the increased power that China is establishing in Africa. Unfortunately, African governments, including our own, have not placed enough emphasis on using trade relations to push the agenda of democratisation and human rights.

I have always understood that China has an important role to play in world politics, a role that is becoming increasingly influential. But I also hope that China will reach a point where the need for internal democratisation will be a prerequisite for continued prominence and international influence.

What could the Tibetan people in general and the Tibetan leadership, in particular, learn from South African freedom struggle?

Your struggle is not just about Tibet, just as our own struggle against oppression was not just about South Africa. Our shared cause is for freedom and human rights everywhere. Every person has a right to their identity, culture, security and liberty, simply by virtue of being human.

One of the central lessons of South Africa's struggle is the importance of negotiation. I believe negotiations were, and still are, the only path to freedom. It is tragic that violence ever became a political strategy. When Prince Buthelezi met with Dr. Sangay in Cape Town in February last year, this is what he told him, "We know that China is a powerful nation with vast resources. How can Tibet possibly hope to prevail against China? Because light always prevails against darkness. This is not a fight against China, but a fight against oppression. When the disenfranchised people of South Africa stood against an apartheid regime, we were the poor and downtrodden, standing against overwhelming military, economic and political power. But ultimately, the cause of liberation prevailed."

The fact that we were able to overcome suggests that victory is possible, even against the greatest odds. By granting Tibet the limited and reasonable autonomy the Middle Way approach advocates, China would bequeath on the world the legacy of a successful nonviolent struggle, which will inform how present and future conflicts may be resolved. Conversely, the failure of the Tibetan cause may discredit nonviolence forever.

We must build and maintain a global network of mobilization to make more and more people aware of the ongoing human rights' violations in Tibet. In South Africa, we are considering tabling a proposal for a formal Parliamentary network recognizing and

interacting with the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. One of the main purposes of such an initiative should be that of providing on-going mobilization and awareness promotion in respect of human rights' violations.

In conclusion, I feel that the greatest challenge before us is that of bringing the Tibetan cause back within the mainstream of attention, mobilization and commitment of democratic governments, universities, action groups, NGOs and churches worldwide, in the same way, we did with the struggle against apartheid.

During the Rome Congress, His Holiness the Dalai Lama pointed out that no one has anything to gain politically from promoting the Tibetan issue. That is true, and in that lies the beauty of us all being here today. The cause of Tibet is a matter of principle. Therefore, being pro-Tibet does not make one anti-China, and as such being pro-China should not make one anti-Tibet!

We are here today to also use the Tibetan cause as an occasion in which we wish to reaffirm that we shall not allow, on this or on any other occasion, any departure from those fundamental values and principles which inspired our struggle for liberation and on which our Republic was forged and founded. In that sense, the cause of Tibet is one of the litmus tests on which the health of global democracy can be assessed.

The IFP is proud to call ourselves Friends of Tibet. We will continue to raise awareness for the cause of Tibet and for peace, freedom and justice for all people, everywhere.

I thank you!



Joseph Yu Shek Cheng

Researcher and Writer, Hong Kong

As a retired political science professor specializing in International Relations and a pro-democracy activist in Hong Kong, I have now come to Dharamshala to articulate my support for the people of Tibet.

They have been in devout pursuit of world peace; and even under the most adverse conditions, they have never abandoned the paramount principle of non-violent struggle. In this way, they have set a good example for the world. I also believe in the non-violent struggle for democracy in Hong Kong. I consider this is the only way to secure the support of a majority of Hong Kong people; and hopefully, that of the international community and international public opinion. But more than these pragmatic considerations, the non-violent struggle is a matter of principle for me too, because the means to an end is important.

The religious beliefs of Tibetan Buddhism have served as the foundation for this pursuit of world peace and non-violent struggle. The beliefs of life after death and reincarnation mean that the sacrifices in this life have value in the following life, and thus enhance the willingness of making sacrifices and accepting suffering. This willingness and acceptance as a religious and cultural tradition have become a part of the Tibetans' value system.

Tibetans' religious beliefs and value system also facilitates their pursuit of inner peace. This inner peace offers satisfaction in life and strengthens their ability to face difficult environments and severe challenges. It has become a source of strength and wisdom.

Peace extends to Tibetans' relationship with nature. Living in a brittle ecology, Tibetans throughout many centuries have learnt to respect nature and protect their environment with self-restraint. The human race as a whole has only now begun to learn to co-exist peacefully with nature. In terms of protection of the environment, Tibetans have a contribution to offer.

As a pro-democracy activist in Hong Kong, I am acutely aware of the infiltration of various pro-democracy groups there by the pro-Beijing united front. I often adopt the principle of "we have no secrets, we have nothing to hide". Obviously, the same United Front apparatus has been eager to infiltrate various Tibetan groups. Apparently, the inner peace of the Tibetans has given them confidence and protection against infiltration.

The viability of the political system has been supported by its broadly accepted legitimacy and effective governance. Despite limited financial sources, the government in exile has been able to function efficiently, fairly and without the contamination of corruption.

As a pro-democracy activist, I firmly believe that our common ground is the upholding of our human dignity and our cherished values. In our common pursuit through non-violent struggles, we respect each other and help each other. We appeal for the support of the international community and international public opinion.

In the previous decades, many Hong Kong people accorded a higher priority to nationalism and the unification of China. Now more and more people, especially the younger generation, understand the importance of the struggle for liberty, human rights and democracy. The fact that we face a common threat helps us understand each other better.

I acknowledge that my understanding of Tibetan people, their culture and their religion is very, very limited. I have come to Dharamshala to seek understanding and enlightenment, and I am most grateful for this opportunity.



Zumretay Airken

World Uyghur Congress, Germany

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for having me. I am here on behalf of the World Uyghur Congress, a Non-profit organization that is based in Munich, Germany. I am going to talk about Uyghur Tibetan Cooperation today.

The Uyghur Tibetan cooperation dates from the 1960s when Isa Alptekin met His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence for the first time. He was one of the prominent figures in Uyghur activism back in East Turkistan and this relationship continues in the 1980s when his son Erkin Alptekin, who is also the first world Uyghur Congress President met the Dalai Lama in Turkey. And in 1985 with this relationship, a joint federation of Uyghurs, Tibetans and Mongolians was established in Zurich, Switzerland. One of the key moments was in 2005 when political prisoner, Rabiye Kadeer was released from prison with the collaboration of the US Government. She meets the Dalai Lama for the first time and the relationship booms from there.

One of the most important works the World Uyghur Congress does in collaboration with the Tibetan community is our advocacy at the United Nations. The World Uyghur Congress works closely with the Tibet advocacy coalition and the Students for a Free Tibet representatives in Europe inside the UN within different bodies, such as treaty bodies, Universal Periodic Reviews and special procedures. There are often overlaps on the Uyghur and Tibetan issues since both groups face the same oppression by the Chinese government. We experience the same crackdowns from the Chinese authorities on cultural and social rights and especially on religious freedom.

Another important work that is done in collaboration with the Tibetan community is our UNPO work. The Unrepresented Nations and People's Organizations was first established in the 1980s by exile leaders of people living under communist regime, such as Linnard Mall of The Congress of Estonia, Erkin Alptekin of the Uyghur people, Lodi Gyari of Tibet along with Michael Van Walt Van Praag, International law advisors of the 14th Dalai Lama. The main goal of UNPO was then to replicate the powerful message of non-violence and inter-ethnic tolerance in the face of oppression exhibited by the Tibetan people and championed by the 14th Dalai Lama and to provide a forum in which others are encouraged and supported to adopt similar approaches. UNPO is one of the primary initiatives that is meant to bring together Uyghurs, Tibetans and other minorities and push for collective action. UNPO is an International nonviolent and democratic membership organization and it has more than a thousand members. It

represents indigenous people, minorities, unrecognised states and it gives them a voice inside the international community.

One of the main ways we collaborate with Tibetans is by holding joint demonstrations. On 1st October 2019, we held a joint demonstration in Brussels together with the International Campaign for Tibet, Tibetan Community in Belgium, UNPO and the Belgian Uyghur Association to highlight the 70 years of repression under Chinese rule as the People's Republic of China was celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the birth of PRC. This demonstration was very successful; it brought together over seven hundred people in the streets of Brussels.

On the 4th of April 2019, there was also another joint demonstration in Brussels together again with the International Campaign for Tibet against the EU-China summit. And in November last year, there was another joint demonstration in Brussels with the Tibetan and Mongolian communities to call on the Asian Europe summit.

We also work on joint campaigns. The latest ongoing campaign is against Apple to stop supporting China's crackdown on Freedom. As we all know since 2017, Apple has denied people living under China's rule to access free and open internet by removing over thousands of VPN, Virtual Private Networks from their App store in China on the demand of Chinese authorities. VPNs are important especially for Uyghurs, Tibetans, Mongolians, Chinese dissidents and human rights activists because it provides critical and safe communication channels for them. And in October 2019, Apple removed HongKongmap.live crowdsourcing app being used by Hong Kong residents and journalists in order to see where protests are being held so they know which areas to avoid to stay safe.

The Chinese government is engaging in unprecedented and escalating attacks on human rights on both Uyghurs, Tibetans and also Hong Kong brothers and sisters. This campaign was held by the International Tibet Network, Sum of Us, Students for a Free Tibet, Free Tibet, Tibet Action Institute and the World Uyghur Congress. Another campaign that was launched was the campaign against Google, "Respect Human Rights", and "Don't do China's dirty work" on 17th June 2019. A coalition of Uyghur, Tibetan and Chinese activists joined ethical consumer specialist to raise ongoing concerns about Google's development of a censored engine for China, Codenamed "Project Dragonfly". This engine for China was linked with link users searches on their personal phone numbers making it harder to avoid official surveillance and that also aimed to blacklist certain search terms labeled sensitive by the Chinese Government such as "Uyghur activism", "Tibet activism" and "East Turkestan". All these people came together and discussed the resolution calling for the company to be broken up due to human rights violations and they spoke on different panels. Due to the joint advocacy for the termination of this project, the outcome was quite successful, because, in June 2019, Google terminated the project.



We often issue press releases together. The last one was the World Uyghur Congress along with Students for a Free Tibet and Tibet Action Institute and “Sum of Us” were calling on Apple. We also issued a press release on 1st October for the 70 years of repression.

The World Uyghur Congress today cooperates with many Tibetan organizations and associations across the world, the main ones are: International Campaign for Tibet, Tibet Initiative, Students for a Free Tibet, Tibet Action Institute, International Tibet Network, Free Tibet.

For better and more efficient Uyghur-Tibetan cooperation in the future, there needs to be more shared information, shared strategies, ideas, solid reciprocity of press access and perhaps economic relations.

I am going to end by presenting the World Uyghur Congress. The main objective of our organization is to promote democracy, human rights and freedom for the Uyghur People in East Turkestan, and in the diaspora. The WUC engages regularly with the international fora, such as the United Nations system to raise human rights violations against the Uyghur people.

Both Tibetans and Uyghurs share the same interests as I mentioned previously. We live under the same oppressive regime and the crackdown on freedom of religion is similar and the language bans are implemented the same way in East Turkestan and in Tibet. Millions of Uyghurs have been sent into internment camps since 2017.

I believe Tibetans and Uyghurs have to stand in solidarity to amplify our voices in the international community and advocate for the respect of human rights in China.

Thank you.

Chongyi Feng

Associate Professor, University of Technology, Sydney

Thank you very much for the invitation. First of all I would extend my very deep apology to all of you because any trouble anywhere in the world is mainly caused by the Chinese communist government. I also offer my very sincere salute to you, the Tibetan freedom fighters and the Tibetan supporters from all over the world who have come together in solidarity to fight in resistance against the Chinese communist regime.

My topic for the talk is ‘Quest for autonomy by Tibetans and HongKongers in Comparative Perspective’. As we are gathered here today, the “Water Revolution” in Hong Kong is going on with great vigour. One thing that always confuse people around the world is that, whenever there is anyone standing up against the Chinese communist regime, whether they are Tibetans or HongKongers, they make it pretty clear that they are fighting for autonomy, yet they are all accused as separatists: “You are fighting for Tibetan independence”, “You are fighting for Hong Kong independence.” But in the eyes of Chinese communist regime they see separatists everywhere; Tibetans, HongKongers, Uyghurs, Inner Mongolians, Taiwanese everywhere in the world. You may find this very complicated but the Chinese communists are very strange and their ideas are different. They treat autonomy as independence because genuine autonomy is not compatible with the Chinese communist rule.

So, no matter how many times His Holiness the Dalai Lama told the world: ‘We the Tibetans only pursue autonomy rather than independence and we have adopted the Middle Way Approach to fight for our genuine autonomy through nonviolence’, His Holiness has been continuously accused as Tibetan separatist leader over the several decades.

No matter how the HongKongers’ five major demands had nothing to do with independence, they are accused by the Beijing regime as separatists pursuing Hong Kong independence. This regime is simply irrational that they cannot tolerate any individual autonomy or community autonomy. This is the real cause of all the troubles around the world anywhere when you fight for your human rights, fight for your basic dignity, you run into direct conflict with the regime.

As a historian or political scientist, I can say the Chinese communist rule in China from the last seven decades is an utter failure. It failed the Chinese nation, it created misery, suffering, tension and contradictions everywhere. The regime has driven the Tibetans, Taiwanese, Hongkongers further and further away from the Chinese nation simply because the Chinese communists want to maintain their grip on power. They



need to suppress the basic human rights of free expression, free belief, and free speech. They have alienated everyone within the Chinese communist rule in China. They may seem very powerful. Policies adopted by governments around the world, especially the free world, over the last four decades, have allowed this regime to accumulate so much wealth. In my eyes, the “China Model”, as they call it, is the worst combination of communist brutality with neoliberal brutality which pursues profit at the cost of everything else, including human rights, the environment and anything that we value. In that process, the Chinese communist regime has accumulated huge wealth and then they use the wealth and power to suppress freedom fighters anywhere in China and around the world.

However, they can appear to be strong but they are losing the hearts and minds of people in China and around the world. Deep inside, they are extremely weak—a very weak regime. It is due to this deep sense of insecurity that they cannot open up and cannot tolerate any pursuit of human rights and autonomy. And this has triggered rebellion and resistance in our Chinese community, Tibetan community, Hongkongers and Taiwanese everywhere. Now all those forces are trying to fight and gather in solidarity. This fight spells the end of the Chinese communist regime.

In the good old days of the 1980s, there was one good thing that we call “de-totalitarianism”, a change to open up China a little bit for personal autonomy, political liberalization and economic openness to the outside world. It gave some hope for us, for the West as well. But now, especially after Xi Jinping’s rise to power, the Chinese communists have started to close the window again—turning China from post-totalitarianism back to totalitarianism.

For us, this reversion from post-totalitarianism to totalitarianism is not acceptable. Simply because the resistance from Chinese communities, Tibetans, HongKongers and Taiwanese, and other freedom fighters, with the support of you all, is invincible.

Together, we will bring down this regime and liberate the Chinese, Tibetans, HongKongers, Taiwanese, Uyghurs or anyone else around the world.

Thank you very much.

Fu-Te Ford Liao

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Taiwan

Good day Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very much honoured to be invited to the Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups. Just for a brief introduction, I always regard myself as a human rights activist and law scholar. So I think I should not be a violator of human rights including your right to food. Therefore I will focus very simply on four points.

The first point I would try to make is that no matter what political or sovereign status Tibet is or will be, universal values of democracy and human rights should be guaranteed in every corner of the world and of course including Tibet. We have learned that, in the past, Tibet was not a part of China and currently Tibet is illegally occupied by the Chinese government. And for the future, I do believe that it is consensus among us that we all support that Tibet should gain its status of sovereign state no matter through what we call Middle Way or autonomy status. Tibet should finally regain its status as a sovereign state.

The second point is that, therefore we should focus very much on the human rights and democracy situations in Tibet. It is very clear that there is no democracy at all in Tibet. I think it is again our consensus that the human rights situation in Tibet is quite seriously damaged and very bad. We just heard the status of the Tibetans from the victims; we also heard the brief story of the human rights situation in Tibet. At Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, we also publish every year a “China Human rights report” by applying universal laws of human rights standards of International Bill of Rights including Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We have found that human rights situations in China are quite bad including the right to liberty, right to education, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech. Violations are quite serious everywhere in China. And of course in Tibet, situations are also quite bad. As we all know that particularly re-education camps have been set up to suppress the non-conformist and the monks. The Chinese government has strongly restricted Tibetans from participating in religious activities, and the topics concerning Tibet are off-limits in the Confucius institutes all over the world. There are also some human rights organizations that have condemned the Human Rights Council for doing nothing on China’s suppression on Tibet.



So we have gathered here to stand with Tibet and stand for Tibet. We have talked about whether Tibet is an exceptional case or maybe it is not, but it is my view that is not the key point. The real point is that no matter if Tibet is an exceptional case or not, universal values of human rights and democracy should be put into practice.

The third point I would try to make is that the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy has been fighting for democracy and human rights. Therefore, of course, TFD stands for and with Tibet whenever there are universal values concerns. In fact, apart from publishing China human rights reports every year, we also offer grants to our NGO friends no matter domestically or internationally to fight for democracy and human rights. Of course, it includes Tibet; we have been supporting several organizations in Taiwan and in the international arena to support human rights and democracy in Tibet.

So if I may, I would like to take this opportunity to say that if you have a good project or any thought that we can cooperate with or work together for Tibet's democracy and human rights, please let Taiwan Foundation for Democracy know.

And the fourth and last point I am trying to make is that all members of the international community must resist and reject the Chinese government's intention to escape from accountability for human rights violations in Tibet. Taiwan's past developments to democracy show that a very important factor of success is that we had a lot of help from international friends. We all know that currently Tibet and East Turkestan are living as parts of China, and Hong Kong and Macau have so-called "one country, two systems". We also know that Taiwan is, in fact, the last frontier to China. All of these are very serious damages to democracy and human rights. Allow me to mention a case in Taiwan. In this May, Taiwan legalized same-sex marriage, and Taiwan is the first one in Asia to do so. During that period of time, we emphasized two words, "Together Stronger". I think they can also be applied here.

Let us work together, then we will become stronger.

Thank you very much!

Daichin Aoyama Olhunud

Chairman, Southern Mongolia Congress, Japan

Today, I am very honoured to speak in front of Tibet supporters gathered here from all over the world. I have been engaging in activities with the goal to establish the right of national self-determination of Southern Mongol (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region according to the Chinese government). Mongolians as well as Tibetans believe in Tibetan Buddhism and deeply respect His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Southern Mongolia has also been subject to serious suppression since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Like Tibet, the Chinese government's policies against our ethnic group can be called ethnic group extermination policies. During the Cultural Revolution, in particular, officially admitted by the Chinese government, about 30,000 Mongolians were victimized. Some other researchers claim that the number of Mongolian victims reached hundreds of thousands of people. This tragedy occurred due to Mongolians' having their own values, cultures and beliefs different from those of the Han Chinese.

This was done in the same way as slaughter and suppression of the Tibetans by the Chinese government. It is the same genocide as Nazis previously committed against Jewish people. Nevertheless, the Tibetans and Southern Mongolians have never given in to any violence and engaged in peaceful resistance movements to protect their ethnic pride, while keeping their belief and tradition in their minds. Actually, such resistance movements are being supported by the voices of people like you all who continuously protested against the Chinese government from outside China that the Chinese government should stop committing inhumane acts and give freedom to Tibet.

Now, let me conclude my speech by pledging that we, Mongolians, will never give up fighting for our freedom as long as you all are there for us.



Micheal Danby

Former Chairman, The Australian Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Australia

As the last speaker, it is always hard. I promise you I am not Fidel Castro but I do want to focus on our dear Australian professor liberated from a Chinese jail and his remarks about how the struggle against China all over the world affects the Tibetan cause.

In the last ten years, I have been surprised that as the struggle of Hong Kong has become more apparent; as the terrible concentration camps of Beijing in East Turkestan have become more widely known, even by satellite photos that you can buy commercially; and of course the oppression of our dear Tibetan friends. This is not in the interest of China. Beijing was much happier when it was doing business all around the world, when it was taking over Africa or the South Pacific, when it wasn't showing its teeth. Deng Xiaoping was a great leader of China and I think he made the doctrine of economic prosperity without aggression, the dictum of China of his day. It's different now. We see it in the streets of Hong Kong, in Tibet, East Turkestan, Kazakhstan, the South China Sea, Africa, the South Pacific where debt leverage diplomacy is being used by a regime that wants to extent its strategic influence by seizing the assets of sovereign countries. They claim they want to economically assist people around the world but this is not really what it is primarily about.

From all of these struggles, a very important positive development has emerged. I am astonished—I have seen it in America too—at the pushback from the public, from the media to increasing aggression from Beijing. Typically two nights ago, on the leading current affairs program on CNN with Christiane Amanpour, the editor of the Economist was interviewed and she said of the two biggest issues facing the world, one of them is the rise of China. We have nothing against the economic prosperity of Chinese people but the aggression of this regime and the militarisation of this regime, the heavy hand of this regime as our tragic refugee testimony before this session testified (referring to the eyewitness account by Political prisoner) and as we know from Uyghur friends. And we see every night on the TV in the streets of Hong Kong. Their hand is clearly being shown but around the rest of the world whether it's Africa, South Pacific, in Europe, North America, people are resisting this. If you read any of the newspapers, media from left to right, it's not an ideological thing. People are opposed to the suppression of human rights, to these unjust treatment of minorities and to the aggression and militarisation all around the world. I hope that our Tibetan friends who are practicing steadfastness and continuing with this networking that this conference is typical of, will be able to surf off that increasing knowledge of the nature of the regime that they are up against to widen their support.

Our only two areas where Beijing has, in my view, been successful is in some elements of the capital system in the business community—you know all of these kinds of people I don't have to tell you stories about them from your own countries. We certainly have them in Australia where the United Front department has half of their personnel provided to them by three Australian billionaires to do business with China, selling them iron ore and coal and other products. Again quite legitimate but again they don't have to accept Beijing's strategic view of the world, its suppressions of Tibetan and Uyghurs and others in order to sell iron ore. It does not follow. One is not connected with the other.

What this conference is about, what the Tibetan cause and struggle under His Holiness and lately under Dr. Sangay have done, just continue it, store it, steadfast, keep going, network with people. There are more and more people around the world who understand what you are all about because of Beijing's aggression. At any moment, let's hope a moment may come, like the fall of the wall under communism or the rise of Nelson Mandela, it could happen. So we just need to keep that solidarity and steadfastness.

Let me conclude by responding to the Prime Minister in Exile about reincarnation. China is a Marxist regime. They don't believe in religion. According to Karl Marx, religion is the opium of the people. What is a Marxist regime doing and telling pro-independent people how they should practice their religion. Amongst Anglo-Saxons, the comedy Monty Python is very popular, from young to old. This is something from Monty Python. We should laugh at them. I have suggested to the Prime Minister that one of the most subversive things that led to the defeat of the Soviet Union and to the destruction of the Soviet Communism was humour. The jokes that I used to get from my East European friends about the latest events in Moscow. I had a great Russian writer friend who used to go on TV and mock the Communists and it completely undermined their legitimacy. I suggest this ridiculous, hilarious and stupid decision of Beijing to interfere in religious incarnations when they are a Marxist regime opposed to all religion is something that can lead to many, many jokes. And I hope Tibetan friends encourage them, spread them and let's, by humour, spread the Tibetan righteousness of the Tibetan cause around the world and the right of the Tibetan People to have a reincarnation decided by themselves and not by people who steal six-year-old children in Beijing.

PLENARY SESSION - III



Briefing on A New Climatic Reality on the Tibetan Plateau by Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha

Environment and Development Desk, Tibet Policy Institute, DIIR, CTA

Moderator : Martin Bursik

Former Deputy Prime Minister, Czechs Support Tibet, Czech Republic

Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha

Environment and Development Desk, Tibet Policy Institute, DIIR, CTA

A New Climate Reality on the Tibetan Plateau

The Tibetan Plateau has been battered by an unprecedented number of floods and landslides, occurring simultaneously at multiple locations across the region since 2016. The local inhabitants are unable to understand and adapt respectively to the drastic change in the climatic conditions on the plateau. The rising temperature and increasing precipitation, as a result of global climate change, is seen as one of the primary causes of the increase in the occurrences of natural disasters on the Tibetan Plateau. Unfortunately, the situation has been further exacerbated by excessive construction and mining activities in Tibet under Chinese occupation.

For a comprehensive understanding of the impact of climate change on the Tibetan Plateau and its possible global implications, a clear understanding of its ecological importance is vital.

The Tibetan Plateau sits at an average elevation of more than 4000 meters above sea level, with an area of 2.5 million square kilometers. At nearly 2% of earth's land surface, it is the world's highest and largest plateau and referred to as the 'Roof of the World'. The presence of 46,000 glaciers, covering an area of 105,000 sq. km. makes the plateau the largest source of accessible freshwater on the planet and the third largest reservoir of ice, after the North and South Poles. For this reason, scientists sometimes refer to it as the Third Pole".

Furthermore, the plateau is the source of Asia's six largest rivers: the Dri Chu/Yangtze, Machu/Yellow, Zachu/Mekong, Gyalmo Ngulchu/Salween, Senge Tsangpo/Indus and Yarlung Tsangpo/ Brahmaputra. These rivers from "the Water Tower of Asia" help feed 1.5 billion people in some of the most-densely populated nations in the world, including India, China, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The melt water from the 12,000 km³ of glaciers in Tibet ensures a constant flow of Asia's major rivers, greatly influencing the social and economic development of a fifth of the world's population.

The timing and intensity of the Indian and East Asian monsoons are greatly influenced by climate change on the Tibetan Plateau: the Indian summer monsoon is intensified and the East China summer monsoon is weakened due to human-induced land cover change on the Tibetan Plateau. For this reason, the plateau is also called “the Weather Maker of Asia”. Even the worsening heatwaves in Europe and northeast Asia are linked to the plateau’s receding snow cover.



It is clear that the ecological health of the Tibetan Plateau is vital for a stable social, economic and environmental well-being of Tibet, China, Asia and the world.

The three articles (enclosed below) written in successive years by the same author would give the readers a clear understanding of the phase and scale of the impact of climate changes on the Tibetan Plateau in recent years.

Natural Disasters in Tibet: Is it the New Normal?

World's highest plateau witnessed three different natural disasters in a month. A 600 million cubic meters of glacial slide onto the Aru summer pasture of Ruthok County on 17 July 2016, killing nine people, burying more than 110 yaks and 350 sheep. Ruthok is one of the seven counties of Ngari prefecture of the Tibetan Autonomous Regions (TAR), located in the northwestern edge of Tibet, bordering Xinjiang in the north and Ladakh (India) in the west.

Far away from Ruthok, in the north-eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau, mud floods and landslides killed two Tibetans and injured more than 30 people on the 9th day of the same month. The unusual mud flood also killed dozens of wild animals and livestock in the four counties of Tsolho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province.

Around the same time, a rare drought-hit Chumarleb and Matoe counties (water source of Asia's major rivers like the Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong), leaving behind a dried river bed with hundreds of dead fish. Ironically, local residents had to drink from lakes and muddy rivers despite Tibet being the 'Water Tower of Asia'.

A glacial avalanche, mud floods and drought within the month of July is a natural disaster too many too quickly. Local Tibetans are worried about the new trend of frequent natural disasters. A trend which might be, unfortunately, becoming the 'New Normal in Tibet'.

Now, what is the cause behind the increasing number of natural disasters in Tibet in recent months or years?

"Climate change and human development are jeopardizing the plateau's fragile environment," writes Jane Qui (Double threat for Tibet, Nature, August 19, 2014), precisely answering the causes behind the worrying natural trend.

Tibet is the world's largest and highest plateau; from where earth's majestic peaks rise into the sky and mighty rivers gush through most of Asia, feeding billions plus lives in the riparian states and influencing the weather patterns as far as Europe. But with the temperature rising twice more than the global average, the plateau's 46000 glaciers are rapidly melting and the streams are quickly drying up.

Despite the Tibetan Plateau facing the severest impact from climate change, there is an absolute lack of public education and awareness program on how to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Much of China's environment-related policies framed in recent years are aimed at solving urban coastal pollution problems rather than protecting the fragile ethnic regions of Tibet and Xinjiang.

The local residents of Tsoholo blamed the recent mud-flood in the region to excessive mining and tunnelling of the mountains. The impact of climate change has been exacerbated by the increasing scale of resource extractions and dam constructions in the Tibetan areas. Mining has become the biggest concern for both the land and people of Tibet, causing landslides, grassland degradation and water pollution. According to the Environment & Development Desk of the Tibet Policy Institute, there has been more than 30 known environment-related protests in Tibet since 2009.

The dire implication of excessive mining in Tibet has been echoed by Chinese scientists as well. Jane Qui citing a report from Chinese Academy of Science that the "Tibetan mines produced 100 million tonnes of wastewater in 2007 and 18.8 million tonnes of solid waste in 2009. Because most of the mines are open pits and have limited environmental oversight, air, water and soil pollution is particularly serious."

A similar horrendous scenario was reported in the (2009) Tibet Handbook, the author of the travel guide writes that "the hills around Chumarleb have heavily eroded by the itinerant 70,000 or 80,000 Chinese gold miners who come here during the summer months. The lawlessness of these prospectors is encouraged by the paucity of the police force assigned to monitor them," a firsthand account. This is the same site where a recent drought has been reported and desertification is a serious issue.

Despite a clear warning of increasing natural disasters in Tibet such as landslides, torrential floods and snow disasters in an Environment Assessment Report (2015) published by the Institute of Tibetan Plateau, the Chinese government continues to expand and expedite mining and damming in Tibet.

Thus increasing the likelihood of more natural disasters as well as exacerbating the impact of any natural disaster. The flood in Tashigang township of Lhatse County (August 3, 2016) in central Tibet is one of the most recent disasters. Fortunately, it was a breach of river embankment and not a dam burst as hurriedly reported by Xinhua news.

Nevertheless, rising river levels due to increasing rainfall and fast melting of glaciers could burst dams and cause catastrophic disasters to Tibet, China and Asia. Tibet is home to probably the largest number of dams in the world and the Chinese government has been investing heavily on building mega dams. The Suwalong hydropower project on the Yangtze River with a design capacity of 1.2 gigawatts is in the latest list of mega dams on this seismically active plateau.



A sudden rise in temperature and increase in natural disasters has been strongly felt by the local Tibetans in recent years. But the lack of information and infrastructure to mitigate the impact and adapt to the new pattern of global weather system has left Tibetans unprepared and unprotected.

Meanwhile, the Chinese government continues to build railways and dams to accelerate the exploitation of more than 3,000 proven mineral reserves found in Tibet.

Flooded Tibet: Struggling to adapt to the new reality

On 30 August 2017, a massive landslide buried nine people in Golok Machen region of north eastern Tibet. The horrifying disaster occurred in the early hours of the day (4:30 am) while residents were still in bed. The day could have been, otherwise, a beautiful summer morning with nomadic melodies echoing across the valley as residents carry on their daily chores. But life on the Tibetan plateau is no longer the same. According to Science Daily (9 December 2016), climate change may now be affecting the once stable regions of the Tibetan Plateau.

The impact of climate change is evident with an unprecedented number of natural disasters across the plateau since 2016, mostly floods and landslides due to torrential rainfall.

As such in 2016, an unusual glacial avalanche in (Aru) Ruthok County of Ngari killed nine people and buried more than 110 yaks. Mud floods and landslides in Labrang, Sangchu, Tsolho and other regions of Amdo injured more than 30 people and caused huge damage. Thus clearly signals drastic shift in the climatic pattern on the Tibetan Plateau.

The shift was apparent as 2017 saw simultaneous floods in many parts of Kham in Tibet.

There is growing worry about the increasing natural disasters and their imminent threat to the life of millions. This writer published an article titled 'Natural disasters in Tibet: Is it the new normal' on 8 August 2016, asking the People's Republic of China (PRC) to make necessary arrangements to minimize the impact of increasing natural disasters. The PRC should be applauded for the massive drive to plant trees across Tibet which would have an immense benefit in the future.

But the recent flood damages in Golok, Dege, Jomda, Sokzong and Rongdrak could have been avoided had the Chinese government proactively pursued a policy of safety first in any infrastructure development in Tibetan areas. The government has been forewarned of increasing natural disasters including landslides, torrential floods, snow disasters and forest fires in a 2015 scientific Assessment Report by the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research under Chinese Academy of Science in Beijing.

The question is, has the relevant governments taken any measures or framed any policy guidelines to face the new challenges. Who should be accountable for the loss of life and damage to property?

The plateau is witnessing a rapid rise in both temperature and precipitation in recent years. This inevitable change caused by climate change cannot be avoided but damages could be easily reduced if the impact of climate change is taken into consideration while framing any development policies.

To frame any such policy, a thorough study should be done to understand the factors or the causes behind recent natural disasters in Tibet. So following are the few possible causes as per the understanding of this writer.

Climate Change

Climate change is certainly the primary cause of increasing natural disasters in Tibet. The plateau has been witnessing a consecutive rise in both temperature and precipitation, especially in recent years. At 0.3–0.4°C per decade, the temperature rise on the Tibetan plateau is twice the global average. This has led to massive permafrost degradation in northern regions of Tibet, resulting in increased water flow as frozen grounds quickly melts and degrades into desert.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the temperature rise has also caused 82% of glacial on the Tibetan plateau to retreat in the past 50 years. In many parts of Kham and Amdo, glaciers are drastically retreating and mountain slopes are dangerously thawing. As mountain slopes thaw and frozen ground loosen, villages and towns located on hillsides and in narrow valleys are in constant danger from impending landslides.

The situation is further exacerbated by the increased rainfall, especially in the eastern regions of Tibet. This is evident from the Tibet Summer Climate Report (2016) which stated that Tibet experienced higher than average temperature and the highest record of monthly total precipitation in the same historical period.

Rapid Urbanization

Rapid urbanization has led to land grab as most of the towns and cities in Tibet are located in narrow valleys with little space to extend in either direction. This has led to the construction of high rise buildings and over congestion. According to a Chinese government report, the number of towns and cities in Tibet increased from 31 to 140 between the years 1990 to 2013. China has set a target of reaching 60% urbanization by 2020 from its 56.1% in 2015. The so-called Tibet Autonomous Region plans to reach

its urbanization rate at 30% by 2020 from its 25.7% in 2014. This is 0.4% faster than the overall target rate pursued by the Chinese government. The rush for urbanization is apparent with clusters of buildings coming up in every Tibetan town and cities.

Chamdo, Shigatse, and Nyintri were declared prefecture-level cities. Soon all of the 18 prefecture headquarters across Tibet would be upgraded into prefecture-level cities. There are around 150 county-level towns that could also grow into cities.

Poor Construction

From the recent floods in Jomda and other Tibetan areas clearly demonstrated poor construction standards. Collapse of many of the buildings could have been avoided had the homes been built with better standard to withstand floods and earthquakes.

Location or Topography

Most of the towns and cities in Tibet are located in narrow valleys along major rivers, such locations are highly prone to floods and landslides. As those towns grow in size, homes cram up on the steep slopes or encroach into the river banks, thus exacerbating the situation to a point where even a small natural event could cause massive damage.

Lack of Adaptation

Lack of adaptation is apparent as both the government and the communities were unprepared when disasters struck. There has been no climate change impact awareness program as both the government officials and the general public are unaware of the socio-environmental impact of climate change. Hence natural disasters are taken as local events.

Conclusion

The summers are the best time of the year for Tibetans. People celebrate summer with festivals and picnics. Such a joyful occasion could turn into a nightmare if natural disasters continue to strike. Climate change is a global phenomenon but impacts vary from place to place. The magnitude of climate change-related damages depends on how individual governments proactively pursue policies and take measures. Adaptation and Mitigation are the two universally accepted principle solutions in facing the new climatic reality. Lack of awareness weakens any effort in dealing with climate change; hence both the government officials and the general public should be educated on the possible impacts of climate change

For any future development policies in Tibet, impact of climate change and local socio-ecological conditions should be taken into consideration.

The impact of climate change on the Tibetan plateau is apparent with unusual scale of torrential rainfall reported across Tibet. The drastic climatic shift has resulted in high frequency of floods and landslides occurring simultaneously in various parts of Tibet as we write.

- **July 10, 2018** – More than 19 townships, 101 villages and 9122 families were affected by floods in Drukchu Dzong (kanlho Prefecture, Gansu) in eastern Amdo due to heavy rainfall.

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- **July 15, 2018** – Landslides were reported due to heavy rainfall in Zamthang Dzong in Ngawa region of Tibet.

- **July 15, 2018** – A brave Tibetan policeman rescued a local resident washed away by the surging Nyung River in Shigatze.

- **July 17, 2018** – Unusual (summer) heavy snowfall was reported in the Gormo region of northern Tibet.

A rare case of floods over a vast area of a summer pasture site has put Tibetan nomads and their tents inundated in many regions of Ngawa in Amdo.

Ever since 2016, Tibet has seen an unprecedented number of floods, landslides, and mudslides due to rising temperatures and increasing rainfall. For the first time in 2016, a new trend of simultaneous landslides, mudslides and floods were reported from different parts of Amdo. The extent of natural disasters has been much more severe in the following year (2017) with massive floods in many parts of Kham.

The once cold and arid plateau is undergoing a massive climatic shift with a warming rate of 0.3°C per decade, which is twice more than the global average. According to a scientific paper on the climatic shift in Tibet from 1961 -2015, published by a group of Chinese scientists (April 25, 2017), they have cited continuous rise in both temperature and precipitation for the last 50 years. The paper also stated that the years 1962-1985 and 1991-1998 were dry periods, while the years 1985- 1991 and 1998-2000 were periods of more rainfall. The research was based on data from hundreds of meteorological stations spread across the plateau. The researchers found that places like Dartsedo, Nyarong, Lithang, Tsethang, Delingkha and Dulan experienced a maximum increase in precipitation, while Sershul, Chigdril and Shigatze recorded the largest decrease in rainfall.

As per our understanding, a) climate change and rising temperature, b) rapid urbanization and excessive construction works, c) topographic features and location of towns and villages, d) poor construction materials or traditional homes not suitable for the new climatic reality, e) lack climate change awareness programs to adapt to the new climatic pattern and mitigate the impacts are the five primary causes of increasing natural disasters in Tibet. We have been focusing on these issues by highlighting the situation through talks, articles and short video films in hope of making the Chinese government aware of the dire situation and to take necessary measures to mitigate the impact. We also launched a six-minute video on the subject recently to assist Tibetans both in exile and in Tibet, to understand the causes of the increasing natural disasters in Tibet.

The change is inevitable, hence we have to adapt to the rapidly changing climatic pattern on the Tibetan Plateau and must take necessary measures to mitigate the impact of the new climatic reality. Beyond the numerous threats, the rising temperature and increased rainfall on the (once) arid plateau also has positive benefits that we must harness. An extensive tree plantation drive across Tibet is urgently needed to prevent further floods, landslides, desertification and rising temperature.

PLENARY SESSION - IV



Briefing on Speaking Truth to Power regarding China's Claim to Tibet by Michael Van Walt Van Praag

Executive President of Kreddha, USA

Moderator : Gunther Cologna

Co-Chair, International Tibet Network (ITN), South Tyrol

Executive President of Kreddha, USA

Speaking Truth to Power regarding China's claim to Tibet

The issue that brings us here today is a conflict that has and continues to cause tremendous human suffering. I would like to call your attention to a development that is profoundly detrimental to the prospects of meaningful negotiations to resolve it: governments are today by and large acting as if the situation in Tibet is a Chinese internal affair, outside of their purview.

Beijing has successfully implemented the well-tested Soviet strategy of reflexive control or маскировка. This strategy entails a government's sustained campaign of feeding opponents information that makes them act in ways that government wants them to. The methods vary, and many are premised on the psychological phenomenon that when the brain is exposed to the same information continuously, it begins to perceive that information as true—regardless of conflicting or contrary evidence.

Counter intelligence specialist Asha Rangappa explained this strategy in an article published in the New York Times last April. I quote:

“The idea is to feed your adversary a set of assumptions that will produce a predictable response. That response furthers a goal that advances your interests. By luring your opponent into agreeing with your initial assumptions, you can control the narrative, and ultimate outcome, in your favour. Best of all, the outcome is one in which your adversary has voluntarily acceded.”(Asha Rangappa, New York Times, 19 April 2019).

How is this working with respect to Tibet?

Over the past decades the PRC has consistently fed the international community the notion that Tibet has always been a part of China. The result is that today many assume, without any conclusive evidence to support it, that there is some truth to this claim. This is the effect of step 1 of the strategy: by having been continuously exposed to the notion that Tibet was historically part of China, government officials, diplomats, legislators and policymakers have started to perceive this information to be true. This, in turn, has automatically triggered in them the universal norm of non-interference in the internal affairs of another state. That is step 2 of the strategy: the predictable response.



By getting the international community to accept the notion that Tibet may have been a part of China historically, however tentatively, Beijing is successfully changing the narrative and with it the international community's perception of the nature of its conflict with Tibet. The Sino-Tibetan conflict is now increasingly viewed as an internal Chinese matter. This radically limits what action governments believe they can take: they can express concern about human rights violations, but they feel precluded from addressing the root cause of the conflict: China's unlawful occupation and annexation of Tibet.

And we implicitly go along with it, limiting our Asks largely to human rights issues and cultural preservation, and often couch even the demand for autonomy in those terms.

For many years, namely from the start of the most recent Sino-Tibetan dialogue, almost 20 years ago, we have mostly followed Dharamshala's lead in not emphasizing the illegitimacy of China's rule in Tibet. This was done in the hope that it would encourage Beijing to respond positively to Tibetan proposals and engage in earnest dialogue on autonomy. Not upsetting or challenging the PRC leadership was part of the Tibetan leaders' commitment to "leave no stone unturned" in efforts to make the talks successful. But silence and accommodation did not have the desired effect. In fact, it enabled Beijing to take advantage and gain international acceptance for its narrative, at the expense of the truth.

Our governments may see no harm in giving in to Beijing's pressure to make repeated public statements recognizing that Tibet is part of China, given that the Dalai Lama and the CTA are today not seeking independence but autonomy within the PRC. Yet those government statements not only reinforce the Chinese narrative but allow Beijing to use our governments' recognition as a source of legitimacy to rule Tibet! Our governments' statements legitimize what the PRC itself cannot legitimize: its illegal invasion, occupation and annexation of Tibet. And what's more, in doing so, it is enabling the PRC to entirely bypass the Tibetan people and their legitimate leaders and representatives, the Dalai Lama and the CTA. The Tibetans' leverage is removed, and the PRC's perceived need to negotiate is gone.

The PRC does not claim the right to rule Tibet on the basis of its conquest of Tibet in 1949/50 or at any other time. It does not claim it on the basis of effective control over Tibet. It claims the right to rule Tibet only on its allegation that Tibet was always a part of China, and is now bolstering this by pointing to our governments' recognition of that claim.

This realization brings Tibet's history to the forefront so that Beijing's claim can no longer be left unaddressed. I am not suggesting that we bring history into the conflict or negotiations. Beijing already did that by demanding that the Dalai Lama publicly acknowledge that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times as a precondition to any substantive talks. What I am saying is that we must challenge China's claim

that it is the legitimate sovereign of Tibet today based on a false historical narrative it has been imposing on us. Acquiescing to, or not challenging China's narrative has serious consequences for the prospects of resolving the Sino-Tibetan conflict and for the Tibetans' very survival as a people. Not challenging China's historical claim to Tibet also emboldens Beijing in advancing similar historical narratives to lay claim to other foreign territories in Northern India, the South China Sea and elsewhere, and makes them harder to refute.

Today I can state with confidence that Tibet was historically never a part of China. I am not saying that Tibet was historically always independent. I am saying that the study of Mongol, Chinese, Tibetan and Manchu historical sources leads to the conclusion that at no time before the PRC's invasion of Tibet was Tibet a part of China. You have been given a booklet, which is a working paper called Speaking Truth to Power Regarding China's Claim to Tibet which we, at Kreddha, have prepared. It contains a summary of the Chinese claim that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times, and then unpacks that claim and its accompanying narrative, uncovering why it does not hold water.

It explains why modern concepts of sovereignty and territoriality cannot be applied to historical Asian politics and their relations because it leads to false characterizations of them. It similarly explains why we cannot apply the norms of the Sinic world and its legal order to historical Inner Asia as the PRC and many scholars do, nor to Tibet's relations with the empires of the Mongols and the Manchus. We show that to understand the nature of those relations we must instead apply the principles and norms of the Chinggisid Mongol and Tibetan Buddhist legal orders that governed them.

These insights were gained over a 10 year period of studying not only Chinese historical sources, but Mongol, Tibetan and Manchu ones as well. On a quest to understand the provenance of conflicting perceptions of history we engaged over 70 leading scholars on the nature of politics, their rule and inter-polity relations in historical Inner and East Asia. That resulted in the publication of Sacred Mandates: Asian International Relations since Chinggis Khan (Chicago University Press 2018). With a thorough and new understanding of historical Inner and East Asia, we subsequently examined the question whether Tibet was ever a part of China, again with the help of leading historians. The findings of that study, as well as the international and legal and policy consequences, are presented in a comprehensive Tibet Brief, to be released next year.

It is a precursor to a comprehensive Tibet Brief, which will also contain the international legal and policy consequences of our historical findings, and which will be released next year. The booklet you have contains only those sections most relevant to the agenda of this international TSG conference.



I invite you to read it because it deconstructs and debunks the Chinese government's narrative that Tibet was always a part of China. People, including government officials, give China the benefit of the doubt when it comes to history, not only because Beijing holds the largest microphone and a big stick, but also because we think we don't know enough about the complicated history in that part of the world. The document is a long read, but I hope it answers all the questions you might have on the subject and gives you the confidence to engage on the subject matter with anybody and everybody. I also invite you to send me comments and questions on it so we can address them as we complete the Tibet Brief.

I realize this is a lot to ask. It is much easier to propose that we leave history for what it is and concentrate on the future, as I have heard some say, including here in Dharamshala. In my professional opinion, this is a fantasy option: Beijing has very little motivation to talk about the future if its historical claim to Tibet is not actively challenged.

There are compelling reasons why it matters that Tibet was not a part of China and why Beijing's claim should not be left unchallenged. Let me explain the principal ones and what they mean for our governments' policy decisions.

It matters because it qualifies the 1949/50 Chinese military advance into Tibet as an act of aggression, the annexation as illegal, and Tibet's status today as an occupied territory. It means that Tibet's territory is disputed and that the Sino-Tibetan conflict is an international conflict. Aggression is a serious violation of international law that cannot lead to a lawful acquisition of territory and therefore sovereignty by the aggressor.

This matters because it affects the legal obligations of the PRC under international law. The form of rule implemented in Tibet, the population transfer of Chinese civilians into Tibet, the PRC's cultural and linguistic policies, as well as its responses to Tibetan resistance to the regime, are subject to legitimate international scrutiny beyond the domain of human rights because Tibet is not lawfully part of China but an occupied territory.

It also affects the legal obligations of all other states towards the Tibetans, the Tibetan government in exile, and the PRC. All states have a legal obligation to regard the conflict as an unresolved international conflict, to uphold international law and promote the conflict's resolution in accordance with it. International law, in fact, imposes an obligation on States not to recognise China's annexation as lawful, and to refrain from any action that helps the PRC perpetuate its violative behaviour or consolidate its position in Tibet.

Speaking the truth about Tibet's historical status matters because it affects Beijing's perceived need to negotiate. The fact that Tibet was not historically part of China goes to the very heart of the legitimacy, or rather lack of legitimacy, of China's rule

of Tibet, and is the Achilles heel of the regime. But as long as Beijing senses that the international community ‘buys in’ to its historical narrative, it does not feel pressured either to negotiate with the Tibetan leadership or to change its policies in Tibet to satisfy Tibetan needs on the ground.

Negotiations that start from the premise that Tibet was historically part of China dramatically shift the posts of the spectrum of possible outcomes to where the middle of that spectrum will no longer satisfy Tibetan needs.

In order to resolve the conflict, the Dalai Lama and the CTA have proposed “genuine autonomy” within the PRC as an acceptable political status, to accommodate Beijing’s demand that they abandon independence as an objective. Genuine autonomy is a compromise ‘in the middle’ between the restoration of independence, on one end of the spectrum, and integration and assimilation into China, on the other. This is what the ‘Middle Way approach’ concretely means. Less than genuine autonomy will not satisfy the needs of the Tibetan people and will not end the conflict between the PRC and Tibet.

And lastly, that Tibet was not historically a part of China matters to all of us because it affects the obligations of all states and therefore our own governments’ policy choices. The status of Tibet, the unlawfulness of the PRC’s annexation of Tibet, and the right of Tibetans to self-determination –which is discussed in detail in the booklet-- have direct consequences for the legal obligations of all states (and other international actors) towards the Tibetans, the CTA, and the PRC.

So it greatly matters that Tibet was not historically a part of China and it matters that we speak up about this. We have not done so sufficiently in the past two decades and we must now course correct to actively challenge Beijing’s false historical claim. The launch of the CTA’s new book, ‘Tibet was never a part of China but the Middle Way Approach is still a viable solution’ is an important signal that the CTA has started ‘resetting’ the narrative to reclaim the truth, which will help restore Tibet’s negotiation leverage.

Actively challenging Beijing’s historical claim does not in any way reduce the importance of continuing fervent advocacy on issues of human rights, including cultural and religious rights and the environment. It is about framing the issue and the discourse within which these are pursued.

What led the PRC to negotiate in the past was a combination of international pressure, the pressure inside Tibet, and clear language on the illegitimacy of the PRC’s rule in Tibet. This was reflected in the 5-Point Peace Plan and the Strasbourg Proposal and parliamentary resolutions and legislation. Taken together, those were strong on the rights of Tibetans and generous on the compromise proposed. International attention and pressure did bring about Sino-Tibetan dialogue 18 years ago. But it did not convince China’s leaders that they had to consider real autonomy as an option because supportive



governments were only pressing human rights and cultural survival issues, while implicitly effectively reassuring Beijing that it does not really have to address the core of the conflict.

This brings us to what we must do:

First, we must course correct to actively challenge Beijing's false historical claim and be vocal about the lack of legitimacy of China's rule in Tibet.

We must frame the Sino-Tibetan conflict as an unresolved international conflict of legitimate international concern, caused by the PRC's illegal occupation of Tibet, and that requires urgent attention and resolution.

As we address symptoms of the conflict, such as human rights violations, cultural deprivation, assimilation, and environmental destruction and degradation, we must do so in this light. And we must hold China to the legal standards this characterization entails for its actions in Tibet.

Course correcting requires integrating this approach in every campaign, statement, legislative initiative, and so forth. It requires also consistently referring to Tibet as "occupied;" its territory as "disputed;" the conflict as "unresolved and international" and not as "the Tibet issue", a euphemism that hides the truth and urgency of resolving the conflict. It requires referring to the Tibetans as "the Tibetan people" and not as a "minority" and refraining from stating or implying that Tibet is part of China or has been in the past. Language is important because of its legal and Political implications. And it has become urgent to use this language if we care about restoring to Tibetans what is on the verge of being lost: their national identity, from which the religious identity is inseparable, and a fighting chance to negotiate a meaningful autonomy to save it.

We must not lose sight of the provenance of the Middle Way approach. The Middle Way approach is an effort to peacefully resolve the conflict caused by the PRC's invasion and continued illegal occupation against the Tibetan people's will. If we lose sight of this, it becomes difficult to appreciate the generosity of the Tibetan demand for genuine autonomy as a compromise solution.

We must actively lobby our governments to cease making statements recognizing Tibet as a part of China. It may seem harmless since the Dalai Lama and the CTA are today not seeking independence but autonomy within the PRC. But it is not. Such statements validate Beijing's false historical claim, even if they are not intended to; they undermine the efforts to persuade Beijing to negotiate with Tibetans; and they pull the rug out from under the Tibetan compromise Middle Way approach, leaving them no leverage.

Finally, we must insist that Beijing's demand that the Dalai Lama publicly acknowledge that Tibet has been a part of China since antiquity as a precondition to substantive negotiations, is unacceptable.

My contention is that promotion and conduct of dialogue with China must go hand in hand with a vigorous assertion of Tibetan rights. Only if the rights are forcefully and effectively articulated and have resonance in the general consciousness as morally and legally just, historically truthful, and politically credible, does the dialogue approach have a chance. Being generous on a compromise will only work by being strong on the rights.

Let us start course-correcting in this very conference and speak truth to power from this important platform. Let us persuade our parliaments and governments to do the same, and let us expressly integrate these recommendations in the campaign plans we will develop in the working groups today and tomorrow.

Thank you.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

PLENARY SESSION - V & VI



Presentation and Discussion on the Campaign Plans emanating from Working Groups on Campaign Planning

Presentation of Draft Action Plan by Drafting Committee and voting on Campaign plans

Adoption of Conference Action Plan Presented by Drafting Committee

Moderator : Kelly Turley

Chair of the Board, Students for a Free Tibet, USA

Action Plan of the Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups

Dharamshala, 3-5 November 2019

Statement

The 8th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups was convened in Dharamshala from 3 to 5 November 2019 by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause at a time of major political changes in the world, just as when the first such conference met in Dharamshala, in March 1990. To meet the opportunities and challenges of such a time of change, the reinvigoration of the Tibet movement is not only called for, but is already evidenced by the participation of 180 delegates from Tibet support groups and other supporters from 42 countries in all regions of the world, as well as by their determination to intensify their efforts for the freedom of Tibet and its people.

The participants met for an extended time with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and were greatly encouraged by his explanation of his four commitments—promotion of human values, promotion of religious harmony; preservation of Tibetan language, culture and Nalanda Buddhist heritage, as well as the protection of Tibet’s natural environment; and revival of ancient Indian knowledge—which reflect his altruistic vision for the future.

Participants fully endorse his conviction regarding the profoundly important contribution the Tibetan people and culture can make to human development, and are therefore persuaded that support for the Tibetan cause is support for humanity as a whole.

The conference was addressed by the Sikyong (President) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, which is called the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile. The conference heard speakers from Tibet, Hong Kong, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and Taiwan, as well as from India, South Africa, the U.K, Australia, China, and the US, all of whom shared a sense of optimism and actively participated in the proceedings of the conference.

We, the participants in the Conference express deep concern that, whereas the situation in occupied Tibet has gone from bad to worse, there are still no signs that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is ready to engage in negotiations with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the CTA to resolve the conflict caused by the PRC's illegal invasion of Tibet almost 70 years ago and by its occupation of the country and repression of the Tibetan people ever since. We call on the Chinese



government to resume the dialogue, which occurred on the basis of the Middle Way Approach, and engage in earnest negotiations without delay, and we urge the UN and members of the international community to persuade the Chinese government to do so. At the same time, we commend His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration for their continued commitment to non-violence and to seeking a mutually beneficial negotiated solution. We are deeply moved by the courage of the Tibetan people in Tibet in their non-violent resistance to Chinese repression and in their efforts to protect their national identity.

We deplore the fear displayed by many governments to stand up to the PRC in the face of decades of its gross and systematic violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms in Tibet and in East Turkestan (Ch. Xinjiang) as well as in Southern Mongolia (Inner Mongolia), and currently, in the face of sustained protests, also in Hong Kong. Instead of firmly acting on the side of truth and justice, those governments and a number of corporate actors betray our core values of democracy, rule of law, self-determination and human rights in pursuit of commercial gain. Similarly, they fail to challenge the PRC's attacks on those very values and the institutions that embody them in our own countries. We are determined to expose such betrayal of and attacks on our values and will forge powerful coalitions and alliances to do so.

Given the critical role of the Tibetan Plateau, as the Third Pole, in global climate change, we commit to insert Tibet, which is at the frontline of the climate crisis, into the debate of this most urgent issue of our time.

Conscient of the immense contribution of Tibetan Buddhism to the understanding of the mind and of human behavior, including the generation of love and compassion and other qualities essential to human happiness, and therefore the value of scholarly works in which this vast knowledge is contained, it is imperative to protect the Tibetan language and culture that provides access to it.

Supporting the decision of the 3rd Special General Meeting of the Tibetans in Dharamshala in October, we insist that all decisions regarding the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama are the exclusive responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his Gaden Phodrang Trust. Any interference in this process by the PRC authorities and any attempt at selecting or appointing a Dalai Lama by the Chinese government will have no legitimacy and should be condemned and subjected to sanctions by the international community.

The struggle for Tibetan freedom is a struggle for justice, truth, and freedom. We are committed to continuing the work until the conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of the Tibetan people. As long as the Tibetan people remains under alien occupation, subjugation and exploitation, and is therefore denied the exercise of its right to self-

determination, the Tibetan struggle for freedom and justice is everyone's struggle for freedom and justice. And so, just as we call for solidarity with the people of Tibet, so too we express solidarity with all who suffer under the PRC's repressive policies, indeed, all other people deprived of their freedom, for no one can be truly free so long as others are oppressed.

Dharamshala 5 November 2019



Priority Campaigns Overview

Dharamshala 3 - 5 November 2019

1. Tibet Climate Crisis

Overview and objectives: There was broad consensus that it was a major priority to insert Tibet into the most critical debate of our time: to establish Tibetans as a frontline community, press for political action and engage new audiences, including young people.

Summary of Campaign proposals: Many plans focused on the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2020 and encompassed government advocacy, grassroots participation in the global Climate Strikes and engaging environmental experts.

Some example tactics suggested:

- Participate in Climate Strikes - next date 29 November 2019 and will be monthly thereafter
- Conducting a literature review/aggregating expert opinion and studies related to Tibet
- Forming alliances with Southern Mongolians as this is part of the third pole
- Getting governments to sponsor Tibetan participation in COP26
- Engaging with youth leaders and ambassadors from other frontline communities
- Advocating for a UN fact-finding mission
- Look at the impacts of China's economic development strategies on Tibet's climate

Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. See page 10 of International Tibet Network's handout (also online at www.bit.ly/8thTSGNetworkHandout); groups are welcome to join the Network's Campaign Working Group. Resources are available on the non-branded site, www.tibet3rdpole.org. International Campaign for Tibet has published reports, see www.savetibet.org/why-tibet/tibetan-environment/. DIIR will share Tempa Gyaltsen's powerpoint on the climate crisis.

Overview and objectives: Conference participants will build on recent successes and campaign to close Confucius Institutes (CIs). Hanban, as an organ of China's Communist Party, is propagating China's soft power and suppressing academic freedom.

Some example tactics suggested:

- Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. See page 18 of Tibet Network's booklet for guidelines on how to start a campaign (also online). Websites include www.no-confucius-institutes.org/ (non-branded), www.atc.org.au/say-no-to-chinese-propaganda/ and www.saynotoci.org/. Hanban link to find CIs near you: www.english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm

Overview and objectives: China's imperative is to control a process to identify the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama. This has major significance for the future of the Tibetan people, as well as being an issue of religious freedom. The objective is to get governments to make proactive statements declaring that it is for H. H. the Dalai Lama and his office Gaden Phodrang to decide on the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, and China's interference will not be tolerated.

Some example tactics suggested:

- Engaging faith leaders and inter-faith groups through personal appeals



- Petitions
- Parliamentary advocacy

Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. See His Holiness' 2011 statement on reincarnation at <https://www.dalailama.com/the-dalai-lama/biography-and-daily-life/reincarnation>.

Free Tibet's "Beyond Belief" campaign can be found as an insert in the Network booklet or at www.freetibet.org/beyond-belief.

4. Don't sell our core values: Challenging China's long arm

Overview and objectives: China's attempts to exert undue influence permeate all levels of each of our own societies. Challenging this, by defending our core values such as free expression, academic freedom and freedom of assembly, pushes back against China's global objectives. By campaigning to defend our core values at home, we have agency, and these campaigns are winnable. Objectives depend on specific issues (see below).

Summary of Campaign proposals: There are many examples of past and current campaigns, including Confucius Institutes, Google, Apple, US National Basketball Association (NBA), highlighting company apologies, etc. This campaign plan proposes using overarching messaging and reactive campaigning to highlight China's attempts to attack our core values AND OUR GOVERNMENTS' AND CORPORATIONS' WILLINGNESS TO SELL THOSE CORE VALUES FOR PROFITS/PERCEIVED ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Some example tactics suggested:

- Create a toolkit for reactive work
- Use humour to highlight absurdities of company apologies, panda diplomacy, etc
- Work strategically with Uyghurs, Hong Kongers and other partners to maximise impact

Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive] Page 20 of Tibet Network's booklet has a Framework and Checklist that includes many of the ways China exerts undue influence and some guidelines on how to assess opportunities to react. Australia Tibet Council campaigns on this theme using #OurFreedomsAreNotforSale

Overview and objectives: 17 May 2020 is the 25th Anniversary of the disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama; an important opportunity to raise his profile with governments and the UN and press for his release/independent access to him and his family.

Some example tactics suggested:

- Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. Many groups are active on this campaign, especially Tibetan Women's Association www.tibetanwomen.org/. See page 5 of Tibet Network's booklet (also online) and also the unbranded www.freepanchenlama.org/.

Overview and objectives: To repeat the success of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act (US, 2018) in other countries. Where legislation is not possible, parliaments could pass resolutions on the principles of reciprocity. [NB: Groups also discussed the potential of Magnitsky-style legislation (Magnitsky Act, US, 2012, AND SINCE THEN, UK, GERMANY MAGNITSKY LEGISLATIONS) which CAN ALREADY BE USED IN RELATION TO TIBET TODAY AND have much broader application than Tibet.]

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Some example tactics suggested:

- Building Parliamentary support (see also below)
- Letter-writing/advocacy by constituents

Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. International Campaign for Tibet, (www.savetibet.org/tibet-access) is leading on Reciprocal Access and promoting initiatives to introduce it in Canada, Australia and in countries across Europe, working with Groups in those countries/regions.

7. Building parliamentary support for legislation

Overview and objectives: Groups identified that parliamentary support and capacity in many countries is well below what is needed to be able to launch legislative initiatives, for example Reciprocal Access, Magnitsky or legislating to stop the spread of CIs.

Summary of Campaign proposals: To empower Parliamentary Tibet groups and parliamentary support in each respective country.

Some example tactics suggested:

- Provide kits on how to build Parliamentary Support Groups after elections
- Lobby kits for elected representatives
- WRITE/CALL PARLIAMENTARIANS/THEIR OFFICES FREQUENTLY: THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM CONSTITUENTS IN ORDER TO ACT
- Organise meetings with respective Parliamentary Tibet groups

Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. Many groups such as ICT, Australia Tibet Council, and the Canada Tibet Committee run Advocacy Days and produce materials. Tibet Network produces periodic Advocacy Kits.

8. Preservation of language rights, including freedom for Tashi Wangchuk

Overview and objectives: The importance of protecting the Tibetan language is embodied by Tashi Wangchuk, whose five year sentence ends in January 2021. The campaign objective is to press for Tashi Wangchuk's early and safe release from prison.

Summary of Campaign proposals: Starting in January 2020, to raise the profile of Tashi Wangchuk and ensure political leaders and the international community at large are aware of Tashi Wangchuk's case.

Some example tactics suggested:

- All participants to immediately share the New York Times documentary about Tashi Wangchuk “A Tibetan’s Journey for Justice”
- Petition, eg www.freetashi.org
- Letter-writing to Tashi Wangchuk in prison (kits in numerous languages will shortly be available via freetashi.org)

Where to go for more information: [this is not exhaustive]. Many Groups are active on Tashi Wangchuk and language rights, for example see Page 8 of Tibet Network's booklet (also online): Groups are welcome to join the Political Prisoners Campaign Working Group. Web resources: www.freetashi.org/ and www.studentsforafreetibet.org/our-work/free-tashi-wangchuk/



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

CONCLUDING SESSION



Address by Chief Guest Ajai Singh

President, Indo Tibetan Friendship Association, Dharamshala

Concluding Remarks by Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay

President, Central Tibetan Administration

Vote of Thanks by Karma Choeying

Secretary, Department of Information & International Relations, CTA



Shri Ajai Singh

President, India Tibet Friendship Association

Namaskar and Tashi Delek.

Respected Sikyong President of Central Tibetan Administration, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Respected Minister of Finance of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Respected Health Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile, the Convener of the Core Group for Tibetan Cause in India, Shri Khrimy ji, our dear friends from all over the world:

We, in Dharamshala, are honoured that you have come to this sacred land. Dharamshala in its true meaning is the abode of Dharma. Thank you for being here and energizing this place with the ideals of your great feelings, devotion and dedication to see that Tibet is liberated and freed. Thank you very much.



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May I start with a very nice Sanskrit Prayer if you allow me, it says:

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः ।

Om Bhadram Karnnebhiih Shrnnuyaama Devaah

भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।

Bhadram Pashyema- Akssabhir-Yajatraah

स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाग्ँसस्तनूभिः ।

Sthirair-Anggais-Tussttuvaagasas-Tanuubhih

व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ।

Vyashema Devahitam Yad-Aayuh

स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः ।

Svasti Na Indro Vrddha-Shravaah

स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।

Svasti Nah Puussaa Vishva-Vedaah

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः ।

Svasti Nas-Taarkssyo Arisstta-Nemih

स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥

Svasti No Vrhaspatir-Dadhaatu

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om Shanti Om Shanti Om Shanti

Thank You... The meaning is very significant, it asks for the Lord to let us hear all that is auspicious, to see all that is beautiful and to allow the allotted span of life to each one of us which our scriptures says is a one hundred years in good health; keeping in harmony with all the elements of nature, serving all humanity and to pray for peace on all sides and all corners.

We in Dharamshala are divinely blessed by the presence of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama for the last 60years. It is a most unique blessing for us all, the people of this land, the people of this place. We are honoured and privileged to have been the headquarters of the Tibetan Government in Exile, Tibetan Parliament in Exile. We have been most happy to have many of our Tibetan friends and brothers who left Tibet, make this their home, they have amalgamated very well with us.

We, the Indo Tibetan Friendship Association Dharamshala, are trying to do things jointly together to build up harmony. How far we have succeeded is for the people to judge; we cannot claim that we have done very well but it has been a very rewarding effort.

Bharat is the true name of our ancient nation which means the land which dispels ignorance, the land of light. Bharat, on its part, as far as doing what we should do for the cause and for the liberation of Tibet, has been doing it and we are trying hard to do all that our support groups in India can. Fortunately for our nation after many years, in fact I feel after our independence, for the first time in 2014 our people elected a leader who, I think, is the envy of all. We are very fortunate and privileged to have a man who is honest, who is fearless, a man who is intelligent and a man who knows how to stand up to things that are wrong. So we have been doing that duty. You know about core values. May I let you know that OBOR Initiative (One Belt One Road), our country's leader said no, we didn't sign that. Thank You.

To Dhoklam, we didn't buckle under. We told China that it will be a blow for blow and maybe our blow would be stronger. They retracted. And just yesterday, there was a regional participation economic conference RPEC in Thailand, our prime minister said no, he didn't sign it. If he had signed it would have harmed the interests of our farmers and our dairy industry so we didn't sign it.

We are doing our best and we know that each one of you who have come from your beautiful countries have spared no efforts. Maybe for the last 30 to 40 years, you continue to do so with tremendous devotion.

After this conference which has brought so many of us close together, we have come to know so many wonderful people who are very successful politicians, great politicians, scholars, artists, writers and people from other professions. You have done your best in all these years. When we go back to our respective homes, our countries, we know what to do, we have charted out the details, things that we are required to do, and we must do it with all an unrelenting effort, a tireless effort with unflinching faith and devotion. And I would say please do it in your respective countries, please cultivate the media, whether it is the television or newspaper because that is most important, the message regarding the Freedom of Tibet must go out to the world from each and every country, from each province, each state, each district in every country.

Napoleon once said, "I am not afraid of 4000 soldiers as I am afraid of 4 newspapers", so a positive media for Tibet and for the people inside Tibet who are undergoing much hardship and suffering, we have to let them know that we are working hard for them. As His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama expressed, in a beautiful audience that we were so fortunate to have yesterday, we have to carry on this work first diplomatically, pragmatically very wisely.



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When you go back to your homes, may I request humbly please let everyone —your parents, your children, your relatives, your friends, your neighbors— know about Tibet; get them involved.

Let us work, we can work and our objective is very noble. It is a wonderful great aim, so we are bound to succeed. With this determination that we can, we will and we must, so from our land of Bharat, with our prayers to all our gods and goddesses, each one of you that have come may you go back, may you and your families live in good health, may you succeed in all the wonderful great noble endeavors and may you come back again, return again and again to Dharamshala, to Bharat, to re-energize, revitalize yourself with all the beautiful virtues, principles and ideals. We will succeed.

Thank you, Tashi Delek, Namaskar.



Dr. Lobsang Sangay

President, Central Tibetan Administration

Concluding Remarks

On behalf of my Cabinet colleagues who are here, two of them are here to show solidarity and appreciation to all of you for coming from all over the world. I know that the journey is not that easy. A friend from Uruguay said he took forty hours of flight to get to Dharamshala. It took him forty hours to get here, and that shows your determination, your love, your support for Tibetan people. So big hands to all of you for making this journey from all over the world.

I am very proud to say that Ajai Singh concluded as the Chief Guest of our conference and it was inaugurated by Mr Khrimy; both of them are from India. So to welcome you by India and to thank you by India is very special because no countries have done more for Tibetan people than India. So thank you very much.



As Ajai Singh mentioned what His Holiness the Dalai Lama has done for India as a whole and the whole world; we know that. But particularly for Dharamshala is unique in my perspective because of the view of a mountain, filled with houses, buildings, restaurants, hotels and soon to come 4-star hotels, from the other side of the mountain where I went for a hike.

Sixty years ago, His Holiness the Dalai Lama chose this mountain to live, and this mountain has grown in proportion, the development His Holiness the Dalai Lama's presence has brought for Dharamshala is tremendous. We are very grateful to the Government and people of India, and we are also very fortunate to have a leader like His Holiness the Dalai Lama who has contributed so much for the global peace and perhaps is the best ambassador of India to appreciate Indian values and to revive Indian knowledge, Indian wisdom in India and particularly for the state of Himachal Pradesh.

And it is fitting, as Ajai Singh just mentioned, that Dharamshala in Hindi means Land of Spirituality and our mission is to take His Holiness the Dalai Lama from the Land of Spirituality to the Land of Gods, that's Lhasa. Lhasa in Tibetan means Land of Gods. Dharamshala also means a resting place. So we have rested for sixty years, we will rest for a few more years, and we will make our onward journey to the Land of Gods. For us His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the manifestation of Buddha of Compassion. So to have our Buddha of Compassion to be back in the Land of Gods, Lhasa, to be with six million Tibetans is our desire, our aspiration and our dream.

So we all must make efforts and commit ourselves more strongly because this is the Tibet Support Groups meeting and our supporters are here. I think we will send a message to Beijing quite clearly; 42 countries have sent supporters here, and in the coming months and years we have eight action plans that we have not shown, but they will see in the weeks and months to come.

And with the blessings of Eight Auspicious Symbols, I am sure all of you have worn Khatak, white scarves, which has eight auspicious symbols. So you all have wrapped yourself with Eight auspicious symbols for all these years to fulfil eight action plans, and once we do that I am pretty sure, we will get to the destination, where we need to be.

So be active, be vibrant, revive the 1990s activism in the sense of street activism. I am all for social media promotion. As I mentioned from Istanbul to Prague to Venezuela to Lebanon to Iraq, street protests are happening. We constantly see and read about Hong Kong. We also mentioned Climate Change and how important Tibet is as far as "Global Warming and Climate Change" is concerned. 16-year-old girl Greta Thunberg, a year ago, boycotted Friday Class and sat in front of the Swedish parliament. She said "Every Friday I will sit in front of the Parliament and protest for Climate Change". She was alone but in one year time, the 16-year-old girl led a global movement. When she addressed the UN a few months ago, there were hundreds and thousands of people

all over the world from Australia to India to Africa to Latin America and obviously from Europe and America. When a 16-year-old girl, a lone girl, who just decided to boycott her Friday class in Sweden in front of the Swedish Parliament can lead a global movement in one year, that means the spirit and the practice of the 1990s are back.

Hence you are the expert of 1990s, your grey hair symbolizes the wisdom of 1990s, some beard reflects the hardship, the toll it has taken and the experience you have generated in the 1990s. So the environment of 1990s is back, and our friends of Tibet, the experts of the 1990s should be in the front and centre of the global movement for Climate Change, for democracy, for justice and freedom. So I am pretty sure, you all will do that, that's why you have taken so much effort to come here.

And like Gandhi said, first they will ignore you, your opponent, then they will laugh at you, then they will fight with you, then you will win. Clearly, Beijing is fighting with us now because recently the Ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom came here for 24hrs. He participated in one public event, the next day the Spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded very harshly saying America should not interfere in internal affairs of China. China is interfering in all the countries all over the world yet, the Spokesperson dared to say 'America shouldn't interfere in the internal affairs of China' which is about Tibetan reincarnation. The Assistant Secretary for South Asia and Central Asia responded saying 'we will, it is the right of the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama to decide on his reincarnation'.

And as I mentioned during Q&A, wherever I travel, there is a parallel delegation from China and Tibetans to compete with us. Few places I have been to, they have a press release issued to condemn my visit, telling me to get out of South Africa and Lithuania and sometimes there is protest. At the University of Toronto, there were 50 to 60 Chinese students waving Chinese flags protesting, and I am sure you have seen this all the time. In a street protest there are always a few people from Chinese Embassy who come and try to disrupt your events. Even at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, each time we have a side event, the Chinese Embassy brings 10 to 20 Chinese people from the restaurants, among tourists who come with shopping bags to fill in the seats. They fill in the seats of 10 to 20 to block other people from attending our events. So clearly the Chinese government is resorting to dog fights. They have ignored us, they have laughed at us, and now they are fighting with us. So Gandhi Ji said when they fight with you, 'You Win'.

We are at the winning stage. I think the stage is set, non-violence will prevail, justice will prevail, freedom will prevail, and we will have His Holiness the Dalai Lama travel from the Land of Spirituality to the Land of the Gods.



Again some people ask ‘how can you believe so much in non-violence’. We are Buddhists, we believe in the notion of impermanence. Normally people resort to violence to kill your enemy because we believe in the notion of impermanence and non-violence, we don’t have to kill, they die. We didn’t kill Mao Zedong, he died. We didn’t kill Zhou Enlai, he died. We didn’t kill General Chu Thae, he died.

We just have to survive, we just have to strengthen, we just have to sustain, and victory will be ours. And you are the reason why we survived for 60 years. You are the reason why we are strong for 60 years. You are the reason why we have sustained. The final ‘S’ ‘Succeed’ is coming very soon so that’s why ‘8’ is an auspicious number. Number 9 ‘Cho’ in Chinese means harmony. China always emphasizes harmony, harmony, harmony. We will deliver harmony for Tibet and Tibetan people very soon.

Thank you very much.



Secretary, Department of Information and International Relations, CTA

Honourable Chief Guest Mr. Ajai Singh, the president of Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association, Dharamshala, Honourable Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, honourable Kalon for Health Mr. Choekyong Wangchuk, honourable Kalon for Finance Mr. Karma Yeshe, Mr. R.K. Khrimey, National Convener of Core Group for Tibetan Cause India, distinguished guests and the participants of the 8th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups:

It is my pleasure and great honour to propose a vote of thanks for the Concluding session for this event, although I have just taken over as the Secretary for the International Relations of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

On behalf of the Core Group for Tibetan Cause, the convener of the Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups and the Department of Information and International Relations, CTA, I would like to sincerely thank Mr. Ajai Singh for accepting our proposal to be the chief guest for the Concluding session and for his wonderful speech.

I am also grateful to the Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India headed by Mr. R.K Khrimey for convening this conference.

I am proud to say that we have 180 participants from 42 countries who are here with us today for the conference. I sincerely thank all of you for sparing your valuable time and resource for coming all the way to Dharamshala to be part of this conference which is immensely important for us.

I must also not forget to thank your colleagues back home and friends of Tibet across the world for their steadfast support for the just cause of Tibet. In fact, as His Holiness very fondly used to say that the TSGs and Tibet supporters are the fourth refuge for us Tibetans referencing to the refuge we take in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha according to the Buddhist belief. And we still very much hold all of you in high esteem as the fourth refuge for us.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the eminent panelists for the plenary sessions and the respective moderators for their insightful discussions on various issues concerning Tibet. Similarly, I would also like to thank members of parliament, former members of parliament and democracy activists for their expressions of solidarity with the Tibetans at the plenary sessions. I must not miss to thank our friends from Uygur, Southern Mongolia, Taiwan and Hongkong for their presence and show their solidarity with the Tibetan cause. A very big thanks is also due to newly-arrived Tibetan refugee lady for sharing accounts of the ordeal she and her family had suffered at the hands of Chinese authorities before she made her way into freedom.

Our sincere gratitude is also due to the members of working groups for their sincere participation and the drafting committee for coming out with a political Statement and Action Plan. I am sure that all of you will leave no stone unturned to put them into action for a meaningful outcome.

I would especially like to thank the Office of Gaden Phodrang for arranging an exclusive audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama for all the participants.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay, who is also the Kalon for the DIIR for his direction and support all along in organizing this Conference and also for his wonderful and remarkable Concluding remarks.

Last but not the least, I must thank my colleagues at the Department of Information and International Relations and particularly TSG liaison officer Ms. Tenzin Donzey and her intern Ms. Tsetan Dolma who have been working tirelessly for months to make this conference successful. I must also thank the managers of the conference hall for all the arrangements and the Departments who have made their respective conference halls available for us to conduct working group discussions.

I hope all of you had a comfortable stay in Dharamshala and thank all of you once again for making this event meaningful. Despite our best efforts, I will not shy away from apologizing for any inconveniences and shortcomings that you may have experienced or witnessed during the course of the conference.

In order to learn from the experience and to prepare for the next International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, Ms Donzey will be sending out feedback forms and all of you are requested to send in your suggestions to her.

Finally, I wish all of you a very safe journey back home and very much look forward to rejuvenated activism in your respective countries and at various international fora.

Thank you all once again!

Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Long Live the Humanity. Long live Tibet Support Groups. Long Live Tibetan Freedom Struggle.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

PARTICIPANTS OF THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS 2019



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

PARTICIPANTS OF THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS 2019

Australia

Former MP and Chairman, the Australian Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee
Former Australian Parliamentarian
Australia Tibet Council
Melbourne-China Civil Exchange Promotion Association
International Youth Movement for Human Rights
Chinese Alliance for Democracy
Federation for a Democratic China
Chinese Individual Tibet Supporters

Brazil

Movimento Free Tibete Natal

Bulgaria

Bulgaria Friends of Tibet

Canada

Canada Tibet Committee
Tibet Action Institute

Chile

Amigos de Tíbet

China

Individual Tibet Supporters

Colombia

Amigos del Tíbet

Costa Rica

Asociación Cultural Tibetano Costarricense

Czech Republic

Former Deputy Prime Minister
Forum 2000
Czechs Support Tibet





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Denmark

The Tibet Support Committee

Finland

Finnish Tibet Committee

France

France Tibet National
Association Lhakar France
Aide a l'enfance Tibetaine
Tibet Nienpo
Kun Phen Ling Terre du Coeur
The Sino-Tibetan Friendship Association
Chokhor Ling Association
Passeport Tibétain
Association Bouddhique Khanh Anh

Germany

World Uyghur Congress
Tibet Initiative Deutschland
International Campaign for Tibet
Southern Mongolia Congress

Hong Kong

Individual Tibet Supporters

Hungary

Tibet Support Association

India

Core Group for Tibetan Cause - India
India Tibet Friendship Society (ITFS)
Bharat Tibbat Sahyog Manch (BTSM)
Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association (ITFA)
Antarrashtriya Bharat Tibbat Sahyog samiti (ABTSS)
National Campaign for Free Tibet Support (NCFTS)
Himalayan Committee for Action on Tibet (HIMCAT)
Himalaya Pariwar
Youth Liberation Front of Tibet, East Turkestan, Manchuria and Inner
Mongolia (YLFTM) India
Tibetan Youth Congress
Tibetan Women's Association

Gu-Chu-Sum Movement Association of Tibet
Students for a Free Tibet
National Democratic Party of Tibet
International Tibet Network
Tibet Action Institute
National Campaign for Free Tibet Support
Tibet Watch

Israel

Israeli Friends of Tibetan People

Italy

Associazione Italia-Tibet
Casa Del Tibet
Tso Pema Non-Profit
International Tibet Network
AREF International Onlus

Japan

Japan Committee for Tibet
Lung-ta Project
Free Indo - Pacific Alliance
Southern Mongolia Freedom and Democracy Movement Foundation
Southern Mongolia Congress
Students for a Free Tibet

Kazakhstan

Friends of Tibet Kazakhstan

Lithuania

House of Tibet

Luxembourg

Les Amis du Tibet, Luxembourg

Kazakhstan

Friends of Tibet Kazakhstan

Kenya

Asian Foundation



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Lithuania

House of Tibet

Luxembourg

Les Amis du Tibet, Luxembourg

Mexico

Casa Tibet México

Tíbet Mx

International Tibet Network

Mongolia

Individual Tibet Supporter

Nepal

National Human Rights Foundation (HURFON)

Human Right of Nepal (HURON)

INHURED International

Netherlands

International Campaign for Tibet

New Zealand

New Zealand Friends of Tibet

New Zealand Han-Tibetan Friendship Association

Federation for Democratic China

Sino- Tibet Study Group

Individual Chinese Tibet Supporters

Norway

The Norwegian Tibet Committee

The Foundation Voice of Tibet

Portugal

Grupo de Apoio ao Tibete-Portugal

Russia

Friends of Tibet, Tuva Republic

Friends of Tibet, St.Petersburg

Tibet Support Group, St. Petersburg
Friends of Tibet, Kalmyk Republic
Buddhist Center Green Tara

Slovakia

Individual Tibet Supporter

South Africa

Member of Parliament, Inkatha Freedom Party
Tibet Rescue Initiative
Tibet Support Group, Cape Town
Women's Justice Foundation

Spain

Fundacion Casa Del Tibet, Barcelona

Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan Tibetan Buddhist Brotherhood Society

Sweden

Swedish Tibet Committee

Switzerland

Swiss-Tibetan Friendship Association STFA
International Tibet Network

Taiwan

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
Sino-Tibet Friendship Association of Taiwan
Human Rights Network For Tibet and Taiwan
International Tibet Network
Students for a Free Tibet
Individual Tibet Supporters

United Kingdom

Free Tibet
Tibet Society
International Tibet Network
Individual Tibet Supporters



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Ukraine

Ukraine Friends of Tibet

Uruguay

Tibet Patria Libre

United States of America

Executive President of Kreddha

National Endowment for Democracy

Tibet Lives

US Tibet Committee (USTC)

Statue of Democracy Foundation

Sino-Tibet Study Group

International Tibet Network

International Campaign for Tibet

Students for a Free Tibet



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

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National Convener, Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India

Ajai Singh

President, Indo Tibetan Friendship Association, Dharamshala, India

Pema Jungney

Speaker, Tibetan Parliament- in- Exile (TPiE), India

Micheal Van Walt Van Praag

Executive President of Kreddha, USA

Micheal Danby

Former Chairman, The Australian Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Australia

Martin Bursik

Former Deputy Prime Minister, Czech Support Tibet, Czech Republic

Peter Neil Slipper

Former Australian Parliamentarian, Australia

Mkhuleko Hlengwa

MP, South Africa, Inkatha Freedom Party

Sonam Norbu Dagpo

Chief Justice Commissioner, CTA

Joseph Yu Shek Cheng

Researcher and Writer, Hong Kong

Zumretay Airken

World Uyghur Congress, Germany

Chongyi Feng

Professor, Australia

Fu-Te Ford Liao

Director, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, Taiwan

Daichin Aoyama Olhunud

Chairman, Southern Mongolia Congress, Japan

Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha

Environment and Development Desk, Tibet Policy Institute, DIIR, CTA

Dukthen Kyi

Head, UN, EU, and Human Rights Desk, DIIR, CTA

Namgyal Dolma

Eyewitness, Former Political Prisoner

Conference Moderator/Facilitators:

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National Co- Convener, Core Group for Tibetan Cause, India

Axel Holger Graffmanns

Executive Director, Tibet Initiative Deutschland, Germany

Marco Antonio Karam

Director, Casa Tibet Mexico, Mexico

Martin Bursik

Former Deputy Prime Minister, Czechs Support Tibet, Czech Republic



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

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Kelly Turley

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

Glimpses of the Conference



GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



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GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE



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GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE











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GLIMPSES OF THE CONFERENCE







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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

ANNEXURES

First International Conference of TSGs held in Dharamshala from 8-9 March 1990

Summary of Discussions of the Meeting

On the frequently stated premise that the years 1990-1995 will be critical to the Tibetan freedom movement, and that the struggle is now entering a vital new phase requiring new initiatives, the emphasis during Group Discussions was on strategies to take home from the meeting that could be implemented immediately. These covered both long and short- term goals.

The optimistic consensus was that great political headway could be achieved in immediate years if the efforts of both Tibetans in exile and Friends of Tibet around the world is coordinated, efficient and maximizes limited resources and personnel. A long and ambitious list of new global strategies and initiatives was drawn up as a result of the five Discussion Groups' brainstorming sessions. Highlight decisions were to work towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama being invited overseas on state visits and to address the United Nations. Further on, it has been decided to establish May 13 as Human Rights Day for China and Tibet, to initiate international Tibetan Flag Days, to set up a computer information network (TIBETNET), to internationally publish the destruction of Tibet's environment, to campaign more effectively with dissident Chinese students abroad, and finally: to intensify lobbying at the UN or through other governments and non-government bodies.

The group discussing parliamentary initiatives consolidated its thoughts into four areas of action to ensure that Tibet's plight remains a high profile among world leaders. Enforcing current law involves applying a strategy that has been initiated in America: international support groups and delegates – with the assistance of the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet – would investigate laws in their own countries which can be invoked to bring pressure on China. The International Campaign for Tibet office in Washington DC has been looking into American laws passed to bring the Soviet Union to book for human rights abuses, and which could now be equally well applied to China. Washington is looking to invoke a US law forbidding import of goods manufactured by forced labor: this initiative would be reinforced by an international boycott of Chinese-made goods. Another American law being investigated by the Washington office denies trade benefits to countries inflicting human rights violations.

A second area of action was working towards official recognition of Tibet. To achieve this objective it was decided to consolidate efforts on three or four promising target countries (Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Namibia, Poland and Bulgaria were identified)



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

and establish a Group of 100 for Tibet to lobby and support the initiative. The Group would include former Nobel Prize winners, human rights leaders and world statesmen, and their purpose would be to pressure governments to recognise Tibet's separateness from China, and extend invitations for official state visits to His Holiness.

Two parliamentary resolutions were outlined which support groups and delegates should work towards raising and passing in parliaments throughout the world. The momentum for declaring May 13 as Human Rights Day for China and Tibet is already underway... spearheaded by Chinese Students for Democracy. The second resolution would commit each government to receive His Holiness on a state visit and to urge the UN to allow to addressing the General Assembly. (The Nobel Peace Prize award now makes the latter resolution more tenable.)

The fourth initiative is complementary to the third: to establish an inter-parliamentary network of parliamentarians who are active in raising questions on Tibet. Several Dutch MPs who raised the idea and European members who have offered assistance would spearhead the informal network. A similar caucus of US Congressmen who care about Tibet is currently being formed and an Inter-parliamentary Consultation on Tibet is slated to be held in London in summer 1990.

Parliamentarians involved in the network would be asked to press for the three action areas identified by the Parliamentary Initiative Group.

In addition the Group discussed organising a petition with a million signatures and researching trade figures between China and Western counteract the misconception – upon which vital political decisions have been based – that the West needs China economically more than China needs the West.

The UN & other international initiatives group generated more than 100 ideas in a rapid-fire brainstorming opening, and then grouped them into UN-focused initiatives, areas for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to implement, education and research needs, contact, networking and information, ideas aimed at religious communities, the People's Republic of China and non-UN initiatives.

There was a call for a permanent team to represent Tibet at the United Nations in New York and Geneva, to prepare data for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile negotiation team and keep year-round contact with UN personnel. It was preferred that Tibetans shall be a majority in those teams and an internship was proposed for a young Tibetan at the UN. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile should name a coordinator to work with the UN Team, and the Office of Information and International Relations, Dharamshala, should be taught to prepare data to conform to UN criteria. In addition a prominent Tibetan should be nominated by the Government to attend UN conferences with Michael Van Walt Praag, the Ultimate goal being that Tibetans will represent Tibetan issues at the UN

Concepts generated under contact and networking included the need for each country to have one person linked to the UN who is lobbying effort for Tibet, as well as the need for Tibetans and Tibet supporters to strive to join NGOs, youth leagues and environmental bodies in order to heighten awareness on the Tibet issue. They also included the need to show that Tibet supports other causes and to try to hold office and represent that organisation at other forums, including the UN.

It was felt that a map showing Tibet's true historic boundary would be beneficial. This could illustrate Chinese versus Tibetan population, Chinese military installations, prisons, nuclear waste, deforested regions and mineral resources. An information package of Tibet could be prepared for the UN and other bodies and this should be translated into major languages. Conversely, UN initiatives and the type of material needed to put forward cases should be translated into Tibetan and Chinese for circulation in Tibet. To maximize the potential support of Tibet sympathizers, a political awareness program was suggested for the world network of Dharma centres. Appropriate activities could be regular pujas and meditations for peace in Tibet and in the world: occasional vigils and pujas staged outside Chinese embassies and walking meditations lead by multi-denominational religious leaders. Special emphasis was placed on building awareness in Southeast Asia to increase spheres of influence.

Military and economic sanction against PRC should be activated by both lobbying governments and by boycotting Chinese goods, and researching corporations dealing with China and supplying data on the situation in Tibet to CEOs of those corporations. As a more effective liaison with the proliferation of non-UN agencies that can benefit Tibet, it was suggested that more international support groups are needed and that more International Campaign for Tibet offices should be established. These could dovetail efforts with special political committees, the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet and Tibetan environment groups.

On the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's part, it was suggested that a UN desk should be set up at the Information Office and this should establish strong links with Offices of Tibet and international support groups and supply in-depth documentation to them. It was also recommended that the Dharamshala-based Government should lobby the UN directly and that it should be made possible for recent escapees from Tibet to address the UNHRC and NGOs to drive home the full impact of human rights atrocities.



Both the UN and Outreach groups emphasized the importance of working with the newly politicized Chinese Students for Democracy groups now raising militant voices in Western countries. But first it was felt that a set of guidelines should be issued from Dharamshala and Offices of Tibet to establish common goals and areas of ideological disagreement. In New York, Tibet supporters have already been demonstrating with Mainland Chinese students and the planned boycott of Chinese goods was suggested as another major activity that suited collaboration. The issue of imported goods manufactured by forced labor was seen as another area where Chinese students could lobby jointly with Tibetans.

Outreach members emphasized more effective use of existing organizations to increase support for the Tibet campaign and pressure on human rights organizations to see Tibet as a priority. Other important points were sending information to the tourism industry to establish the true situation in Tibet and developing awareness through cultural and arts and crafts exhibitions, tours by monks acting as goodwill ambassadors and lecture tours by former imprisoned monks, all organised in conjunction with Tibetan Youth Congress. In the arena of stimulating international awareness, suggestions were put forward for an annual International Day of Tibet, a worldwide Tibetan Flag Day, ongoing Years of Tibet, as in the 1991 American initiative, and producing a world rock concert as well as a world Record for Tibet.

The MEDIA group called for a more cohesive press strategy at this critical period of Tibet's political evolution. Even today, in the wake of the Nobel Prize, it was felt that the world in general is unfamiliar with the true situation in Tibet, and that includes the Chinese Students for Democracy. Good media coverage supports diplomacy, it was felt, and reminds politicians of the cause and at the same time educates the voting public. Since Dharamshala is pitted against China's monolithic Xinhua News Agency, which floods the world's media with misinformation, it was suggested that the Government-in-Exile should concentrate on building up a more credible and visible media base. Targeting for His Holiness' tour of Europe and the USA in September 1990, the group suggested launching a pilot project to establish a new, assertive, high visibility press strategy. This would initially require a Press Team to be set up, comprising a senior Tibetan official and a press advisor with national campaign experience. The task would be to feed the world's press, quietly and decisively as events break, so that momentum is always sustained.

It was further suggested that a permanent press agency shall be established in Dharamshala to disseminate information on both Tibet and the exile community. Feeding advance information on programs to the media was seen as a priority (the lack of media personnel covering His Holiness' visit to the Berlin Wall in December 1989 was cited as a lost publicity opportunity). A longer-term suggestion was further journalism scholarships for Tibetans and work placement on either a US presidential or similar high-powered campaign.

Since Dharamshala is now computerized, a proposal has been to establish TIBET.NET – a worldwide computer link-up providing instant newsbreaks, events, background data, etc. Further suggestions were for more sophisticated press kits, graphics, database archives and calendars of upcoming events.

An Environment Desk was planned to be established and a suggestion was made for an Environment Ministry to be set up in Dharamshala. The first and immediate activity was to key into Earth Day on April 22, 1990, and request His Holiness to plant a tree and release an official statement on Tibet’s environment. The Tibetan Women’s Association pledged to spearhead a tree-planting campaign and Tibet support groups were committed to contracting environment groups in their countries and enlisting Green Party activists and politicians. Demonstration outside Chinese embassies and sending information packages to countries neighboring Tibet, spelling out imminent environmental dangers, were other areas of immediate action.

Tibet’s newly formed “friends of the environment” will also be locating international environment conferences and arranging for delegates to be sent, as well as looking to join peace and anti-nuclear organizations.

As well as tree planting in exile communities, a campaign to start the reforestation of Tibet was launched. Initially this would involve seeds being provided to persons visiting or returning to Tibet. Lamas visiting Tibet would be briefed to educate Tibetans on the importance of raising new trees and a special kit would be prepared in Tibetan.



Second International Conference of TSGs held in

Bonn from 14-17 June 1996

Action Plan

We have tried to draft an action plan keeping in mind a number of aspects. The first aspect it should give us, as well as other Tibet Support Groups, a sense of an overall common strategy or strategic objective. Second, some specific programs, which Tibet Support Groups can participate in or can be lead, and third, strengthened and improved communications for information system.

One of the messages which has been clearly brought out during the discussions is the uniqueness of the Tibetan movement, uniqueness in the fact that it is the only non-violent movement for liberation which has a State and a government of its own. This point of view was also highlighted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The uniqueness and the strength of the Tibetan movement are that it is actually a state-in -exile or a government-in-exile. We should not forget this important point especially in the light of the fact that we have all agreed to convince other governments, the UN organizations and other bodies to recognize Tibet and the Tibetan Government as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan People.

We also have to find the right road as Tibet Support Groups, between the essential elements of Tibet Support Groups being independent in the sense they are not part of the government establishment and do not represent the government, and at the same time being a part of the movement which supports the recognized leadership of the Tibetans.

The other aspect which has come out strongly not in terms of specific programs but as something we have to be aware of when we go back, is the sense of urgency and renewed determination reflected in this conference.

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS

From June 14 to 17, 1996 some two hundred and sixty five representatives of Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) from sixty-five countries met in the parliamentary hall of the Wasserwerk building in Bonn, Germany, to develop new strategies and action plans in support of the Tibetan people's struggle for freedom.

The conference was graced by the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who addressed its opening session.

On the other hand, if the Tibetan effort was allowed to fail due to insufficient support, this would be a tragedy for non-violence, with repercussions well beyond Tibet.

In order to save Tibet and the interests of protecting the Tibetan identity and culture from destruction, the Dalai Lama stated he would be prepared to consider genuine self-government for Tibet. But China's insistence on claiming that Tibet is a part of China makes it important for us and the TSGs to understand the true status of Tibet, and to speak out on the truth: that Tibet is a country under occupation.

The conference participants deliberated for two-and-a-half-days. On Monday, June 17, they agreed that the overall common strategic objective must be to achieve the start of substantive negotiations without preconditions between the Chinese and Tibetan Governments, so that they could find a solution which will bring an end to the suffering of the Tibetan people, in accordance with the people's right to self-determination. The conference felt a sense of urgency in that matter.

A solution to the Tibet issue through dialogue is essential not only for the Tibetan and Chinese people but also for the international community as a whole which needs to demonstrate clearly that a non-violent approach to conflict resolution will be recognized and supported, and can achieve a positive solution.

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THE PANCHEN LAMA

Deep concern was expressed at the continued detention of the young Panchen Lama by the Chinese authorities. A specific campaign should be launched on December 10, for the release of the 11th Panchen Lama.

PARLIAMENTARY AND GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Raising Tibet at the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU): TSGs will approach members of Parliament from their own countries who are members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In the short term, activity will centre around the forthcoming 99th IPU conference in Beijing, from September 16-20 1996. TSG Denmark will take the leadership in this effort, and is preparing a briefing paper on the IPU will reference to this meeting for use of all TSGs. A long-term goal is to achieve observer status for Tibetan parliamentarians in the IPU.

MANUAL FOR PARLIAMENTARY ACTIONS

A manual for TSGs on parliamentary lobbying will be prepared, with information concerning previous parliamentary actions, resolutions, and advice on how to lobby. A draft manual will be prepared which will be translated where necessary and adapted to local circumstances in the various regions of the world by a TSG in each region. The Minister for Information and International Relations of the Government of Tibet-in-Exile has undertaken to arrange for the preparation, in India, of such a draft manual by October of this year.

G7 MEETING

The upcoming G7 meeting should be an important focus of lobbying efforts to obtain the adoption of a favourable position on Tibet by the members of the G7, given the difficulty identified by the conference in persuading individual governments to take a position on their own. The ICT will send a campaign briefing to the TSGs in G7 member countries and others that may have influence on a G7 member (e.g. EU countries).

CHINESE ADMISSION TO THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION (WTO)

China's application for WTO membership provides a significant opportunity to focus attention on Tibet: Asia Watch is taking a strong position on China's application and the International Campaign for Tibet is near to completing a document on the issue, which will aim to link China's membership with meaningful negotiations between Tibet and China. This can be used by TSGs to campaign against unconditional Chinese admission to the WTO.

CO-ORDINATION WITH WORLD PARLIAMENTARIANS CONVENTION ON TIBET

In undertaking parliamentary lobbying action, the decisions and resolutions of the WPCT to be taken into account, and efforts should be undertaken in support of these decisions. One such important decision made in Vilnius at the last meeting of the WPCT was to undertake world-wide efforts to hold parliamentary hearings on Tibet, in which the status and the legitimacy of China's claims to Tibet would be included. A number of such hearings have already been held. Building on those precedents, more such hearings should be encouraged.

OUTREACH TO THE CHINESE PEOPLE

The conference stressed the importance of reaching out to the Chinese people in China and abroad. TSGs can also play a role in encouraging meetings of Tibetans and Chinese on a personal level, looking at common issues and not only stressing differences. There is a need to find ways for greater dissemination of information on Tibet among the Chinese, inside and outside China.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA

Views on appropriate policy for TSGs regarding corporations doing business in China and Tibet and on trade with China ranged between boycott / sanctions on the one hand to co-opting investment and business organisations operating in China, as partners on the other. In this respect, the guidelines adopted by the Government of Tibet-in-Exile, and the study of doing business in Tibet prepared by ICT should serve as important guides in determining individual TSG policy.

There was a greater consensus on boycotting goods which can be specifically identified as being manufactured by prison and forced labour. Colorado friends of Tibet will liaise on this issue with the Laogai Foundation. In future new initiatives may be taken. Tibetans pointed out that they too, as a community, need to intensify their own efforts in relation to any boycott.

The dumping by China of its cheap products in countries world-wide, particularly in the Latin American and developing countries, and the negative impact of this practice on employment in involving trade unions, professional organisations and governments on the Tibet issue.

Expert economic analysis of the Chinese economy is required, together with information on profits / losses being made by companies doing business in China. There is also a need for an analysis of the effects of Chinese investments in different (developing and Latin



American) countries. The dangers of contracts not being honoured, losing investments made, and misappropriation of funds should also be researched. Some materials on this issue are to be compiled by the Colorado Friends of Tibet.

INFORMATION SHARING AND CO-ORDINATION

The importance for TSGs having access to accurate information in a timely manner is crucial. A large amount of information on developments in Tibet, government and parliamentary activities, development projects, and TSG activity as well as studies on various issues are available. The conference expressed the urgent need to strengthen the existing e-mail network capability of TSGs: the objective should be to get all TSGs on-line as soon as possible. To this end a number of activities will be undertaken:

The Canada Tibet Committee will distribute a one page listing of computer resources. For those TSGs who are not on the e-mail, a “buddy-system” will be established by the Canada Tibet Committee to find individuals to help those TSGs that do not have access to the Internet to make effective use of it.

For those TSG who do not have access to e-mail, a “buddy” will assist them to get on-line, or, if that is not possible, to provide them with the necessary information via fax or snail-mail. The setting up of this system is to be also co-ordinated by the Canada Tibet Committee.

The TSG representatives stressed the need for better distribution of information to TSGs on such issues as developments in Tibet, the position of the Government of Tibet-in-Exile on various issues, actions and campaign initiatives of other TSGs, actions of governments or parliaments on Tibet, and documentation, (new) publications and other materials available on Tibet. Possibilities were explored of this being organised from India. The Government of Tibet-in-Exile stated it would appoint one person at DIIR with the specific task of sending such information and maintaining contacts with TSGs. Other options were also looked at.

The need for some form of improved co-ordination between TSGs on regional and international levels was felt by many participants. This would have to take place without creating new superstructures but rather by using the existing ones. Regular meetings would have to be held on regional and on international levels, preferably once every three years. In addition, the possibility of assigning the task of facilitating such co-ordination to an individual, for example, based in India, will be explored.

REGIONAL FOCUSSES

Specific conditions in different regions of the world require strategies adapted to those regions. The Latin American and European regions met and determined some specific

adaptations of strategies for their regions. Some of the conclusions reached are stated elsewhere in this statement.

The importance of developing support for Tibet in countries in Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean was recognised, and the TSGs look to the Government of Tibet-in-Exile for guidance and leadership in this regard. Emphasis at this stage should be on encouraging the creation of TSGs in some selected countries, and strengthening newly established ones. The TSGs in South Africa in particular, need to be assisted. In countries that recognise Taiwan, there may be greater possibility of developing activity.

It is essential that the specific situation and cultural and political conditions, as well as the affinities in each country to be understood and utilised. Thus, for example, the issue of nuclear rising will have a resonance in the Pacific, as will colonialism in African countries. As was true of the early interest in Europe and elsewhere, awareness will first have to be developed in those countries through educational activities, for example, in Tibetan culture.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN TIBET

Any economic or development projects being planned or carried out in Tibet must be assessed in terms of the benefit or harm they may bring to the Tibetan people, and, in particular, their effect on China's population transfer policy. In order to intensify monitoring and reaction to such programmes, the TSGs will look for information on projects supported by governments, the EU, international agencies and NGOs and analyze them. A resource directory or database about projects in Tibet should be prepared to make this information available to others. Campaigns may be organised where appropriate.

It was stressed by Tibetans who have recently worked in Tibet that there is a need to support small private initiatives in Tibet which will empower Tibetans and help them in the field of education, health and relief of poverty. On the other hand, projects that directly or indirectly benefit the Chinese authorities or colonists should be scrutinised.

ABUSE OF WOMEN

The conference expressed its strong condemnation of the treatment of women in Tibet, in particular policies of involuntary sterilisation and abortion.

ENVIRONMENT

It is stressed that the environmental issues, the destruction of the environment, nuclear industry and the resulting pollution, and the nuclear testing in Eastern Turkestan should



be focused on in the coming years, and should be made integral parts of the work of the TSGs. The conference decided to intensify protest against nuclear testing in Eastern Turkestan.

SPECIFIC CAMPAIGNS

MARCH 10, CO-ORDINATED DEMONSTRATIONS AND FLAG FLYING

In 1996, there were approximately six hundred cities and municipalities that officially flew the Tibetan National Flag on March 10. This initiative was co-ordinated by the Transnational Radical Party. There was a consensus that this campaign should be intensified by all TSGs world-wide. The goal is to get six thousand cities and municipalities fly Tibetan flags world-wide on March 10, 1997.

On the same day, TSGs should also join together to hold major regional demonstrations. Geneva for Europe (at the UN), New Delhi for Asia, etc.

PARLIAMENTARY PETITION TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL TO PRESS FOR NEGOTIATIONS

The initiative of the Transnational Radical Party to obtain two thousand signatures of parliamentarians, and a meeting with the UN Secretary-General to urge to receive His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be supported by the TSGs.

GRASSROOTS PETITION / LETTER WRITING TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL TO PRESS FOR NEGOTIATIONS

Letter campaign calling on the Secretary-General of the UN to implement the past resolutions on Tibet by providing his good offices to bring about negotiations between Tibet and China has been suggested.

Tibet supporters are urged to write letters to the UN Secretary-General to implement the UNGA Resolutions on Tibet. Letters are also to be sent to the Government Missions to the UN and Foreign Ministries. Details of this campaign are to be worked out.

On a national level, the Indo-Tibet Friendship Society and the Himalayan Committee for Action on Tibet have initiated their own campaign directed at their government. Similar campaign may be launched in other countries.

HONG KONG CAMPAIGN

The return of Hong Kong to China will be used to focus attention on Tibet. To this end a plan was developed: Tibet supporters in Hong Kong to create awareness among Chinese concerning Tibet issues; TSGs to stress the relevance of what is happening in Tibet for Hong Kong. A strategy will be developed by TSG UK & ICT to create awareness of the Tibet issue with the Hong Kong Legislature Council using the ICT report, Michael van Walt's paper on Status of Tibet and the Amnesty International report to reach the Chinese population as part of the existing and long-term strategy of reaching out to the overseas Chinese.

SETTING OF TIBET-FRIENDLY MUTUAL FUND

Milarepa Fund is already working on setting of a Tibet-friendly Mutual Fund and related initiative.

EU STAND UP TO CHINA CAMPAIGN

In view of the upcoming four European Presidencies which are sympathetic to the Tibetan cause, Ireland (from July), the Netherlands (January 97), Luxembourg and Belgium, a European Union Working Group met to discuss how to gain support within the EU to "insist on negotiations without preconditions" in all dealings with China.

This campaign will be inaugurated with the co-operation of Amnesty International and East Timor Solidarity at the opening of Ireland's presidency in Dublin next month. Lead to be taken TSG Ireland. TSG UK will provide papers on EU's policies on China.

WORLD WOMEN'S UNION FOR TIBET

This will be launched on March 8, 1997 and co-ordinated by CSPT Paris.

ACTION ON SPECIFIC DAYS

International Women's Day on March 8, World Earth day on April 22, Tibetan Democracy Day on September 2, Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday on October 2.

To highlight the non-violent nature of the Tibetan struggle and to use the opportunity to undertake activities in support of the proposed Satyagraha movement.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE STUDENTS FOR FREE TIBET MOVEMENT

Encourage all TSGs to start chapters of Students for a Free Tibet in their camous and encourage international students to get involved in Students for a Free Tibet.

Third International Conference of TSGs held in Berlin from 11-14 May 2000 Action Plan

We, the 282 representatives of Tibet support organizations from 52 countries of all continents, gathered in Berlin from 11 to 14 May 2000 to develop strategies to effectively support the struggle of the Tibetan people for freedom and justice, express our complete solidarity with the people of Tibet and pledge to intensify our efforts to help them achieve their legitimate objectives. We fully endorse the right of the Tibetan people to determine their own destiny, in accordance with their recognized right to self-determination, and recognize His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to be the sole legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people.

We are gravely concerned at the deterioration of the situation in Tibet and condemn the continued violation of the Tibetan people's human rights and freedoms, including their political, cultural, religious, social and economic rights, by the Government of the People's Republic of China. We commend and admire the Tibetan people for responding to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's call to reject violence, despite the violence and suffering inflicted on them by the Chinese Government authorities.

We support His Holiness the Dalai Lama's call for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, which is caused by China's occupation of Tibet, and for the proposals he has made for substantive negotiations with China's leaders without any preconditions. We commend His Holiness for the consistency of his position in this regard and are pleased at the broad support, which governments and parliaments of many countries have expressed for the proposals put forward by His Holiness.

We condemn the persistent refusal of the Government of the Peoples Republic of China to enter into earnest negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and for setting unacceptable conditions designed to prevent such negotiations from taking place. This is particularly unreasonable given the extremely moderate and conciliatory position His Holiness has taken.

We endorse the proposal made by a Member of the European Parliament at the conference for an initiative to urge the Government of Tibet-in-Exile to reconsider its position on independence if no substantive progress has been made in negotiations with the Government of the People's Republic of China on proposals for Tibetan self government in the next three years. In that event, we shall fully support such a stand and



shall launch a major campaign for international recognition of Tibet's claim or for the conduct of an internationally supervised referendum on the issue.

We have reviewed the activities, successes and weaknesses of the Tibet movement and are very encouraged by the strength, which the movement has demonstrated, in particular the considerable impact that some international campaigns have had. We are convinced that the potential for success can be considerably increased by improving the communication and co-ordination among all concerned and by creating a spirit of and mechanisms for mutual support so that the capacity and effectiveness, particularly of less established groups can be increased. Extensive discussions were held and recommendations on this issue were made.

In order to support most effectively the Tibetan struggle for freedom, justice and human dignity, we urge all Governments to intensify calls on China to respond positively to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's proposal for negotiations without preconditions and to support the non-violent efforts of His Holiness and the Government of Tibet-in-Exile and people.

We decide to take the following actions: Tibet Support Groups will actively lobby their governments to expressly press the Government of the PRC to start negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Government of Tibet-in-Exile without delay and without any preconditions.

Tibet Support Groups will undertake coordinated lobbying of their respective governments to persuade them to take action at the 57th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to censure China with respect to Tibet. Special attention should be given and support provided for this purpose in Latin American and African countries. This activity should start as soon as possible. Appropriate follow-up to last year's appeals to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan should be considered.

Efforts will be undertaken by Tibet Support Groups wherever possible to persuade the parliaments of their respective countries to recognize that Tibet is an occupied country and that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Government of Tibet-in-Exile are the sole legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people, as was done by the Australian Senate, the Belgian Parliament, the European Parliament, the Saami Parliament and the U.S. Congress.

Building on successes of a number of campaigns, and in line with the overall political strategic objectives, international campaigns will be conducted to prevent or stop development projects and direct or indirect foreign investments in Tibet that adversely affect the Tibetan people. In keeping with the Government of Tibet-in-Exile's guidelines on development, projects that genuinely assist and empower the Tibetan people inside Tibet will be encouraged and supported. Research should be done and made available

In Eastern Europe and the CIS, the setting up or enlargement of parliamentary groups will be encouraged and a co-ordination system will be created. Tibet Support Groups



will seek to co-operate with and to receive support from Tibet Support Groups inside and outside the region. It is proposed to solicit the engagement of influential personalities from the region in support of Tibet.

Special efforts will be made by European Tibet Support Groups to lobby the European Commission, which has been asked to appoint a special coordinator on Tibet.

The conference emphasized the importance of reaching out to the Chinese people and Tibet Support Groups were encouraged to maximize opportunities for this. The special experience of persons from former communist countries may assist them to reach out to the Chinese people. Use of the website in the Chinese language is essential. A major conference on Tibet will be organized by the Tibet-China Study Group next year. Similar conferences are encouraged. Writings of Tibetans and compilation of reports by Chinese visitors to Tibet and to the Tibetan community in exile will be published in the Chinese language and the making of a documentary was proposed.

The Government of Tibet-in-Exile is requested to consider posting a representative in Latin America, to increase its presence at the United Nations in New York, and to include a Tibetan fluent in Chinese in the New York office.

In order to improve the communication and co-ordination of Tibet Support Group activities and campaigns, which is considered to be of major importance, as stated above, it has been decided to set up the International Tibet Support Network, as proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Tibet Support Group Co-ordination. The Ad Hoc committee has been asked to take on the task of the Network's Steering Committee for the interim period of one year until elections to that body are held. All Tibet Support Groups will be encouraged to become members of the Network.

NOTE: Third TSG action plan is based on the discussed and amended draft conference action plan emitting from the working groups.

I The Independent Tibet Network, 12 Beaumont Court, Worthing Road, East Preston, West Sussex, BN16 1BE, UK, www.truthtibet.com, which participated in the conference, opposes this section and demands to endorse the Tibetan people's right to independence.

Fourth International Conference of TSGs held in Prague from 19-21 October 2003

This Plan for Action was generated by Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) and Tibetan NGOs, based on Workshop discussions during the Fourth International conference of TSGs which was held between 18 and 21 October 2003 in Prague, Czech Republic. The 260 participants in the Conference, from 47 countries, focused on four main campaign themes, which were selected by a Preparatory Committee after consultation with TSGs and Tibetan NGOs:

Political Initiatives

Human Rights

China's Western development Programme

THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS

On the basis of detailed and background analyses, participants discussed overall strategic priorities related to these four themes. They then looked into practical ideas for actions that would lead to the realisation of these objectives.

Tibet Support Groups and Tibetan NGOs are widely diverse group of organisations. Some are quite small, whilst others have significant resources. Each operates within the opportunities and constraints of its national and local context. An essential purpose of the Conference therefore was to identify a range of actions that are both politically relevant to the present situation of the Tibetan people, and practically achievable at all levels of the movement.

Due to constraints of time, this Plan for Action could not be discussed in detail during the Conference. Therefore this should be considered as a record of proposed priorities and action ideas generated during the discussions which took place in Prague. It is a detailed resource of campaigning ideas which each Support Group could use for the development of its campaigns.

The substantial number of ideas generated are a reflection of the creativity and energy of the Prague Conference. TSGs and Tibetan NGOs are encouraged to examine the Plan



for good ideas, specific suggestions, and experiences of campaigns that have proven effective in the past and may do so again in future. The sequencing of the priorities is not a ranking but reflects the interests of the participants of the Conference in the extremely wide range of issues discussed.

The role of the Tibetan Government in exile was to convene this Conference and to explain its policies; during the course of the Conference, TGiE appealed to participants for support for its Middle Way Approach. Just as this Plan for Action does not necessarily represent the views of all TSGs and Tibetan NGOs, neither does it necessarily represent the views of the Conference Organisers.

Executive Summary: The Conference reviewed China's continuing occupation of and repression in Tibet and developments there since the last TSG Conference in Berlin in May 2000. The Conference condemned the ongoing violations of human rights and expressed its solidarity with the people of Tibet in their struggle to determine their own future in freedom. The Conference supports the re-opening of direct contact between representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and of the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGiE) and the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Conference urgently calls on the new leadership in China to enter into earnest substantive negotiations, without preconditions, so that the parties can reach an early agreement which will be acceptable to the Tibetan people.

Tibet Support Groups and Tibetan NGOs renewed their strong commitment to the Tibetan cause and their support for the Tibetan people's struggle for their rights and aspirations in the face of China's continued occupation. Participants were greatly encouraged by the warm welcome they received in the Czech Republic and the strong support for the Tibetan cause expressed by President Vaclav Havel and the President and the Vice-President of the country's Senate. The increasing number of Chinese supporters in the Tibetan movement and the presence of Chinese and Taiwanese campaigners at the Conference was especially motivating. They were also encouraged by the steady growth of the Tibetan movement. The effort and strategies that emerged from this Conference will enhance the movement and will substantially increase political pressure on China, through innovative and wide-ranging means, to resolve the issue of Tibet to the satisfaction of the Tibetan people.

In workshops on political initiatives, participants developed strategies and actions to build support for the Tibetan cause across and within governments and international organisations such as the UN. These include campaigning for the appointment of special representatives for Tibet at the European Union and elsewhere, possibly at national level; explaining the Middle Way Approach to governments and obtaining support for it; and campaigning for the recognition of the Tibetan Government in Exile. Strategies to build support among opinion makers and the private sector were also discussed.

The importance of campaigning for human rights of Tibetan remains a high priority. It was emphasized that human rights violations are a symptom of the occupation of Tibet and will not end until the question of Tibet is resolved. The most important campaigns discussed included those to pressure the PRC to free all political prisoners, in particular the Panchen Lama and Tenzin Delek Rinpoche; respect international standards as well as China's own laws; respect the right to freedom of expression and religion and the freedom from torture; respect women's rights, including reproductive rights; restore former political prisoners' full rights; and promote the social and economic rights, in particular those to education and health. Participants also discussed the importance of preserving Tibet's unique cultural heritage and considered ways to address human rights abuses in China. They also addressed the illegal detention in and forced repatriation of Tibetan refugees from Nepal.

With respect to China's "Western Development Programme", a number of areas for campaigns were selected due to the particular harm, for example, through population transfer, they would inflict upon Tibetans and their environment. Campaign issues proposed include tourism, transport networks, the proposed road around Mount Kailash, water resources and dam projects, mining projects and foreign investments in Tibet. Particular attention was given to the Gormo-Lhasa railway project. Whereas aspects of projects that can benefit Tibetans should be encouraged, it was emphasised that the ownership of development projects must be with Tibetans.

Most TSGs opposed China's bid for the 2008 Olympics and were successful in making human rights the key issue associated with the bid. Despite this, Beijing was granted the Games, so TSGs propose to take advantage of this platform in order to focus world attention on China's occupation of Tibet. The Athens games in 2004 will provide the first major opportunity for campaigning on this issue. Targets will include corporate sponsors, the International Olympic Committee and National Olympic Committees. TSGs recognise that China's promise of media freedom could be of great benefit in China and Tibet, and will campaign to ensure this is realised.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

Fifth International Conference of TSGs held in

Brussels, 11-14 May 2007

Conference Press Statement: Tibet Conference comes up with a Roadmap for Peace in Tibet

Brussels, 14 May 2007 — The three-day 5th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups came to an end with a concise action plan that will serve as a roadmap for the Tibet movement for the coming years. The action plan covers four areas of concern to the Tibetan people and their supporters around the world: political support for negotiations, human rights, environment and development and the 2008 Olympic games in Beijing.

“The action plan that came out of the conference is very powerful,” said Kalon Tempa Tsering, the Kalon for the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration. He said, “The action plan will galvanise the worldwide Tibet movement with new energy and enthusiasm.”

The closing ceremony was addressed by Dr. H.C. Rolf Berndt, the Executive Chairman of the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung and by Mr. Sonam Phuntsok Monkhar, the Tibetan Member of Parliament elected from Europe. In his address Mr. Monkhar thanked the participants for the energy and enthusiasm they put into the conference and said that such support will greatly enhance the ability of the Tibetan people to resolve the issue of Tibet based on the Middle-Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which, he reminded the participants, was endorsed by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.

The message of Betty Williams was read out. In her message, the Noble Laureate said, “Stand proud and strong, Tibetan people, for right not might is on your side. And when the governments of the so-called democratic and free world decide not to kowtow to the bullying of China’s tyrannical leadership, Tibet and the people His Holiness loves so dearly may have their dream come true; the dream of a free, prosperous and peaceful Tibet.”

In his vote of thanks Mr. Tempa Tsering said that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is fond of saying that in political terms the Tibet Support Groups around the world are the fourth refuge of the Tibetan people. He said that whenever the Tibetans pray they take refuge in the Buddha, the Sangha-the community of monks, and the Dharma-the teachings of the Buddha. Because of Tibets’ sad political situation, the international community has thus become our fourth refuge.

The Fifth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) concluded today in Brussels. The international Tibet support movement is a unique coalition of dedicated organizations and individuals who pool in their talent together to improve the human rights situation and to resolve the issue of Tibet. This time the conference brought 300 participants from 145 Tibet Support Groups and 36 Tibetan Associations from about 56 countries.

The conclave also brought 12 Chinese supporters of the non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people.

This international gathering was convened by the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration in collaboration with Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, Germany, and co-hosted by the Belgian Inter-Parliamentary Group for Tibet.

Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, the elected head of the Tibetan political leadership and Mr. Lodi G. Gyari, Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, briefed the participants on the current status of the Sino-Tibetan dialogue. Kalon Tripa used this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of both His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to leave no stone unturned to resolve the issue through negotiations with the Chinese authorities, so that the Tibetan people can live in freedom and dignity.

This TSG meeting comes a year ahead of China's hosting of the Olympic Games. Chinese authorities promised the international media greater freedoms in their news dissemination. The Olympic Games next year will be an opportunity for China to showcase its impressive development achievements. The participants at the 5th international Tibet Support Groups Conference would also hope that the greater freedoms provided to the international media will be also extended to China's own domestic media, so that China's dynamic development could be sustained by fair and objective media coverage.

The first Tibet Support Groups conference was held in Dharamsala in 1990, the second in Bonn in 1996, the third in Berlin in 2000 and the fourth Tibet Support Groups conference was held in Prague in 2003 and was inaugurated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the presence of Vaclav Havel, the former President of Czech Republic.

CONFERENCE STRATEGIC PLAN

The 315 participants of the Fifth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups from 56 countries and six continents met in Brussels from 11th to 14th May 2007 to renew their firm commitment to the people of Tibet and their courageous struggle for freedom. They pledge to increase their efforts in support of Tibet and call on the international

community, including governments, elected representatives of the people and civil society leaders as well as all freedom loving individuals throughout the world to support His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Conference participants admire the unwavering loyalty of Tibetans in Tibet to the Dalai Lama and their remarkable ability to safeguard their culture and identity. The conference participants will continue their unceasing efforts to achieve a political resolution to the question of Tibet in accordance with the wishes of the Tibetan people to determine their future in freedom.

The growing strength of the Tibet support movement is again demonstrated at this meeting. Its ability to overcome the disappointment of His Holiness' absence from the conference due to Belgian sensitivity to pressure from the government of China demonstrates the long term commitment of the worldwide movement.

The conference is deeply concerned about the PRC's reluctance to actively pursue earnest negotiations, since no talks have been held between its government and the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for more than one year. This leads to serious questions about the Chinese government's sincerity in this regard. Conference participants are equally concerned about the lack of improvement in PRC's treatment of Tibetans in Tibet, where human rights continue to be violated. Participants urge the international community to persuade the Chinese government to demonstrate its good faith both by actively and constructively pursuing a negotiated resolution for Tibet and by fully respecting international human rights standards throughout Tibet. The Tibet Support Groups will closely monitor the situation and develop appropriate actions as it unfolds.

A wealth of strategies and activities were proposed and discussed by the conference participants to support the Tibetan struggle; the conference agreed to focus the attention of Tibet Support Groups on a number of areas of major importance. An immediate area of focus is the campaigns designed to focus attention on Tibet in relation to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, campaigns in which all Tibet support groups will enthusiastically participate.

Increased efforts will be devoted to strengthen governmental and parliamentary support for the Tibetan cause and the Sino-Tibetan negotiation process. In view of the paramount importance of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese people, and recognising the tremendous increase of interest in Tibet and its culture amongst Chinese, the conference decides to intensify its outreach to the Chinese people. The role of opinion-makers in this regard is fully recognised. Respect for human rights, especially freedom of expression, but also religious freedom and the issue of political prisoners including 11th Panchen Lama, will form an important focus of activity, emphasising the PRC's duty to abide by its obligations under international law. Violations of the rights of Tibetan refugees who flee to Nepal also form an area of serious concern and action.

The current alarming rate of population transfer of Chinese people into Tibet, which has accelerated the socio-economic marginalisation of Tibetans, constitutes an important focus of action. Environmental concerns, especially the threat to the river waters flowing from the Tibetan plateau and also the reckless exploitation of natural resources are recognised to be of critical importance to the region and the world.

The conference expresses its admiration for the successful efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people for establishing a genuine democratic system of governance in exile. At the start of this conference, His Holiness sent a written message requesting frank and open discussions and constructive suggestions. The conference met at a critical and important time for the Tibet movement, with the approaching Olympic Games in Beijing and the increase in pressure by the government of China on governments worldwide, starkly highlighted by His Holiness absence from Brussels. Tibet Support Groups emerged from the conference more focussed and determined in their efforts and with a clear strategy for the next three years.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TIBET SUPPORT GROUPS

Special International TSGs Meeting held in

Gurgaon, India 29 November to 1 December 2008

The Special International Tibet Support Groups Meeting was held in India, the second home of the Tibetan people, from 29th November to 1st December 2008 – a week after the Special General Meeting of the Tibetan People held in Dharamsala, base of the Tibetan government in exile, that was called by the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama asked Tibet supporters attending the Special International TSG Meeting to “provide suggestions to our elected leadership on the best possible course for the realization of the Tibetan people’s fundamental aspirations”.

The meeting opened with one minute’s silence for those who have died in Tibet, particularly since the uprising from 10 March 2008 onwards, and delegates paid tribute to those killed or injured in the recent atrocities in Mumbai. This violent tragedy underlines the urgent need for the international community to take meaningful action in support of those who pursue non-violent struggles, including the Tibetan people.

The meeting re-affirmed the delegates’ commitment to a non-violent approach on Tibet, and also their support for the Dalai Lama’s and Tibetan government in exile’s emphasis on engagement and reconciliation. Delegates also highlighted the 21st century relevance to the world of the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual tradition and culture, especially in terms of offering alternative ways forward for conflict resolution.

The meeting welcomed the recent Special General Meeting of the Tibetan People from the diaspora in Dharamsala, India, which provided opportunities for diverse opinions from the Tibetan community worldwide to be openly expressed and discussed. This was an important democratic forum that should be continued in order to strengthen Tibetan institutions and civil society in exile. Delegates noted that while the meeting was held in exile, efforts were made to ascertain the views of Tibetans in Tibet, despite an intense climate of fear and Chinese government restrictions. The Special General Meeting re-affirmed the solidarity of Tibetans from across the Tibetan plateau, just as Tibetans in Tibet from all three provinces (U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo) have demonstrated strong unity in their assertions of Tibetan cultural and religious identity.

The uprising in Tibet and the disproportionate responses by the PRC authorities have created a crisis of extreme urgency in Tibet that demand swift and positive action from the international community. Delegates expressed concern about the Chinese government’s representation of these protests as only violent riots in Lhasa, despite

The meeting expressed profound concern over the continuing suffering of the Tibetan people, now under de facto martial law, and the delegates' solidarity with political prisoners and the families of the hundreds of disappeared.

Delegates to the Special International TSG Meeting reaffirmed their commitment to putting the needs and wishes of Tibetans in Tibet first. The delegates regard the protests in Tibet as a rejection by the Tibetan people of Chinese misrule in Tibet, expressing a resentment that has built up over more than 50 years and reached a breaking point. Through their dissent, Tibetans are conveying the message that the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile represent their interests, and not the Chinese government.

The meeting welcomed the fact that the Memorandum of Genuine Autonomy had been made public by the Dalai Lama's representatives prior to the Special Meeting, and appreciated this clear outline of the Tibetan government in exile's position. There was general agreement that engagement is a means for securing positive change, but differing views about a framework for engagement were expressed.

The meeting noted that the Chinese authorities have failed to create genuine stability in Tibet and that its political campaigns have, indeed, led to further unrest and increased tensions between Chinese and Tibetans. There is a risk that this could intensify further, particularly in the build-up to the 50th anniversary of the 10th March uprising in 2009. Delegates stressed the importance of stepping up targeted outreach to the Chinese people, particularly given the upsurge in anti-Tibetan sentiment and Chinese nationalism as a result of distorted representations of the situation in Tibet by the Chinese government.

The meeting acknowledged the importance of Tibet to the world – specifically in geopolitical terms, due to its location between India and China, and environmentally, as the earth’s ‘third pole’ and a watershed of Asia’s great rivers affecting millions of people. A more strategic approach to communications was encouraged in order to ensure that the reality of Tibet’s situation today is conveyed to the global media and to strengthen advocacy.

Specific recommendations on advocacy, monitoring, campaign action, Chinese outreach and the dialogue process will be presented to the Tibetan government in exile following the meeting, in accordance with the Dalai Lama's request.



Sixth International Conference of TSGs held in

Surajkund, India, November 5-7, 2010

The Surajkund Statement and Action Plan on Tibet

Statement

The Sixth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups was held at Surajkund in the north Indian state of Haryana from 5 to 7 November 2010. It was convened by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause – India, the apex coordinating body of the Tibet supporters in India, and facilitated by the Department of Information & International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration.

The conference was attended by 258 participants from 57 countries and consisted of an opening ceremony, five plenary sessions and working groups on political support, outreach to Chinese, human rights, and environment and development issues.

During the inaugural ceremony, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was the Guest of Honour and the former Deputy Prime Minister of India, Mr. Lal Krishna Advani, the Chief Guest, while the Kalon Tripa, Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, delivered the key note address.

Other international guests present at the inaugural ceremony included Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago from the Philippines; Mr Rafael Gimalov, Member of Parliament from Russia; Major (Retd.), Vijay Singh Mankotia, former Minister of Himachal Pradesh in India; Mr. Javed Raza, National General Secretary, Janata Dal (United), India; Dr. Yang Jianli, President of Initiatives for China, T.N. Chaturvedi, former governor of Karnataka; Subhash Kashyap, former Secretary-General of the Indian Parliament; and Ms. Jaya Jaitly, a prominent socialist leader.

The purpose of the conference was to take stock of efforts in finding a negotiated solution to the Tibetan issue, discuss the current situation in Tibet and outline ways for the Tibet groups throughout the world, including Tibetan NGOs and Tibetan associations, to strengthen their work in the light of new developments in China and Tibet.

The previous conferences of Tibet Support Groups have been held in Dharamsala in 1990, in Bonn in 1996, Berlin in 2000, Prague in 2003, and Brussels in 2007. A special TSG conference was also held in India in 2008.

The conference participants:

Reiterated their position that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration are the legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people;

Expressed their deep admiration for the unwavering determination and commitment to nonviolence of the Tibetans in Tibet despite the increasingly stringent controls being exercised by the Chinese authorities;

Recalled the courage of the Tibetan people who voiced their grievances and expressed their aspirations through public demonstrations throughout Tibet in 2008;

Demanded that the Chinese Government let the world know the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama and release him as well as all Tibetan political prisoners;

Expressed their appreciation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche, whose addresses during the inaugural session have greatly motivated the participants. The conference expresses its appreciation of Kalon Tripa's many years of leadership and assistance to the TSGs;

Welcomed the reiteration by Indian leader Lal Krishna Advani at the conference of the Indian support to Tibetan aspirations irrespective of how the India-China relationship develops;

Applauded the extraordinary and continued support rendered by the government and the people of India to the Tibetan people, which has enabled them to establish a firm foundation for the preservation and promotion of Tibetan identity in exile;

Committed to work together to forge a strong international coalition that will pursue a common strategy for alleviating the plight of the people of Tibet and ensuring a political solution to the Tibetan issue, consistent with their United Nations recognised right to self-determination;

Welcomed the increased participation by Chinese delegates in the conference and regarded this as a measure of the growing understanding and support among the Chinese people about the reality of the Tibetan people and the Chinese people's future role towards creating a solution;

Welcomed the noticeable increase in delegates from Southeast Asia;

Welcomed the democratic election process that is currently underway to elect the Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) and members of the Tibetan Parliament by Tibetans in the



free world. We fully support the International Network of Parliamentarians for Tibet's initiative to facilitate and ensure that international election observers are invited to monitor the Tibetan election process in Nepal. We remain particularly concerned about Nepalese authorities' interference in the Tibetan election process in October 2010. We urge the Nepalese Government to respect the Tibetan people's right to participate in their democratic process;

Appreciated the sympathy and support of the people and Government of Nepal towards the humanitarian needs of the Tibetans-in-exile so far, as well as, expressed serious concern about the changing attitude of the Government of Nepal towards the Tibetan refugees in recent times;

Expressed condemnation of China's continued abuse of the human rights of the Tibetan people in general, including its violation of China's own constitutionally-mandated rights, its violation of international treaty obligations concerning the Tibetan people's religious and monastic administration, and its violation of the Tibetan people's rights to use the Tibetan language as the medium of instruction in the education system. The Tibet Support Groups resolved to closely monitor the situation and develop appropriate actions to highlight these abuses and make China respect these rights;

Expressed concern that the People's Republic of China's ill-conceived developmental activities in Tibet are negatively affecting the fragile ecology with grave implications for the region and the world as a whole and demanded that these activities be stopped forthwith;

Resolved to make the protection of the Tibetan environment a central part of campaign work for the coming years;

Urged the governments of conference participants, as well as the United Nations and other international agencies, to recognise His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as the legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people and take tangible action towards a political solution in Tibet, reminded the governments and parliaments, including the European parliament, of their past commitments to support Tibet and urged them to take effective steps to fulfill them;

Agreed, therefore, to the following Surajkund Action Plan to focus attention of Tibet Support Groups on a number of areas of major importance.

POLITICAL SUPPORT

We will develop a training program and resource materials to support the creation of a broader network of Tibet Groups capable of advocating in local and national governments on the Tibet issue. Tibet Groups will be encouraged to participate in coordinated Lobby Days to build relationships and support. We will liaise with the International Network of Parliamentarians for Tibet, involve Tibetan Parliamentarians and officials in our outreach, and coordinate closely with Tibet Groups already engaged in advocacy in governments.

We recognize the deep desire of the Tibetan people to have His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit them, and firmly believe that His Holiness is a positive force for bringing about a peaceful resolution of the Tibetan issue. Therefore, we will launch a campaign towards fulfilling the aspirations of the Tibetan people for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Tibet based on the fundamental rights of freedom of movement, of association, of religion and of free speech.

I. OBJECTIVE: To reverse the Chinese Government's efforts to weaken the status of the Tibetan language.

We will create and sustain international outrage at policy decisions intended to weaken if not eliminate the Tibetan language in Tibet, through a campaign that uses a variety of new and creative communication channels to educate and persuade key audiences who can influence the Chinese Government. The campaign will also use methods to convey to Tibetans inside Tibet the worldwide support for their right to use and enjoy their own language.

II. OBJECTIVE: To increase awareness of human rights abuses in Tibet through a simple grassroots campaign.



We will wear, and encourage others to wear, a white armband on Wednesdays with the word “TIBET” on it. Everyone who wears the armband will become an ambassador for Tibet as people ask why we are wearing the armband. We will publicize the campaign through a variety of means, including at the Kalachakra in Washington D.C. In July 2011.

ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE: Create an alliance with effected communities and build public awareness at the grassroots level in order to stop the damming of the Mekong/Zachu River.

Using people to people connections at the local and village level, we will help build the capacity of communities to challenge damming projects on the Mekong/Zachu River in Tibet. We will create greater understanding of the ways in which decisions affecting rivers in Tibet produce significant consequences in China and other countries. As the campaign takes root we will consider expanding it to address other rivers flowing from Tibet.

CHINESE OUTREACH

OBJECTIVE: To foster greater understanding between Chinese and Tibetan people through the exchange of personal stories and experiences.

We will open up channels of communication by using personal stories to highlight issues and concerns that Chinese and Tibetan people share, such as the environment, freedom of speech and religion, etc. We will create positive and simple messages to initiate conversations and then create spaces for the conversation to continue, including in local cultural events, friendship groups, and in on-line spaces such as Common Ground.

Special International TSGs Meeting held in Dharamsala, India 16 – 18 November 2012

CONCLUDING STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Special International Meeting of Tibet Support Groups

In response to the escalating crisis in Tibet, the Special International Meeting of Tibet Support Groups was held in Dharamsala, India from 16-18 November 2012. The meeting, which was attended by almost 200 participants from 43 countries, was convened by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause - India, and facilitated by the Department of Information & International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration. The purpose of the meeting was to develop strategic campaigns to address the deteriorating situation in Tibet where to date at least 75 Tibetans have self-immolated.

This is a highly significant moment in the Tibetan struggle for freedom. Despite unprecedented repression, there has been a dramatic upsurge in resistance against China's occupation. There have been important changes within the Central Tibetan Administration with the historic devolution of political power from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the democratically elected leadership. Meanwhile the Communist Party of China has appointed its new leaders. These changes demand renewed effort from Tibet Support Groups who pledge to increase their efforts on behalf of the Tibetan people and their human right to self-determination as recognized by the United Nations.

We, the conference participants, express our deep admiration and strong support for the unwavering determination and commitment to nonviolence by Tibetans in Tibet and for the many diverse ways in which they are resisting, including Tibetan cultural renaissance and Lhakar. Such resistance has continued despite mass detentions, violent military responses to peaceful protests, and the increased use of "patriotic re-education" campaigns.

We express deep anguish that Tibetans feel compelled to self-immolate as an act of political resistance. We resolutely stand in solidarity with their aspirations for freedom and for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland. Responsibility for this crisis lies with China's leaders and their failed Tibet policies over the last sixty years. We call on China's new leaders to urgently address the root causes of these self-immolations.

We are deeply concerned about the forced removal of nomadic communities which is eroding cultural traditions, destroying livelihoods, and resulting in social exclusion. We



believe that social and economic exclusion are contributing factors in the escalation of self-immolation and therefore must be urgently addressed.

We call specifically on General Secretary Xi Jinping and the new Politburo Standing Committee to take immediate steps to resolve these and all legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people recognising that a peaceful resolution is in the best interests of both the Tibetan and the Chinese people.

We demand that our home governments initiate urgent and coordinated action, including at the United Nations and in other international and regional fora, to bring pressure upon the Government of China to change its policies in Tibet.

The conference participants welcome the creation of a coalition of Asian Tibet Support Groups and congratulate it on the adoption a common action program.

We, the conference participants, renew our commitment to work together and in cooperation with Tibetan organizations, Chinese human rights defenders, and other concerned organizations around the world, in pursuit of a political solution to the Tibet issue consistent with international human rights standards.

To that end, we have today agreed to the following Action Plan:

RESPOND TO TIBETAN SELF-IMMOLATIONS

Objective:

To press key governments to establish an intergovernmental forum to develop coordinated action in response to the escalating self-immolation crisis in Tibet by the end of 2013.

This campaign aims to build broad public awareness and domestic pressure on key governments with the support of parliamentarians and opinion leaders. Tactics for government pressure include lobby days and advocacy in national ministries and international fora. These activities will be supported by awareness-raising about the crisis of self-immolation. We will engage greater media outreach by organizing rallies and other events that will appeal to local and popular media including via a social media strategy.

1. AMPLIFY TIBETAN RESISTANCE

Objective:

Expand Lhakar to 25 additional countries by the end of 2013, and strengthen Lhakar where it already exists. We will urge Tibet Support Groups, Tibetan associations, and Buddhist centres to join the Lhakar movement by reaching out and providing them with resources and support. Activities will include presentations and educational workshops to key organizations, as well as seeking endorsements from celebrities, parliamentarians and other opinion makers. Recommended Lhakar actions would include social media engagement, online videos, vigils, flash-mobs, and cultural events and lobbying.

2. BUILD POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR TIBET

a. Objective:

To stop China's re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council by November 2013. Targeting UN Ambassadors and their home governments, this campaign will build parliamentary, civil society and constituent support for a principled "no-vote" on China's re-election to the Human Rights Council. Key tactics will include Tibet lobby days and constituency pressure on parliamentarians, creation of a report card, letter-writing and online actions.

This campaign will be considered a success despite China's likely re-election because it will create significant public awareness and media coverage of China's appalling human rights record and it will enable the movement to build coalitions with other human rights organizations.

b. Objective:

To create a network of nine downstream national governments receiving Tibet's water by December 2013.

This campaign will target environment ministers of the downstream nations which are India, Pakistan, Burma, Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. Working in partnership with International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet (INPaT), the Department of Information & International Relations environment and development desk, and Tibetan NGOs, this campaign will reach out to parliamentarians, environmental NGOs, and affected local communities in an effort to create this forum. Key activities include raising awareness in international fora including Conference of Parties (Climate Change Negotiations), pressuring national parliaments and potentially



holding a conference on Asia's water and food security. We will build new contacts with civil society organizations in target countries in the hopes of winning support for a mass action day and water rally.

Adopted by consensus

November 18, 2012

Dharamsala, India



national identity and language under the increasingly authoritarian regime. It expresses solidarity with all Political Prisoners in Tibet. In this context, the Conference welcomes recent joint actions by concerned governments on China and, building on this, urges increased action on Tibet.

The Conference is dismayed at the hardening of the positions of the Chinese Communist Party and the government authorities towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration and their refusal to engage in dialogue with them to resolve the issue of Tibet. It is deeply saddened by the many Tibetan men and women who have chosen the ultimate sacrifice –of taking their own lives– to express their yearning for freedom and determination to save the Tibetan identity and religion, to protest the destruction of both by the PRC, and call for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return.

The Conference is profoundly concerned about the devastating impact of China's policies on Tibet's fragile and globally vital environment, notably the damming of Asia's rivers, destructive mining practices and coercive settlement of nomads, all of which exacerbates the impacts of climate change and environmental destruction on the Tibetan Plateau and the surrounding regions.

The Conference expresses its complete and continuing solidarity with the non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people for freedom and for a restoration of their fundamental human rights. It commends the initiatives of parliamentarians and government officials of many countries who persist in pressing the PRC to respect the rights of the Tibetan people and who urge its leadership to resume dialogue with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to respond positively to his efforts to pursue a mutually beneficial solution through the Middle Way approach, which calls for genuine autonomy for the whole Tibetan people.

The Conference considers the Chinese government's demand that His Holiness declare that Tibet has been a part of China since antiquity entirely unacceptable both because of the falseness of this historical claim and because this precondition forms an obstacle to earnest negotiations. It reaffirms its conviction that Tibet has not historically been a part of China and that the Tibetan people have the right to determine their own destiny. The Conference emphasizes that the PRC cannot obtain legitimacy for its rule over Tibet by attempting to force His Holiness and members of the international community to endorse its untruthful claims. It can only gain legitimacy for a role in Tibet from the Tibetan people themselves, through a mutually beneficial agreement and by implementing real changes in its policies and behavior towards the Tibetans in accordance with the latter's needs and aspirations. The conference consequently calls on the Chinese government to unconditionally resume dialogue and on other governments to resist Chinese government pressure to endorse China's claim to Tibet, and to persuade China's leaders to abandon the shameless precondition.

Conference participants reaffirm their commitment to supporting the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom and for respect of their human rights and protect the plateau's environment. They fully support His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration leadership's persistent call for earnest dialogue to resolve the Tibetan issue and will strengthen their efforts to press the international community to persuade the Chinese leadership to do so. The Tibet Support Groups will continue their dedication until a satisfactory solution has been achieved.

Accordingly, the conference has outlined the following proposals for Action Plans to be carefully considered and developed:

Joint and individual action by governments on religious freedom, in particular against the demolitions at Larung Gar, which has been brought to the world's attention by the international press.

Legal action in national courts on the basis of universal jurisdiction.

Expression of solidarity with the cultural and national identity resilience movement in Tibet.

Action on language rights at the United Nations.

Place the release of the Panchen Lama on the agenda of a US-China Presidential summit.

Take action against the Confucius Institutes' political agenda and obstruction of academic freedom

List the 1959 Tibetan national uprising among the UNESCO's heritage of Memories of the World.

Establish a system for providing correct information on Tibet on Wikipedia sites.*

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Translate Tibetan testimonies and personal stories for distribution in Chinese.

Establish a system for providing correct information on Tibet on Chinese language Wikipedia sites.*

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

To press all affected countries in particular the PRC to enter into a water-sharing agreement regarding the waters originating from the Tibetan plateau.

To persuade the PRC to allow the Tibetans to be stewards of the Tibetan plateau to slow down climate change for global benefit.

To get the PRC to earnestly implement the protection of the environment of the Tibetan plateau through beneficial provisions of the PRC's environmental laws.

The participants commit themselves to the above action plans and engage to work collaboratively with one another.