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International Parliamentarians Call for Action on Earth's "Third Pole"

Just as China is essential to successful implementation of global climate change solutions, Tibet is indispensable to China's ability to implement them successfully."

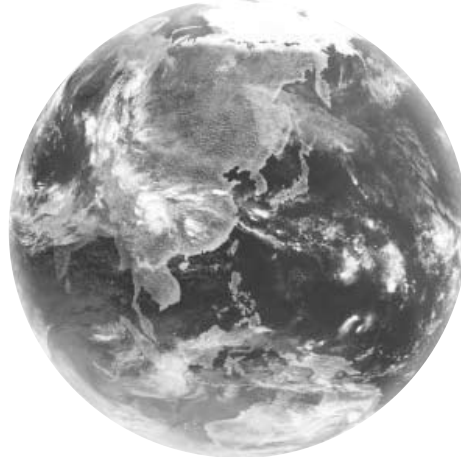
~ Open Letter to COP15

Thirty-five Parliamentarians from 16 different countries have written an open letter to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, urging negotiators to take into account the global implications of climate change in Tibet.

Tibet, the world's largest and highest plateau, is the 'world's third pole' because it contains the largest ice fields outside of the Arctic and Antarctic. It is the source of the Mekong, Yangtze, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Indus, Salween, Irrawaddy and Yellow Rivers, lifeblood of India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Southeast Asia. No other area in the world is a water repository of such size, serving as a lifeline for much of a continent and for at least a billion people. The sustainable management of Tibet has become a serious security issue in the region.

The open letter was signed by Hon. Peter Slipper MP on behalf of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet. The letter urged negotiators at the conference to consider initiatives and policies that take into account the following:

1. Independent, international scientific assessments of the changes in the Tibetan plateau's ecosystems, water resources and land use policies, including the participation of scientists and relevant stakeholders from Tibet and from those nations that depend on Tibet's water.
2. Integrated participation of Tibetans, especially Tibetan nomads, in the decision-making and management of the plateau's natural resources.
3. Encourage trans-boundary



collaborative decision-making and governance of the Tibetan plateau's water resources, including all regional and local stakeholders. In a statement to COP15, the signatories urged collaborative action:

"Just as China is essential to successful implementation of global climate change solutions, Tibet is indispensable to China's ability to implement them successfully. We urge negotiators to ensure that strategies to address climate change include stakeholders in Tibet, particularly nomads. This inclusion is essential to understanding, mitigating and adapting to changes in the Tibetan plateau's water, forest, and grassland resources and ecosystems, critical to millions of people downstream and for the stability and security of Asia."

For the first time at a major international forum on climate change, a Tibetan advocacy team has been on the ground to present information on the global implications on climate change in Tibet.

For further information: www.tibetthirdpole.org

5th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet

The 5th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet took place in Rome on 18 and 19 November and concluded with the adoption of the Rome Declaration on Tibet.

The convention, held at the Italian Parliament, was attended by 133 Parliamentarians and associates from 30 Parliaments around the world, including Hon. Peter Slipper MP, Co-Convenor of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, and included an address by the Dalai Lama at the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament.

Welcoming his arrival in Rome and visit to the Italian Chamber of Deputies, 114 Italian parliamentarians signed a letter to the Dalai Lama praising his decision "to assure through dialogue, a true political, cultural, social and religious autonomy for the Tibetan population, that represents a forward-looking choice of great value and political wisdom, not only for the issues regarding Tibet, but for the entire world."

At the conclusion of the two-day Convention, the parliamentarians adopted the WPCT Rome Declaration.

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Tibet News

Tibet News is the newsletter of the Tibet Information Office, Canberra

Address:

8/13 Napier Close, Deakin
ACT 2600 Australia

Phone: 61-2-6285-4046

Fax: 61-2-6282-4301

E-mail: tiboff@bigpond.com

Web site: www.tibetoffice.com.au

Representative of HH the Dalai Lama: Sonam N. Dagpo

Secretary: Ngodup Gyaltzen Udak

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Artwork: Griff - A Man & His Macs

Editors: Griff and Sonam Dagpo

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WPCT Rome Declaration

The Rome Declaration on Tibet on the 5th World Parliamentarian Convention

I. PREAMBLE

The Fifth World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, meeting in Rome on the 18th and 19th of November 2009 – Defends the right of the Tibetan people to their own identity, culture and way of life;

Reaffirms its strong commitment to the people of Tibet and to the non-violent path they have chosen, under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama;

Reaffirms the critical role played by parliaments and parliamentary bodies in raising awareness of the difficult situation in Tibet within governments and international institutions and in formulating policies for the benefit of the Tibetan people;

Recalls the four previous meetings of the World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, the resolutions and action programmes they have generated, and the impact of the resultant activities and initiatives;

Seeks a resolution for Tibet that guarantees genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people within the framework of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China; and

Proclaims that the message of the World Parliamentarians' Conference on Tibet is resolutely not anti-Chinese but a statement of support for justice and truth with a sincere conviction that the Tibetan and Chinese peoples can find a way to coexist with mutual respect.

II. FINDINGS

The Fifth World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet,

FINDING that since the last meeting of the World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet in 2005 the situation in Tibet has deteriorated due to the government of the People's Republic of China's imposition of harsh measures on Tibetans and its harder line taken toward the Dalai Lama and his pursuit of autonomy;

MOTIVATED by the political protests that began in March 2008 in which Tibetans across the Tibetan plateau expressed their anguish in an unprecedented and overwhelmingly peaceful manner in response to the continuing repressive policies of Chinese authorities;

CONCERNED that Chinese authorities responded to the protests with a security crackdown across the Tibetan plateau that includes the documented detention of 735 Tibetans for exercising rights such as freedom of speech, religion, assembly and association;

OUTRAGED at the execution of Tibetans without following international standards of due process of law;

RECOGNIZING that the People's Republic of China, as it seeks to be a responsible member of the international community, should acknowledge that with such status come duties and responsibilities to protect and respect those peoples under its control pursuant to international standards of justice and human rights as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

RECOGNIZING that the People's Republic of China has a moral responsibility to address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people through fair administration of rule of law under international standards of justice, respect for freedom of religion and expression, protection of the Tibetan people's right to express their cultural identity and way of life, and implementation of genuine autonomy;

ACKNOWLEDGING the recent documentation by United Nations bodies, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council and the Committee Against Torture, national governments and non-governmental organizations, of the systemic violations of the human rights of the Tibetan people by Chinese authorities;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the People's Republic of China has signed and ratified the U.N. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, but regrets serious gaps in its implementation, which is a root cause of Tibetan discontent;

RECOGNIZING the need for continuing support for both long-staying and newly-arriving refugees from Tibet, many of whom are young children, including in the areas of humanitarian assistance, education, health, and revitalization of settlements;

CONCERNED by the environmental degradation on the Tibetan plateau, the

so-called “Third Pole,” as a result of climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions, the mismanagement of natural resources by Chinese governmental and commercial interests, and the resettlement of Tibetan nomads into fixed communities, which separates them from their traditional livelihood and stewardship of Tibetan grasslands; RECOGNIZING that Chinese policies to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on the Tibetan plateau affect billions of people in Asia, and that the involvement and experience of Tibetans is integral to the successful implementation of climate change policies;

RECOGNIZING the invaluable contributions, financially and in other forms of support, by governments and citizens toward the well being of the Tibetan people and their effort to sustain their identity, particularly the host nation support by the government and people of India;

RECOGNIZING that international and governmental statements in support for dialogue in the wake of the protests that began in March 2008 were critical in setting the stage for the rounds of dialogue that occurred later in that year; RECOGNIZING that in order for the negotiations between the Chinese government and the representatives of the Dalai Lama to be effective it is essential that the format of the negotiations be transparent and with the involvement of appropriate international supervision;

CONCLUDING that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, despite the continuing occupation of Tibet, is sincere in seeking a “middle path” solution for Tibet, not independence;

CONCLUDING that the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People proposed by the representatives of the Dalai Lama embodies his vision for genuine autonomy within the constitutional framework of the People’s Republic of China;

CONSIDERING the experiences of the many autonomous regions around the world, for instance Trentino-South Tyrol in Italy, which have shown that conflicts can be overcome by respecting the fundamental rights of distinct peoples and ethnic and linguistic minorities and enabling them to exercise the right to self-government while respecting

territorial integrity of the state;

AFFIRMING the value of non-violence in mitigating conflict and misunderstanding and the potential of non-violent leadership as embodied by His Holiness the Dalai Lama for peace and stability in the People’s Republic of China; and

REAFFIRMING the resolutions and declarations made at all previous World Parliamentarians’ Conferences on Tibet, including the recognition of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile as the legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people.

III. ACTIONS

THEREFORE, the Convention is resolved to:

EXPRESS SUPPORT for substantive negotiations between the Chinese government and the representatives of the Dalai Lama toward a meaningful resolution of the Tibet issue, with the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy as a realistic and constructive basis for such negotiations;

CALL ON governments to urge the People’s Republic of China to fully respect the Tibetan people’s fundamental human rights and freedoms and to acknowledge their right to authentically participate in all issues regarding their present and future well-being;

URGE national governments to acknowledge that third-party facilitation is essential for the resumption of the dialogue and to guarantee its transparency;

CALL ON the People’s Republic of China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

ENCOURAGE governments to explore multinational mechanisms to work collaboratively on the challenges of climate change in Tibet, including with the direct participation of Tibetan stakeholders. To this end, participants of this convention will draft and publish an open letter expressing the key importance of Tibet as the “Third Pole” prior to the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen;

COMMIT to engage relevant governments and institutions to ensure that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is welcomed appropriately when meeting with various government leaders and officials;

COMMIT to building capacity within national governments for dissemination of information and the implementation of policies on Tibet, such as the identification or establishment of an office within the Executive Branch of government to handle Tibet affairs;

COMMIT to identify members of an international parliamentarians network for Tibet. The network, in consultation with the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, will identify a secretariat. The network will facilitate greater coordination between parliamentary groups, share best practices, and be sufficiently supported in the international advancement of a near-term action plan to include:

(1) introducing a resolution or motion in parliaments reflecting the principal elements of the World Parliamentarians’ Conference on Tibet Declaration;

(2) requesting a full briefing on the Tibetan policy advanced by their governments, including in multilateral fora, in the areas of human rights, environment, security, development and other economic assistance and geopolitics;

(3) seeking tangible national and local governmental and private support for programmes that provide assistance to Tibetan communities, including inside Tibet and to long-staying and new refugees from Tibet;

(4) engaging in parliamentary exchanges with Chinese legislators and in outreach to Chinese constituents;

(5) visiting Tibet as part of a multinational parliamentary delegation with the intent of determining the situation on the ground, including the status of Tibetan nomads and political prisoners;

(6) organizing parliamentary hearings before the foreign affairs and/or human rights committees with Tibetan representatives and, if they accept, Chinese government representatives to discuss the political and humanitarian situation in Tibet;

(7) promoting a campaign to gather the support for, endorsement of, and signature on this declaration by parliamentarians of democratic national and local governments, political parties, community leaders, religious organizations, Nobel Peace Laureates, opinion makers and all citizens of goodwill in the world.

Statement by Lodi Gyari, Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, concerning the dialogue process with China

My attention has been drawn to an interview published in the Chinese media by Executive Vice Minister Zhu Weiqun of the Central United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party on December 8, 2009 concerning our dialogue process.

We are currently under discussion with the Chinese leadership on the next round of dialogue and so the timing and content of this interview are perplexing. It is my understanding that the Chinese leadership is as desirous as our side in continuing a discussion, which we hope will ultimately lead to a mutually satisfactory negotiated solution to the Tibetan issue.

During our fifth round of talks in February 2006, the Chinese side clearly expressed appreciation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's position not to seek Tibetan independence and of seeking a solution within the framework of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

The Tibetan transcript from the recording of that meeting shows the Chinese side terming His Holiness' position as a "Tamsangpo" (good or welcome news). It reads, "It is a welcome news that (the Dalai Lama) is showing a gesture by saying that he wanted to resolve the problem on the basis of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China." We looked at this as a small but important progress in our dialogue process with our counterparts. We felt that for the first time the Chinese side was registering and taking due note of His Holiness' position in finding a mutually acceptable solution. We have been highlighting the positive aspect in our dialogue process and this was one such developments from the Chinese side in the five years that had passed since the re-establishment of our contact in 2002. It was this spirit that we conveyed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama upon our return to Dharamsala.

At the same time the Chinese side drew our attention to various issues that needed to be resolved. On our part we stated the willingness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to address all these concerns in a statement. We even suggested that both sides have

consultations on the formulation of the statement in order to ensure that it will have the desired result in achieving a breakthrough. There was no response from the Chinese side to this initiative of ours.

Instead, from around May 2006 the authorities began intensification of campaigns in Tibet, including launching of patriotic re-education campaign. There was increased vilification of the person of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and restrictions placed on peoples' religious activities.

Following the series of demonstrations in Tibetan areas in 2008, we had two rounds of talks and one informal session with the Chinese leadership. During the most recent 8th round held in November 2008 we in fact presented a Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People that clearly outlined the basic needs of the Tibetan people that can be fulfilled even under the present Constitutional provisions of the People's Republic of China.

The outright rejection of the Memorandum by the Chinese side, without even looking into many of the points raised therein, did not leave any scope for further contacts. However, His Holiness the Dalai Lama continued to be committed to the dialogue process and impressed upon us the need to take steps to reach out once again to the Chinese leadership.

So far, it has been all our initiatives that have been the basis of any perceptible positive side to the dialogue process. It was at our initiative that contact was re-established and continued since 2002. Every time it has been our initiative that has started the process for the rounds of discussions.

The February 2006 meeting was not the only occasion when the Chinese side showed some positive development on His Holiness' position. During the informal session in Shenzhen in May 2008, the Chinese side came out with "Three Stops" (stop separatist activities, stop violence and stop sabotaging the Beijing Olympic Games) directed at His Holiness. When we rejected these charges, the Chinese side came up (during the subsequent seventh round in

July 2008) with "Four Not-to-Supports" (not supporting activities that would disturb the Beijing Olympic Games; not supporting plots inciting violent criminal activities; not supporting and concretely curbing violent terrorist activities; not supporting activity seeking Tibetan independence.) as a replacement saying that this was being done positively because they considered our point that His Holiness was not indulging in the activities mentioned in "Three Stops" (one of which related to independence). Therefore, changing from "Three Stops" to "Four not-to-Supports" was an indication that the Chinese leadership acknowledged that His Holiness was not indulging in Tibetan independence activities.

The recent statements coming from Beijing, therefore, reminds me of an advice given to me by a Chinese Professor who was involved with the Tibetan issue for many years while serving the Chinese Government. He said that we should not expect the Chinese leadership to have the political courage to remove the hat of separatism from His Holiness the Dalai Lama even though they clearly are aware that he is not working in that direction. The professor told me that if the Chinese side were to remove such a hat from him, then they would not be able to justify to the Chinese people their current policies in Tibet or on the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Time and again, the Chinese side has been the one that has been cautioning us from negotiating through the media. They contend that we should take things up directly and face to face. But we see it is the Chinese side that is increasingly coming up with obstacles presented through selective interviews to the media. During our seventh round held in July 2008, the Chinese side portrayed the "Four Not-to-Supports" positively in comparison to the "Three Stops." However, after our meeting and even before we had reached India to brief His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Chinese side went to the media and gave a totally negative message of their position.

We feel if the Chinese side is really serious in wanting to address the grievances of the Tibetan people and to provide them with the same rights that are provided for in the Chinese

Constitution and the relevant statutes on minority rights, we should do that through our channel and across the dialogue table. His Holiness the Dalai Lama continues to be committed to the

dialogue process and we are ever ready to continue the discussions.

Washington, D.C. December 10, 2009

Our Future: Who is Responsible?

His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Australia 2009

Last December His Holiness the Dalai Lama spent eleven days in Australia and New Zealand, his seventh visit to our shores. The extraordinarily successful visit, which carried the theme “Our Future: Who is Responsible?” saw His Holiness give public talks in Sydney, Auckland, Hobart and Melbourne, give a two-day teaching on “Awakening the Mind” in Sydney, converse with some of the world’s top psychologists and neuroscientists, and give the closing address at the Parliament of the World’s Religions.

In total well over 20,000 Australians and New Zealanders attended events during the visit. His Holiness also met with members of Australia’s Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese and Mongolian communities, and held numerous private briefings with politicians, philanthropists, community leaders and representatives of non-government organizations. On 10 December, the twentieth anniversary of His Holiness’s Nobel Peace Prize, His Holiness attended a special function organized by Australia Tibet Council and Amnesty International and later received a memorable felicitation from Melbourne’s Han-Tibetan Friendship Group.

With the visit coinciding with the landmark UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen, the theme of responsibility, particularly with respect to the environment, featured prominently throughout His Holiness’s many talks, meetings and press conferences. Whether it is climate change, conflict resolution or global inequality, His Holiness’s 2009 visit will have left thousands more Australians pondering the importance of his teachings to the great challenges of our times.

Days 1-4: Sydney

At a packed press conference at the start of the visit, His Holiness outlined



His Holiness addresses the “Peace Through Justice” breakfast in Melbourne

his two lifelong objectives – promoting human values and promoting religious harmony – and underlined the interdependence of humans with each other and the with the environment. Referring to Tibet as the earth’s “third pole”, His Holiness explained why the Tibetan environment is crucial to the wellbeing of more than a billion people in Asia, noting that the Indus, Ganges, Mekong, Yellow, Yangtze and other of Asia’s great rivers all begin in Tibet.

Day two of the visit saw His Holiness begin his two-day teaching on “Awakening the Mind” in Sydney. Nearly 5,000 people attended the teaching. The morning session began with a traditional indigenous “Welcome to Country” from the Cadigal people of the Eora aboriginal nation, the traditional owners of the Sydney area. Flanked by Buddhists from Thailand, Vietnam, Tibet and many other countries, His Holiness said he was very happy to be giving another teaching in Australia, and in particular to be explaining Nagarjuna’s Commentary on Bodhichitta, which he said he considers a “sacred, important and sophisticated text”. In his opening

remarks His Holiness spoke of the potential of all the world’s great religions to bring inner peace, arguing that while differing in their philosophy, all religions carry the same message of tolerance and compassion. Beginning the teaching, His Holiness emphasized that for a happy life and a peaceful community we must train our mind and look more at our inner world, explaining that all worry and frustration come through ignorance of the nature of ultimate reality.

During the lunchbreak His Holiness held a meeting with Australia’s Tibetan Community. Around five hundred Tibetans were present, with many travelling from interstate. Over one hundred members of the Mongolian community also joined the meeting. In a half hour address His Holiness focussed on the importance of education, encouraging more of Australia’s Tibetans to try to go to university in order to learn skills and professions that will benefit and strengthen the community.

At the close of the afternoon session all those attending the teaching received



His Holiness gives a press conference on arrival in Sydney

a packet of seeds blessed by His Holiness. In recognition of the twentieth anniversary of his Nobel Peace Prize, His Holiness offered gifts of seeds to all those he connected with during his Australian visit. The seeds were of native Australian plants, selected in consultation with Greening Australia to help support resilient and sustainable native ecosystems in the local areas His Holiness visited.

A busy third day in Australia saw His Holiness prioritising the promotion of Han-Tibetan friendship, using the breaks in his teaching schedule to meet at length with members of the Chinese community.

In the morning His Holiness met with seventy members of the Chinese Liberal Culture Movement. In his address His Holiness commented that while China is making immense economic progress, to obtain the support and respect of the international community it must become more transparent. Praising China's rich culture and heritage, His Holiness also remarked that economic development alone would not bring peace; for that we also need a culture of compassion. The meeting was organized by Prof. Yuan Hongbing.

During a lunchtime meeting with Sydney's Vietnamese community, His Holiness commented on the peculiarity of their coming together in neither Tibet nor Vietnam but outside of each other's homelands. Continuing the theme, His Holiness spoke of the positives that may come from adversity and how being forced from Tibet had led him to travel to many countries and to meet and learn from people of many different nations. Speaking as a Buddhist, His Holiness encouraged the Vietnamese community to preserve and nurture their own Buddhist culture.

Immediately following his meeting with the Vietnamese community His Holiness addressed a packed room of over 300 local Chinese citizens. While conceding that the purpose of his visit was primarily religious, His Holiness discussed at length the political situation in China and future prospects for the Tibetan and Chinese people. His Holiness said he believed that everybody should have free and unfettered access to information and the right to express their views. He said he was broadly optimistic about China's future and saw the inevitability of democratisation and other positive changes, but that this may take some time. His Holiness reiterated his message of responsibility, explaining that as individuals we are all responsible for shaping the future. Reflecting on the many conflicts of the past century His Holiness emphasized the need for a century characterised not by conflict but by dialogue and reconciliation. The meeting was organized by Chin Jin of the Federation for a Democratic China, a long-time friend of Tibet and pioneer of efforts to bring together Chinese Democrats with Tibetan exiles.

The afternoon teaching session began with a traditional music and dance performance from the Sydney Tibetan community. The performance was representative of strong and ongoing efforts by Australia's Tibetan community to teach and preserve traditional Tibetan arts, language and culture in exile.

Day four saw His Holiness share a stage with three of the world's foremost psychologists and neuroscientists at a forum on "Science of Mind" at Sydney's Mind and its Potential conference.

Dr. Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology, Marc Hauser, Harvard Professor of Evolutionary Biology, and B. Allan Wallace, an experienced Buddhist practitioner and fluent Tibetan speaker, all presented the latest findings in their respective fields, before entering into a fascinating dialogue with His Holiness. Over the course of two and a half hours the four covered a broad range of topics in Buddhist science and modern psychology, discussing issues as diverse as depression, positive psychology and the evolutionary basis of emotions. His Holiness, who for over a decade has inspired and encouraged collaboration between Buddhist



His Holiness greets members of the Chinese community in Sydney

scholars and cognitive scientists, was impressed by Seligman, Hauser and Wallaces' latest observations, offered further profound insights relating to their work and strongly encouraged the continuation of cross-cultural research into the nature of mind.

In the afternoon His Holiness gave the first of four public talks scheduled for his visit to Australia and New Zealand. Around 7,000 attended the talk on the theme of "Our Future: Who is Responsible?"

In his last appointment in Sydney His Holiness met with Tony Abbott, the newly installed leader of the Liberal Party and leader of the opposition in the Federal Parliament.

Days 5-8: New Zealand

His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Auckland, New Zealand from 4 to 7 December, 2009 on the invitation of the Dalai Lama Visit Trust New Zealand. His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived Auckland on 4 December from Sydney. He was received and welcomed at the airport by Mr. Thuten Kesang, Chair, the trustees of the Dalai Lama Visit Trust New Zealand and Tibetans and well-wishers.

At the hotel His Holiness gave a short interview with Maori TV and met with Hon Phil Goff, leader of the opposition and Darian Fenton, co-chair of newly reformed Parliamentary Lobby Group for Tibet.

On 5th December His Holiness met with the Mongolian community of New Zealand and addressed them about the historical ties between Tibet and Mongolia dating back centuries. In fact he told them that his title Dalai Lama was bestowed on him by a Mongolia king, therefore we have something in common. Later

His Holiness met the committee members of Tibetan Children's Relief Society of New Zealand and Friends of Tibet (NZ). After a brief introduction



His Holiness at the Hospice in New Zealand

from Mr. Thuten Kesang on Friends of Tibet (NZ), Mrs Bev Pownall, President of the Tibetan Children's Relief Society spoke. She gave a brief history of the Society and asked His Holiness to present two Life Membership Certificate and two certificates honouring the work done by those who started the Society back in the 1960s. Life Membership was awarded to the past president Mrs. Jean Nuttall and Mr. Thuten Kesang as a treasurer for 42 years and still hold the post. His Holiness thanked both organisations for their effort and continued support for the Tibetan cause for which the whole Tibetan community is very grateful.

His Holiness then met with four Green Party MPs and they discussed the Tibet's environment issue. His Holiness said that we talk about North and South Pole; the Third Pole is Tibet, where major rivers of Central Asia start from Tibet. Any destruction of that will spell major disaster for Asia and we need to protect the fragile ecosystem of Tibet in order to avoid disaster later on. After this brief discussion with the Greens, they were joined by 7 other MPs from the cross-party Parliamentary Lobby Group for Tibet. Here again His Holiness spoke to them about the Tibet issue between China and Tibet and he stated that he is not seeking separation from China but seeking for genuine autonomy within the framework of the Peoples Republic of China. So far there has been very little response from China, although they met 8 times. He urged them to help wherever they could to promote the Middle Way Approach to solve the issue with China. There was a brief discussion on the 5th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, meeting in Rome on the 18th and 19th of November 2009. He also touched on briefly on the Memorandum, which was presented to the Chinese representatives when they met in July 2008 in relation

to solving the issue between China and Tibet.

His Holiness was welcomed on the stage at Vector Arena by Ngati Whatua, the Maori tribe of Auckland. Then he gave a public talk to the crowd of about 7,000 on the topic of A Peaceful Mind. At the end of the talk he answered some questions from the public.

On 6th December, His Holiness met with the Tibetans living in New Zealand and spoke about the importance of modern education and that Tibetans must educate their younger generation to the highest possible standard. He also said to pay attention to the preservation of Buddhist culture and the Tibetan language, and try to teach the younger generation the Tibetan language, and must uphold the honour of the Tibetan people and try not get into trouble. After blessing the Tibetans, His Holiness left for Vector Arena for the morning session of the teaching "Nagarjuna's Commentary on Bodhicitta" which started at 10:00 am, and finished at noon. The second session went from 1:30 – 3:30 pm. About 2000 attended the teaching.

A vote of thanks was given by Mr. Simon Harrison on behalf of the Dalai Lama Visit Trust New Zealand to His Holiness. This was followed by an invitation to Ven Amala Wrightson to say a few words concerning the offering of a text of Dhammapada to the New Zealand Parliament. The copy of the Dhammapada was presented to His Holiness to bless before all the sanghas that were gathered for the teaching. The New Zealand Buddhist Council will present this copy of Dhammapada in Pali, English and Chinese to the House of Representative of New Zealand to sit alongside the Bible and Koran as a spiritual reference for the members of Parliament in the House.

Then His Holiness left for visit to North Shore Hospice, where he met with a few in-house patients and gave a talk to the members of North Shore and Amitabha Hospice care-givers. He told them that they are doing a great and compassionate work and to keep it up.

His Holiness left on an early morning flight to Melbourne on 7 December to attend other important engagements in Australia. Although His Holiness visit to New Zealand was very short, it was great experience, especially for those

who heard him speak for the first time. They will always remember his message of Peace, Love and Compassion.

Day 9: Hobart

On returning from three days in New Zealand His Holiness travelled to Hobart in Australia's small island state of Tasmania. Tasmania has a special relationship with Tibet through an ongoing exchange program between the University of Tasmania and the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India.

At an address to staff and students at the University of Tasmania His Holiness spoke passionately about the value of cross-cultural learning and of the enormous benefit it has brought to Tibetans and the West through scholarly exchanges such as the Tasmanian Buddhist Studies in India Program.

After being driven to his press conference by Tasmanian Greens politician Nick Mckim in a fuel-efficient hybrid car, His Holiness once again spoke to the media about the immense environmental significance of Tibet, the earth's "third pole", and our collective responsibility to take strong action on climate change.

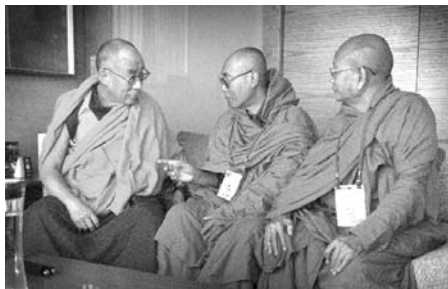
In the afternoon His Holiness met with long-time friend Senator Bob Brown, leader of the Australian Greens and Senator for Tasmania, along with Don Henry, President of the Australian Conservation Foundation and Lisa Singh MP, Tasmanian Minister for Climate Change. His Holiness then delivered a talk to four thousand people on the subject of "Our Earth: Who is Responsible?"

Days 10-11: Melbourne

The final leg of the Dalai Lama's Australian visit saw His Holiness head



Tibetans and Tibet supporters in Melbourne greet His Holiness



His Holiness meets with Burmese monks in Melbourne

to Melbourne in the southern state of Victoria, where he received a warm welcome from over fifty members of the Victorian State Parliament. Speaking at a function inside Parliament House, His Holiness spoke about the value of democracy and the importance of respect for different religious and cultural traditions, before taking several questions. The function was organized by the Victorian Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

Following his meeting with MPs His Holiness met with a group of schoolchildren from Marysville, the town worst affected by devastating bushfires that ravaged rural Victoria in February 2009.

In the evening His Holiness gave the keynote address at the closing plenary of the Parliament of the World's Religions, the world's largest interfaith gathering. Over five days the eight thousand delegates from around the world discussed a wide variety of topics including environmental responsibility,

youth empowerment and, of course, interfaith cooperation. His Holiness urged the delegates not to leave their new ideas and understanding at the conference but to put them into action.

The final day of His Holiness's visit coincided with International Human Rights Day and the twentieth anniversary of His Holiness being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The day began with a breakfast function organized by Australia Tibet Council and Amnesty International to celebrate the anniversary and give His Holiness the opportunity to address an influential Australian and international audience. The event, titled "Peace Through Justice", saw His Holiness share the stage with Prof. Larissa Behrendt, a prominent indigenous Australian. The event focussed on the importance of truth, justice and respect for human rights in the lasting resolution of conflict. After a traditional indigenous "Welcome to Country" Professor Larissa Behrendt spoke about the ongoing plight of Australia's indigenous people. Prof. Behrendt highlighted the ongoing voicelessness, exclusion, insecurity and deprivation of aboriginal Australians and the universal right to freedom from poverty. In a half-hour address His Holiness discussed the situation facing many of the world's indigenous peoples, expressing particular sadness at the conditions facing indigenous Australians. Nonetheless, with his ever-

hopeful, practical and forward-looking perspective, His Holiness spoke of the enormous gains in human rights protection over the last century and urged all minority and indigenous peoples to make extra efforts to preserve their identity and culture.

The celebration of His Holiness's Nobel Peace Prize anniversary continued with a felicitation by the Han-Tibetan Friendship Association. In the company of several Federal Parliamentarians and other dignitaries, over five hundred Tibetans and Chinese took part in the elaborate felicitation featuring speeches and cultural performances.

In the afternoon His Holiness met with members of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, who presented him with a report on their recent activities in support of Tibet. The group reported having taken several important steps over the last year to build and consolidate support for Tibet within the Parliament of Australia. Most significantly, 2009 saw the first unofficial Australian Parliamentary delegation to Dharamsala.

In the final event of His Holiness's Australian visit and rounding-off a series of public talks on the theme of responsibility, His Holiness addressed several thousand Melbournians on the theme of "World Peace: Who is Responsible?"

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