



Tibet News

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Tibetans Celebrate Historic 50th Anniversary of Democracy Day

The landmark occasion for Tibetans in accomplishing a genuine democratic polity in exile during the last 50 years was celebrated by Tibetans throughout the world on 2 September 2010.

Thursday, 2 September 2010

Dharamshala: A GRAND CEREMONY to celebrate this historic milestone was organised by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile at Lugsum Samdupling Tibetan settlement in Bylakuppe in South Indian state of Karnataka.

During the ceremony, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile honoured His Holiness the Dalai Lama with a Gold Medal as an expression of the Tibetan people's deep gratitude for bestowing upon them the gift of democracy.

His Holiness thanked to the Tibetan people for honouring him out of genuine happiness and devotion.

Around 17 members of parliament from some 13 countries joined the Tibetan people in celebrating the democracy day.

Expressing his gratitude to the foreign dignitaries, His Holiness said



His Holiness the Dalai Lama (C) receives a Gold Medal as an expression of Tibetan people's gratitude in recognition on his remarkable initiatives and encouragement in carrying out far-reaching democratic reforms in the exile Tibetan community. The award was presented by Speaker (L) and Deputy Speaker (R) of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile/Photo by Drubgyue Nyima

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Budapest Confers Honourary Citizenship on His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Monday, 20 September 2010

Budapest, Hungary: MAYOR GABOR DEMSKY of Budapest conferred Honourary Citizenship upon His Holiness the Dalai Lama at a ceremony held in the City Hall on Saturday. The Honorary Citizenship award citation declared "The title of 'Honorary Citizen of Budapest' be conferred upon Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, for preserving cultural and spiritual traditions as the leader of the people of Tibet, and for his work for peace and non-violence."

His Holiness said that he was honoured to receive the recognition emphasising a special significance in receiving this award because of Alexander Csoma de Korös, a Hungarian scholar and a pioneer of Tibetology, who authored and published the first Tibetan-English dictionary.

His Holiness also gave teachings to over 11,000 people with another 8,000 people from 74 countries watching His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teaching on Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism on the Internet.

His Holiness gave a detailed teaching on the foundation of Tibetan Buddhism. In response to a question, His Holiness said that the transformation of our destructive emotions is very important. For the last 2,000 years, there has been no change in our emotions. Therefore, ancient teachings are still relevant and for thousands of years to come they will remain relevant because of the lack of change in human emotion. The 7 billion human beings are the same and have attachments, anger, greed, love, kindness and all need happiness. His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that the essence of Buddhism is infinite altruism. ■



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Tibet News

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the support from the international community has greatly encouraged the Tibetan people in their struggle for truth and justice.

Your support has immensely helped the people of the international community to get a better understanding and knowledge about the issue of Tibet, His Holiness said.

It has also contributed for raising the awareness of the Chinese people living inside China about the reality of the Tibetan issue, despite the strict restriction imposed by the government on the flow of information, he said.

I hope the wholehearted efforts of the international community to support the issue of Tibet will definitely bear fruit, he added.

In its statement, the Kashag said a meaningful and genuine Tibetan democratic polity in exile has been established under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Kashag said whatever accomplishments we have been able to achieve in attaining greater freedom in

terms of rule of law and democracy is all due to the efforts made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Kashag gave a detailed account of various far-reaching democratic reforms initiated and encouraged by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile said 50 years of successful democratic process in the exile Tibetan community has fully exposed the Chinese government for deluding the international community by lying and leveling groundless accusations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama of reviving feudal society.

On the upcoming elections of Kalon Tripa and members of parliament, it said every individual should use his or her own discretion and must not be influenced by other's opinion to elect Kalon Tripa and members of parliament.

In Dharamsala, Cabinet Secretary of the Central Tibetan Administration presided over the democracy day function at the main Buddhist temple. ■

TIBETAN ELECTIONS



Residents of Gangchen Kyishong in Dharamsala came out in droves to cast their votes in the primary elections on Sunday, 3 October 2010/Photo by Tenzin Gyaltsen

Tibetans In Exile Go To Polls

Sunday, 3 October 2010

Dharamshala: THE PRELIMINARY ROUND of general elections of the 15th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the 3rd Kalon Tripa (Chairman of the Kashag or Cabinet) by popular vote was held in Tibetan communities across the world on Sunday, 3 October.

79,449 voters are eligible to cast ballots in this general elections as compared to 72,771 in 2006 elections.

Tibetans cast their ballots at a polling booth in Gangchen Kyishong in Dharamsala, India, on Sunday, 3 October 2010

Tibetans living in India, Nepal and Bhutan, North America, Europe and

Nepali Police Confiscate Ballot Boxes in Kathmandu

Monday, 4 October 2010

Dharamshala: THE FIRST ROUND OF POLLING for Kalon Tripa and Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in Nepal was disrupted as police took away ballot boxes during the voting in Kathmandu on Sunday, said Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Jampel Choesang, quoting a reliable source.

The source informed us on phone yesterday that his office had been granted permission by the district authority in Kathmandu to conduct voting.

However on the polling day, some 30 Nepalese police arrived at polling booths in Swayambhunath monastery (Tibetan: Phagshing) and Boudha (Tib: Choeten) and took away the ballot boxes, the source said.

The Nepali police said that they had orders from the Nepal's ministry of home.

The source said efforts are on to request the Nepalese government to return the ballot boxes.

We are also appealing for help from



Tibetans cast their ballots at a polling booth in Gangchen Kyishong in Dharamsala, India, on Sunday, 3 October 2010

human rights and refugee agencies in Nepal, he said.

We can't say anything on the prospect of getting back the ballot boxes, the source added.

The CEC said in a democratic system of governance there is provision for re-election in case of disruption in voting process.

Except Kathmandu, the first phase of polling went peacefully without any untoward incidents in other parts of the world, the CEC said. ■

other countries across the world are casting their votes in the primary elections.

The settlements in India and Nepal and countries where voting took place are Dharamsala, Bylakuppe, Mundgod, Hunsur, Kollegal, Bhandara, Mainpat, Orissa, Tezu, Meoa, Bumla, Ladakh, Rawangla, Herberpur, Darjeeling, Dehradun, Mandi, Simla, Delhi, Shillong, Bangalore, Tashijong, Bir, Sataun, Kumrao, Puruwala, Bonshi, Kullu, Paonta, Dalhousie, Chauntara, Kalimpong, Varanasi, Sarnath, Kathmandu, Gangtok, Pokhara, Shawa-rasum in Nepal, Nainital, Dimapur, Lotserog, Bhutan, England, America and Canada, Taiwan, South Africa, Australia, Japan, Switzerland, Belgium and Russia.

Large voter turnout was witnessed in the north Indian town of Dharamsala as residents came out in droves to cast their votes at their respective polling booths set in 10 different locations.

Enthusiastic voters braved scorching sun and long lines that stretched down the road to cast their votes at a polling station in Gangchen Kyishong, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration in India.

The final round of voting is scheduled to take place on 20 March 2011. ■

International community calls for protection of Tibetans' democratic rights in Nepal

Thursday, 7 October 2010

Dharamshala: THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY has called on the Nepalese government to allow Tibetans residing in the country to exercise their democratic rights.

A group of 30 Nepalese police barged into the polling stations in Kathmandu and forcibly took away ballot boxes mid way through the polling for the first round of general election on Sunday, 3 October.

"We urge the Nepalese government to protect the longstanding rights and privileges of Tibetans in Nepal, particularly their right to express themselves freely in accordance with Nepali law," a Radio Free Asia report quoted a spokesperson for the US State Department on 6 October.

The International Network of Parliamentarians on Tibet, which brings together 133 legislators from more than 30 parliaments worldwide, has called on the Nepalese government to "immediately release the ballot boxes to



Tibetans wait in long queues to cast their ballots in Dharamsala, India, on Sunday, 3 October 2010

the legitimate representatives of the Tibetan community in Nepal".

The Office of Tibet in Australia has called on the chairman of the Australian Parliamentary Group for Tibet, senator Bob Brown and Deputy Speaker Peter Slipper's office, Australia Tibet Council, Australian Tibetan Community Association and others to send strong

representation to the Nepalese government through their embassy in Australia to return the ballot boxes and also to allow final voting on 20 March 2011.

Australia Tibet Council and Tibetan Community of ACT have already send their protest letters and other are going to do so soon. ■

Kashag's Press Statement on Liu Xiaobo Winning This Year's Nobel Peace Prize

8 October 2010

THE KASHAG WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND its sincere congratulations to Mr Liu Xiaobo for being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The whole of China should be proud of this singular honour bestowed on one of her sons.

This year's Nobel Peace Prize that is conferred on Mr Liu Xiaobo is the international community's recognition of the outstanding contributions Mr Liu Xiaobo has made to the advancement of freedom and personal liberties in China.

His involvement in organizing *Charter 08*, which calls for freedom and democracy in China, is an act of unparalleled courage and sacrifice. His support for the Tibet cause and the Middle-Way policy is well known to everyone.

We Tibetans pray that Mr Liu Xiaobo will be able to receive the well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize in person on December 10. ■

*Prof Samdhong Rinpoche
Kalon Tripa, Dharamsala*

European Union's Top Lawmaker Supports Resumption of Talk on Tibet

Thursday, 7 October 2010

Brussels: AS LEADERS FROM the European Union and China met for the 13th EU-China summit in Brussels on 6 October, the vice president of the European Parliament called for the immediate resumption of talks between the Chinese leadership and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's envoys towards resolving the issue of Tibet.

"On Tibet, McMillan-Scott encourages China to resume talks with the Dalai Lama's representatives immediately and EU High Representative Baroness Ashton to meet with the Dalai Lama, leading to the establishment of an EU Special Representative to Tibet," said Mr Edward McMillan-Scott, EP vice president for human rights and democracy, in a press release issued on 6 October.

The EP vice president also expresses hope that the UK's coalition government will revoke the Labour administration's de facto recognition of China's sovereignty over Tibet. ■

His Holiness Joins Nobel Laureates' Call to Free Liu Xiaobo

Dharamshala: HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA is among the 15 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates who signed a letter urging G-20 to ask China to release human rights advocate and Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo from imprisonment.

"The Chinese government's release of Dr. Liu would be an extraordinary recognition of the remarkable transformation China has undergone in recent decades," said a letter initiated by Desmond M. Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, signed by 15 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, and sent to the leaders of the G-20 on 25 October.

We strongly and respectfully urge that your respective governments request the Chinese government immediately release Liu Xiaobo's wife Liu Xia from

house arrest and enable her to communicate freely with whomever she wishes, the letter noted.

"In addition, as part of the upcoming G-20 Summit, each of you will see Chinese President Hu Jintao in Seoul, South Korea on November 10-11. The Summit provides time and opportunity to address Dr. Liu's imprisonment. We strongly urge you to personally impress upon Chinese President Hu Jintao that the release of Dr. Liu would not only be welcome, but is necessary," it said.

Other signatories were Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, Jimmy Carter, F.W. de Klerk, Shirin Ebadi, John Hume, Mairead Maguire, Wangari Maathai, David Trimble, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Lech Walesa, Elie Wiesel, Betty Williams and Jody Williams. ■

PRESS STATEMENT OF HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA ON LIU XIAOBO BEING AWARDED THE 2010 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER MY HEART-FELT congratulations to Mr. Liu Xiaobo for being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

Awarding the Peace Prize to him is the international community's recognition of the increasing voices among the Chinese people in pushing China towards political, legal and constitutional reforms.

I have been personally moved as well as encouraged by the efforts of hundreds of Chinese intellectuals and concerned citizens, including Mr. Liu Xiaobo in

signing the Charter 08, which calls for democracy and freedom in China. I expressed my admiration in a public statement on 12 December 2008, two days after it was released and while I was on a visit to Poland. I believe in the years ahead, future generations of Chinese will be able to enjoy the fruits of the efforts that the current Chinese citizens are making towards responsible governance.

I believe that Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's recent comments on freedom of speech being indispensable for any country and people's wish for

democracy and freedom being irresistible are a reflection of the growing yearning for a more open China. Such reforms can only lead to a harmonious, stable and prosperous China, which can contribute greatly to a more peaceful world.

I would like to take this opportunity to renew my call to the government of China to release Mr. Liu Xiaobo and other prisoners of conscience who have been imprisoned for exercising their freedom of expression. ■

October 8, 2010

Australian Parliament Convenes Hearing on Tibet

Thursday, 24 November

Dharamshala: AUSTRALIA'S PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON Foreign Affairs and Human Rights convened a hearing on Tibet, including "the status of dialogue between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese leadership, and human rights situation inside Tibet".

At the invitation of the joint parliamentary committee, three senior officials of the Central Tibetan Administration, Mr Sonam Norbu Dagpo, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative to Australia, Mr Chime Rigzin, Secretary to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Mr Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha, Secretary at the Department of Information

and International Relations in Dharamshala, attended the hearing on 24 November.

The hearing was held under the chairmanship of Mr Michael Danby, a member of the Australian House of Representatives. In July 2009, Mr Dandy led an Australian parliamentary delegation to visit the Tibetan community in Dharamshala.

Leading members of the Opposition Party's foreign affairs committee including 10 Members of Parliament attended the hearing.

During the course of the hearing, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Representative Sonam Dagpo gave a briefing about the Middle-Way policy proposed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to resolve the

issue of Tibet and the dialogue process with the PRC leadership.

International Secretary Tenzin Phuntsok Atisha briefed about the human rights situation inside Tibet.

The participating delegates put forward a wide range of questions concerning Tibet's environment and water, causes leading to the mudslide tragedy in Tibet's Drugchu region, Chinese population transfer to Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's congratulatory message to Liu Xiaobo on winning Nobel Peace Prize and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's retirement plan made during a recent TV interview in India.

The Tibetan officials replied to the questions and issues raised during the hearing. ■

INTERNATIONAL

His Holiness speaks to CNN, gives talk on religious harmony in Miami

Miami: HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA began his last day of programmes for this current tour of the United States and Canada by giving an interview to CNN International's Hala Gorani on 26 October.

The questions include highlight of the visit, his views on China and Liu Xiaobo, and how to practice compassion. His Holiness mentioned his "serious discussions" with scientists at Stanford and Emory universities as being the main purpose of this current visit. On the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo from China, His Holiness said that when he received the award in 1989 he said he took it as recognition of his work on the promotion of compassion. Similarly, he felt that Liu has dedicated himself for a better China and freedom of the individual. He is among those Chinese who are calling for a more open China. His Holiness said the Nobel Prize is recognition of his good work.

Thereafter, His Holiness left for Temple Emanu-El in Miami Beach, the venue of his talk on "The Significance of World Religions." The event was sponsored by Temple Emanu-El, Florida International University (FIU), Florida Memorial University and University of Miami and was attended by around 1500 invited guests.

His Holiness was introduced to representatives of the Jewish faith, the Catholic and Protestant churches, Islam,

Hinduism, Jainism and Taoism prior to his talk. Prof. Nathan Katz of Florida International University's Department of Religious Studies gave the welcome remark.

Latin Grammy Award Winning flautist Nestor Torres performed a short musical interlude, which the organisers say was dedicated to the His Holiness.

His Holiness addressed the gathering thereafter by greeting his "spiritual brothers and sisters." He appreciated the flute recital, particularly praising the musician's gesture as he performed.

His Holiness said promotion of religious harmony was one of his two commitments. He talked of the need for different religions to exist in order to satisfy the different spiritual and mental dispositions of people. He said if we look at the philosophical level, there are big differences between different religions. But, all religions have the same messages of love and compassion, and they all have the potential to help humanity, he added.

His Holiness outlined four possible ways in which religious harmony could be promoted. He said firstly, scholars on religion could meet and discuss different aspects of religions and the commonality in them. Secondly, he said religious practitioners could come together to discuss similar issues. Here he recalled his discussions with the Trappist monk Thomas Merton. Thirdly, he said, meetings of religious



His Holiness the Dalai Lama's talk "The Quest for Happiness in Challenging Times" at the University of Miami on 26 October 2010/Photos/University of Miami

leaders could be convened to promote the common message. He talked about such a summit that was convened by Pope John Paul II in Assisi in 1986. Fourthly, he suggested that religious leaders and practitioners could undertake group pilgrimages to the sacred sites of the different religions. He talked about his own positive personal experience when he undertook such pilgrimages in Varanasi in India as well as in Jerusalem. He also recalled his experience having to teach the Gospel in England at one time.

INTERNATIONAL

During the Question & Answer, His Holiness was asked that if an intelligent person makes a bad decision, what would have gone wrong. He replied that basically it would be on account of the lack of knowledge of the reality. His Holiness said that without full knowledge, people will tend to adopt unrealistic approach. When making decisions, he said emotion should not be involved and there was the need to be objective. People should also look at a problem not just from one dimension but from three or four dimensions. He said it would not be a question of right or wrong decisions, but one of realistic or unrealistic decisions.

When asked what was the toughest and the most difficult thing he had gone through, His Holiness said the period when he lost his individual freedom at the age of 16 and when he lost his country at the age of 24 was a difficult one. He said when he had to leave Tibet in 1959 it was very sad.

Another questioner wanted to know how to feel joyful in the face of a tragedy. His Holiness said basically it boils down to being realistic and quoted the eighth century Indian Master Shantideva about analysing a problem and not worrying if it has a solution but learning that it will be useless to worry if there is no solution. He said this message is very realistic. He also suggested that something that one perceives as a problem may also have a positive angle.

His Holiness concluded by suggesting that while promoting the commonality among religions, it is important for people to be aware about the fundamental differences, too, so that they have a complete perspective. If the differences were not mentioned and the commonality is highlighted at a superficial level, then it will not mean much and will be hypocritical, he added.

"In hosting this interfaith event, His Holiness reminds us of the key role of tolerance and understanding in navigating the complicated times we live," FIU Professor of Religious Studies Nathan Katz is quoted as saying in a statement. "His message is one of unity and peace in the global community," Prof. Katz has added.

His Holiness then left for the University of Miami where he had his lunch. In the afternoon, His Holiness gave a public talk on "The Quest for Happiness in Challenging Times," at the University's BankUnited Center to more than 7000 students and other guests.

In a statement announcing the talk, University of Miami President Donna E. Shalala said, "We are honored once again to host His Holiness the Dalai Lama on our campus." "His Holiness teaches us all an important lesson in hope, compassion, and

humility," she added.

His Holiness was introduced to the gathering by University of Miami's Executive Vice President and Provost, Thomas LeBlanc.

His Holiness began by explaining the nature of his current tour of North America. He said this was his last engagement and that the main purpose was to meet with scientists at Stanford and Emory universities. He said he would be departing from Miami after the talk and returning to his home in India tomorrow morning.

His Holiness said he and some of the people in the audience belong to the 20th century and that a majority of the people here, the students, belong to the 21st century. He asked the students to be prepared for the 21st century by not only taking care of their education, but also their heart and inner values.

He talked about the scientific and technological development in the past two centuries and added that in the 20th century the development was quite amazing. He talked about the development of the nuclear bomb and neutron bomb and their negative impact. He said the 20th century also turned out to be a century of bloodshed. His Holiness thus said that technological development itself was not a guarantee for world peace.

His Holiness talked about today's world being heavily interdependent. He said he learned that the University of Miami has students from around 100 countries and added that we are all same as human beings. He said that differences will always be there and urged the people to learn to be respectful of each other and to find nonviolent path to resolution of conflicts. We need to promote this century as a century of dialogue, he added.

His Holiness expanded on the need to cultivate inner peace and affection for a more peaceful society. He said we should not consider the promotion of compassion and love as mere religious matters. They are very much a part of our life, he added.

His Holiness then talked about the promotion of compassion through three different ways. Those believers who subscribe to Theistic religions regard all human beings as created by the supreme God and so from that perspective develop compassion towards all. Secondly, those who follow the non-theistic religious traditions, like Buddhism and Jainism, believe in the Law of Causality and therefore should cultivate compassion that will be in the interest of all.

He said there needs to be a third way to promote compassion, which should apply to even those who do not subscribe to any religion. His Holiness called this the promotion of secular ethics. He said that some of his Christian and Muslim friends have

reservation of his use of the term "secular" as they feel it means being against religion. He, however, clarified that the term should be understood in the same spirit as it is found in the Indian Constitution, namely being respectful of all religious traditions. His Holiness said this third way simply uses common sense and common experience as well as scientific findings, without touching religion to promote inner values.

His Holiness then answered some questions during which he talked about optimism that mankind was basically becoming more positive. He referred to the increase in environmental awareness during the latter part of the 20th century, the growing voices against war and the closer relationship between science and spirituality as indicators of this.

His Holiness was given a resounding applause at the conclusion of his talk.

The Florida media carried reactions from the audience. "He advocates for human freedom. He is a man who has been denied and oppressed, but he has never allowed that to let him hurt others," said Imam Nasir Ahmad of Masjid Al-Ansar mosque in Miami, who waited outside Temple Emanu-El with members of his congregation, is quoted by the Miami Herald as saying.

Florida's CBS TV station had the following reaction from the audience.

"I loved how he preached a message of tolerance which is important in today's society. I liked how he talked about being a good person doesn't mean you have to be religious. You can still have good morals and values and not be religious. I loved how it was so informal and it was really positive," said religious studies major Abigail Garner.

"I loved how it was so objective. You don't get that from any other leaders, especially religious leaders. They're always so biased. Even if his message is so simple, it's correct and it's beautiful," said student Max Keil.

"It's amazing that he's so open. He's such a faithful Buddhist, but he's so open to other religions. It was really interesting how he said to not be so dedicated to one religion. It was amazing how open and objective he is. Objectivity is what really stuck with me," said Elizabeth Chung.

His Holiness then left Miami for New York and will be departing from there for India on 27 October 2010. During this trip, which began on 11 October 2010, His Holiness visited California, Georgia, Ohio, Toronto (in Canada), Florida and New York. ■

(Report filed by Bhuchung K Tsering) The Surajkund Statement and Action Plan on Tibet Adopted by the Sixth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups Surajkund, India, November 5-7, 2010

The Surajkund Statement and Action Plan on Tibet

Adopted by the Sixth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups Surajkund, India, November 5-7, 2010

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. 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 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;

Participants raise their hands to support resolutions passed during the Sixth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups at Surajkund near New Delhi from 5-7 November 2010

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



Residents of Gangchen Kyishong in Dharamsala came out in droves to cast their votes in the primary elections on Sunday, 3 October 2010/Photo by Tenzin Gyaltsen

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;

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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.

ACTION PLAN

POLITICAL SUPPORT

I. OBJECTIVE: To build up Tibet as a constituent issue in parliaments and governments.

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.

II. OBJECTIVE: To build support for fulfilling the aspirations of the Tibetan people for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit in Tibet.

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS

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. ■

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