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CTA Holds Grand Prayer Service and Fast for World Peace and Tibet

29 September, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA today presided over a grand prayer service for world peace and Tibet. Heads of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon religion took part in the prayer service.

Addressing the prayer service, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay said Tibetans are driven to set themselves on fire due to the Chinese government's continued occupation of Tibet, demographic aggression, systematic repression of religion, culture and language, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction.

Sikyong said consistent uprising in Tibet during the past fifty years have exposed the policy of colonialism in Tibet carried out in the garb of development. He said, though Tibetans have shown strong resentment against the Chinese government's hardline policies and called for freedom and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet in 2008 protest, the Chinese leadership continues to pursue repression pushing Tibetans to burn themselves to death.

He said the Central Tibetan Administration and Tibetans in exile express solidarity with those who have died, those who are live, their



Heads of the three pillars of democracy of the Central Tibetan Administration during the prayer for world peace and Tibet in Dharamshala on 29 September 2012/Photo/DIIR China Desk

family members, and those who are suffering arrest and imprisonment in Tibet. Following the hour-long prayer service, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and Tibetan Parliament Speaker Penpa Tsering led a fast and prayer service for world peace and Tibet in the temple courtyard.

Thousands of Tibetans including 432

participants of the Special General Meeting, wearing a white head band for solidarity with Tibetans inside Tibet and black arm band asking for global support to save Tibet and restore freedom in Tibet, took part in the event. A group of participants of the special meeting, who have come from 26 countries, addressed the gathering in local languages. ■

Special meeting of Tibetans held in Dharamshala

DHARAMSHALA 28 September, 2012:

OVER 432 DELEGATES FROM 26 COUNTRIES attended the Second Special General Meeting of Tibetans from 25 to 28 September, 2012 in Dharamshala. The four-day meeting opened with a portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama placed on a throne and 51 Tibetan national flags hung from the surrounding balcony in the hall as a mark of respect for the self-immolators.

In his opening address, Mr Penpa Tsering, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, said: "The main reason for holding this Second Special General Meeting of the Tibetan People is how and in what ways the Tibetans living in exile should respond to the tragic situation in

Tibet today."

"Over the past 60 years, the Chinese government has continued to pursue a policy of assimilation designed to obliterate the ethnic identity of the Tibetan people," he said.

He said the Chinese government has pursued a policy of massive Chinese population transfer into Tibet and the systematic repression of Tibetan people's political freedom and their language, religion and culture.

"Because of it, the situation in Tibet became so severely unbearable that to our knowledge 51 Tibetans have been driven to sacrifice even their lives by setting themselves on fire. Forty-one have died," he added. *Continued p2*



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"A state of undeclared martial law continues to remain in force in Tibet, he said adding, "China has converted Tibet into a territory resembling a prison camp, denying permission for visits by independent journalists as well as by governmental and non-governmental delegations seeking to investigate the real situation in the Tibetan areas."

In his opening remarks, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay spoke about the efforts made by the Kashag to highlight the grim situation in Tibet and the tragic self-immolations by Tibetans in the international community.

He said the Central Tibetan Administration is firmly committed to the Middle-Way policy to resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue with the Chinese government.

The meeting came up with 31 recommendations on how to deal with the critical situation in Tibet and find a lasting

solution to the issue of Tibet. The meeting resolved to pursue the Middle-Way policy to find a meaningful solution through dialogue with the Chinese government.

They also underlined the urgent need to seek political support from the international community to resume the dialogue process. The meeting expressed grave concern over the tragic self-immolations by Tibetans and urged Tibetans inside Tibet not to take drastic actions.

In his concluding remarks, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay said the special meeting sends a strong message to the Chinese government that Tibetans on both sides of the Himalayas are united and its repressive rule in Tibet is untenable. He said responsibility for the problem of lies with the Chinese government, and it also has the solution to resolve it through dialogue with the Tibetan leadership. ■

Tibetan Athlete Makes History at Olympics

12 August, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: CHOELYANG, THE FIRST TIBETAN ATHLETE to compete in the Olympic Games made history by winning the bronze medal in London yesterday.

The Associated Press (AP) reported that Tibetans watching the race cheered 21-year-old Choelyang in the 20 km Women's Race Walking event.

"I'm extremely honored to take part as the first representative of the Tibetans at the Olympic Games and to win a medal," AP quoted Choelyang as saying. She finished 14 seconds behind Russia's Elena Lashmanova who set a world record at 1 hour, 25 minutes, 2 seconds.

Choelyang comes from a family of Tibetan herders in Tsochang in Tibet's



Amdo Province and started running as a kid on the Tibetan plateau and then joined a sports school.

"As an individual, we wish her well," Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for information and international relations of the Central Tibetan Administration, told AP in an interview. "She must have put in a lot of effort to reach there. But we are sad that she cannot represent a free Tibet." "China uses things like this for their political gain. The fact that a Tibetan is participating in the Olympics does not take away anything from the dire situation prevailing inside Tibet," Kalon Dicki Chhoyang added. ■

Choelyang celebrates her historic win at the London Olympics/AP Photo



Senator Lisa Singh Raises Tibet Issue at Australian Senate

Senator Lisa Singh has brought the Tibet issue at the adjournment at the Australian Senate. She visited Dharamsala along with Senator Larissa Waters from 10-13 July 2012.

Senate debates, 22 August 2012

Adjournment

Tibet

IN THE PARLIAMENTARY BREAK IN JULY I had the extraordinary opportunity to travel to Dharamsala, the exile capital of Tibet, with my colleague Senator Waters as part of an Australia Tibet Council delegation. The Australia Tibet Council supports this exchange as a way of assisting members of parliament to understand more deeply the situation of the Tibetan people. Tibet lies within Chinese territory, amongst the peaks of the Himalayas, and is home to people with a deep and important connection to their culture and their home. Tibet has over 2,000 years of written history and, prior to occupation by China, existed as an independent sovereign state.

Tibetan identity is built on a foundation of profound spirituality and the leader of the Tibetan Buddhist religion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is known and revered the world over.

Tragically, the leadership and the culture it represents has been systematically undermined by an occupying regime. Since China asserted its authority in the region in 1949 the loss of life, property and significant sites of heritage—for example, more than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed—has been equalled only by the corresponding loss of liberty, freedom of expression and culture. China has falsely imputed motives of violence and separatism to His Holiness in order to justify targeting Tibetan culture and has pursued a deliberate strategy of Chinese immigration and militarisation in order to subsume the local population.

Under Chinese rule, teachers and religious leaders require permission to practise and are typically subject to forced re-education. Local language is totally delegitimised. The everyday commerce and movement of residents in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, is subject to intense surveillance and, as the Prime Minister in exile of the central Tibetan administration, Dr Lobsang Sangay, explained when he was in Australia a short time ago, it is impossible for ordinary citizens to express their deeply-held spirituality without fear of arrest, torture or even disappearance.

Since last year 49 Tibetans have taken the extraordinary step of setting themselves alight in order to highlight the oppression of their people and to assert a level of control over their own destiny. These self-immolations are not just acts of desperation; they are acts of political

expression. Indeed, according to Dr Sangay, the self-immolations are somehow an assertion of freedom: 'You can restrain my freedom but I can choose to die as I want.' That a people should feel that their form of death is the only avenue for expression is an indication of the gravity and urgency of the situation in Tibet. Australia has a longstanding position of recognising China's sovereignty over the Tibet Autonomous Region. But the principles of liberty, freedom of speech and expression, and security of heritage that the Tibetan people seek are universal standards. Unfortunately, for many the only option, in order to openly practise their culture, is to seek refuge in the exile capital, Dharamsala, located on the other side of the Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh in India. It is a city above the clouds on the slopes of the Kangra Valley, not easily reached by either the southern or the northern approach. It has, however, become home to the exiled government that represents Tibet.

I had the privilege of learning about traditional Tibetan Buddhism and meditation at the Gyuto monastery and meeting his eminence the Karmapa. We also met with the director of the Tibetan Nuns Project, Mrs Rinchen Khandro, at the nunnery at Sidphur and learned of her work and the support given to Tibetan nuns. The new reception centre for new arrivals seeking asylum, which has been funded by the US Congress, provides refuge and the necessary medical attention for new arrivals. Many arrive with frostbite and other injuries after enduring a journey across the Himalayan ranges to get to a place of freedom. The records revealed that from 1991 to 2004 the centre had hosted a total of 42,634 new arrivals from Tibet, more than half of whom were children and young people under the age of 25. Yet I was informed that since 2008, the time of the Olympic Games in China, the military presence had increased dramatically in Tibet across the borders and in the streets, which has led to a reduction of new arrivals at the reception centre in Dharamsala. Nevertheless, while there I was able to talk to some new arrivals, who had only been there a day, about their journey, their hopes and their ambitions now that they were free. Many had never had any formal education and had left their families behind for a future where they could be free to live out their lives.

What Tibetans are doing every day in India is really what they should be able to do in Tibet and what we all take for granted—that is, to keep their culture alive and practise their art, language and

religion. I am so pleased the Indian government has provided support and the opportunity for Tibetans to educate their people so that they are able to learn their language and culture, and practise their art through the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts and Norbulingka in Dharamsala. The Tibetan Children's Village is a remarkable achievement, with a number of students going on to become Rhodes scholars and leaders all over the world. In 1959, the Dalai Lama recognised that so many orphaned refugee children, separated from their families, would need a centre to care for and educate them. The TCV today houses, cares for and educates thousands of Tibetan children and it was indeed an honour to be able to meet them. Its mission is to ensure that all Tibetan children under its care receive a sound education and cultural identity and become self-reliant, contributing members of the Tibetan community and the world at large. I certainly believe that is being achieved at the TCV.

Not only did we meet with the Tibetan parliament in exile, we also met with civil society—a number of Tibetan NGOs, including the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Tibetan Women's Association, Students for a Free Tibet, Gu-Chu-Sum and the National Democratic Party of Tibet. Given the experience of the Tibetan people, it is perhaps no surprise that civil society has thrived when it has been allowed to. All of these organisations are run by passionate, dedicated individuals.

I am pleased that Australia continues to highlight the question of Tibet in the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue. However, China has recently closed entry to the region and refused a request from Australian officials to visit there and neighbouring Sichuan province. At the same time, under the guise of maintaining stability, 3,000 new troops have entered Tibet, with soldiers standing on the street corners and outside people's homes.

Ultimately, the Tibetan character is one of humility, gentleness and hopefulness. Each person I met in Dharamsala is imbued with a powerful conviction that democracy will outlast authoritarianism and Tibetan culture will once again thrive in the open air of their homeland. I sincerely hope that Australia and the world can continue to contribute to that worthy aim of making China understand that with power comes responsibility to all members of the human family. ■

Australian MPs visit Dharamsala, Pledge Support

19 July, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A TWO-MEMBER AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION visited the Tibetan community in Dharamsala from 10 – 13 July.

Senators Lisa Singh, Labour Party and Larissa Waters, Green Party, met the standing committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Speaker Penpa Tsering briefed the two senators about the critical situation inside Tibet and appealed to them to support the just cause of Tibet. The Tibetan Parliament hosted a dinner reception and a cultural performance at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts. The senators also met Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay and Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information & International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration.

They visited Tibetan cultural, religious and educational institutions, and all spectrum of Tibetan civil society in and around Dharamsala. The senators said they would impress upon the Australian government and their allies to engage the Chinese government in resolving the issue of Tibet.

Senator Lisa Singh is a Labor party Senator from Tasmania. She is the first person of South Asian decent to be elected to the Australian Parliament in 2010. She is a member of the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet. She met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in her home state of Tasmania. In March 2012 she met a group of Tibetan representatives in her office as part of the



Australian Senators after their meeting with standing committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in Dharamsala, India, on 10 July 2012/TPIE Photo

Tibet Advocacy Project, and has recently joined the Australian All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet.

Senator Larissa Waters is a Green Party senator from Queensland since 2010. She has met local Tibetans in her office in Brisbane. ■

Tibet Information Office organized the delegation to Dharamsala.

'Flame of Truth' Relay kicks off in US, Taiwan, Australia and Russia

3 September, 2012

CANBERRA: THE HISTORIC FLAME OF TRUTH relay, a global event organised by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE) started on 6 July in India on the birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, then commenced on the occasion of the 52nd Tibetan Democracy on 2 September worldwide.

In Australia, the relay started in Canberra at the Tibet Information Office, where the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mr Sonam Dagpo handed over the torch to Ms Lhamo Tenzin, President of the Tibetan community in Canberra (ACT) with a short ceremony. *The Flame of Truth* then travelled to all the capital cities of Australia and New Zealand.

Join the online petition at: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/198/920/082/>



Representative Sonam Dagpo with members of the Tibetan community in Canberra, Australia

TPIE has launched an online signature campaign appealing to the international community and people of the world to support the issue of Tibet. Signatures and appeal letters will be submitted to UN headquarters in New York, UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and UN Information Centre in New Delhi on 10 December, coinciding with UN Human Rights Day. The petition demands the United Nations to discuss the issue of Tibet based on the resolutions it has passed in 1959, 1961 and 1965, and to send independent international fact-finding delegations to investigate the ongoing crisis in Tibet—and to ensure that the basic aspirations of the Tibetans inside Tibet are fulfilled. ■

INTERNATIONAL

UN apprised of crackdown on Tibetan Intellectuals

3 August, 2012

GENEVA: THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPORTEUR on Freedom of Expression and Opinion has been apprised of the Chinese authorities' crackdown on Tibetan intellectuals in Tibet.

At least 24 Tibetans intellectuals, including monks, men and women, have been given sentences ranging from few months to life imprisonment for excising their freedom of expression. The Chinese authorities especially targeted Tibetan writers, bloggers, singers, teachers, documentary makers and environmentalists under a crackdown policy since 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative in Geneva, Mr Tseten Samdup, yesterday (2 August) submitted a detailed profile of 64 Tibetan intellectuals to the UN Special Rapporteur and urged for necessary inquiry into their cases including information on court proceedings, access to family members etc.

These new generation of young Tibetans born and educated under Chinese Communist rule have edited banned magazines and are tech-savvy bloggers

imprisoned for gathering, expressing and sharing information about conditions in Tibet especially after the March 2008 demonstrations across Tibet.

Their writing challenged the official account of the events of 2008 and situation in Tibet in general. The crackdown on Tibetan artists and intellectuals are the harshest since the Cultural Revolution.

Strict restrictions have been placed on photocopying and printing documents.

A public health worker, 41-year-old Wangdu was sentenced to life imprisonment in December 2008 for sending e-mail to the outside world. He worked on an HIV/AIDS prevention project for the Australian Burnet medical research institute in Lhasa.

81-years-old Paljor Norbu, a Tibetan traditional printer master was arrested on 31 October 2008 and sentenced in a secret trial to seven years in prison. His family ran printing business for generations publishing Buddhist texts for monasteries in the Barkhor area in Lhasa.

12 intellectuals were released on fear of custodial

death after excessive torture during detention by the Chinese authorities. Due to the severity of the torture some have become physically and mentally dependent on their family members.

The whereabouts of about 37 intellectuals are unknown. There are great concerns for their health. Family members have been intimidated and denied visits to prisons. Four school teachers were expelled and one demoted. A writer and comedian escaped into exile.

On 12 June, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton, in her address to the European Parliament on the situation in Tibet said, "Over the last three years, an increasing number of Tibetan intellectuals and cultural figures have faced criminal charges or been imprisoned. The EU is worried by restrictions on expressions of Tibetan identity and freedom of expression in Tibet."

She said that EU was concerned by the deterioration of the situation in Tibet, as illustrated by the wave of self-immolations and by clashes between the police and the local population since the beginning of the year. ■

Kashag's Statement on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's 77th Birthday Celebrations

6 July, 2012

ON THIS SPECIAL AND JOYOUS OCCASION of the seventy-seventh birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and on behalf of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet and the Central Tibetan Administration, I offer His Holiness our deepest reverence, prayers, and warmest wishes.

Today is the most auspicious day not only for the people of the Land of Snow but also for the entire world. Though Tibetans are confronted with an unparalleled tragedy in our history, we have still been able to establish and sustain a successful and an exemplary refugee community under the visionary leadership of His Holiness. Tibetans should cherish the principles of non-violence and democracy and many other vast contributions that His Holiness has made including bringing about a more peaceful world.

His Holiness was recognized at a most difficult period of Tibetan history. He was compelled to take over the spiritual and temporal powers at the tender age of sixteen. Similarly, at the age of twenty-four he had to leave his country and go into exile. In exile he was able to implement many of his long-held visions for democratization of Tibet. Major reforms included: the establishment of the Commission of the Tibetan People's Deputies in 1960; the promulgation of the Draft Constitution for a Future Tibet in 1963; adoption of the Charter of the Tibetans in Exile in 1991; the holding of the first direct election for Kalon Tripa in 2001; and finally in 2011 handing over of all political authority to the directly elected leadership. At that time His Holiness felt that it was an opportune moment for transferring political authority as Tibetans had reached greater maturity in democratic ideals and commitment to their practice. Undaunted by numerous challenges, sixty years of His Holiness' leadership has made the people of Tibet capable of standing on our own feet.

While deciding to hand over political authority to the directly-elected Tibetan leadership His Holiness stated: "although you have not welcomed my decision, let me reassure you that as long as Tibetan people retain their faith in me, I will continue to uphold my responsibilities. I believe that eventually Tibetan people will come to appreciate my decision." It should be noted that His Holiness took this decision at a time when so many authoritarian rulers around the world still brutally clung to power. The world hails this wise and far-sighted action towards a secular democracy.

Despite the anxieties of Tibetans in and outside Tibet over the last year, the devolution



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Chief Guest Kishen Kapoor, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay, Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament Mr Penpa Tsering, the Tibetan Chief Justice Commissioner Ngawang Phelgyal Gyechen and Gyalwang Karmapa Rinpoche at the tsuklakhang. PHOTO/Lobsang Wangyal.

of political authority has ensured a smooth transition without major mishap due to the support and unity of Tibetans. The Kashag would like to appeal to all Tibetans to continue to remain united and extend their support to make this transition a success.

Today there is worldwide acknowledgement of the untiring contributions made by His Holiness as an advocate of non-violence, compassion, secular ethics, religious harmony and Tibetan freedom. His contributions have been marked by the highest honors including the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Most recently, His Holiness was awarded the prestigious 2012 Templeton Prize which recognized his "engagement with science and with people far beyond his own religious traditions" and for focusing "on the connections between the investigative traditions of science and Buddhism." Moreover, it is well known that despite the obstacles and pressures from the People's Republic of China the number of world leaders meeting with His Holiness is growing. It is also well known that his teachings are attracting an ever-growing global audience. Perhaps less known is that this audience includes thousands of Chinese from the Mainland including many members of China's more than 200 million Buddhists. Consequently, through their spiritual practice more Chinese are now learning about Tibet and its culture.

His Holiness has always stated that the final word on Tibet would be that of the Tibetans in Tibet. Despite forcible occupation by China for over fifty years, the Tibetan spirit and desire for freedom remains indomitable. Even the darkest period of the Cultural Revolution

failed to crush the identity of the Tibetans. In the 1980's numerous protests took place against China's oppressive rule in Tibet. The landmark peaceful protests in 2008 were even larger in number and extended across the entire Tibetan plateau. The spate of self-immolations in Tibet since 2009 has clearly shown Tibetan aspirations for freedom and dignity remains strong.

Furthermore, the unshakeable Tibetan spirit and solidarity that now prevail across the three provinces are unprecedented in Tibet's history. The increasing number of people worldwide sympathetic to and interested in the Tibetan cause, culture and religion is a matter of pride. This has been possible solely because of His Holiness's leadership. For these vast contributions and achievement, and much more, we remain eternally grateful to His Holiness. The Great Fifth Dalai Lama helped strengthen Tibet by unifying the nation and creating greater consciousness of the Tibetan spirit and identity.

The Great Thirteenth Dalai Lama put Tibet on the world map by establishing relations with other countries and increasing its global status. Like his two great predecessors, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has contributed to strengthening internal unity of the Tibetans and the external profile of the Tibetan cause, and therefore will be recognized as amongst the great Dalai Lamas of Tibet.

At this delicate time external forces are trying to make every effort to undermine the legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama by creating disunity amongst Tibetans and disrupting the path towards secular democracy. For instance, the Chinese government is manipulating and

financing different groups including the Shugden followers, and their actions have harmed the Tibetan cause. Tibetans should not fall prey to their manipulations and harmful intents. They should remain vigilant.

On August 8 this year, which coincides with Lhakar (Wednesday), Kalon Tripa will complete a year in office. To mark the day and more importantly to show our support, the Kashag calls on all Tibetans and friends to observe the day by organizing a global solidarity vigil. This international vigil will remember those Tibetans who have given up their lives for Tibet and show solidarity with every Tibetan in Tibet who continues to suffer oppression under Chinese rule.

This vigil will be followed by another key event, which is a four-day Special General Meeting to be held from September 25 to 28 in

Dharamsala. The meeting will discuss and deliberate the ongoing crisis in Tibet and formulate appropriate action plans. A long-life offering will be also presented to His Holiness on behalf of the Tibetan people and administration during the meeting.

The Tibetan leadership remains firmly committed to non-violence and the Middle-Way Approach. We believe that the only way to resolve the issue of Tibet is through dialogue, and we remain prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue anywhere and at anytime. We strongly urge Beijing to accept the Middle-Way Approach, which seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China and within the framework of the Chinese constitution. The Tibetan leadership considers substance to be primary and process as secondary, and is ready to announce the special

envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to continue the dialogue process.

On this occasion, we would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the government of India and her people, and, in particular the state of Himachal Pradesh, for their generous hospitality and support for more than fifty years. We also thank all those who support the Tibetan people.

Finally, like the Great Fifth who reunified Tibet and the Great 13th who was able to return to Tibet from India, we pledge to strive to facilitate the return of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to the Potala Palace, which is the wish of all Tibetans and the universal cry of all those who have self-immolated. With fervent prayers for His Holiness' long life and may all his wishes be fulfilled. May the truth prevail in Tibet. ■

Kashag has retained the progress of CTA, Kalon Tripa says

DHARAMSHALA: THE 14TH KASHAG CONVENED a press conference today marking the completion of its one year in office since the inauguration of Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay on 8 August last year.

Speaking at the press conference, Kalon Tripa said the present Kashag has considerably lessened the initial anxiousness of the Tibetan people after the devolution of political authority by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and has retained the progress of the administration.

"There was a bit of anxiousness among the people, including myself and the members of the Kashag but in retrospect, if you look back, the Kalons and myself, we have traveled around the world and to many settlements. Cumulatively, it's fair to report

that there is a sense of stability and a sense that we have lessened the anxiousness among the Tibetan people," he said.

Acknowledging the hard work of the elder generation of Tibetans, he said the foundation of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Tibetan movement is very strong. It has sent a clear message to the Chinese government's claims that the Tibetan movement will collapse when the elder generation passes away, he added.

Speaking about the Tibetans living inside Tibet, he said they have kept alive their indomitable commitment to the cause of Tibet. A stable and vibrant Tibetan administration in exile will give them the extra impetus to their thoughts and feelings, he added.



From left: Kalon Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon Tsering Dhondup, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay, Kalon Pema Chhinjor and Kalon Tsering Wangchuk at the press conference.

He also said that the international community has come to the growing realisation that the Central Tibetan Administration has a fully and a consolidated democratic system.

Kalon Tripa thanked the Tibetan people both inside and outside Tibet for their solidarity and support and pledged the 14th Kashag's sacred duty to uphold the legacy of the elder generation to carry the Tibetan struggle forward. ■

US Report on Tibet Negotiations; Encourages Substantive Dialogue

DHARAMSHALA: THE US GOVERNMENT HAS REITERATED ITS CALL for substantive Sino-Tibetan dialogue towards reaching a lasting solution to the long-standing problems facing Tibet.

In its annual 'Report on Tibetan Negotiations' released on 12 September, the US State Department said: "In 2011, Chinese authorities continued to place the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas under increasingly intense and formalized systems of controls, many of which appeared to be aimed at facilitating enforcement of social stability and undermining the religious authority of the Dalai Lama. Increasing official interference in Tibetan religious and cultural spheres

provoked acts of resistance among the Tibetan population. These in turn led authorities to intensify to maintain control, thus creating a cycle of official repression and increasingly desperate acts by Tibetans, such as a series of self-immolations by Tibetan Buddhist clergy and laypersons in Tibetan areas.

"The US Government believes that the Dalai Lama or his representatives can be constructive partners for China as it deals with the challenge of overcoming continuing tensions in Tibetan areas. The Dalai Lama's views are widely reflected within the Tibetan society and command the respect of the vast majority of Tibetans. His consistent advocacy of non-violence is

an important factor in reaching an eventual lasting solution. China's engagement with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to resolve problems facing Tibetans is in the interest of the Chinese government and the Tibetan people. Failure to address these problems will lead to greater tensions inside China and will be an impediment to China's social and economic development.

"The United States consistently urge China to respect the distinct religious, linguistic, cultural identity and human rights of the Tibetan people.

"We continue to encourage both sides to engage in a substantive discussion that will work to achieve concrete results," the report noted. ■

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's European representative criticises China's role in Tibet

The Parliament Magazine talks to special representative of the Dalai Lama to Europe Kelsang Gyaltzen about China's presence in Tibet.

20 August, 2012

PARLIAMENT MAGAZINE (PM):

CHINA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE EU Wu Hailong says that Tibet is a highly autonomous region. How would you respond to this?

Kelsang Gyaltzen (KG): China claims to have introduced "democratic reforms" in Tibet in 1959 and having made the Tibetan people masters of their own homeland. Nothing could be further from the truth. Tibetans have little or no say in running their own affairs. All the decisions of the local government are taken by the Chinese Communist party and its regional branch in Tibet. The Tibetan people's participation in the government is only to rubber stamp the decisions made by the central and local Communist party's leadership. The secretary of the Tibet autonomous region (TAR) Communist party is the most powerful post. No Tibetan has ever held this position.

The lack of true autonomous rights and freedoms in Tibetan areas in China, enabling Tibetans to protect and develop their unique and distinct culture, religion, language and identity, poses a serious threat to the very survival of Tibetans as a distinct people. The forced transformation of Tibet in China's own image is uncovering the existing autonomy in Tibet as empty and meaningless. This is at the heart of the problems that Tibetans are facing today.

PM: China maintains that its government has always viewed the protection and promotion of Tibetan culture as an "important and inescapable duty". Do you agree with this?

KG: Unfortunately, the situation inside Tibet is marked by increasing political repression and by intensified policies and developments that continue to undermine the culture, language, religion and identity of Tibet and marginalise Tibetans in most spheres of life in their own homeland. Obviously, the Chinese government continues to view Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan distinct culture, language and identity as a threat to the stability of the Chinese rule in Tibet. Instead of addressing the issues resulting from "the unique nature of Tibet" – which successive Chinese leaders have repeatedly acknowledged – with understanding, tolerance and respect, the Chinese authorities' reflex has always been to resort to intimidation, coercion and repression. This is causing further alienation and resentment among Tibetans.

PM: Ambassador Wu says Chinese authorities are helping to improve the lives of Tibetans. How do you respond to this?

KG: We know from history that colonialism breeds a library of self-serving literature. China has churned out a huge amount of propaganda materials on "liberation, socialism and modernisation" in order to justify its invasion and occupation of Tibet. However, these pretty slogans hide the naked truth of China's growing need to exploit the abundant resources of Tibet to feed the resource-hungry economy of its dynamic coastal areas. The devastating impact of this policy has been a massive influx of Chinese onto the Tibetan plateau. Having lost their country to China, Tibetans in increasing number are losing their jobs to more skilled Chinese settlers, who are streaming to Tibet to take advantage of the economic boom. After the military invasion and occupation of

Tibet more than 60 years ago, Tibetans are now suffering from a demographic invasion and occupation of their homeland by Chinese settlers.

PM: Tibetan culture is very unique. Has this been affected by China's governance, and if so how?

KG: The Chinese authorities have engaged in a consistent effort over 60-plus years to replace authentic, organic Tibetan culture with a state-approved and controlled version that conforms with the ideological, political and economic objectives of the Chinese Communist party. This effort has been pursued through intentional policies that are designed to fundamentally alter Tibetan culture in a way that robs it of its essence and turns it into something that the Chinese authorities can manage.

In its 1997 report "Tibet: Human rights and the rule of law", the International Commission of Jurists wrote: Rather than instilling in Tibetan children respect for their own cultural identity, language and values, as required under the convention [on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination], education in Tibet serves to ideologically indoctrinate Tibetan children and to convey a sense of inferiority of their own culture, religion and language in comparison with the dominant Chinese culture and values."

PM: What do you have to say about China's failure to deliver on pre-Olympic promises of allowing free reporting on Tibet by foreign journalists?

KG: Once again China has sealed off Tibet from the rest of the world. Heavy restriction on the flow of information and strict censorship are in force to shroud the ongoing merciless crackdown in Tibet. Journalists, foreign diplomats and members of international human rights organisations are not allowed entry to Tibetan areas. Even ordinary tourists have been banned in recent times. The absence of any international presence in Tibetan areas gives the Chinese authorities a free hand in the suppression of the Tibetan people. If China has nothing to hide in Tibet, Beijing must then open up Tibet to the rest of the world. Let the world see and witness the "progress" in Tibet and "the happiness" and "satisfaction" of the Tibetan people.

PM: Tibetans are increasingly staging demonstrations, including self immolation, in protest against Chinese rule. Has this influenced Beijing's approach to the region and do you expect the protests to continue.

KG: Sadly, the dramatic protests by Tibetans in Tibet are escalating. As of today, there have been 49 cases of self-immolation inside Tibet and one case in India since 2009. Alone in this year already, 36 Tibetans resorted to the drastic form of protest through self-immolation. All cases of self-immolation are clearly acts of political protest calling for freedom for the Tibetan people and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

There is an urgent need for the international community to send a strong message of concern, solidarity and commitment to the Tibetans in Tibet. This message should convey to the Tibetan people that the outside world has taken note of their desperate situation and that it is committed to working for the improvement of their situation and committed to actively promote a peaceful resolution of the issue of Tibet through dialogue and negotiations on a long-term basis.

There is, therefore, a clear need now for the European Union to look for more effective ways and means to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedom for the Tibetan people and a peaceful and mutually acceptable solution of the issue of Tibet through dialogue and negotiations. The dramatic worsening of the situation in Tibet is a clear indication that business as usual will not do justice to the complex and compelling state of affairs in Tibet.

PM: Are Tibetans allowed freedom of religious expression? If not, what form do any restrictions take?

KG: The core of Buddhism is persistent striving for mental and spiritual development through intensive study with qualified lamas, understanding and practice. The study of Buddhism is exactly what the Chinese authorities continued to restrict, as they wanted to misrepresent Tibetan religion as practices in superstition and blind faith. Monastic colleges were not allowed to continue in the traditional way, and a ceiling was placed on the number of monks allowed in each monastery.

Since 1996, the Tibetan people are suffering from an incessant onslaught of political campaigns such as the "Patriotic Education", "Strike Hard" and "Spiritual Civilisation" programmes all tailored to undermine Tibetan religion, culture and language.

PM: You also say that the Tibetan language has been superseded by Chinese. However, ambassador Wu says there is equal importance attached to both languages. How true is this?

The diminishing relevance of the Tibetan language on its home soil became a source of grave concern for many Tibetan scholars in Tibet, some of whom openly raised their voices in protests. In 1992, the late Dungkar Lobsang Trinley, one of the leading cultural and intellectual figures of modern Tibet and recognised by the Chinese authorities as a "national treasure", said: "In spite of Tibetan being declared the first language to be used in all government offices and meetings, and in official correspondence, Chinese has been used everywhere as the working language". He further argued that "without educated people in all fields, able to express themselves in their own language, Tibetans are in danger of being assimilated. We have reached this point."

In October 2010, thousands of Tibetan students in the north-eastern part of Tibet, now part of China's western Qinghai province, staged peaceful protests amid rising concerns over the erosion of Tibetan culture, language and national identity. The immediate cause of the protest was the announcement from the local Chinese authorities that the language used in textbooks should be changed from Tibetan to Chinese. These protests by Tibetan school and college students spread from several areas of Qinghai to Beijing, where several hundred Tibetans at the national university of China protested to express their concern about the downgrading of the Tibetan language. These demonstrations follow a new emphasis in Qinghai province on the importance of Chinese language for Tibetans and a new "bilingual education" imperative that is designed to transition "minority" students from education in their mother tongue to education in Chinese. ■

Parliament's Appeal Letter on Critical Situation in Tibet

30 August, 2012

A Tibetan Parliamentary delegation headed by Speaker Penpa Tsering presented appeal letter to various embassies in New Delhi to seek their urgent and concrete action to end China's policies which are pushing an increasing number of Tibetans to set themselves on fire in Tibet: The following background information has been presented along with the appeal letter to the embassies.

Demographic Aggression

Population transfer is the main tool of assimilation and China has done that successfully with Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. It is underway in Xinjiang and Tibet. Han Chinese have already become the majority community in almost all of the Tibetan cities and townships. The vast majority of the Tibetan nomads are being uprooted from their centuries old traditional pastureland forcefully to the nearby existing cities and townships. Judging by the rate at which the demographic aggression is taking place in the name of development in the last few decades, there is every possibility that only pockets of Tibetan towns will remain in Tibet. In a planned manner, Chinese officers and settlers are being provided with many incentives including higher pay, job opportunities and automatic promotions etc. to promote demographic onslaught.

Political Freedom

Any form of action or expression that has some political connotations are being dealt with brutally in the name of national security. Particularly, influential Lamas, intellectuals, writers,

environmentalists and singers are targeted. The difference in the manner in which the authorities deal with the peaceful Tibetan demonstrators and the Chinese demonstrators are clear evidence of racial discrimination.

Religious Freedom

The numbers of monks and nuns have been reduced drastically and in many cases, monasteries have become just tourist attractions rather than centers of learning. The religious practitioners are not only forced to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama during 'patriotic education' sessions but also has to adhere to regulations laid down by the atheist authorities and monastic management committees filled with communist henchmen. The movements and activities of the clergy are severely restricted. People are forced to pay their respects to the Communist leaders – Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu, whose photos are forcibly placed alongside Buddhist images in the monasteries. Efforts are being made to set up communist branches in Monasteries and Nunneries. And most importantly, the atheist leadership wants to be responsible for the selection of reincarnated high lamas to meet their political ends, including that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. What an irony?

Freedom of Language

Tibetan language forms the basis of Tibetan identity and root of Tibetan religion and culture. Imposition of Mandarin as the medium of instruction and relegating Tibetan as just a language at the primary level coupled with demographic aggression will sound the death

knell of the unique Tibetan religion and culture.

Environmental Destruction

In the last more than 5 decades, destruction of the fragile natural environment and ecology of Tibet has caused irreparable damages that affects not only the plateau of Tibet but all the neighboring downstream countries in South and South East Asia including China. Unscrupulous extraction of natural resources without any consideration for environment will further exacerbate environmental woes. On the pretext of rejuvenating Tibet's ecology, the government is confiscating nomadic lands and the nomads are being sedentarized on the outskirts of existing townships and cities. In the absence of dung manure, severe degradation and desertification of the grasslands are being reported. Seemingly, China is giving lot more importance to Tibet's environment in the recent past but still falls short of using the centuries old wisdom of the Tibetan nomads on environmental stewardship.

Destruction of the Tibetan Way of life

Consequent to China's occupation of Tibet and its policies, the traditional Tibetan way of life has undergone a sea change. China's policy of demographic aggression in the cities and townships has marginalized the native Tibetans socially and economically. By resettling the Tibetan nomads into compact communities, it has not only deprived the Tibetans of their traditional livelihood but many of the young Tibetans are reduced to penury in the absence of proper vocational training for a new way of life. This will have serious implication on the livelihood of many Tibetans in the future. ■

HIGHLIGHTS: Worldwide 'Flame of Truth' Torch Relay



1) 27 June, Flame of Truth Relay Press Conference TPiE in Dharamsala; 2) Eastern leg of torch relay at Tenzingang Tibetan Settlement in Bodila, Arunachal Pradesh on 20 July 3) Rakesh Pathania, Member of State Assembly in Nurgur, India; 4) The Flame of Truth relay in Moscow, Russia



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