

4th WORLD PARLIAMENTARIANS'
CONVENTION ON TIBET
18-19 November 2005, Edinburgh

A REPORT

Co-hosted by

Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Tibet

&

UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet

Co-ordinated by

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WELCOME RECEPTION





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Chairman of the Cross Party Group on Tibet at the Scottish Parliament

MIKE PRINGLE

Good morning everybody. I hope every one of you had a good sleep. Many of you might have had a jet lag. I heard some of you saying that you went to sleep at half past twelve but couldn't sleep till early morning. I hope you feel refreshed this morning. Those of you who were at the dinner reception last night, it was a huge delight to welcome you. Chris and I thought it was a very good start. We are looking forward to a very successful two-day meeting in Edinburgh.

You see Edinburgh today perhaps has the best sunshine but very crisp and cold. There was pretty frost last night. But this morning I think you all see Edinburgh for what it is. In my view, it is certainly one of the most beautiful cities in the world. I hope some of you might take this opportunity to enjoy and have a look around the city at the end of the conference.

So again I welcome you and let us kick off. I will ask Harry to say a few words.



Mike Pringle is a member of the Scottish Parliament and a founding member of the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Tibet.

HARRY COHEN

First of all let me add my welcome to all of you and also express my pleasure to co-host this Convention of World Parliamentarians' for Tibet along with a member of the Scottish Parliament, Chris Ballance. It is an important convention of parliamentarians and other representatives concerned for the justice for Tibetans and I must congratulate the organizers for putting this program together. I must also congratulate you all for attending, taking part and being involved in it.

I am the Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group in the United Kingdom for Tibet. We have very many distinguished members and supporters. Amongst them is Lord Weatheral, the former speaker of the House of Commons. He's been a very strong supporter. I get a lot of support from other members of the parliament for the Tibetan cause and that's reflected in the Common's motions that we put down. I will just give you a couple of examples. The one on the Chinese Premier's visit recently mentioned about Tibet's occupation, calling for President Hu to meet the Dalai Lama to resolve China's long standing occupation of Tibet and called on the Prime Minister to publicly state his concerns about Tibet during the course of the state visit. 94 members of parliament signed that memorandum.



Harry Cohen is a member of the Westminster Parliament and the President of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, UK, the Co-host of the Convention

Another one which was put down by one of the candidates of the Conservative, the Opposition Party's leadership, expressing concerns about historic buildings, arbitrary security measures, and environmental damage in Tibet and again calling for taking up the human rights issue with the Chinese Premier, got 76 signatures. And my own one, which was about the Tibetan Parliamentarians' visit recently, 71 members of parliament signed it. So you can see that there's a good measure of support amongst the parliamentarians. Now I must say it was a delight when the Tibetan parliamentarians came to Westminster. They were eager to

learn, eager to contribute. It really was an example of a developing democracy and it is far more progressive and enlightened and modern than at places where democracies have been deliberately held back.

Our parliament group has future plans as well. We plan to have a meeting with the Chinese ambassador; we also plan to meet the UK ambassador to China when he comes to Britain; and we also plan to make contact with Paula Dobriansky, US Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, who also has the responsibility of the Tibetan issue. We will also continue our campaign against lifting of the arms embargo on China.

Now I'm not a great fan of President Bush. I think his stance on climate change, on wealth and equality, on war and several other issues has been bad. But I do pay credit where it is due. And I think he's been excellent in meeting the Dalai Lama recently and making it clear that he is opposed to religious discrimination in China and elsewhere. So I do praise him in that regard. And he called on the United State's State Department's report which indicated that Beijing strictly controls all religious activities. Now that has been denied by a Chinese foreign office spokesman but it is interesting to see how he denied it. I'll just read you his quote denying that there was control over religion,

“Well, the Dalai Lama is not merely a religious figure but a political exile in another country.” So he was maligning him as well from a religious aspect. And how could he not say that there was control over religion when we have the example of the 11th Panchen Lama? What is his fate since he was taken over by the Chinese? We've seen arrests of very many monks and nuns and His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not allowed to return to Tibet.

Since the so-called “peaceful liberation” of Tibet in 1950, some 1.2 million peaceful Tibetans have been killed in the process. Chinese authorities have persistently undertaken measures to stamp out the Buddhist religion and the Tibetan people's spirit of their uniqueness. And that repression has been in the form of a constant militarised presence and the import of ethnic Han Chinese; last year some 8,50,000 Chinese moved into Tibet and Tibetans are being ghettoised.

A lot of investment has been put in Tibet but mainly for the Chinese. And a lot of these historic buildings which have been part of the cultural heritage have been misused or concreted over. I'll give you a couple of quotes from an article in the recent *Guardian* newspaper by a man called Hunt. He's summed it up very well. He says, “The

arbitrary arrest of the religious leaders is just the tip of the iceberg of human rights abuse. Currently hundreds are languishing in jails to face trials for crimes including raising a Tibetan flag. Lots have suffered under the hideous inventiveness of the People's Liberation Army's torture tactics. China is currently engaged in a wholesale demolition in the ancient neighbourhood of the holy city of Lhasa. Despite its unique world heritage status and any number of objections from UNESCO, the ancient architectures are being ruthlessly replaced by concrete." And it says, "Perhaps the final indignity is that under Chinese munificence, some gutted monasteries are being restored not as functioning religious sites but as heritage attractions. And authentic culture is being transformed into false living history. Tibet is being turned into a theme park. That is not acceptable and China does need to change its act. If it wants to succeed in its path of smashing Tibetan culture, it would amount to a slow genocide and that is certainly not acceptable. It creates severe resentment and it would be a brake on Chinese progress, when they are deemed to be anti-freedom, anti-human rights and anti-democracy. It looks like it will benefit China if it involves diverse cultures that Tibet provides and there is no need for repression. The underlining seems to be that Tibet's self-rule would

represent a threat to China. Now 2.6 million Tibetans (in TAR alone) doesn't represent a threat to a billion Chinese. They must set a better example in moral terms if they want to be world leaders."

I'll give just one example of the Olympics coming up in China. There will be a happy smiling face of the Olympics but behind it lies suppression. Denial of human rights of the Tibetans and others will mar the Olympics and it will mar China's good name as well. I think His Holiness the Dalai Lama offers a way forward with his non-violent approach. Very Gandhian. In many ways, by taking on, taking forward the Gandhian approach, pressing for negotiations with a view to preserving Tibetan culture, environment and genuine self-rule. And as part of that, of course, his return as a religious leader and the return of the exiles to undertake their own self-government within the context of any agreement. So this is about tackling Tibet's situation, which is one of injustice. That is why this convention is so important. It is important for parliamentarians to speak up, to raise their voice and say this injustice must not continue.

You know, when Premier Hu was the governor in Tibet in an earlier role, he had this policy of "grasp with two hands". It was

a doctrine. What it basically meant was economic development and ruthless repression at the same time. Well, I do favour a new doctrine involving two hands. But it should be two hands shaking, the Dalai Lama's and President Hu's hands, shaking hands over an agreement for autonomy for Tibet. So, I think that can be achieved if parliamentarians speak out for Tibet like at this conference and keep pressure up around the world in getting meaningful negotiation and a genuine self-government for Tibetans putting an end to their repression.

So this conference is about getting justice done, about rights being achieved for Tibetans. It is also about saving an important civilization, a unique civilization and culture. What we're engaged here is nothing less than seeking to save Tibetan civilization. We're

supporting that and we are very grateful for your support in that, which is pretty splendid and I wish you all the very best at this Convention.

Thank you.

MIKE PRINGLE

Thank you very much Harry. That was indeed an excellent start. I'd now like to welcome Mr. Pema Jungney, who is the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile. Now everybody has extreme respect for Speakers. At the Scottish Parliament we are controlled extremely well by our Speaker and I'm sure Pema also controls his parliament well. He probably does not have much trouble in his parliament. You are very welcome and we're very much eager to hear what you're going to say.



PEMA JUNGNEY

Honorable Chair, Honorable Chris Ballance, the President of the Scottish Cross Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, Honorable Harry Cohen, the President of the UK Parliamentary Group for Tibet, respected Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, the Chairman of the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration, and respected fellow parliamentarians and friends across the world. On behalf of the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, I would like to thank you for your presence here at the 4th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet.

My colleagues in the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies and I are delighted that we have been able to organise the 4th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet here in the beautiful city of Edinburgh. This convention comes after a gap of eight long years. And for this reason, at the very outset, I would like to thank both the Scottish Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and the UK Parliamentary Group for Tibet for shouldering the heavy responsibility of organising this important convention. Without their support, it would not have been possible to hold this convention.

For the benefit of the new participants at this convention, let me briefly go over the first three parliamentarians' conventions on Tibet.



Pema Jungney is the Chairman of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, Tibet's Parliament in Exile, and a special invitee at the convention

The first convention was held in New Delhi in March 1994. The convention was attended by 69 parliamentarians from 25 countries. It adopted the Delhi Declaration, which called for the formation of all party parliamentary groups for Tibet in respective legislative bodies around the world and to create an international network of parliamentarians to coordinate activities for the cause of the Tibetan people. It also called upon the parliamentarians to prevail upon their governments to speak up for the rights of the Tibetan people.

The second convention on Tibet was held in May 1995 in Vilnius in Lithuania. This was attended by 88 parliamentarians from 25 countries. It reaffirmed its support for the Delhi declaration and called upon governments around the world to support the efforts of the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama to restore the rights of the people of Tibet through a peaceful settlement.

The third parliamentarians' convention on Tibet was held in April 1997 in Washington, DC. 63 parliamentarians from 27 countries attended the convention. The convention reaffirmed its support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach of seeking genuine self-rule for the whole of Tibet within the People's Republic of China.

Since the convention on Tibet in Washington, DC, the number of formally organised parliamentary groups for Tibet has grown to 27, spread across 27 countries, mainly in the West and Latin America and also in countries like India and Japan. In countries like the United States, where they choose not to have formal support group, nevertheless the parliamentarians have been equally active. Along with the Tibet Support Groups, these parliamentary groups for Tibet have been instrumental in highlighting the issue of Tibet in the international forums and

bringing the concerns of the Tibetan people to the attention of their respective governments to influence the People's Republic of China.

Because of the sustained international pressure brought on China, the authorities in recent years released some high profile political prisoners like Takna Jigme Sangpo, Ngawang Chopel and Ngawang Sangdrol. The sustained expression of international concern on the vexed issue of Tibet has also in part resulted in the Chinese authorities re-establishing ties with Dharamsala and accepting visits by the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to discuss the concerns of the Tibetan people.

We would like to say emphatically that all these positive developments would not be possible without the efforts of the worldwide Tibet movement and especially the sustained support of the various parliamentary groups for Tibet.

However, there are still issues that are of deep concern to the Tibetan people. For this reason, this convention is designed in such a way that we will have time and opportunity to explore these issues in greater detail. We have prepared detailed background papers on the four core issues of concern to the Tibetan people and I hope that you have had the time to go through them.

The issues of great concern to us are China's Western Development Programme, the still appalling human rights situation in Tibet, the deteriorating environmental situation, and our own sincere efforts to create the right environment for substantive discussions on the issue of Tibet.

China's western development programme was launched in 1999 by the then President Jiang Zemin. The economic reason for the Western Development Programme is to bridge the yawning economic disparity between the rich coastal areas of eastern China and the impoverished western regions. The Chinese authorities hope to accomplish this by accelerating the economic development in the poor western regions of the country and thus bringing a measure of economic equality between the east and the west.

However, in Tibet much of the development activities pursued are concentrated in infrastructure, namely, improving communications, roads and initiating the ongoing construction of the railroad to Lhasa. The first train, on a trial basis, thundered into the Tibetan capital on 15 October 2005 amidst great official fanfare.

Tibetans in Tibet, however, suspect that the real reason for the development in infrastructure is to enable China easier access to Tibet's rich mineral and other natural

resources. The Tibetan people say that this will make it easier for China to cart away these resources to the mainland to fuel its development and to bring in more Chinese settlers onto the Tibetan plateau to ease the pressure of population on other parts of China's crowded regions.

Tibetans in Tibet also assert that the vast majority of Tibetans are not benefiting from the economic boom that is going on in Tibet. Chinese settlers, who are attracted to the ongoing boom on the roof of the world, are the main beneficiaries and the common Tibetans are increasingly marginalised and remain as poor as before, if not poorer.

Although Tibetans from Tibet say that they are left pretty much to themselves as long as they don't involve themselves in what the authorities perceive as political activities, the human rights situation in Tibet continues to remain grim. Compared even to coastal China, the authorities keep a tight lid on normal human activities in Tibet. Dissent of any form in Tibet is still punishable by imprisonment. The whereabouts of the Panchen Lama recognised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama continues to be a matter of deep concern for us.

Authorities permit the free practice of the rituals of Buddhism, so as to give the impression that there is religious freedom

in Tibet: being allowed to say prayers, worship at temples and monasteries, make offerings at these places and to take the sacred walk around holy places. But these are the outward form of Buddhism and not its real substance. The essence of Buddhism is for a teacher being freely allowed to teach his wisdom and insight to his students and his students in turn passing this wisdom to their own students, which creates an unbroken lineage of Buddhist knowledge orally transmitted from teacher to students. This is banned in Tibet. This ban on the free teachings of the Buddha undermines the very ability of the Tibetan people to hold on to their spiritual and cultural heritage.

Tibet's fragile eco-system and the devastating impact of China's rapid economic development on this system are of particular concern to us. Tibet is Asia's water tower. 10 of Asia's major rivers originate from Tibet. According to environmentalists, they feed about 47% of the Earth's total human population. So what China does or does not do in Tibet has a major impact on millions of people downstream. Rumours of China's plans to divert the Brahmaputra River, which flows downstream to India and Bangladesh, and despite the official ban, the un-official logging of Tibetan forests contribute to the devastating flood experienced regularly in India, Bangladesh and in China itself.

As for the ongoing railway project, Tibetans in Tibet fear this will help China accelerate the migration of its jobless population onto the Tibetan plateau and cart away Tibetan resources. Many Tibetans fear this will inundate Tibetans in a sea of Chinese settlers.

On the bright side is the renewed contacts between Dharamsala and Beijing, which started in 2002. Since then the Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mr. Lodi G. Gyari and Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen, along with their two senior assistants, made three visits to Beijing, including the Tibetan areas, and had a frank and substantive discussions with their counterparts at the Chinese embassy in Berne in Switzerland this summer. It is our sincere hope that these contacts will lead to a peaceful settlement of the protracted issue of Tibet that satisfies the wishes of the Tibetan people and which meets the genuine security concerns of the Chinese authorities.

We believe that it is in this area that the members of parliaments around the world could be most effective in prevailing upon the Chinese leadership to settle the issue based on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank the Scottish Cross Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet for their

involvement in the organisation of this important conference. I would also like to express the appreciation of the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies, to all the members of the organising committee and others who have worked so hard to ensure the smooth running of this conference.

Thank you.

MIKE PRINGLE

Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Pema Jungney. That was very enlightening and it gives us a lot to think about. Thank you very much for those words. We at Scotland of course have our own evolved parliament since 1999. We are now in the second term. I know that His Holiness visited us earlier on this year and when in Edinburgh we had considerable discussions about how we achieved that. I hope that sometime in the not too distant future the Tibetans will have a devolved assembly in Tibet and act on a very similar basis to the one we have here in Scotland.

Prof. Rinpoche please.

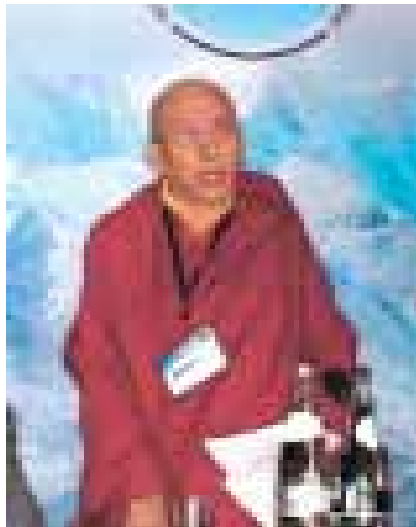


PROF. SAMDHONG RINPOCHE

Honorable Chairperson, honorable Chris Ballance, the President of the Scottish Cross Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, honorable Harry Cohen, the President of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet in UK, respected Mr. Pema Jungney, the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, honorable Parliament members from various countries and friends from all the participating countries. On behalf of the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I would like to welcome and thank you all for sparing your precious time to attend this convention.

This convention comes at a critical period in the history of the Tibetan people. His Holiness the Dalai Lama often describes the present period as the one that will make or break the spirit of the Tibetan people and that of Tibet's spiritual and cultural heritage. This is because the Tibetan people are presented with new opportunities and daunting challenges.

On the positive side, since 2002 we have managed to re-establish contacts with the Chinese authorities. On our part, we are making every effort to maintain and expand these contacts in our sincere attempt to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully on the basis of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach.



Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche is the Chairman of Kashag, the Tibet's Cabinet in Exile and is a special invitee to deliver the keynote address at the convention

The Middle-Way Approach recommends that the whole of Tibet be granted genuine autonomy. In return, the six million Tibetan people will be happy to live within the constitutional framework of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This is the position of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the aspiration of the vast majority of the Tibetan people.

In order to resolve the issue of Tibet on the basis of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle-Way Approach, the Central Tibetan Administration has made every effort within our power to create a conducive atmosphere for negotiations and taken a series of

confidence-building measures. We are pleased that the Chinese authorities have taken note of these positive steps. We will continue to take these steps till the issue of Tibet is resolved through a negotiated settlement.

Though Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen, a senior member of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's delegation who engaged with the PRC leaders, will brief you in detail on our contacts with the PRC leadership, I would like to acknowledge the open and frank attitude of the PRC representatives. We especially appreciate the comments made by them during the last round of talks held in Berne in Switzerland in July 2005 that the PRC central leadership attached great importance to the contact with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On our part, during the talks we have both in writing and verbally explained to the PRC leadership all the concerns raised by them. Much to the anger of the worldwide Tibet movement, the Kashag has taken the extremely unpopular decision of requesting the Tibet Support Groups, the Tibetan people in exile and NGOs to avoid provocative actions and slogans and not to engage in personally confronting the visiting Chinese leaders abroad with agitation. Much to the dismay of a section of the Tibetans, at official functions, we have banned the singing

of songs that fuel nationalistic anger and anti-Chinese sentiments. These are some of the measures that we have taken to create a conducive atmosphere for negotiations. They are an indication of both our seriousness and sincerity in peacefully resolving the protracted issue of Tibet and in restoring to the long-suffering people of Tibet the dignity and happiness they so richly deserve.

We believe PRC has an historic opportunity to grasp the hand of friendship extended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The ability of PRC to view His Holiness the Dalai Lama as its most effective ally and a trusted partner in its continuing search for social peace and legitimacy in Tibet will rebound enormously in enhancing China's international image. This will especially be true in the eyes of those millions in Asia whose lives and the lives of their ancestors have been enriched by Tibetan civilization and now in the eyes of millions around the world who look up to His Holiness the Dalai Lama for guidance and inspiration.

We hope to accomplish this with the continuing support, guidance and commitment of our friends in the legislative bodies around the world. The fact that PRC has renewed its contacts with His Holiness the Dalai Lama is due to the counsel offered

to the PRC leaders by government and legislative leaders around the world. We hope your support and commitment on this critical area of our contacts with the PRC leaders will continue.

We feel that the aspiration of the Tibetan people as articulated in the Middle-Way Approach are most reasonable and within the constitutional provision of the People's Republic of China. PRC's willingness to settle the issue of Tibet on the basis of the Middle-Way Approach will contribute to peace and stability and will enhance the image of PRC.

At this point it is important for us to clarify one fundamental nature of the Tibetan people's struggle, which is a struggle for the future of the six million Tibetan people. It is not a struggle for the restoration of the lost privileges of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his traditional government.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly stated that once he returns to Tibet in a manner that meets the aspirations of the majority of the Tibetan people, he would hand over his inherent powers to a duly elected local government of Tibet. Once this happens, the Central Tibetan Administration in exile would automatically be dissolved and the same Tibetan officials, who are currently working in Tibet, will look after the affairs of Tibet.

In his latest interview, which appeared in an Indian national daily, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, "When the day comes for our return with a certain degree of freedom, then I will hand over all my authority to the local Tibetan government. Hopefully, that local government should eventually be an elected government."

Friends, I must once again remind you in a nutshell the objectives and the nature of our struggle. We do not perceive the problem of Tibet as an isolated problem for the Tibetan people alone or a struggle between just two nations, namely China and Tibet. The Chinese and the Tibetans have lived as neighbors since time immemorial. Our relations had been fluctuating all the time, as friends, as relatives, as enemies, but at no time have these relations reached the nadir that we have been facing for the last fifty years. The present problem, as we see it, is a symptom of a larger human malady, which continues to exist and perpetuate itself in the modern world. Therefore we shall have to search the remedy also at a larger plane, at the level of all human societies.

Our conflict is neither a conflict of political ideology nor for political powers. It is neither fight for territory nor a struggle between nationalities. The Tibetan people neither ask for separation nor a larger share of political

or economic power. Our sole objective is to retain the identity of Tibetan people as a non-violent society in order to preserve and promote the unique Tibetan cultural and spiritual heritage in order to share it with all human beings. The essence of the Middle-Way Approach is to achieve the required basic freedom and human dignity for the Tibetan people in order to enable them to perform efficiently their universal responsibility, which is impossible under the present situation.

If PRC authorities have a political will, implementing the provision enshrined in the Constitution of PRC for National Regional Autonomy with all sincerity can easily fulfill our above-mentioned aspiration. By this the people of Tibet will be able to contribute their part to the welfare of humanity and also emotionally integrate with PRC, which will bring about the real unity and stability to the PRC.

To achieve this objective, we are fully committed to non-violent means. The present major problems of humanity, including problems facing PRC, are of 'violence'. Unless the violence is eradicated, none of the human problems, national or international, can be resolved on a sustainable basis. Keeping in view the objectives and the methods mentioned above, our struggle is a

struggle between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, violence and non-violence. The world community has recognized the nature of our movement and therefore supported it voluntarily without any expectations. In spite of that we are not yet able to convince the PRC leadership and they always accuse His Holiness and us for being "separatists". In spite of our consistent policy of Middle-Way adopted for the last 26 years, PRC continues to accuse us of being "separatists". Sometimes, we begin to doubt whether the PRC leadership wants us to remain "separatists" and want us to continue to work for "separation" in order to meet some of their internal political requirements.

My one-pointed request to you all is that through your legislative bodies, through your governments and through the individual friends of PRC leadership, you should try to educate, persuade and encourage them to give up the unfounded doubts and suspicion upon His Holiness and his administration. And to begin meaningful negotiations with His Holiness without losing any time.

The marginalisation of Tibetans inside Tibet, demographically, economically and politically, has endangered the very survival of the Tibetan identity. Each passing day, the marginalisation increases by leaps and

bounds. Therefore, time is running out. Tibet must be saved before its extinction.

In conclusion, my colleagues in the Kashag join me in expressing our deep appreciation to your presence and participation in this convention. It is an indication of your support to and solidarity with the just and non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people.

I am particularly encouraged by the strong Indian delegation from All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet. In fact, the inception of WPCT is the brainchild of the All Party Parliamentary Group of Indian Parliamentarians in 1994. Today, when I am in your midst, the memory of the late Shri Madhu Limaye comes to my mind again and again. He took great personal interest in organising the All Party Group in the Indian Parliament and also in convening the first WPCT in New Delhi. I also remember the hard work done by Shri George Fernandes and Shri Mohan Singh, who were conveners of WPCT at that time.

In fact, the issue of Tibet as well as the cultural heritage of Tibet still surviving in exile is mainly due to the generous and continued support of the government and the people of India. I would urge all the participants of this Convention as well as all the sympathisers of Tibet all over the world to recognise and acknowledge it.

I would also like to thank the Assembly of the Tibetan People's Deputies for initiating this Fourth World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet. The Central Tibetan Administration would like to express our deep appreciation to the Government of United Kingdom for permitting us to hold this convention. We would also like to express our gratitude to both the Scottish Cross Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and the UK Parliamentary Group for Tibet for stepping in to actually organise this convention at such a short time.

I remember it was sometime early this year, when I accidentally met Mr. Victor Spence in Dharamsala. He suggested that it would be good to hold either the Tibet Support Conference or the WPCT here. At that time I did not consider it very seriously and I just said that it might be considered for the next meeting, as at that time the WPCT was already scheduled somewhere else. But things happen in their own way and sometimes we have to believe in that. After quite sometime, when the dates were approaching fast and there were only two to three months left, we had to take it seriously and request Mr. Victor whether it was possible to have it on the scheduled dates in November. To our pleasant surprise, he said, "Yes, it will be possible". And it happened here in actuality

and I owe a great deal of gratefulness to him and his colleagues and I hope this Convention will have very positive and substantive action plan to resolve the long-standing Tibet issue.

MIKE PRINGLE

Professor, thank you very much indeed for that. We must add that Victor contacted us and said that, “By the way there seems to be a problem with the Tibet Convention in Rome. There’s a possibility that it might come to Edinburgh”. Both Chris and I responded enthusiastically and said, “Yes, great”. So it has to be said that we were actually delighted. I think these things are

meant to happen, I think it was meant to happen here and I hope what happens this weekend will prove just exactly that. I think we’ve had a challenge laid down today for all of us. Professor Rinpoche has given the challenge to us. I think there might be many things, which have been said by the Professor this morning, which will appear in the final draft, I’m sure that is almost inevitable. And I think some of the things he said are very important and we all have to move forward, and we all have to move forward very quickly. So I’ll now like to ask Chris Ballance to sum up.



CHRIS BALLANCE

Thank you very much Mike. Respected Professor, honorable Chair, honorable Harry Cohen, honorable and distinguished delegates. Thank you so much for agreeing to come here to Edinburgh. It is a greater privilege to have you here. Thank you very much indeed for coming.

We have in Scotland several layers of government. We do have a Scottish National Parliament, which gives this country a national identity, a sense of autonomy. We have a Scottish Parliament, which has control of education, health care, prisons, environment, planning, transport, arts and culture, housing, tourism and other things. We also have the Westminster Parliament, which retains the powers of defense, foreign affairs and macro economic policy. There are some tensions but nevertheless this is a precedent and we also have the European Parliament, which sets the general competition and trading laws and, perhaps the most important of all, the human rights legislation. I'm very pleased to welcome some of my European colleagues of the European Parliament.

So autonomy is possible within a wider context. I think that's a very important message to get across at this moment because the power of China across the world is immense and it is growing. Its economic power, its promise to governments across the world of many, many

jobs, trade, and businesses is immense and it is growing.

In Scotland, our First Minister has been to China twice. The Deputy First Minister has also been to China. We have just appointed our very first foreign representative in China. It is a very powerful country that we are dealing with. However, we have a real role that we can perform within our parliaments—promoting the cause of the Tibetan people, promoting the rights of Tibet and highlighting the abuses perpetrated by China.



Chris Ballance, a member of the Scottish Parliament, is the President of the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Tibet and a Co-host of the convention

Now I can't say what parliamentarians across the world can do but what I would like to convey is what our cross party group has done. Our cross party group was formed two years ago when we heard that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was able to give a very brief five minutes time for reflection, the spiritual thought which starts our parliamentary work every week. And when we heard that, Mike and I were very keen that we should form a cross party group for Tibet in order to maximize the benefits we could get from His Holiness' visit. And we thought that was probably all we would do around that visit.

But shortly after His Holiness' visit, the organizers of the Edinburgh Military Council Tattoo Office announced that they were inviting the Chinese Red Army to perform at their annual concert. So Mike and I along with the local Students for Free Tibet and colleagues from the Tibet organizations in London went into the display, unfurled a Free Tibet banner and were duly and ceremoniously arrested and sorted out by Her Majesty's constabulary (applause). I don't think we deserve the applause; it was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion. I would strongly recommend it to anyone who has a power-wielding police force in his country. I should say we conformed to the methods of non-violence. We met with the local chief

constable before the event. We told him exactly what we are planning to do. We assured him that it would be entirely non-violent and peaceful. We didn't give him the actual date that we were planning to do it on but we kept them well informed on that one.

We have also supported the local Edinburgh University Students for Free Tibet. With their group we've been very active with meetings, publicizing the issue of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, visits from Tibetans and with other events that they have had. The other thing we did was when there was a Chinese state visit to Edinburgh. We knew that they would be traveling along the street outside the Parliament of Edinburgh. We hung Tibetan flags outside the windows of the Parliament. Again something we were doing without permission but we reckoned that the visit would be around half an hour. So we had half an hour and nobody in the authorities would notice until it was too late. These are the sorts of things that we have done in the last two years and I hope we will continue to organize in a similar fashion to raise the issue of Tibet.

I have also met with the Chinese Consul on several occasions in connection with this Convention. I must say that the Chinese consul had advised me in the strongest

possible language that I think a diplomat can ever use that this Convention should not happen. She told me it would be bad for the people of Britain, it would be bad for the people of Scotland, it would be bad for trade with Scotland and that it would destroy Scotland's tourist industry with China. She has been very active. She has also visited the Scottish government and said exactly the same things there. She has also visited the presiding officer, the Speaker of our parliament twice and has said the same things to him. And I believe she has also visited our first minister to say the same things. I am very glad that she cares.

I think the activities that the Chinese have undertaken in respect of this Convention shows how important this Convention is. And I know from talking to many of you last night that the Chinese have been active across the world trying to make it as hard as possible for people to come here. And so it is a real tribute to the passion so many people feel for Tibet, that we do have 130 parliamentary representatives here from 30 countries across the world and I think that is absolutely fantastic.

We started slightly late. I think, now we're going into teatime and actually one of the most important things about this sort of a meeting is to get together, to meet, to talk

over the tea break. So I don't plan to go on any further. But one think that I would like to say is that I have seen a quotation attributed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama saying that "if you feel you are too small to make a difference, try spending a night in a bed with a flea". And ladies and gentlemen, respected professor, honourable Chair, I very much hope that following this conference, the offshoot of this would be that the Tibetan flea is felt, in a non-violent way, by the Chinese giant across the world. Wherever the Chinese go, wherever the Chinese have a state visit, have a trade visit, have any form of representation, they will see that the voice of Tibet will be there, greeting them until they resolve the question of Tibet.



The Kalmyk delegate presented a message of solidarity from the President of the Republic of Kalmykia.

MIKE PRINGLE

Well, I think on that note, we come to the conclusion of the Opening Session.



Chair of the session: Hon. M.A. Kharabela Swain, Member of Indian Parliament

Status of the Sino-Tibetan Dialogue by Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen,
Envoy of H.H. the Dalai Lama

The Geo-political importance of Tibet by Mr. Dalip Mehta, Former Ambassador
and Former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

M.A. KHARABELA SWAIN

Ladies and Gentlemen, now we are going to start the Plenary Session I.

My name is Kharabela Swain. I am a Member of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament. I will chair this session. To my left is Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen. He is the envoy of H.H. the Dalai Lama and is one of the two Tibetan representatives in dialogue with the Chinese government. Now he will brief all of us about the Sino-Tibetan dialogue he had with the Chinese. And to my right is another distinguished speaker of this Convention. He is Mr. Dalip Mehta. He was a former ambassador, he comes from India, he was in the Indian foreign service. He served as the secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and he will be dealing with the subject on the Geo-Political Importance of Tibet. So these are the two gentlemen who will be dealing with the subject I just mentioned and then I shall throw the floor open for your comments. I shall request you to raise your hands so that I can call you one by one. I also request you to keep the responses and comments brief so that we can complete it by 2.30 as we are already running late by 15 to 20 minutes. I now request Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen to brief you on the status of Sino-Tibetan Dialogue. Mr. Kelsang please.



Kharabela Swain is a member of the Indian Parliament and is the Convener of the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet.

KELSANG GYALTSEN

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Today, I am asked to brief you on the current status of dialogue with China. First, let me convey to you the sincere apology of my senior colleague, Mr. Lodi Gyari, the Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the leader of the Tibetan delegation team to China, for his inability to be present in this very important conference on Tibet. Many of you may be well aware that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has just concluded a very successful visit to the United States during which he had very constructive and encouraging meetings with President Bush, Secretary of the State, Dr. Rice and with leaders and members of the US Congress. Mr. Gyari regrets missing the opportunity of meeting many old friends again and addressing this important gathering. I also personally thank the organizers for the invitation and honour to address this convention on Tibet.

Our first direct contact with the Chinese leadership after our escape from Tibet in 1959 was established in late 1978. Before going into exile, His Holiness the Dalai Lama had tried his best for more than eight years to work out peaceful co-existence with the Chinese leaders as well as with the Chinese Generals of the People's Liberation troops in Tibet. When China



Kelsang Gyaltzen is the envoy of H.H. the Dalai Lama and is one of the two Tibetan representatives in dialogue with the Chinese government.

emerged from the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and Deng Xiaoping signaled a willingness to have direct contact, His Holiness responded positively without any hesitation. Right from the beginning of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, His Holiness was determined to pursue the path of non-violence and to seek a solution to the Tibetan conflict through dialogue. Already in early 1970s, His Holiness and the Tibetan Cabinet had held many discussions and had concluded that sooner or later they would need to enter into direct contact with the Chinese leadership and engage in a dialogue

about the future of Tibet. As a result His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan leadership in exile were fully prepared to enter into direct contact with the Chinese leadership when the opportunity presented.

Over many years His Holiness did his best to engage the Chinese leadership in an honest dialogue. Unfortunately, lack of political will and vision on the part of the Chinese leadership resulted in their failure to reciprocate the numerous initiatives of His Holiness. Finally, in August 1993 our formal contact with the Chinese government came to an end.

Around that time His Holiness the Dalai Lama instructed Mr. Lodi Gyari and me to explore informal channels of communication to the Beijing leadership. Through private persons and semi-officials, we were able to establish a few channels. Three rounds of meetings were held at secret locations in the course of time.

In the late autumn of 1998, without any obvious reason, all our channels of communication were shut down. This sudden development was accompanied by a hardening of the Chinese position on dialogue, in their attitude towards His Holiness and above all by an intensified new round of repression in Tibet.

Despite this setback His Holiness has encouraged and inspired us to continue our efforts and to explore all available avenues. Our efforts through private and informal channels led finally in January 2002 to a first face-to-face meeting outside of China with Chinese officials responsible for Tibet policy.

This meeting paved the way for the visit of a four-member Tibetan delegation to China and to the Tibetan capital Lhasa in September 2002. It was the first time since 1980 that representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama have been able to visit Lhasa.

Since then the Tibetan delegation has been able to visit China and tour Tibetan areas in 2003 and 2004. This year another round of meetings between the Tibetan and the Chinese delegations was held outside of China. The meeting took place at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Berne, Switzerland, on June 30 and July 1, 2005.

On our first mission in 2002 the task entrusted to the delegation was two-fold: First, to re-establish direct contact with the leadership in Beijing and to create a conducive atmosphere enabling direct face-to-face meetings on a regular basis in future. Secondly, to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach towards resolving the issue of Tibet.

In Beijing we met with Mr. Wang Zhaoguo, Vice Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the Head of the Central United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party, and Mr. Li De Zhu, Minister for Nationalities Affairs and Deputy Head of the United Front Work Department. We had frank exchanges of views with them in a cordial atmosphere. They reiterated the known position of the Chinese government on dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We took the opportunity to explain His Holiness the Dalai Lama's thoughts on resolving the issue of Tibet through negotiations in the spirit of reconciliation and dialogue. The Chinese leaders listened to our explanations with keen interest and engaged in free and spontaneous exchanges.

In 2003 our visit followed the changes in leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as well as of the Chinese government. Consequently, our main objective was to continue the process begun in 2002 and to engage extensively with the new Chinese leaders and officials responsible for Tibet and our relationship. In addition to this main objective, we had three specific aims on this visit: i) to broaden our overall understanding of the situation in China through visits to different areas and meeting with officials; ii) to meet with Chinese Buddhist leaders

and to visit Buddhist holy sites; and, iii) above all, to visit Tibetan areas and meet Tibetan officials.

On the second visit our new counterparts were Mrs. Liu Yangdong, Vice Chairperson of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Head of the Central United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party, Vice-Minister Zhu Weiqun, the deputy head, Mr. Chang Rongjung, Secretary-General and other officials. We were impressed by the attention and candor displayed by the Chinese leaders during our meetings. Both sides agreed that our past relationship had many twists and turns and that many areas of disagreement still exist. The need for more efforts to overcome the existing problems and bring about mutual understanding and trust was acknowledged by both parties.

In 2004, we had so far the most extensive and serious exchange of views on matters relating to Tibet. We had two sessions of discussion in Beijing. The meeting with Mr. Liu Yangdong took place in a more formal setting and lasted more than three hours. On the following day, another session was held in a business-like setting lasting more than five hours. Vice Minister Zhu Weiqun led the Chinese delegation in the discussion.

The discussions were held in a frank but cordial atmosphere. The Chinese side presented a long list of criticism of and objections to Tibetan activities, positions and views. It was apparent from the discussions that there are major differences on a number of issues, including some fundamental ones. Both sides acknowledged the need for more substantive discussions in order to narrow down the gaps and reach a common ground.

We stressed the need for both sides to demonstrate flexibility, far-sightedness and vision to bridge the differences.

In 2005 the fourth round of meetings between the Tibetan and Chinese delegations was held in Berne, Switzerland. The discussions were concrete and substantive, and held in a cordial, frank, and business-like atmosphere. The Tibetan side had the opportunity to respond in detail point by point, verbally as well as in writing, to the criticism, objections and allegations made by the Chinese side during the last round of discussions in Beijing. We also put forward some proposals that will help build trust and confidence and move the ongoing process to a new level of engagement aimed at bringing about substantive negotiations to achieve a mutually acceptable solution to the Tibetan issue. We reiterated our commitment to continue making every effort to create a better

environment. At the same time we urged the Chinese side to join in this effort, and highlighted the absence of such gestures from their side.

Both sides had a positive assessment of the ongoing process. Vice Minister Zhu was pleased that our direct contact had now become stable and an “established practice”. He also conveyed to us that the Central leadership of the Chinese Communist Party attaches great importance to the contact with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He stated that we need not be pessimistic about the existing differences and that it was possible to narrow down the gaps through more meetings and exchanges of views.

This is a brief summary of interactions between the Tibetan and the Chinese delegations over the recent years. Obviously, major differences on a number of issues, including on some fundamental ones, continue to remain. From our discussions with our Chinese counterparts it has become clear that the biggest problem we face is the lack of trust. There are deep-rooted misconceptions and strong distrust between the two sides.

Obviously, a few visits and meetings cannot resolve this distrust and misconception. However, an important beginning has been made to reduce the level of mutual distrust.

The resumption of direct contact provided an opportunity for both sides to extensively share with each other their views and perspectives on core issues. Now it is important to continue this process and for both parties to demonstrate their sincerity and trustworthiness to the other by taking small tangible steps to build trust and confidence. It is a delicate process, requiring both quiet diplomacy and some very public and visible initiatives.

What is presently most disturbing and of great concern to us is that there have been no positive changes inside Tibet since the opening of direct contact with the Chinese leadership. On the contrary repression inside Tibet has increased recently. Nor has Beijing reciprocated the confidence building measures undertaken by the Tibetan leadership in exile after our first visit. We must face the fact that so far there has been no indication of any change in China's harsh policies in Tibet nor have been there any clear signs that the Chinese leadership is genuinely interested in beginning an honest dialogue.

I wish to add here that this is not to express any doubt about our policy of reaching out to the Chinese government. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, the Chief Executive of the Tibetan Government in exile has just made very clear our determination and commitment to the

present process. What I am trying to say here is that we need to make a very cool-headed and clear-eyed analysis of the present process avoiding raising expectations, false illusions and false hopes.

Presently, China is undergoing profound changes. This process of transformation will be influenced to a large degree by the attitude and policies of the international community towards China. This, in turn, will impact China's policies on Tibet and towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In this context, it is clear that it is not solely in the hands of the Chinese leaders alone whether the Tibetan people will be able to enjoy a life in freedom and dignity in future or not. The outcome will be determined just as much by the policies of the governments of the free world towards the Tibet issue and China.

There is no doubt in our mind that the strong international concern for Tibet has been one of the major factors for the Chinese leaders for agreeing to our visits. It is, therefore, necessary that the international community continue to remain engaged with the Chinese government on the issue of Tibet. It is of great importance to continue to demonstrate strong interest in the progress of the ongoing process and to continue to encourage and urge the Chinese leadership to enter into substantive

negotiations to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet. Thank you.

M.A. KHARABELA SWAIN

Before I request Mr. Dalip Mehta to make his presentation on the Geo-Political Importance of Tibet, as the chairman of this session let me kindly have the privilege of seeking just one clarification from Mr. Kelsang Gyaltzen. You spoke about the lack of trust. If it is not confidential, can you please make one or two points of distrust between the Chinese government and the Tibetan government? Can you please make one or two points at least on which there is deep-rooted distrust between the two parties?

KELSANG GYALTSEN

I think the most obvious distrust is, as many of you know for many years, actually since the late 70s, that His Holiness has never made any statement saying that the Tibetan government or He is seeking independence for Tibet. And for the last more than twenty

years, His Holiness has been reciting like a mantra that He is not seeking independence, not seeking separation, but the Chinese government till today continue to allege that His Holiness is still seeking separation and independence of Tibet. That is one very obvious case of distrust. And out of this position, all the activities that His Holiness undertakes, even if His Holiness gives a Kalachakra teaching or when he travels abroad on cultural and religious programmes, the Chinese government considers all these activities as a political effort to smear the image of China and to promote independence. So I think this basic distrust is not yet overcome.

M.A. KHARABELA SWAIN

Thank you very much Mr. Gyaltzen. I now request Mr. Dalip Mehta to make his comments on the Geo-Political Importance of Tibet after which I shall throw the floor open for questions and answers.



DALIP MEHTA

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, honorable members of parliament from around the world, Ladies and Gentlemen. For the privilege of speaking here this morning, I should like to thank the Cross Party Scottish Parliamentary Group for Tibet, the UK Parliamentary Group for Tibet and the Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre in New Delhi.

I have been asked to speak on the “geo-political importance of Tibet”. In other words, the strategic importance of Tibet.

The subject matter is perhaps of greater interest to the participants who have come from Asian countries than further afield, though it undoubtedly has global implications.

Peace in Asia to a very large extent depends on the state of relations between China and India. A look at the map immediately highlights the strategic location of Tibet, straddles as it does the very heart of Asia. Tibet comprises approximately one-fourth of China’s entire land mass and its vast mineral resources, including uranium and river systems, add to its strategic importance. Five of the world’s great rivers have their source in Tibet. The Yellow river that flows into China, the Mekong that flows into South East Asia, the Irawadi that flows into Myanmar, the Brahmaputra that provides sustenance to India and Bangladesh, and the Indus



Dalip Mehta is a former Ambassador and a former Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

that passes through India into Pakistan. This gives us an idea of Tibet’s geo-strategic importance.

Until its occupation by China, Tibet had throughout its independent existence been a source of regional stability, being an effective space between Asia’s two largest and most populous nations, India and China, countries which till then had no common borders and, therefore, no basic conflicting interests. After 1950, when Tibet no longer existed as a separate entity, the geopolitical situation changed dramatically, with India and China now sharing a long and

dangerously militarized border of over 4500 kilometers, much of which is disputed, and which in 1962 had led to a war between the two countries. In fact, 1962 saw the severance of all links between Tibet and India - cultural, religious, trade and political. Today both countries are nuclear powers with regional and global aspirations; the situation thus is vastly more dangerous if conflicts are not resolved quickly and peacefully.

Successive governments in India have, in the belief that India–China friendship is the bedrock of peace and stability in Asia, attempted to have good relations with China. Even though Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru condemned, in the strongest terms, China's invasion of Tibet in 1949, he signed an agreement with China in 1954 which legitimized Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. He did attempt to rectify some of the damage by providing the Dalai Lama a second home in India in 1959. In 2003, India and China went a step further and in their Joint Declaration stated that the "Tibetan Autonomous Region is a part of the territory of the People's Republic of China". I believe that in referring exclusively to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (U-TSANG) India endorsed the truncated contours of Tibet and tacitly accepted the absorption of Amdo and Kham, regarded by

Tibetans as part of Tibet, into neighbouring provinces of China. The Autonomous Region in fact comprises only about half of what was originally Tibet. In so doing, India seems finally to have abdicated its historical role in Tibet with which it had the closest relations over the centuries. This is not intended to be a criticism. It is perhaps the result of real politik. But in my personal perception, it is an assessment of the situation on the ground.

Be that as it may, as a quid pro quo China recently recognized Sikkim as part of India. This gesture, though welcome, merely acknowledges ground realities as Sikkim acceded to the Indian Union, by democratic process, some three decades earlier. I am happy that the Member of Parliament representing Sikkim is here with us today.

In recent years relations between China and India have improved. The cold war syndrome has receded. Atmospherics are more positive. Economic relations are widening. Traditional trade routes between India and Tibet are gradually being opened to mutual advantage. But unless the fundamental causes of discord are removed, relations between the two countries can never be fully normalized. There are the competing ideologies and political systems; the border remains disputed in several sectors: China is in

occupation of 53,000 sq. kms. of Indian territory in Aksai Chin, in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and continues to claim over 83,000 sq. kms. of Indian territory in Arunachal Pradesh, in the north-east of the country. By a happy coincidence, the Indian Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh is also with us this morning. And there is the competition between the two Asian giants not only over political influence, but also natural resources that are critical for continued economic development.

And then there are India's security concerns, surrounded as it is by China's close "all weather" ally Pakistan, a nuclear power, to its west, where it is presently constructing a deep-water naval base at Gwadar, and Myanmar to the east, where China is also developing port facilities, opening up the Indian Ocean to its naval presence. The conversion of the Tibetan plateau into a vast military zone, with huge stockpiles of conventional and nuclear weapons, has serious implications for India, as also I imagine for the rest of the world. The construction of the over 1100 km rail-link between Gormu and Lhasa will enable rapid transport of troops and weapons into Tibet along India's northern border. At short notice China can rapidly deploy as many as 12 PLA divisions against India within a month, quite

apart from tightening its occupation of Tibet and accelerating population transfer and mineral exploitation in the region. All this with serious consequences for Tibet's fragile ecology. Today China is engaged in the largest expansion of nuclear and missile armouries anywhere in the world. China wishes to be the supreme power in Asia. As US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld remarked in Beijing last month, the continuous expansion of Chinese strategic strike capability raises many questions including – whom is it directed against? In the circumstances India cannot afford to be unmindful of these security implications.

In short, India is sandwiched between the economic and political need to develop good relations with China, and the security need to protect against the spread of Chinese influence and power in the region. These forces unfortunately often align in a manner which makes India an unreliable ally for the Tibetans.

All this leads to the question of how, if at all, can Tibet provide stability to this potentially volatile part of the Asian continent where simmering problems continue to exist? There can be no doubt that there is a growing appreciation for resolving disputes through negotiated compromises rather than resorting to force.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's insistence on finding a peaceful resolution to the Tibetan crisis therefore comes at a time when the world is more receptive to such solutions.

As I see it, therefore, the answer lies in the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach wherein he has, despite the historical reality of Tibet's independence and sovereignty, pragmatically accepted Tibet being a part of the People's Republic in return for genuine self-government and autonomy for the whole of Tibet, something the Chinese themselves assured the Tibetans in the 17 Point Agreement of 1951. It has taken the Dalai Lama great courage to accept existing realities in advocating his Middle Way Approach, as in the process he may well have alienated sections of his own people who advocate a more militant approach to attaining their goal of complete independence.

It is interesting that the 4th WPCT is happening here in Edinburgh. As pointed out by other speakers, Scotland itself enjoys autonomy within a larger political entity. This is something that will work well for the Tibetans as well. It is hoped that the Chinese realize that the Dalai Lama is not a "splittist" as they claim, that he does not aspire to Tibetan independence, but merely the preservation of Tibet's unique culture, something which itself should be a matter

of pride for China's rich and multi-cultural society.

I wish here to recall the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan of 1987 in which, *inter alia*, he envisages Tibet becoming a demilitarized zone of peace and non-violence. If indeed Tibet were to become a Zone of Peace, within China, and without compromising Chinese sovereignty or territorial integrity, it would bring stability to the region and provide an important psychological boost for improving the political environment not just southwards to the Indian sub-continent but towards Central Asia as well. It would once again become a buffer between China and India, permitting large-scale demilitarization along the common border, and the growth of healthy economic and cultural relations between the two countries.

In fact, it would be beneficial to apply His Holiness concept of zones of peace wherever there exist the possibility of future conflict anywhere in the world.

China itself is becoming a world economic and military super-power. It is engaged in making an image turn-over. The Beijing Olympics are not far off. There is a generational change in its leadership, more pragmatic and forward looking. A leadership conscious of its credibility and global responsibilities. Given Chinese goodwill it

is possible to work out an arrangement on Tibet, which safeguards the interests of all concerned. It is therefore incumbent on the world community to support the on-going dialogue between the Dalai Lama's envoys and the Chinese Government.

The Tibetans, guided by the Dalai Lama, have consistently engaged in discussions about the future of their homeland. These discussions have often been frustrating and inconclusive, yet the Tibetans have persevered. The Dalai Lama's unique mixture of idealism and pragmatism, coupled with a deep commitment to non-violence has had a major role to play in their approach. It must be remembered that the Tibetans renouncement of the path of civil strife has set apart their approach from the many other movements in Asia and around the world that seek self-determination in their homeland.

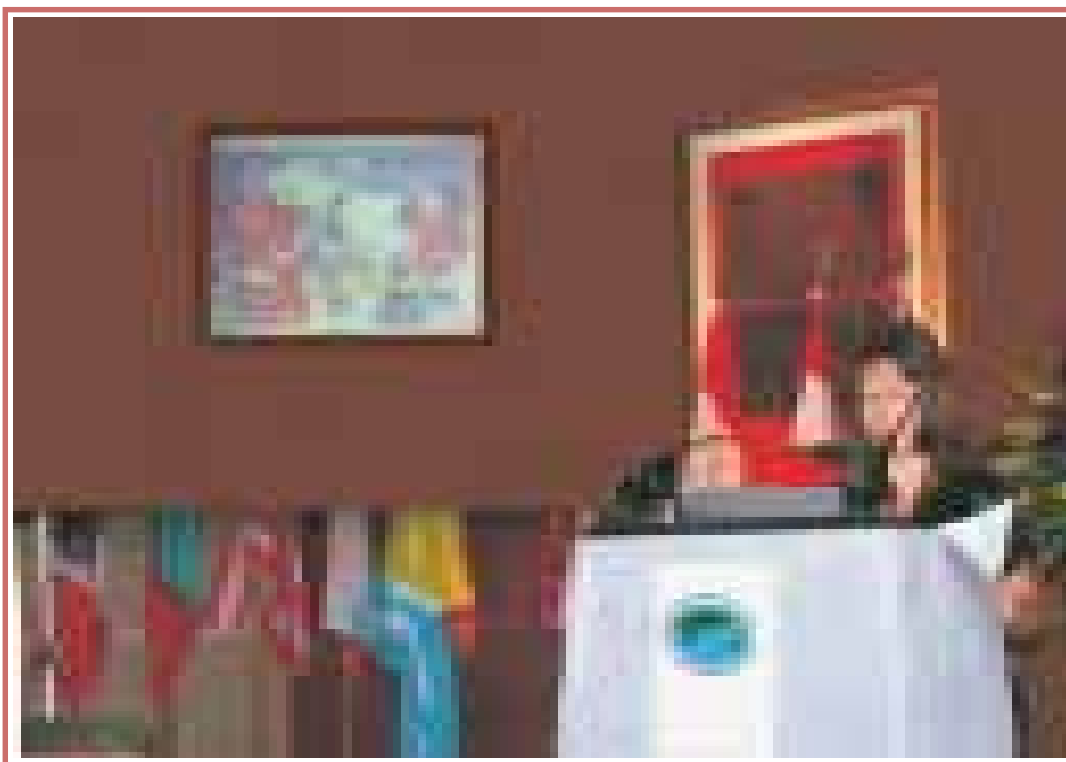
China has many regions and ethnicities subsumed within its structure. If China is an honest broker with the Tibetans and provides them with the autonomy within the state structure that they were promised, others might take note and follow a similar strategy of engaging in constructive dialogue with the central government.

It is important that the process moves forward from confidence building to conflict resolution. And this can only be achieved in the life-time of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for he alone has the stature to take this process forward. He is globally respected as an apostle of peace, and the moderate voice of the Tibetan people. The opportunity must not be lost.

Thank you.







Chair of the session: Hon. Gianni Vernetti, Member of the Italian Parliament

Environment and Development Issues in Tibet by Ms. Kate Saunders,
International Campaign for Tibet

Briefing of TSG activities by Dr. Dorothy Berger, Co-Chair of the International
Tibet Support Network (ITSN) and Mr. Tenzin Dargyal, Member, ITSN SC

GIANNI VERNETTI

Good afternoon to everyone. We begin the second plenary session. I am Gianni Vernetti, the President of Italian Parliamentary Group for Tibet. I would like to introduce Ms Kate Saunders of the International Campaign for Tibet and she will give us an overview of “Environmental and Developmental Situation in Tibet”. It is a very sensitive issue and it is an issue many of us have raised in our parliaments in recent years. As you know the Western Development Plan of the People’s Republic of China has put under serious risk the fragile ecosystem of Tibet. It is an ecosystem that can affect the lives of millions and billions of people in Asia. So we are very interested to hear, to know more about this critical issue for the future of Tibet. Thank you very much. Ms. Kate Saunders please.



Gianni Vernetti is a member of the Italian Parliament and the President of the Italian Parliamentary Group for Tibet.

KATE SAUNDERS

I have quite a few pictures to show you. They are all new pictures taken in Tibet over the last couple of months. Tibet's average elevation is 14,000 feet above sea level and Tibet is the highest country in the world. Its high altitude environment is increasingly endangered by China's policies, which do not take into account the local needs and the fragile ecosystem. This really matters to Asia and to the rest of the world. Five of Asia's great rivers have their headwaters in Tibet and half of the world's population lives downstream. Deforestation in Tibet is already being linked, as many people know, to severe floods in the Yangtze a few years ago. The high planes, the forests and also the grasslands which you see here is a home to many rare and endangered wildlife including the Tibetan antelope, the chiru, the snow leopard, the blue sheep, due to extensive resource extraction, poaching and unsustainable development.

Tibetans are facing increasing marginalization as their economy becomes integrated with China with a population of 1.2 billion and they are losing out particularly under the so-called Western Development Strategy by Beijing. Beijing's campaign to develop the PRC's western regions, including Tibet, is a very high profile political campaign. It was initiated by the then Party Secretary and President Jiang Zemin way back in 1999. This enormous



Kate Saunders is the Director of Communications of the International Campaign for Tibet, Washington D.C.

undertaking affects around 56% of the entire PRC (almost a quarter of China's vast population including Tibetans, Uighurs and other so-called national minorities). The Chinese authorities say that this development will improve infrastructure, strengthen environmental protection and develop science, technology and education. But the reality is very different. Western Development reflects the party's agenda to control Tibet and to repress the Tibetan identity and it represents the most severe threat so far to the survival of Tibetan culture and religion.

I am going to show you a few shots here of Tibetan landscape. This is in the eastern Tibetan areas and this is a picture of Tibetan nomads. These few slides to come indicate some vignettes of the Tibetan culture and religion. They indicate different aspects of the Western Development Campaign. These slides show Tibetans selling a product called Yartsa Gunbu which many Tibetans will know what it is. It is a strange sort of creature. I think it is a worm which transforms into a grass which is edible.

What we are seeing now is that as the Tibetan nomads are displaced from their land, many more of them are going to business selling this, but in doing so they are facing competition from the Chinese who are also selling this which is quite lucrative. This is one of the traditional Tibetan industries, which is being co-opted into the Chinese system and commercialized. So here are some monks who are also selling it. Monks and nuns in Tibet are facing increasing pressure on their religious education, many of them having to do business to survive.

This is a major festival in one of the largest remaining religious encampment in Eastern Tibet which is called Yakchen Ghar in what is now called Sichuan province. This is one of the religious encampments, which has become an important focus of preserving

Tibetan identity. These are rare pictures because very few westerners go to these encampments where Tibetans gather informally around great religious teachers and in this case around the teacher Achok Khenpo. They are attracting increasing number of Chinese Buddhists as well as Tibetan Buddhists.

These are some of the monks and nuns around Yakchen Ghar. Some of these religious encampments manage to survive despite increasing pressure from the Chinese authorities. In the traditional eastern province of Amdo and Kham, there are still some religious encampments where the Tibetan religious identity can still be preserved in a way that we don't see in Tibet Autonomous Regions where controls are stricter.

Now these are pilgrims prostrating all the way to Jokhang temple in Lhasa from eastern Tibet. These particular pilgrims are spending two years during this journey, prostrating the entire way to the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

This picture is of Chiru, Tibetan antelope, slaughtered by Chinese poachers. Many of you might have seen in recent days that the Tibetan antelope or Chiru was chosen as one of the five Olympic mascots for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. It is ironic that China chose an animal which is increasingly

endangered in Tibet and which China has not been able to protect.

This is another shot of Yakchen Ghar, which is a religious encampment in Sichuan province. Soon after this picture was taken, some of the homes of monks and nuns were demolished by the Chinese authorities. There is a very strict legislation governing religious settlement like this and the population of monks and nuns are increasingly restricted.

This is a recent shot of Serthar monastic encampment, which is also in Sichuan province. And a few years ago in Serthar more than a thousand mainly nuns' homes were demolished by the Chinese authorities because Beijing claimed that they were contravening the quota of monks and nuns allowed in this place.

This picture was taken a couple of months ago and it shows some of the rebuilding work that is going on there although monks and nuns haven't been able to rebuild on the site of their old homes.

This is a picture of Serthar, which was taken a couple of years ago showing the extent of the demolition. This religious institute was founded in the early 1990s by a very charismatic senior lama called Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok who died last year. He was involved in an increasingly precarious

balancing act trying to ensure the survival of this religious settlement but finally he was unable to prevent the destruction that took place at this important settlement. There are still more than a thousand monks and nuns there but no foreigners are allowed to go in and there are increasing restrictions on the religious practice there.

This picture shows a nun who is in the ruins of her old home just after it was demolished and she is trying to find some of her belongings there.

This is a picture of Kumbum and these are Chinese tourists dressed in a sort of Tibetan outfit. Kumbum in Amdo is the second seat of the Panchen Lama—a very important Tibetan religious leader. As most of you know, the Panchen Lama as recognized by the Dalai Lama, the real Panchen Lama disappeared in 1995 and is being held in an unknown location probably in Beijing. In the meantime, his second seat, Amdo in Qinghai increasingly has the appearance of a tourist attraction, where it is full of Chinese tourists dressed in Tibetan costume. Friends who have been there say it is increasingly unrecognizable. Monks were under pressure not to display any photographs of the Panchen Lama. The abbot of Kumbum Monastery Achok Rinpoche actually fled into exile a couple of years ago because he

was asked to receive the Chinese choice of Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu who is a young boy. He was asked to receive him in Kumbum and he didn't want to do that because that would tantamount to recognizing the Chinese choice of Panchen Lama.

So there are more Chinese tourists in Kumbum having their pictures taken in Tibetan traditional dress. This is also something that is symptomatic of the sort of development and modernization that is going on in Tibet. A while ago, you would never have seen a monk with an electric guitar playing pop songs.

There are some new buildings and some development that is going on in a town in the traditional Tibetan area of Kham now incorporated into Sichuan province. Then you can see the buildings just on the left hand side—brand new buildings—but there is an attempt to give a sort of Tibetan looking façade. There is more destruction of traditional Tibetan housing some of which you can see behind it and reconstruction of some new buildings in new style. Then, you can see the type of urbanization that is resulting here from the Western Development Campaign. The Western Development Campaign prioritizes the development of the administrative and the

military apparatus of the state in order to maintain control of Tibet. That is why there is a political agenda to this campaign.

But Tibetans are suffering from increasing poverty, rural-urban inequality, the worst education indicators in the People's Republic of China and little know-how on health care provisions in most areas. It is certainly the economic development that is going on in Tibet that is transforming Tibetan lives probably more than any other campaign at the moment. Western Development is imposed from the top-down in Beijing and Tibetans are facing increasing competition for employment, a marginalization within their own communities due to the number of Chinese migrants entering Tibet which is leading to the concerns for their survival. This campaign emerges really from the Party's fears that the PRC will disintegrate in the same way as the Soviet Union. They are particularly threatened by what they term as "splittist tendencies" in Tibet. As a result of this, repression in Tibet is intensified to quash all forms of pro-independent protest as economic development accelerates. Party chiefs have openly admitted in many speeches about the political agenda of achieving what they call stability through development.

Western Development is not a new thing. Of course, it represents acceleration of policies that were formulated over 50 years of Communist Party rule. In the 1950s, Soviet Union helped China to built state factories in the area, and in the 1960s Mao Tsetung announced plans to built heavy industries in the western regions, including Tibet, and in the central areas of China. In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping focused on market reforms in the east coast and he urged the western regions to be patient saying that their time will come. Now the time has come, it seems.

The campaign of Western Development was launched in 1999 formally by Jiang Zemin who was probably mindful of his place in history. This Western Development Campaign is being described by the party as epoch making, a chance in a lifetime, a once in a millennium opportunity.



Now this is a picture in Lhasa. Many of you might recognize that these flags that are fluttering here are not traditional prayer flags, they are actually the flags marking the 40th anniversary of the founding of Tibet Autonomous Region by China. So, this is a new scene of the increasing modernization in Lhasa.

Again, this is Lhasa depicting the style of the new buildings and the Potala Palace here. We see at the front is the new Potala Square. In the mid 1990s, the traditional village of Shol was demolished in front of the Potala to make way for the Potala Square and this demolition has continued and now it is a sort of vast square, vast green square. You cannot see very well in this picture and the roads have been broadened. You can see a sort of greening of the square that has gone on with the scale of development in this critical Potala area. So with Western Development Campaign, the stratagem of ecological protection such as the afforestation of farmland is running the risk of depriving the people of their livelihood and the influx of Chinese migrants encouraged by the Party under the rubric of Western Development is having a dramatic impact on the lives and the livelihood of the Tibetan people. So even though there is this economic development going on in Tibet, there is no discussion allowed in

Tibetan areas about the appropriate form of the development that is taking place. The current form of infrastructural, GDP oriented, ultra rapid growth is very dangerous and probably unsustainable, which is very likely to damage local resources and the environment. It also encourages outside migration and profit extraction. There needs to be an open discussion of Tibetan oriented development that will develop Tibetan human resources which should not be just pushing up GDP by following a model of development that is very similar to a city in inland China. What we are seeing now is that China is trying to change the debate about Tibet to highlight economic progress and success. It sites visibly verifiable examples such as the railway and new shops and buildings. These are part of pictures that may offer advantages to some people but not to the vast majority of Tibetans.



This is a picture that was taken a couple of months ago in Lhasa of the new railway bridge that is now being built in Lhasa. But the economic development policies are also being used as a smoke screen to divert people from the fact that we are getting now less and less access to information in Tibet about anything potentially critical. People remained probably not only as scared but more scared now of speaking out about issues critical of the government on arrest, torture, economy, the railway or migration. More particularly in the eastern Tibetan areas—the more traditional areas of Amdo and Kham—development is taking such a strong hold. It seems that the people are less and less prepared to speak out even about the building of the roads, homes, the building of the railway. The person who took these pictures who speaks Tibetan was in the area for quite a long time but no Tibetans actually spoke to him even casually or on a friendly basis about what was happening there. He asked directions to one place and they would not give directions. They just sort of rushed away. So the levels of fears in some areas seem to be increasing.

Before Chen Kuiyuan became party secretary 10 years ago in Tibet, people in Tibet could debate economic issues but not political or human rights issues. But now it seems that

they cannot do either of these. You notice in this picture. This is a poster which is touting a new road being built in Lhasa and you notice that the Chinese language characters are much bigger than the Tibetan. This is another trend which we have noticed in the last few months particularly with the building of the railway from Qinghai to Lhasa. More and more signs are actually only in Chinese and not in Tibetan at all which is actually not in accordance with Chinese legislation which says that officially both Tibetan and Chinese are official languages in Tibet.

This is particularly not a very clear picture but it shows the area where the railway is being built. You can just see a bridge going to Lhasa. This is an example of a new poster of the railway taken in Lhasa a few months ago with wording entirely in Chinese. This was taken about seven or eight months ago but now this bridge is complete. This is the railway track that is being laid now from Qinghai to Golmud. Now the railway is going to lead to increased exploitation of Tibet's natural and mineral resources by the Chinese state and by the Chinese companies. It is going to increase militarisation of the Tibetan plateau which is a particular security concern for New Delhi. I was on a trip to India a few months ago and spoke to several



people about this and it is quite a sensitive project in New Delhi and it is causing some concern amongst the military there. It is also going to have some detrimental impact there on Tibet's fragile ecology because the plateau is a watershed. This is even acknowledged by senior Chinese officials in China although most Chinese officials do not want to talk about railway because it has such high level approval from party figures such as Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin and so on. Of course, it is also going to lead to substantial inflow of Chinese migrants.

The building of the railway really can best be understood in the context of China's security concerns because so many billions of Yuan have been poured into this project. This is a new station and this was taken a couple of months in Golmud in Qinghai.

This is a new railway station and you can see that there is not even an attempt to use Tibetan language as signs. These are some of the new rail cars that are being trialed right now and again there are Chinese signs.

So this is again the tracks that are now being built and it is going from Golmud and the first train is being trialed there. Again all the signs are in Chinese. This is another view of the bridge in Lhasa taken just recently and more constructions are going on here. There is a hammer and sickle that is being used and the wording is something about 'congratulation to all labour party workers who are involved in this construction of the railway'. This sign was in Lhasa.

Under the Western Development Campaign, China's latest Five Year Plan announced the creation of hundreds of new towns in Tibetan areas and the eradication of nomadic lifestyles. This is the key goal for Beijing and it is the same throughout China and it is not only in the Tibetan areas. Settling of nomads makes them easier to administer, it makes control easier and there are these different reasons but it is the eradication of the entire lifestyle. So what you see here again is that the Chinese characters are in dominance.

This is an eastern area in Amdo of Tibet and this shows some of the new housing that is being built for nomads. This is the first time

these pictures are being seen and it was taken just a few months ago. There are some Tibetan people in the new housing complex and it is just being built for nomads. So all of the houses are uniform. These are some nomads here. So what is happening is—it is creating a whole new transformation of lifestyle. Nomads have to go, they are losing their land so they are losing their livelihood. While they may receive initial compensation for moving into the new home but it is not sustainable, so many of the particularly Tibetan nomads are just migrating to the towns just to find any work. So this is the latest status symbol in Amdo, the motorbike of course. These are some young nomads who have moved to the urban areas on motorbike.

This is actually a town, a plant of the new development that is being built in this particular area for the nomadic resettlement.



This shows exactly where it is going to be built. I have just taken this expanse of land. So they are moving from this grassland to this very uniform housing development in this expanse of land.

This is in Yushu, which is in Qinghai province. It is just showing some of the ways in which some Tibetans who have moved from the grassland and are now making a living whatever way they possibly can or cannot.

In order to build the railway station near Lhasa, the Chinese authorities use the site of a traditional Tibetan village called Neu or Leu in Chinese. Now this was part of the village before it was demolished. This was taken about seven, eight months ago before it was demolished. This is now the site of the train station. This is also a sign, which was leading up to the village a few months ago. This is the result. This is the new settlement that is being built. Tibetans have been relocated from their old village into this new housing complex. That is another one of the old village and that is the housing. The sign on the wall, which is in Chinese, basically announces the resettlement, the relocation of Tibetans which is another unusual thing. Resettlement is not generally announced by the Chinese authorities. It is a sign of their increasing confidence now. They feel free to announce it officially. You can see that in this

new picture of the new housing built on this sort of great expanse of flat plain. The area around this seems to be calling into question the need for the resettlement or destruction of the village at all. It is an indication of the rapid pace of the economic development.

Deforestation as well is a major issue of environmental concern. This depicts a forested area, which is in Kham area, which is now in Sichuan province and this is despite the logging ban. This picture was taken quite recently, there is a logging ban in force in some areas of Kham and this was brought into force after 1998 when there was a severe flood in Yangtze. They encouraged the Prime Minister of the time, Zhu Rong Ji to visit the Tibetan areas to look at the upstream forested areas to see what could be done about that. And logging ban was enforced. In some areas, it is being implemented, in some areas it is



not. So you can see in this picture that there is a sort of denuded hill side above, and the deforestation above this town in Kham but again there is this surreal plastic palm tree that you can find in these many new towns that China is building. More deforestation shown there.

So what we also find is that China says that it is pumping vast sums of money into Tibetan areas but in fact that is going toward the massive infrastructural projects like the railway, and road-building but it is also going to the government administration. So what is happening is that growth strategy is increasing its dependence on external subsidization just in order to keep up the current growth. So in other words, it is not a healthy economic growth and the exclusion of Tibetans from the development of their own economy is not a way to bring about a healthy economy.

In terms of health and education, although official Chinese statistics show that the GDP value of the healthcare sector actually decreased between 2001 to 2003 which reversed a few year of rapid expansion of the building after 2001. This is despite frequent official proclamation that money is being poured into healthcare. So more than half a century after Tibet's incorporation into the PRC, an affordable and adequate healthcare



is still not available for the Tibetans. Beijing's economic development policy is neglecting what they call soft infrastructure such as health and education in favour of the hard infrastructure like the railway, the road, the factories, the transportation, and the hydroelectric power stations. So, many Tibetans are still dying from conditions that are easily treatable such as diarrhoea, dysentery and pneumonia.

The proportion of resources allocated to education in the TAR has also dropped as well. The only way ahead for the Tibetans and ultimately the economy of the Tibetan areas is to pursue a much more proactive and affirmative policy towards Tibetans, particularly with regard to the rural and the urban poor encompassing educational training, vocational training, employment and business and also combining this with a variety of locally oriented infrastructural and service

development. That should be reflected really in the development funding that western government provides towards Tibetan areas. Tibetans need to be involved in the decision-making in their areas because the situation is so urgent as they are being exploited.

So two policy initiatives could conceivably provide a way ahead for Tibetans. One is the massive expansion of social services, primarily in education and healthcare but also in various forms of social security. Second is the reorientation of the local economic strategy towards local integration and ownership. These initiatives could lead towards an overall shift in Tibetanising development. Now some local officials and scholars both Chinese and Tibetans are pushing these forward and are trying to promote these ways forward. But at the moment, they are isolated voices but they need all of the support they can get from Western NGOs and western government who do provide funding for Tibetan areas for development and they need that support from national and international NGOs. As parliamentarians, I think that is an important debate to have when development funding is looked at in the Tibetan areas. So I am going to stop there because I am being told to leave room for questions in case any one has questions.

GIANNI VERNETTI

Thank you very much. Just a few words before finishing our discussion. I think Kate told us very clearly about the time factor—Tibet is changing and it is changing very quickly. People's Republic of China is developing a clear strategy that is not just environmental or quick developmental or quick physical change. It can really produce big changes in Tibetan identity and in Tibetan cultural life. So, I feel, we as parliamentarians can do a lot. Many of our resolutions focus on human rights problem, many of our resolutions focus on political support, on contact or on increased contact between China and Tibetan Government in exile. I think that we have to also try to focus in future on the sort of development guidelines. Many big western agencies also work inside China. I think, we have to work in our parliaments to advise our government to try to continue work for the development of Tibet. We want to continue our development field but these developments have to benefit the people of Tibet. We have to involve the majority of Tibetan people. I think it was one law, which is important like in the U.S Congress some years ago, they have voted and passed the Tibetan Policy Act. That is probably the most important law that I know that talks about

these issues. I think it will be good if we can incorporate a possible initiative in our final resolution in the forthcoming sessions. This will provide certain guidelines for our governments regarding a desirable policy toward Tibet.

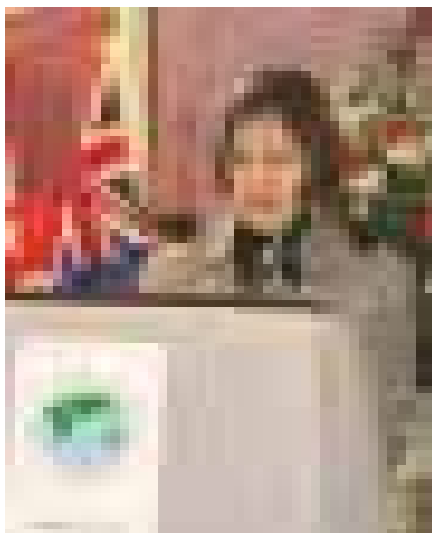
I now invite Dorothy Berger and Tenzin Dargyal for the second panel on the Tibet Support Group. We have around 20 minutes and after that we will have a tea break.



DOROTHY BERGER

Hello, I am very glad to be invited to speak with you today partly because eight years ago when this group last met, ITSN, the International Tibet Support Network, didn't exist. I would therefore like to give you an idea of what ITSN is, what its potential is and then get you to the primary focus of my remarks which deals with opportunities for parliamentarians and the Tibet support groups to better complement one another's work. My friend and colleague, Tenzin Dhargyal, will follow with some very specific examples of how we might work together. My job is to paint it with kind of broad strokes.

The International Tibet Support Network was created in the year 2000, in Berlin, at the third International Conference of Tibet Support Groups and its creation recognized several things. One of them is the enormous growth of Tibet Support Groups worldwide. It is possibly a phenomenal growth of groups in the last ten or fifteen years but each of them came into existence independent of the other and each has its own action plan, its own idea of what it can best do for Tibet. And for some years, it seemed that a kind of coordinating body could focus the energy of the Tibet support groups, avoid duplication and diffusion and therefore make the whole movement more effective.



Dr. Dorothy Berger is the Co-Chair of the International Tibet Support Network (ITSN).

ITSN is an organization of organizations, there are no individual memberships. Last I heard we had something like 140 organizations as members of ITSN. That's quite large.

The mission of ITSN is to maximize the effectiveness of the Tibet movement by strategic planning, by coordination of campaigns and by building the capacity of our member organizations. For example, training in such things as governmental relations, media relations, campaign materials and so on. All of the daily bits and pieces that a Tibet support group needs.

We are not a super TSG, we are not a Tibet support group at all. Our role is rather to stay somewhere in the background, to propose, to think, to coordinate, to enhance the work of the TSGs themselves by making them more skilled at what they do. We do not give orders and participation in any campaign that we organize is completely voluntary.

ITSN is governed by an elected steering committee that reflects the diversity in size and geography of the whole Tibet movement. All the steering committee members are representatives of the largest and the smallest Tibet support groups. At present, the steering committee members come from Russia, Chile, Mexico, Canada, England, France, Denmark, Lithuania, Israel, Switzerland, India and United States. It is a very interesting group of people. The Tibetan government in exile sends two representatives to the steering committee but we are independent of one another.

For the past two years or so, our major work has been organized by what we call campaign-working groups. These are voluntary consortia of Tibet support groups with a single focus. At present, we are three campaign working groups, one dealing with the Panchen Lama, one dealing with the railroad and one dealing with 2008 Beijing

Olympics. Another for Tenzin Delek Rinpoche has for the moment at least completed its work. The campaign working groups plan campaigns and invite other Tibet support groups to join in. Their work has been extraordinarily diverse and often imaginative. May be during tea break, if you would like details of some of them, I can tell you.

For the five years of its existence ITSN functioned as a predominantly volunteer organization with minimal funding and sometimes with no funding at all. A very difficult situation but that has just changed thanks to Isdell Foundation having provided us with a secure funding base. We are about to hire a full time Executive Director and now have funds for such things as campaign materials, training programs, regional meetings, all of the things that keep Tibet support groups alive. This is a really exciting time for us and I have thanked Yodon Thonden privately for giving us that funding base and would like to express my thanks publicly right now.

On Saturday this group of parliamentarians will adopt an action plan. Sometime in the next month, the Tibet support groups will meet in Brussels probably with something like around 500 people in attendance and that group will adopt an action plan. Next

week, ITSN is proposing to the planning group for our conference that the action plan adopted in 2006 be much more narrowly focused than ever before. We are hoping for something like two primary objectives. I can't of course tell you what those will be because planning is just about to begin but there have been various ideas around today that can give you an idea of some possibilities. The idea that I am expressing I hope is clear, that with a narrower focus we can increase the impact of what we do. There is always something to do for Tibet. In doing it makes us feel good and it is good. But may be now is the time for some reflection, to focus our energies on what seems likely, given current situation to best further our goal. We are about to become a much more effective organization. We can mobilize a large number of increasingly skilled people to do our work. If the action plan that the parliamentarian group adopts tomorrow is similarly narrowly

defined that means that we can much more effectively complement one another's work.

Each of us can do things that the other cannot and it seems to me that the governments and the grassroots groups working in the same direction is somehow the best chance that we have. I was struck last night in the Scottish Parliament by an interesting symbol, of a wedding ring that symbolizes the marriage between parliament and people. I am not exactly proposing marriage today but definitely proposing that there are many things that we can do to maximize the effect of each of us and before I turn the microphone over to Tenzin, could I just ask by a show of hands how many people in parliamentary groups already have a working relationship with the Tibet support groups in your neighborhood? Could I ask the people from Tibet support groups who are in the audience?



TENZIN DARGYAL

The cause of Tibet is very fortunate to have the sympathy of most parliamentarians. This is not something given, especially when we know that when you are being lobbied on many different issues. The challenge that we have now is to go beyond the awareness campaign and to focus on concrete action. Arguably, we can say that there is enough global awareness established now on the problems of Tibet. In Canada, even elementary students know that there is a problem in Tibet. So right now in the 21st century the focus must be on concrete actions that are consistent and effective. What we need now is time to think about these types of actions. We also wanted to give you an overview of some of the actions that we like to propose as ITSN and as Tibet support groups.

Dorothy already highlighted some of the campaigns specifically the Panchen Lama campaign, which is an important campaign. Most of us already know that Panchen Lama has now been missing including his parents for 10 years. Something that we feel parliamentarians can do is to specifically ask whether to your foreign affairs division or your Chinese counterparts that you meet. Ask about the whereabouts of Panchen Lama or even be bolder to request being allowed to visit this young boy who is also known as the Gedun Choekyi Nyima.



Tenzin Dargyal is a member of the International Tibet Support Network (ITSN), Steering Committee

So within every parliament every government has representatives that work with the United Nations and these groups should also reach out and build up on the work of the committee on the rights of the child. Tsering Jampa la was here not so long ago at this UN working committee and they moved a resolution which formally requested the Chinese authorities to allow an independent team to visit the missing Panchen Lama. So through your respective United Nations ambassadors, you can encourage these people to work on the committee for the rights of the child.

And something that is perhaps even more innovative now is that in preparation for that eventuality we have to remain positive and it is now perhaps time to seek locally, within your own groups, who is the likely candidate that is acceptable to China to do this visit. We have to be positive and we have to be forward looking to think about the next steps.

Again, as many of you have mentioned during the presentation that Olympics provide a huge opportunity and it is our goal as the ITSN that the spotlight that will shine on Beijing will also shine on the issue of Tibet. It is a unique opportunity to borrow the very famous Chinese words “to make a great leap forward” for the Chinese before the 2008 Olympic games, to really show that to be a member of the international community it has certain obligations towards Tibet. So I think everyone shares that the world will be watching China. And also one very important point that was reminded by my friend Alison from Free Tibet Campaign is that China has already made several public commitment that there will be media freedom during the Olympic games and we have to hold China to its own rhetoric. In fact, that is one of the strongest vehicles we have to convince China that the resolution of the Tibetan issue is important - using their own words.

The railway as Kate showed with many pictures is a very double-edged project that many of us feel is the final phase of the cultural genocide of the Tibetan people. We also believe that railway is just a subgroup of a much larger issue which is the development of Tibet. And unfortunately in Canada, we have a dubious distinction of being the number one supplier of railway technology. We are also very active in gold mining in Tibet so this is an expertise that we are rapidly building in the Canada Tibet Committee. There are already guidelines for many of you perhaps don't know and it is available online at www.tibet.net. The Tibetan government in exile, also known as the Central Tibetan Administration, has already set up guidelines on their website. So that your respective government and in turn the companies that consult your government, especially on these famous trade delegations, can visit this website or the office of Tibet or TSG to find out more.

As our moderator already told you before, a very concrete example that perhaps can be applied locally being sensitive to the different parliamentary systems around the world, is the Tibet Policy Act which clearly refers to the guidelines established by Dharamsala, the Central Tibetan Administration. And the heart of those

guidelines is basically to ensure that the Tibetan people are truly in power to direct their own economic future. So these are guidelines that exist and these are guidelines that everyone here can go to the Internet tonight and read and look at so that policies can be developed with your respective governments.

The reality is that Tibetan government in exile is slightly muzzled to take firm action on these issues. So that leaves clearly the responsibility on us TSGs and our government friends to work together, to be very firm on the issue of development. I think I would like to repeat this one more time. Due to the sensitive nature of the current talks, with our aspirations to have negotiations, I think the onus is on people in this room: TSGs and governments working together to take a strong stand on the development of Tibet today. I am very proud to present an example from Canada, barring the elections which may be held next week; we succeeded in passing a motion in the parliament of Canada that will call upon Bombardier, one of the suppliers of the railway cars and our Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to answer questions on any Canadian involvement in this controversial project. So this is a leadership that I believe Dharamsala will gladly welcome.

I guess it is also important to lay out clearly what can ITSN do for you. I think we showed to you that we have campaigns, and these are campaign materials and messages that we are happy to share with you. We have TSGs around the world and it is not a problem to get in contact. We do have now a full time coordinator, who you can reach any time and we have an executive director, who will be coming soon. We realize that part of your work is try to tell your colleagues to be active on Tibet, we could also be useful for such actions as writing letters as constituents and this is something that we can work with you to activate our memberships. The CTC has around 3000 members across Canada, ICT has 70,000 members, and SFT has I believe 300 chapters around the world. These are groups, friends and people that we can activate to advance your cause in your respective regions because we have to have a fundamental belief that when governments and people work together there is the most powerful force to it.

We already know that people work to bring down government and that has been quite successful. We have access to the people and you have access to the government. There is a synergy possible here. We can help advance your goal sometimes in your own caucus of your government. Again EU is a good example. Because of the diversity of the

membership, we can execute campaigns based on the local flavour, and even within the EU the Eastern and the Western have a different type of philosophy in their way of working. These are things that we can contribute.

Maybe some of you don't know but it is safer to mention that there does exist internet based tools that are existing today and that have existed for the last decade including World Tibet News. You can receive the news by email everyday. It is a nice digest of compact news on Tibet.

The issue of Tibet has never been more complex. That can be an advantage as it can be possible now to approach the respective governments with a menu of problems and proposed solutions. Without losing focus on negotiations - that everyone will agree is the North Star, which is the most important job - but there is no reason now that our discussion with our respective governments have to be monopolized by our foreign affairs because we all know that we are all sensitive to the Chinese concerns and sometimes they want to silence our concerns by dubbing us as Tibet supporters. This is a global trend visible in many countries—that multi million dollar budgets ministries result in complicating the issue of sustainable development. And just some examples of development as Kate mentioned.

It also happens today that development is a trendy political issue made popular by Bono and some of the efforts he made but poverty is a huge problem not only in Tibet but now in exile also. There could also be collaboration between different environmental ministries to preserve the mountains and sacred lakes of Tibet. They don't necessarily have to go through the obstacles that are often presented by foreign affairs.

Immigration again is a big issue. I am proud to say that I am here today because of the concrete action that the government of Canada took in 1971, when they accepted 50 Tibetan families to live in Canada. These actions have to continue. These are actions that are not that complicated and could be executed quite easily.

Cultural preservation, if you have Tibetan communities in your own constituencies in your countries, your government can provide funding assistance to help these local communities to preserve their own culture. Developing effective Tibetan base curriculum especially in Tibet is very important.

Multiculturalism is a key point because today unfortunately China sees multiculturalism as a threat to their stability whereas countries like the EU, UK and Canada see it as strength. So this is part of the knowledge that must be shared with

China. Another I believe here at the Welsh and also in Belgium and especially in Canada is that formal policies are encouraged. Its now actually law that force government to be officially bilingual or trilingual and these are policies that must also be implemented in Tibet. In fact in Canada we have a problem of Anglophones being stronger than the Francophone so Anglophones are being offered free lessons any time of the week as long as they want to learn French. Wouldn't that be nice to have in Tibet to have Chinese officials learn Tibetan because they are in Tibet by the way?

There have been several actions that have been already proposed in the previous World Parliamentary Convention. One of them was building official Tibet Support Groups- ours in Canada are called Parliament Friends of Tibet. We decided to add some more concrete points. We actually discussed amongst some friends right up until midnight last night. I feel inviting the Tibetan Government in Exile officials is a very important symbolic gesture. We support them by virtually proclaiming that these are the legitimate representatives of the Tibetan people despite what the local Chinese embassy or the consulate will say.

Another creative idea we feel is that once this parliamentary group is formed there are

normally research funds that exist that each member can avail to hire either a fulltime or part time staff to focus only on the issue of Tibet. That has made a tremendous difference in Canada because we realize that most MPs are very busy and they have multiple issues to work on. What we are saying is to hire one staff who will only focus on the issue of Tibet in your respective parliaments. Despite the fact that many of you may have opposing political views you can work together on this issue, which is to pull in some research money or funds that are available to hire a dedicated person to cover the issue of Tibet on your behalf.

I believe the exposure of the parliamentary process to young Tibetans in your communities is very important. Parliamentarians are regular people. It is often when you speak to some people that it is a very scary process but it not that unnatural and also there are members of Students for Free Tibet. So these are interns that we recommend could be used if there is an intern process in your local governments-assigning one staff to oversee on the issue of Tibet. Requesting annual briefings from the senior bureaucrats to a band that are responsible for China—regular annual briefings is some thing that must be done continuously. Also request a meeting with the local Chinese ambassador.

I think later on perhaps from a Canadian Senator you will hear an interesting story. As a result of the actions that we have done, the Chinese ambassador in Canada has requested the meeting with the parliamentary friendship group of Tibet saying we like to meet with you to clarify some issues.

Later tonight in this room at 5 o'clock, we will be showing a film called "What Remains of Us". Personally I believe it is the most powerful film I have ever seen on the issue of Tibet. It has been a catalyst to have provided so much activism like we have never seen before including within our parliamentary friendship group. So one of the successes that we have is perhaps this film. This film can be used respectively as part of our regular activities to encourage more memberships and this can be contacted directly with the film makers. I can provide the contact information later but we will be showing this film at 5 o'clock today. It is very hard to understand but you have to see the film to understand the power of the film.

And lastly, which is a very important point even if it is in the spiritual context. Even if it is not in the oval office or it is not done somewhere on the official ground but I feel it is very important that respective parliamentary groups at the minimum insist that the Head of the State receive His

Holiness the Dalai Lama. It sends very strong political message to China that the world cares about Tibet. As Head of State you can not let China determine whom you can or cannot see. That is a very important point.

So finally, I think we all probably agree that negotiation is a key point for everything we do and every interaction that we have with China. But it is also very important to transmit the message that having a pro-negotiation stand is not anti-China. It is in the best interest of China. And many people repeated today that the trade lobbyists and business people are making very hard for you to have a constructive dialogue within your respective governments. We need to come back and say that a pro-negotiation stand is not an anti-China position. Actually in the case of Canada, we had a very senior federal bureaucrat for the China portfolio who is actually very friendly with China and he speaks perfect mandarin. He is the one who told us that if China looks at all the issues that they have on the table like Taiwan, Uighurs, Tibet, poverty, unemployment, water, the Tibet issue is the only issue that can actually be resolved in a swift and genuine negotiation. Everything else is very complicated and it will take a long time. But the issue of Tibet if you look at the portfolio of problems that China has can

be resolved in a swift negotiation. And the Chinese and our respective government need to understand that that is in the best interest of China. And I think everybody here knows that Tibet is a test case to see if non-violent movement can prevail.

And finally, we just want to repeat again that as TSGs we have access to the people, you represent the government and if we work together, we have to believe that there is no more powerful force on the planet today.





Chair of the session: Hon. Prince M. Buthelezi, the President of Inkatha Freedom Party and traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu Nation of South Africa.

Human Rights Situation in Tibet by Hon. Lobsang Nyandak Zayul, Minister, Department of Information and International Relations, CTA

Eyewitness Account by Mr. Takna Jigme Sangpo, former political prisoner

PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI

It is a great pleasure for me to chair this session of our Fourth World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet which is dedicated to human rights. Undoubtedly, there are many aspects to the Tibetan question and crisis. Yet, the issue of human rights remains central of them all, for from its resolution, the entire crisis could be settled. Having fought for human rights in South Africa for fifty years, I know well the difficulties of waging human rights campaign with the method of non-violence. I embraced non-violence myself and I am rooted in the tradition of non-violence which, in my own region of KwaZulu-Natal, had champions such as Mahatma Gandhi, who began, his nonviolent human rights campaign there, and Chief Albert Luthuli who was the first black man to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. For this reason when I met with the Dalai Lama in South Africa, I found in him an immediate spiritual and political affinity and brotherhood.

The issue of human rights in Tibet is closely intertwined with the call for its rightful, meaningful and much necessary autonomy. In fact, the systematic pattern of human rights violations in Tibet has the purpose of destroying a nation, its autonomy and its identity. In this case the major violations of human rights have been concentrated in respect of freedom of religion, because of the importance of culture and religion for Tibetan self-identification. In this respect,



Prince M. Buthelezi is the President of Inkatha Freedom Party, traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu Nation of South Africa and a former Minister of South Africa.

one thinks of the similarity in my own country when during the negotiation process, the Zulu people were prohibited from carrying and displaying our cultural accoutrements or, in this very land (Scotland) which hosts us, the prohibition that was imposed on wearing the kilts. The violation of human rights in Tibet is much more severe as it goes to the core of one's own sense of humanity and interferes in the most important of all relationships, that of between man and god.

It is saddening that in the twenty first century, in a country with such culture, heritage and development such as China, people could still be imprisoned and tortured on account of their religious choices. It is shocking that a government with the international dignity and power of China would stoop so low as to interfere with the sacred procedures for the recognition and appointment of the next Dalai Lama to the point of allegedly abducting the young Panchen Lama.

Again, the comparison with the religious struggle which ended Scottish autonomy or the mediaeval religious disputes on the investiture of Popes is not inappropriate, except that what is happening in Tibet is much worse, were is not for it occurring during this twenty-first century. For this reason it is of such importance that all of us, who are committed to democracy and the expression of the freedom of those who elected us in our respective parliaments, have assembled here today to assert that what happens in Tibet is a concern for the whole world. Neither China nor the world may disregard it on the alleged account that this is happening in a remote and secluded area. It may happen in Tibet but it detracts from the splendor and modernity of Shanghai and the many efforts of the Chinese Government

to live up to international standards. It may happen in Tibet but it undermines the very credibility of the entire UN system which has thus far been deadlocked in adopting a binding resolution through its Security Council to put an end to this shame.

Somehow, because it is happening in China, we must consider this crime against humanity in a more serious light than similar ones happening elsewhere. Because of China's emerging position of an economic super power, it is important that we, the elected representatives of many peoples of the world, hold China accountable to the same higher standard of our own democracies, failing which the whole world would be in great jeopardy. I fail to understand why often human rights violations in China are glossed over. For this reason Tibet is indeed a global issue and I invite today's speakers in this session to give us a full account of the dimension of this problem so that, with our solidarity, we may join our voice to support the plight of the people of Tibet. Therefore, without further ado, I call on our first speaker, the honourable Lobsang Nyandak Zayul, who is the Minister of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala. So I now give the podium to you, sir.

LOBSANG NYANDAK

Thank you very much, honorable Chair. Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm indeed very delighted to be here in the midst of honorable parliamentarians and distinguished people who have come all the way from different parts of the world to express your solidarity for the cause of the Tibetan people. I am also very delighted to be speaking here at this very historical event, though the topic that I am going to present is not so delightful.

Before I begin my presentation, honorable Chair, I would like to honour Mr. Takna Jigme Sangpo who has spent a total of 37 years of his life behind bars, including 5 years in labour camps. His offense was that he dared to speak of freedom and justice for the people of Tibet. Unconcerned with the inhumane sufferings he had undergone whilst in prison, Mr. Jigme Sangpo adhered to the path of non-violence and continued to hold his opinion peacefully calling for freedom in Tibet. As a result he was sentenced to a total of 41 years. In addition he suffered 5 years of hard work in different labour camps. He was released in March 2002, nine years before the expiry of his prison term which was to end in the year 2011. Mr. Jigme Sangpo is a living testimony to the long sufferings of the Tibetan people. He is an inspiration to all those who espouse freedom and justice.



Lobsang Nyandak Zayul is the Minister of Information & International Relations and Finance, Central Tibetan Administration.

Takna Jigme Sangpo's release and the occasional releases of one or two political prisoners cannot be construed either as change in human rights policy of China or improvement in human rights situation in Tibet. These releases are always timed to gain optimal economic and political benefits from other countries. Though we cannot deny the fact that due entirely to the sincere concerns and the hard work of the international community some of the political prisoners, including Jigme Sangpo, were released. I wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all those who worked for their release and who continue to stand with

us in our peaceful struggle for human dignity and freedom. Except for those who managed to seek asylum in foreign countries, political prisoners do not get to enjoy freedom outside prisons. Their movements are constantly watched and freedom restricted.

Though in the past four decades, China has undergone major changes, the political system of totalitarianism remained unchanged. Totalitarian regime demands complete loyalty from its citizens and there is little tolerance to individual's freedom of thought and expression. Unless the fundamental rights of the citizens are fully respected without reservation, there is little hope for improvement of human rights. In Tibet, there is an additional cause for repressive policies and that is the unfounded fear of Tibet's secession from China.

With the entry of the People's Republic of China (PRC) into the United Nations in 1971 and its recognition by an overwhelming majority of the countries of the world, China became one of the central forces in world politics. In the 34 years of its UN membership and its increasing engagement in the international politics, Beijing's human rights policy has become sophisticated but not softer. Beijing has signed many international human rights covenants and treaties, newly included "the state respects and

safeguards human rights" in its Constitution in March 2004, accepted visits from UN thematic bodies, and enacted some long overdue legal reforms. However, this hardly begins to address the sources of widespread and systematic human rights violations, which continue to occur in Tibet.

By accepting the membership of the UN, the PRC admitted its acceptance of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and its obligations under the Charter. In order to fully guarantee the fundamental rights of its citizens, to it is imperative for the PRC to accept that the international human rights regime is truly universal and to implement human rights laws in its entirety. However, PRC's discourse on human rights generally falls into three major long held arguments. Firstly, the issue of human rights falls by and large within the domestic jurisdiction or sovereignty of each country. In fact, sovereignty is deemed by the PRC to be the core of all fundamental principles of international law and cultural relativism concept is used to insulate itself against the universality concept. Secondly, the economic development especially the right to subsistence, is the foundation for human rights and determines the extent to which human rights are guaranteed. Thirdly, the rights of a citizen are inseparable from

his duties to the State. The basic contradiction of sovereignty versus universality of human rights, economic versus civil and political rights, and rights versus duties are inherent in Beijing human rights discourse. Such discourse challenges the universal applicability and standard of human rights.

In the case of China, there is a wide gap between principles and pragmatism, which is one of the core bases of human rights violations in Tibet. The human rights abuses of Tibetans in Tibet take place in the context of denial of right to self-determination in both civil and political rights as well as in economic, social and cultural rights. The PRC government has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1998, and has signed and ratified International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1997 and 2001 respectively. Both these covenants guarantee the right to self-determination.

China's Constitution and the Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of 1984 provides for Tibet's autonomy in areas of politics, economy, religion, culture, economic undertakings, natural resources, education and others. Despite the establishment of Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) in 1965 and formulation of China's Regional Ethnic

Autonomy Law in 1984, there is a calculated failure to apply real autonomy in the region where effective Tibetan participation is denied and policy making powers at all levels are not devolved. Hence, the top down approach employed by the PRC government with regard to its policy-making and implementation mechanism has lack of Tibetan participation and disregard of local concerns.

Given the politically restive nature of Tibet, the authorities of Beijing consider the stability issue as paramount. In the course of ensuring stability in the region, the Beijing authorities embark on a number of policies and campaigns that lead to violation of the fundamental human rights of Tibetan people. Foremost amongst these have been the "Strike Hard" campaign, "patriotic re-education" campaign and anti- Dalai Lama campaign.

Human rights violations in Tibet can be broadly categorized into three major areas – civil and political, religion and development. In Tibet, it is commonplace for Tibetans to be detained, arrested, imprisoned and tortured for the exercise of rights to freedom of expression and opinion and other rights linked intrinsically to freedom of thought and religion. Security forces routinely resort to arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, and torture

in response to non-violent protest – including displaying the Tibetan flag or other innocent symbols of cultural identity – holding peaceful demonstrations, possessing photographs of the Dalai Lama and putting up and distributing political leaflets. In all these cases of arbitrary arrests, fair trial was almost non-existent and detainees were subject to torture and punishment even leading to death. According to the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy based in Dharamsala, there are currently 145 known political prisoners in various Chinese administered prisons and detentions centers in Tibet as of December 2004.

Recently, on May 11 this year, two monks from Kardze Sichuan province were sentenced to 11 years imprisonment for hoisting the banned Tibetan national flag. In another case two monks from Sichuan province in eastern Tibet were apprehended and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for pasting independence on the wall near their monastery on 13 May this year. The re-launched “Strike Hard” campaign in Tibet has had serious human rights implications for the Tibetans as this campaign has more political connotations than a criminal angle thereby camouflaging the real intent of the campaign. The charges of “endangering state security” and the term “terrorist organization” in China’s Criminal

Law is not defined, thereby allowing a broad and ambiguous range of interpretation including the criminalisation of non-violent political protests.

Beijing interprets the faith and practice of Buddhism as a manifestation of deep-seated nationalist sentiments. Tibet’s irrevocable faith in the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual and political leader, is seen in Beijing as fuelling a rival center of power and, therefore, a direct threat to their authority in Tibet. Believing that religion is the organizing principle of Tibetan society—and, therefore, a vehicle of Tibetan nationalism—Beijing has systematically attempted to substitute Tibetan Buddhism with a state-controlled surrogate version of religious practice referred to as “normal”, i.e “patriotic, religious practice”.

The “patriotic education” implemented in Tibet’s religious institutions since 1996 is designed to suppress patriotic sentiments, and to mould the monastic community along the Party’s communist line. Besides being a serious infringement on the rights of the Tibetan monks and nuns in terms of their belief, the campaign has resulted in many arrests and expulsions. The campaign is used as a tool to stabilize and to exert control over what the Chinese authorities term “the hotbed of dissent activities,”

referring to the monastic institutions. The forcible implementation of the campaign in garnering loyalty to the state is in direct contravention with many international human rights provisions on religion. The Chinese authorities reaffirmed the implementation of “patriotic re-education” for the next three years in December 2004. Reports from Tibet have confirmed the actual execution of the campaign in monasteries in the Tibet Autonomous Region from July this year.

Popular religious figures inside Tibet have now come under intense scrutiny and suspicion over recent years. Several of Tibet’s leading lamas have faced insurmountable obstacles and persecution from the Chinese authorities over their alleged links to “splittist” activities and their loyalty to the Dalai Lama. The whereabouts and well-being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the XIth Panchen Lama of Tibet, still remains unknown; Chadrel Rinpoche, Chairman of Panchen Rinpoche’s reincarnation, is still under house arrest at an undisclosed location; and Trulku Tenzin Delek and Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche, both popular religious leaders from eastern Tibet, are facing life term imprisonment.

There is a serious and an urgent need of a sincere and an effective support from the

global community more at this crucial point of time than ever before. This conference is reaffirmation of the fact that the unstinted support from the individuals and groups within the international community is still very much alive and active. Such support further boosts the unrelenting determination of the Tibetans both in and outside to fight for truth, justice and freedom although the response is that of brutality to the non-violent path adopted by us. Thus, on behalf of Tibetans both in and outside Tibet, while appreciating your continued support, I humbly request each and every one present here to be more assertive in your support and actions. Just last month we had European Parliament passing a resolution concerning human rights in Tibet. All such concerns and support will compel Beijing to review its policies and be flexible in its stand on the issue of Tibet one day.

PRINCE BUTHELEZI

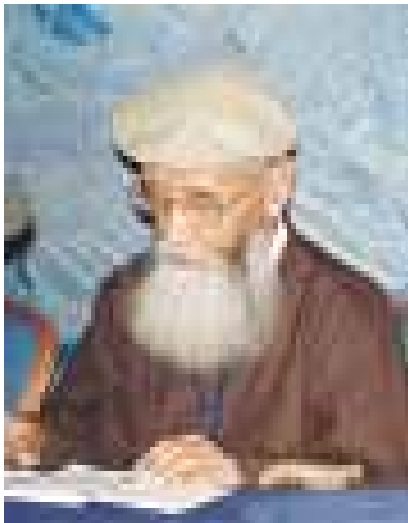
Thank you, Minister, for that presentation. I won’t say much because the minister has kindly introduced Mr. Takna Jigme Sangpo who is a former political prisoner. I would also like to welcome Dechen Pemba who is going to translate for us. Over to you, sir.

TAKNA JIGME SANGPO

I am very pleased to be given the opportunity to speak at this convention and I am glad to be able to meet all of you. Thank you. I have been a political prisoner for 37 years. I am an old man of 77 and my name is Takna Jigme Sangpo. At the time of my release, I still had 9 more years to complete my prison term.

I have been in prison for three separate occasions - in August 1965, March 1970 and September 1983 in protest against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. In the prisons, we were subjected to inhuman treatments including cuffed hands and chained legs. Particularly my hands were cuffed with my arms crossed and chained at the back. I still have the scars from the iron that has eaten into my flesh. Even now I have scars on my back suffered from severe beatings. I have some pictures that have been taken in Dharamsala, of the scars (the photographs were circulated). This is in brief the personal suffering I went through.

Generally, prisoners being beaten and killed are common. For example, on the 1st and 4th of May 1998, the prison authorities hoisted the Chinese National Flag in the prison compound and we were asked to sing the Chinese National Anthem. We explained that we are political prisoners and refused to sing. Then the military was called in and they started shooting. It



Takna Jigme Sangpo is a former political prisoner.

was like a war. At that time in my group, a very young monk from Drepung Monastery, Sungrab la, standing beside me was shot and he fell. He was seriously injured.

Many people were beaten and injured. Among them was a monk from the new Phenpo Monastery called Ngawang Dorjee. He was hit on the head and his skull was broken. He was hospitalized but could not be healed. Even today, his skull is like a new born baby's.

Similarly, another monk Phuntsok was beaten so severely that his whole body had swollen beyond recognition. He did not recover properly from the hospital and was infected with tuberculosis on the leg. He is also known by another name Drubthob. He is today in Dharamsala and he will be able to tell you the details of what we went through. What was tragic and sad for all of us was the death of Khedup and Lobsang Wangchuk from Thana village of Medrogongkar county due to severe torture that night.

There are many prisons in Tibet at the regional and district level. These days many more detention centers were set up following the setting up of National Security Bureaus at the village level. There were many stories of prisoners who have died of starvation since 1959. In a meticulously planned manner the prisoners were starved to death. From 1965 to 1970, I myself have witnessed many who died of starvation. For instance, Tsondue Ghapo of Kham Nangchen, who was 56 years of age, was subjected to harsh labour and died of starvation in my cell.

Today in Lhasa there are three major prisons. Sangyi, Gutsa and Drapchi. In these prisons the diet is so designed, just enough to survive, short of starvation to death. I would like to commend and thank the international civil societies, human rights organizations and

Amnesty for their efforts, which has benefited us.

I would like to request the human rights organizations, Tibet supporters, nations and governments to help release all the political prisoners and specially Lobsang Tenzin, who is still languishing in the second most notorious prison Trangmo in Tibet.

Today the most significant and critical development in Tibet is what underlies the façade of fast-paced, development that is taking place in Tibet, which is ominous for the destruction of the Tibetan Identity. The Tibet Autonomous Region is known as ‘Tibet’ Autonomous Region but there is hardly any official document in Tibetan language. In the nomadic and village level, the primary schools are taught Chinese. About 80% of young Tibetans pay more attention to learning Chinese. It is heartrending to hear young Tibetans telling their teachers that they can’t make a living by learning Tibetan language. It is agonizing. This is a clear indication of the imposition of slow and silent death of the Tibetan language. If that happens, don’t you think a great tragedy has befallen the Tibetan people?

Since the situation of Tibet is in its worst and critical stage, the supreme leader of Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has asked for a genuine self-rule for Tibet. The Tibetan Issue

is an important and urgent one, hence I would request Tibet supporters, and human rights organizations, nations and leaders to take greater responsibility in resolving the issue of Tibet based on the proposal of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In short, under China's occupation, the survival of the Tibetan identity is at stake. I fear the worst—a demographic change that will annihilate the Tibetan people's identity forever.

That is all I wish to say and I wish all the delegates health and happiness.







Introduction by Ms. Tsering Jampa, International Campaign for Tibet, Europe
New Initiatives to Support the Non-violent Movement of Tibet by Hon. Eva
Lichtenberger, Vice-President, Tibet Inter-Group at the European Parliament

TSERING JAMPA

I have the honour to introduce Eva Lichtenberger. Eva is the Vice-President of the European Parliament's Tibet Inter-Group. In the European Parliament, the Tibet Inter-Group was set up in 1998. Over the years the Inter-Group dealt with the Tibet issue within the Parliament, the Union, and the Commission at a very high agenda. In 2004, Tibet Support Groups including my organization, the International Campaign for Tibet in Europe have been very fortunate to have active members and as a result we have been able to have the Tibet inter-group reinstated at the parliament. And with this I would like to welcome Eva Lichtenberger. Thank you.



Tsering Jampa is the Executive Director of the International Campaign for Tibet, Europe.

EVA LICHTENBERGER

Thank you very much for the warm welcome. I hope you all had a nice evening together and a nice night here. We are beginning today's work here in this very distinct building—the City Chambers. The architecture is very interesting and I hope it gives us a good spirit to go on with our work. Before I start, let me bring you the warmest wishes from the European Parliament Tibet Inter-group. I know that lots of our members would have liked to come but the problem was that we had the session of the European Parliament up to Thursday evening. And a lot of people had to go back to their constituency to do their work, so it was very difficult for more people to join here.

So, what is the Tibet Inter-group in the European Parliament? It is an assembly of members who are interested in the issue of Tibet. It was founded in 1988 and in 1989 it was set on the agenda. Mr. Thomas Mann from Germany is the president and we have several vice-presidents. I am one of them. We are working very intensely on the Tibet issue. We have a very good secretary for our group, Ms. Gabriela Reichert, who knows everything about the history of the Tibet Inter-group. She is working very intensely together with us and gives us the connection, because the members of the parliament in Europe are always traveling. They are all very busy. So she is the heart of our group and has done a lot of work with us.



Eva Lichtenberger is a member of the European Parliament and the Vice-President of the Tibet Inter-Group of the European Parliament.

The Tibet Inter-group meets once a month during the Strasbourg session because we can meet most members of the Parliament. Over the years we have organised many events on Tibet. We invite special guests like Paula Dobriansky and Richard Gere, representatives of Tibet related NGOs and also organized the third official visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We participated in the big commemoration of the anniversary of the 10th March 1959 first in Brussels and then in Geneva. We had the premiere of the Martin Scorsese film during

the parliament session. We had also organised making of the Sand Mandala in the European parliament, which was a very moving experience. The monks were working on this mandala in a corridor where lots of people pass. And it was really great to see lots of members of parliament who never have dealt with the issue of Tibet, and they stopped, stood and watched. This was a very moving event for all of us in being able to reach beyond the group of people who are already engaged in the case of Tibet.

We are also organizing a Parliamentary Delegation visit to Dharamsala. We had similar visits in 1998 and 1999 and we will have a visit next year too. We also present exhibitions on Tibet, its culture, religion, way of life and the difficulties they face inside and outside Tibet to present the full reality of Tibet to our colleagues in the European Parliament. We also had the European parliamentarians' Conference on Tibet in March 2001 and November 2002. The highlight of our activities was the speech of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 2001, an event that is still remembered by many people.

I think it is important to mention here that the then President of the EP, Nicole Fontaine confirmed that the European Parliament

would go on with its tradition of supporting the case of Tibet. She said in 2001 that we have clearly heard the powerful appeal you have made to us. You have told us that "if the international community, in this case the European community, can join you in your efforts then perhaps the results we all wish to achieve could be reached." And she added that "this is still the feeling in the European Parliament. I would simply like to show you that you can count on the active support of the European Parliament, on the active support of our political groups and this means all political groups in the parliament. And the inter-group, as you know has been created precisely to strengthen our friendship with the Tibetan people. You can count on our support, you can count on our indestructible loyalty, so that with the spirit of your proposal, your people can regain its freedom." It is my strong hope that we can repeat the visit of the Dalai Lama in the coming years.

We also take political actions and one of the most important things is to pass resolutions on certain specialized issues or on the situation in general in Tibet. But it is also very important that Tibet gets mentioned every time in a resolution where there is talk about religious freedom, violation of human rights and when there is talk about, for

example, relations with China and the economic problems we already have been facing in these relationships. I shall then present some resolutions by title so that you also know what the European Parliament is on to.

We also of course try to coordinate with the European Commission, the Council and the United Nations and coordinate our works with the Tibet Support Groups in other countries. We also maintain close relations with the Tibetan government in exile and its representatives in Europe as well.

The European Union as a whole had always paid high attention to the situation in Tibet and has made it a topic in the EU-China relations. For example, in January 2001 the council emphasized the relevant points concerning the EU-China relations. The declaration of the Council as a guideline to its policy towards China referred to human rights policy and made it clear that the European Union should not forget about that. It also mentions about the situation of Tibet, as the last passage says, “respecting the cultural rights and religious freedom in Tibet, taking account of the recommendation of the committees of the United Nations’ covenants, or to the preparatory education campaign in Tibet and access for an independent delegation to the young

Panchen Lama, who has been recognized by the Dalai Lama.” So these are a few points of the European Parliament and we as an inter-group are dedicated to keep this discussion alive in the group of more than 700 members.

So before I come to the actual activities we are trying to undertake to put forward the Tibet question, I would like to talk a bit about the present situation. For about ten years, because of the economic growth in China and the greed for market access, the European governments have been going soft on the issue of Tibet in a much more visible way. We have confrontations with the heads of governments and ministers who travel to China. Seeing the big market they are very hesitant to critically mention the violation of human rights in China even if they have the order from their parliament to do so. We are facing these problems. Nevertheless the evidence of problems in Tibet is arriving in the European Parliament. So I just wanted to mention one example, the study done by the scientists of Canada and US on Tibetan refugees where there is proof that torture, psychological torture resulting in effects that can be seen for years and years do take place on a regular basis.

We had this moving report yesterday on the dramatic situation of the political prisoners

in the prisons in Tibet. And I think we have to keep it present in the minds of our citizens in Europe so that they see how serious the situation still is and that the improvements that sometimes seems to have been reached are not really sustainable. There is always a backlash, there's always a worsening of situations. This is the main problem. That group of scientist called upon the government to give high priority to human rights issues when negotiating with the Chinese government.

The Tibetans face problems in everyday lives. Lessons in schools are taught only in Chinese. Access to schools, to education is not possible for a large number of Tibetans. There is limited access to health care and costs are high. There are of course very hard policies against the monasteries where they accept only a limited group of monks and nuns. And in the fast growing town of Lhasa, there are growing problems of Aids and prostitution with the new kind of "lifestyle" that Tibet had never faced before.

And we also have cases of journalists who have been allowed to travel to Tibet for years and years freely but are now refused entry. We have more and more cases of that nature but the most prominent was that of Ms. Claude Lavenson, the biographer of His Holiness who was refused entry at the border

although she had a visa. There were long discussions on it and we of course wrote letters of protest and interventions in the embassies to clear things.

And we have of course, the difficult situations faced by Tibetan refugees in Nepal. In Nepal there was the Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office in Kathmandu. Nepal is the first entry point for new Tibetan refugees after they had a terribly arduous and long journey over the Himalayan mountains. The Chinese government now puts heavy pressure on Nepal on the one hand and on the other hand gives money for building streets, schools and so on to change the policy of Nepal concerning Tibetan refugees. Because of this the Tibetan refugees are no longer given the refugee status but are called "people of concern". And this is a very, very dangerous thing because then they can be taken into imprisonment and sometimes they are charged high amount of money to get released. So I think concerning the actual policies for Tibet we also have to think about Nepal. May be we should concentrate our efforts on the government of Nepal so that this meeting point for Tibetan refugees can once again be reopened to look after the welfare of the Tibetan refugees who come over the mountains.

We always wanted, considering the whole situation, that the European Union should appoint a special envoy on Tibet in the Commission for Foreign Affairs. We have decided in the Parliament to have one. We have also decided on the agenda, but the Commission says that they cannot do this, which I could not believe. We of course stick to our efforts. My colleague Mr. Gatsinsborsky from Germany, asked the commission as to why this envoy was not installed and the answer was that Solana would have time enough to work on the Tibet issue. We are not convinced with that and we will try to go on to get this envoy. Maybe during the Austrian presidency we'll get another opportunity to install a person that could do this important work.

I also have to tell you that the Chinese government is more than ever present in the European Parliament. We already had visits of the ambassador. We also had visits of the official representatives of the People's Congress of the Republic of China. We as MEPs, knowing about the situation in Tibet were really shocked about the attitude that the Chinese Members of Parliament showed concerning Tibet. They did not even accept our critical remarks and they denied openly that there are any human rights problems in Tibet. They, for example, mentioned that

Tibetan autonomy was far-reaching and sufficient but they really reacted with the lack of understanding. Instead they kept saying that the old system in Tibet was repressive.

After having criticized the human rights violations, it was very interesting that some of the representatives of the Foreign Committee of the People's Congress came to me and invited me to participate on a guided tour with one of their representatives passing Tibet. I wonder what they would have shown to me, perhaps to show me that there was no problem at all and that these were all rumors going around in Europe. I was really frustrated by this very cold and closed response to the whole issue. And I think lots of my colleagues learnt about the position of China very well when they were confronted with this kind of attitude in such a discussion.

We also had discussions on the economic problems, on the textile problems, and it made us learn the way in which the Chinese government, not the Chinese people, is dealing with international affairs. I think we have to stress in every meeting and we have to get our governments to stress it too when they are confronted with China, so as not to let them go on with their habits.

We had of course engaged in lots of political activities. I will show you the resolutions that have been passed in the years 2004 and 2005. We had five resolutions passed. I have them all with me, if anyone is interested then I could make copies but they could also be found on the homepage of the European Parliament. We had several resolutions on the case of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, on the situation in Tibet in general and on the case of Nepal and then this year, one month ago on the case of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche because we learnt about his critical health situation.

In all those resolutions the European parliament agreed with a great majority, if not in unanimity, that we will stick to the case of Tibet and which is also very important. We have also always stuck to the weapon's embargo. Of course, there were some heads of government in Europe, Germany and France as the well-known ones who said we should lift the arms embargo. But the European Parliament stuck to its position—no lifting of the arms embargo as long as violations of human rights in China, especially in Tibet, go on like they do. On these issues, we have always agreed on with a good majority and you see that parliamentarians do not follow their heads of government on such matters when they try to get markets.

We had very interesting guests like the members of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies' visit in October. We also had a group of young Tibetans in Europe as guests in our meeting who told us a little bit about their lives and their bindings to Tibet and their imaginations. I would not read all of it but we have lots of events going on in the European Parliament—for example, exhibitions on Tibet, which showed the Tibetan everyday reality.

And finally in the coming year, a delegation from the European Parliament will go to Dharamsala. And this I think will provide us a good fundamental to go on with our work.

What we all understand and will be discussing is the importance of networking and cooperation amongst us. We in the European Parliament need more cooperation with the National Parliamentarians' groups. We hardly know each other. Because we need to influence our government and the European Commission when they have contact with China. And I think at the European level, we have to have a better network. We are thinking of having a third meeting in Brussels with a clearly defined topic of strengthening the networking between the European Parliament and the National Parliaments to have more exchange

of information and also to have the possibility of joint actions. For example, on critical urgent cases of political prisoners, we should have joint actions in the European Parliament with the National Parliaments, that have the willingness to do so, because the rulers are very different in the different European states. That way we can make the presence of the issue of Tibet felt in Europe much more than we have been able to do so far.

And of course we should have networks between European, US, Canadian, Australian, Asian groups on Tibet, which is now organized. We do have personal contacts. Of course someone knows somebody but we have to get beyond that. Because right now we are dependent on people who are taking this responsibility on their personal shoulders. And if one of those is not re-elected or are at the end of their political career, the contacts are lost. This is a serious problem. So we must try to institutionalize some kind of networking that would then remain and would not endanger the whole project. So I think we should go forward in this direction of institutionalizing the network.

And I think we have to strengthen our links with the NGOs and the Tibet Support Groups at the national level and also of

course on global levels on a common list of priorities. As it was said already yesterday, it will be very important to focus our initiatives on certain points where we could agree to keep them as priorities for the next one or two years. That doesn't mean we would leave the other things but to have better coordination and joint initiatives in those affairs we could agree on. That should be our focus right now. For that I was trying to have some proposals made for our work for the next few hours. We in the European Parliament hope for your support, at the national level. We will continue to go for the special envoy for Tibet and we need to go on. This is of course one thing for special urgent action and so also for the political prisoners.

Another important issue for joint action is Olympics 2008. As we heard yesterday, one of the conditions to make this work would be that we have initiatives on freedom of press and freedom of communication. We will have to define what we ask from China. As someone said that, and as I was also confronted with, the Chinese tend to define things in their own way. Then there is lots of discussion, which doesn't help us too much. So we have to say that these are the points that we ask from the Chinese to make this event in 2008 work.

And we as Tibet supporters have to prepare very clever actions to make the case of Tibet known on this occasion.

There are of course lots of other areas where we have to help like better education of Tibetan refugees in exile, in order to keep the tradition, the unique Tibetan cultural heritage. These are on-going projects and they should of course be carried on because I think they are more important than we can see from the outside. We must of course try to get the maximum possible direct help for Tibetan people in Tibet and we have to make it paramount as to what is going on in Tibet and China. We also have to work together when journalists are refused entry to Tibet, or when official representatives are blocked in their wishes to see certain things. These should be made public as strongly as possible

because people need to know what's going on in Tibet.

And I think it would be a very interesting proposal and approach to declare 2008 as the International Year of Tibet in the year of Olympic games. We should think over it right now what we could make out of the idea and how we could raise our cooperation with the NGOs but also within our groups at European and global levels. We as European parliamentarians are prepared to do it and are prepared to play a central role in that.

I hope that we will now in our working groups agree on certain joint initiatives that would take the synergy of this meeting from this weekend to our working places and spread it amongst our colleagues.



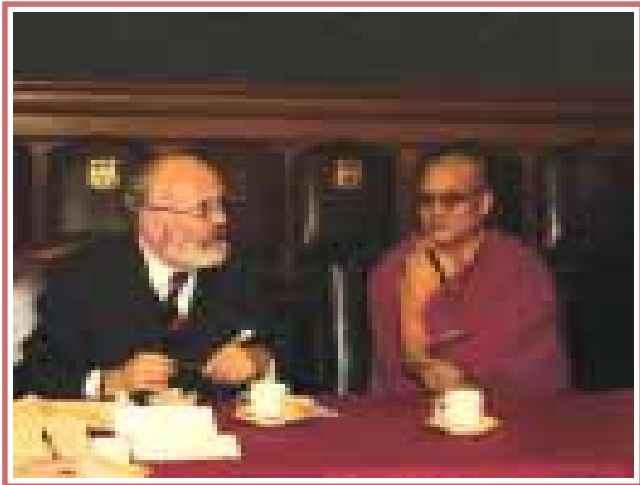
WORKING COMMITTEE - I



WORKING COMMITTEE - II



WORKING COMMITTEE - III



WORKING COMMITTEE - IV





Master of Ceremonies: Ms. Rosemary Burnett
Program Director, Scotland, for the Amnesty International.

Welcome address by Hon. Harry Cohen, President of the UK All Party
Parliamentary Group for Tibet

Pronouncement of the Edinburgh Declaration by Hon. Chris Ballance,
Chairman of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group for Tibet

Address by the Guest of Honour, His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama

Valedictory Remarks by Hon. Linda Fabiani, Member of the Scottish Parliament and
Vice-Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group for Tibet

Vote of Thanks by Hon. Dolma Gyari, Vice-Chairperson of
the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (Tibet's Parliament in Exile)

ROSEMARY BURNETT

Honorable guests, welcome to the closing ceremony of the 4th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet. My name is Rosemary Burnett and I am the Program Director, Scotland for the Amnesty International. This is the first such convention in the last eight years. The objective has been to share information, review current developments and develop governmental action to advance Tibetan issues. This is particularly important given a process of the dialogue between Chinese leadership and His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his representatives is aimed at producing a negotiated solution for Tibet.

It is clearly of the utmost importance to keep up the pressure at the international, regional and national levels to ensure a just outcome for the people of Tibet. It is so encouraging to see so many Parliamentarians here, 130 delegates from 32 different countries. At the last Convention in April 1997, there were 63 Parliamentarians and Congresspersons from 27 countries. More than double the number will surely result in doubling the effort in 2006.

For this closing ceremony, we would invite Harry Cohen, Member of the Westminster Parliament to welcome the gathering and Chris Ballance, Member of the Scottish Parliament, to pronounce the Edinburgh Declaration. We will get to listen to the address by the guest



Rosemary Burnett is the Program Director, Scotland, for the Amnesty International.

of honor His Holiness the Dalai Lama, valedictory remarks by Linda Fabiani, also a member of Scottish Parliament and a vote of thanks by Dolma Gyari, the Deputy Chair-person of Tibet's Parliament-in-exile.

First I would ask you to give a hearty Edinburgh welcome to Harry Cohen, Member of Parliament, the President of UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet and co-host of this Convention.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Harry Cohen.

HARRY COHEN

Your Holiness, Members of the Scottish Parliament, distinguished Parliamentarians and delegates, ladies and gentlemen. I give this welcoming address at the closing ceremony and I can say that we have had a very historic and fruitful Convention with excellent sessions and an excellent declaration at the end of it. I want to thank and congratulate the drafting committee members Michael Van Walt Praag, Thupten Samphel, Sonam Norbu Dagpo, Mark Ballard, MSP and Michael Collie, the PA to Chris Ballance.

I also want to thank and congratulate the organizing committee of the Convention Penpa Tsering, Mrs. Takla, Victor Spence, Mrs. Tsering Jampa, Mrs. Lobsang Choedon, Mr. Tenzin Norbu, Stephanie Turner, Barry Mason, Caroline Forbes and Stewart Watters. If I have missed out on any one, I apologise. I also want to thank again the Scottish House, particularly Chris Ballance and Mike Pringle.

I want to thank the Sponsors of the Convention, the Isdell Foundation which is represented by Yodon Thonden, the International Campaign for Tibet, both in Europe and Washington, and Mr. Renzo from Italy. Finally, I want to thank everyone who has participated in this Convention.



Harry Cohen is a Member of the Westminster Parliament and the President of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet, the Co-host of the Convention .

The UK All Party Tibet Group is very pleased to be the host recently for 11 Tibetan parliamentarians who came and visited London. I know this is a part of His Holiness' program to develop democracy. So, on this occasion, I know it is customary to hand over a gift or token but rather than a token or gift that could go in a cupboard somewhere, what we want to do is that the Tibet Society along with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet will sponsor, on an annual basis, visits from Tibetan deputies to the Westminster Parliament.

This program will help develop their knowledge and experience of well-established legislature. This will also help to show there is a broader Tibetan leadership, strong international support for Tibet and good relations among all these stakeholders.

Now, I know it is time to turn to the issue of Tibet. Often I find in my years of politics when there is a certain issue like ethnic minority issue or an immigrant issue or youth issue, someone more powerful has a hand in creating the problem. But often it is the community itself that comes up with the

solution. Your holiness, I think you will signal those solutions, those pathways for these solutions replete with tradition but very much mixed with modern and progressive approach as well; promoting democracy and promoting the cause by non-violence.

So, for our part, those who took part in this Convention, the Tibet support groups and parliamentarians, we pledge to redouble our efforts in support of your case for meaningful dialogue and negotiation leading to justice for the Tibetans. That is the outcome we want to see. Thank you very much.



THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION

19 November 2005

We, the 133 delegates to the 4th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 18 and 19 November 2005, members of 30 parliaments and associates from countries spanning all the world's continents, on behalf of ourselves and our respective parliamentary groups, have gathered to review and discuss the developments with respect to Tibet since the 3rd World Parliamentarians' Conference on Tibet (WPCT) (Washington D.C. 1997).

The Convention **thanks** the people of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Tibet and the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet as well as the City of Edinburgh for their hospitality in hosting this convention. It notes the appropriateness of holding this meeting in Scotland, given the many similarities between the genuine autonomy Tibet seeks within the People's Republic of China and the autonomous status Scotland has achieved within the United Kingdom and the UK's current Presidency of the European Union.

The Convention **recalls** the urgent call by the 3rd WPCT for negotiations between the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), on the one hand, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile, on the other, as the Dalai Lama has proposed for decades. We **reiterate our strong support** for the Dalai Lama's Middle Way approach to resolve the issue through negotiations in the spirit of non-violence and reconciliation. We **commend** the Chinese government for heeding this call by inviting the Dalai Lama's special envoys for four rounds of high-level meetings in Beijing and Berne between September 2002 and June 2005. This is a very important, encouraging and necessary development for the resolution of the question of Tibet.

However, the Convention **is surprised** that these meetings have been so infrequent and **is concerned** that the dialogue has not been accompanied by any positive changes in China's governance in Tibet, nor by any discernible improvement in the human rights conditions of Tibetans. This is especially disturbing in view of the Tibetan government's considerable efforts to persuade Tibetans and their supporters to exercise extreme restraint in order to create a conducive atmosphere for talks. In this context, we especially deplore the continued

suppression of freedom of expression, culture, religious belief and practice, and the marginalization of the Tibetan language.

The Convention **deplores** the refusal of the Chinese government to release political prisoners, in particular the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who has been held in a secret location since 1995, when he was only 6 years old.

The Convention is seriously concerned about the continued influx of Chinese settlers into Tibet, which threatens the identity of the Tibetan people.

The Convention **is deeply concerned** at China's persistence in implementing the so called 'Western Development Plan', in total disregard of the wishes and concerns of the Tibetan people and despite the obvious damage this is causing to them and their environment and the clear threat its continuation poses for the survival of the distinct culture and way of life of Tibetans, including their language and religion.

The Convention **is also concerned** at the degradation of the natural environment of the Tibetan plateau, including the Himalayan region, exacerbated by the said development policies of China in the region.

The Convention **supports** the creation of a zone of *ahimsa* (peace and non-violence) throughout the Tibetan plateau and is convinced this would provide an important example to the rest of the world.

Consequently, the Convention

Emphatically calls on the government of the PRC to demonstrate its sincerity and seriousness in finding a negotiated solution to the question of Tibet by arranging to meet with the Dalai Lama's representatives much more frequently and to start engaging in substantive negotiations with them, without preconditions and without further delay;

Urges the Chinese government to indicate commitment to the negotiation process by making visible improvements in its policies in Tibet, in particular

- to take effective measures to ensure full respect for the human rights of the Tibetan people;
- to halt the implementation of the 'Western Development' program in Tibet until a proper and credible assessment has been made of its impact on the lives of the Tibetan people,

their culture, language, spiritual traditions as well as natural environment to the satisfaction of the Tibetan people;

- to take immediate steps to halt the population transfer of Chinese into Tibet, which is transforming the indigenous population into a minority in their own land;
- to release the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and all other Tibetan political prisoners unconditionally;
- to cease the virulent attacks on the Dalai Lama, which cast serious doubt on the sincerity of the Chinese government in negotiating with his representatives;

Calls on President Hu Jintao to demonstrate his own commitment to resolve the issue of Tibet by meeting with the Dalai Lama as soon as possible in a mutually agreed venue;

Calls on both parties to intensify their efforts to achieve tangible results in negotiations before 2008, when the world's eyes will be turned to China and the situation in Tibet on the occasion of the Olympic Games;

Stresses the importance of worldwide parliamentary support for Tibet and decides to undertake activities to strengthen the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in this respect;

Calls on all governments and parliaments to monitor closely China's behaviour in Tibet and developments regarding negotiations with the Dalai Lama and his representatives, and to place and keep Tibet firmly on the agenda of bilateral and multilateral discussions with China;

Calls on the EU to appoint a special representative for Tibet to promote, provide assistance for and to follow negotiations between the PRC and the Tibetans, in accordance with the express demands of the European Parliament;

Commends the Tibetan government in exile for the impressive progress it has made in developing democratic institutions and processes;

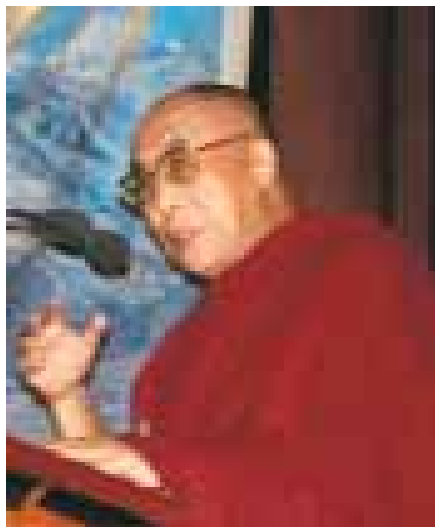
Finally, the Convention decides to hold the next World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet prior to the 2008 Olympic Games and looks forward to reviewing the progress made at that time.

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

Honorable Harry Cohen, President of the Westminster All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet; honorable Chris Ballance, Chairman of the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet at the Scottish Parliament; delegates from around the world, and the Tibetan delegates. To all of you I would like to express my deep sense of appreciation. I thank the organizers for organizing the 4th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet. I am also thankful to you all for the Edinburgh Declaration.

Now, I will use my broken English (*laughs*). Most of our friends know that my way of speaking is completely informal. So, if my informal way does not go well with the parliamentary procedures then I apologize and I may deserve some punishment (*laughs*).

To begin with, I want to mention that I had a sort of report of what happened here in the last two days and the discussions with the concerned Tibetan leaders here. Why? My position since the last more than 4 years is of semi-retirement from politics. So I don't bother myself with what's going on in detail. The details are now being carried out by our elected political leadership and our speakers and parliament members. So, my position is somewhat like an advisor or may be a senior advisor (*laughs*). In most of the cases they agree with me but sometimes they don't. So this is a clear indication that we deliberately promote freedom of



The Guest of Honour, His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama.

thought and freedom of speech as a democratic principle. So I don't know the details of your discussions on different issues. But I just want to share with you some of my basic thoughts. Of course, many of you know my usual concerns or way of thinking but some may not. So I shall explain some of my views. To those people who already know about my way of thinking, my explanations would be a repetition, so please don't bother about my talk and take rest.

Now, the issue of Tibet. Actually, I think, from an ecological point of view, because of Tibet's location, a special sort of care for the Tibetan ecology is very important, because major rivers which cover almost the whole of Asia emanate from Tibet. So the lives of millions or billions of people are related to those major rivers, which come from Tibet. That is why we need a special care. This is not just for the interest of the six million Tibetan people, but for the millions of people in the whole of Asia. Here, my Indian friends who come from southern India may not depend much on the rivers which come from Tibet. But the whole of northern India, I think, their life depends on the rivers that come from Tibet.

And of course, the whole of China is dependent on the three important rivers that flow from Tibet. So the preservation of the ecology of Tibet is very essential. It is important to remind this because some of our Chinese brothers and sisters, and even the Chinese government in the past, were not much concerned about ecology. Now a days, the government is showing some serious concern about ecology. That is a very good development. With this I wish to stress what I have heard that the Chinese government has undertaken some kind of rehabilitation of Hu Yaobang. This is another sign of

progress and positive development. So I want to express my appreciation for the government's decision.

Sometimes, I do feel that the system is such that the report from the people on the spot may not report the ground reality. They create their own artificial facts and then report to their superiors. Therefore, I feel it is useful to convey to our friends the issues at stake.

Basically, we are not seeking independence and everybody knows that. What we are seeking is genuine, meaningful autonomy within the framework of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. I always tell people that my approach is for the best interest of the people of China as a whole, to achieve genuine stability, genuine unity and prosperity. The present semblance of stability and unity is somewhat artificial—under force, under gun. Everybody says nice words but deep inside, there is resentment. This is not genuine stability. Without stability and unity, it is impossible to achieve genuine prosperity.

It seems lots of constructions are going on in Tibet, especially around Lhasa. All this money comes from the Central Government but not for economic reasons. Since we are not seeking independence, I believe in the

constructive policy and development of Tibet. I think we can help the Chinese government, although we never ask for some kind of special position or special privilege. No. As early as 1992, I have publicly made it clear that when the day of our return comes with a certain degree of freedom, I shall hand over all my decision-making authority to the local government. That would be my complete retirement (*laughs*). And that local government hopefully and eventually should be an elected democratic government. Whether this is possible or not, we have to discuss eventually with the Chinese officials. That is our hope. Therefore, we have no concern or interest of our own status on these things.

But we can certainly help to transform Tibet materially from a backward state to a real modernized human community with our own century old rich cultural heritage and inner values and to keep our environment beautiful and clean. So these changes are for everyone. So also for the preservation of Tibetan culture. Since we are not seeking separation, since we are not seeking independence, in reality, we are accepting the citizenship of People's Republic of China. In that case, the Tibetan culture is also a part of the culture of the People's Republic of China. So the rich Tibetan cultural heritage

and spirituality, if preserved properly, is of immense benefit to enrich the culture and spirituality of the People's Republic of China. Already quite a number of Chinese are showing not only interest but also want to practice or follow Buddhism in general and especially Tibetan Buddhism.

Most probably the Chinese government and some Chinese officials may consider this meeting as another gathering of western anti-Chinese forces using the Tibetan issue to attack China. I want to ask those members who have come from different countries "Are you anti-Chinese?" (*laughs*). So clearly, we have not gathered here for some kind of antagonistic ideas or work. No, certainly not. At the same time, some Chinese officials and friends may be a little unhappy with our relationship with our supporters, mainly the western supporters. Recently I met with some Chinese. I told them, "We have two hands. This right hand is usually considered more important (*arms stretched*). So, this right hand we extended to the Chinese government. Please give us meaningful autonomy, which is in the interest of both. But so far nothing has come. So naturally, as human beings we have many friends, many supporters who really want to help and support us actively. So logically, as human beings, on this side

(*pointing to the right hand*), we are eagerly waiting to find some meaningful solution but nothing happens. In the meantime, some people, some supporters show their sympathy. So we extend our left hand to them. When the extension of the right hand really produces meaningful result then the left hand will also join the right. But when the right hand remains empty, we have to extend our left hand to our supporter friends. That is quite logical. I think, even the Chinese government sometimes sides with USA and sometimes with Russia. That's quite logical.

If there are some Chinese reporters, please, you must report that firstly, we are not anti-Chinese. Secondly, we are certainly not manipulated and cannot be manipulated by any western anti-Chinese people, if there are any. We are quite independent people. We know what is right and what is wrong. Thirdly, we are seeking help from our supporters because here (*right hand extended*), nothing is happening. Therefore, we have to talk with our supporters and friends. If the Chinese government really wants our contact with our western supporters to be stopped, then please give us what we are asking. When we get a satisfactory result, then we will say to our western friends, "Good-bye" (*laughs*), we

don't need your support now." We will definitely say that. So these are the facts, the truth and I always speak the truth. No matter what others feel, I say what I have to say – the truth. So this is what I want to make clear to you and also to the Chinese government.

Then as far as our goal, whether independence or autonomy, we have remained fully committed for the last several decades. Even with the middle way approach we are fully committed. This policy of mine, we set that up in our mind, around 1973-74. At that time, China was in the throes of Cultural Revolution. In Dharamsala, after a few years, when more or less our immediate problems were somehow settled, we had a serious discussion that sooner or later, we have to talk with the Chinese Government. That's the only way. The only way with which the Tibetan problem could be solved is through talks between the Tibetans and the Chinese, and no one else. So we have to talk with the Chinese Government. The Chinese constitution provides autonomy, but in a totalitarian regime, often, these are not implemented properly. Now things have changed. The Chinese leadership is changing. They are changing comparatively. Today's China as compared to the China thirty years ago, has undergone much change.

Now I am over 70 years old. I have some sort of experience and have witnessed the development of China. Mao Zedong's time was one era. I feel Mao's era gave importance to ideology. That's good. At that time there were lots of scientists among the Chinese Liberation Army as well as some engineers. They really had some kind of compassion, though they never use the word compassion and motivation. They thought about the right and the interest of the public and were willing to sacrifice their own life. Because of ideology and faith, there was a clear vision of communism, a classless society, without police, a very peaceful society through socialism. That's very beautiful. Yes, there was a certain target and certain method. With that belief, you see, people worked.

Then was Deng Xiaoping's era. He preferred seeking the truth from fact. That was a great, scientific way of thinking, very good. In fact, ideology alone was not sufficient. Day-to-day life must improve. So he introduced economic liberalization. Since Deng's era, in spite of some drawbacks, the Chinese people got immense benefit from his policies. The Chinese people became much more prosperous. The gap between the rich and the poor has increased. That is unthinkable in a socialist country, but it has happened. So despite such drawbacks, the general

quality of the Chinese people has improved. I think that's good.

Then comes Jiang Zemin's era. The new realities of not only the middle class people, but also the richer, wealthier people are becoming important part of the society. Communist Party represented only the working class. So the communist party now, according to the new reality, acts on behalf of all people, all sectors. So you see, the new way of thinking is very practical.

Basically, I think, the Chinese people, even five thousand years ago, showed that they were very practical and hardworking. I usually tease our Indian friends that compared to Chinese; Indians are lazier. But from the brain side, I think, traditionally, over thousands of years, the Indians were remarkable (*applause*). Because of the hot climate (*laughs*) and also lots of vegetables and lots of fruit, we work a little less hard (*laughs*). The Chinese people are really hard working. I think the Europeans in the northern worlds also, due to the cold climate and less vegetables, life is difficult and therefore they are more hard-working. Eventually imperialists and colonialists came into being. For your survival, you need more and more raw materials from other side, isn't it? (*laughs*). But I really admire the westerners, for they seem to have become more mature. In spite of past mistakes, I think the

Europeans think about human rights and democracy. I think these universal values come from these countries. I also admire the concept of European Union. In the past, the small countries were very much into sovereignty and sovereign rights. Now a days they don't care; what is important is the common interest rather than national interest or prestige. I think the British are still attached to their pounds (*laughs*). The rest of Europe is more concerned about the common interest. These are indications of broad-mindedness. Therefore, I really admire the European people. I think through lots of experiences the European people are becoming more mature.

In Asia, at one time, Vinobha Bhave ji had the idea of a united confederation of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Burma and Sri Lanka. I think these are very farsighted ideas. Obviously, if that idea had materialized, then the Indo-Pakistan conflict or Bangladesh would have never taken place. I think the sub-continent would be much more peaceful and all the resources could be spent on development of the economy and education of its people. Anyway, there is too much digression from my side so I need some disciplining (*laughs*).

Then the fourth generation of Chinese leadership, hopefully, with the rehabilitation

of Hu Yaobang, I think eventually there'll be the restoration of Hu Yaobang's broad vision and realistic approach. As you know in the early '80s he came to Lhasa. He publicly admitted their past mistakes and apologized publicly. He also indicated that almost 80 percent of Han Chinese would be reduced from Tibet. I think that was a very realistic approach and this reminds me of 1954-55, when I was in China. There were several meetings with Mao Zedong. One time Chairman Mao told me that the very purpose of sending Chinese Liberation Army as well as other Chinese civilians to Tibet is to help you. He also told me, "In the past, Tibet at one time was a great nation but today it is backward. So we are coming to help you. After twenty years you will be in a better position, then it'll be your turn to help us and we will reduce those Chinese." This is what Chairman Mao himself told me.

Let's now come to the Tibetan national flag. I think some of the present Chinese officials, when they see this flag (*pointing at the Tibetan national flag*), they become angry. They feel it is the sign of a splittist. When I was in China, on one occasion, Chairman Mao asked me whether we have a national flag or not. With a little hesitation, I said, 'Yes'. Then, Chairman Mao encouraged me by

saying, You should keep the Tibetan National Flag along with the red flag, So these are really broad ways of thinking.

And also when the 17-point agreement was signed, the Liberation Army had already reached Chamdo and it was very easy to send the troops to Lhasa. But the Chinese government preferred peaceful liberation through agreement. Again in 1956, Chou Enlai told the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru that the Central Government does not consider Tibet as an ordinary Chinese province. The Central Government considers Tibet as a very special case. So these I think are realistic approaches. Hu Jintao, who is younger and a smart leader has also spent some time in Tibet. Hopefully with him, the new leadership will adopt a more realistic approach. This is my hope. Our approach is: with your one hand, reach out to the Chinese Government. In the meantime also seek some blessing from our supporters. Then we will see what happens.

I think I will mention this philosophical idea that almost all the man-made problems are created due to ignorance. Because of the ignorance, lack of knowledge and lack of the knowledge of a clear picture, your handling of the situation becomes unrealistic. Unrealistic approach brings more trouble.

So far the Chinese government's policy regarding the so-called minorities in general and particularly Tibet is unrealistic because of the lack of knowledge. Therefore, seeking truth from facts is very essential. Firstly, the facts should be genuine. In many cases, false facts are created. For example, when some Chinese leaders come to Lhasa, they visit some Tibetan areas. The local authorities rearrange a whole village or area where the leaders are supposed to visit. False facts are created.

When Hu Yaobang visited Tibet, he sent 20 or 30 of his own trusted people to Tibet before his visit. Then he received all the report from them. But when he reached Lhasa, the local officials presented some artificial report and he scolded them. Therefore, our approach is helpful to find a realistic solution and not separation. So these are the points that I wanted to share with you.

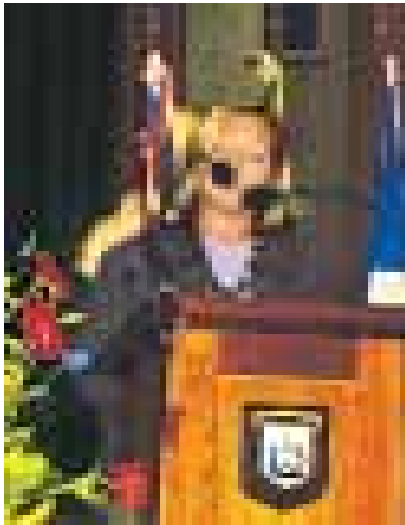
Thank you.

LINDA FABIANI

Well, when I entered politics, I was worried about public speaking. If anyone had told me that one day I would have to follow the Dalai Lama (laughs), I would not have stood for elections. But I am so glad I did because it is a great honour for Scotland to host this conference, the convention of Tibetan friends and the friends of Tibet. It is also an honour to have a Declaration from the convention, which is called the Edinburgh Declaration. I hope that by the next convention, there will be another declaration named after the venue; there would have been much progress and we look forward to that.

I also feel very proud that we have a parliament in Scotland after 300 years - a devolved parliament. It is of interest to His Holiness, his government in exile and his people because devolution is a process and not an end, and it is the right of the people to determine that process of devolution. For Tibet to embark on that process, to look at the end of a long walk, the first step has to be taken today to get through that door towards autonomy. That door has to firstly open.

Everyone here recognize that the only way to achieve that is by international support, by the work of the people here and beyond and by talking. We have to keep talking. We have to



Linda Fabiani is a member of the Scottish Parliament and the Vice-Convenor of the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Tibet.

keep talking amongst ourselves and also we have to keep spreading the message out there.

I am absolutely convinced that there is growing, all the time growing support for Tibet and the Tibetan cause. Many, many people want to help Tibet to get that door opened so that they can go through.

I now have a very enjoyable duty to perform because I am giving the valedictory remarks. I would ask the assistance of Harry Cohen because I have some gifts on behalf of the Scottish and the UK parliamentarians and indeed everyone in Scotland. The first is a

very, very important person Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, the Chair of the Tibetan Cabinet (*hands over the gift*). The second is honourable Pema Jungney, the Chairman of the Tibetan Parliament (*hands over the gift*). The third is to Dolma Gyari, the Deputy Chairperson of the Tibetan Parliament (*hands over the gift*). And I have a special one, to a special friend of us all, Penpa Tsering, the head of the Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre and the organizer of this conference (*hands over the gift*).

The last gift I have is something I would like to explain to you. The symbol of the Scottish Parliament is imprinted on this. Described on this is the Scotland Act, which says 'There shall be a Scottish Parliament'. And I would like to give this card on behalf of the people of Scotland to the people of Tibet because one day, there shall be a Tibetan Parliament.

Thank you.

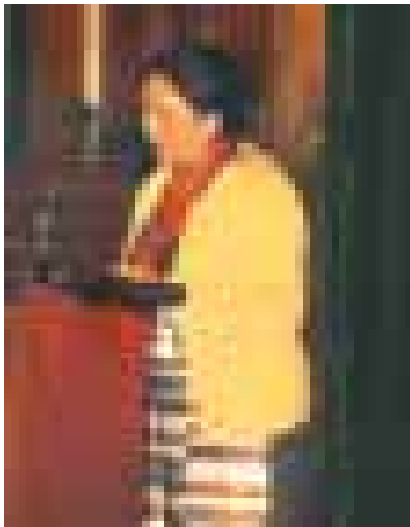


DOLMA GYARI

Your Holiness, Honorable Chris Ballance, Honorable Harry Cohen, Honorable Linda Fabiani, Honorable Councilor, Madam Rosemary Burnett, Honorable Members of Parliaments and distinguished guests. On behalf of the Tibet's Parliament in Exile, the Assembly of Tibetan Peoples' Deputies, the democratically elected legitimate legislative body of the Tibetans, I have the honour of expressing our deep sense of gratitude to the hosts of this very important convention of World Parliamentarians on Tibet in this historical and very beautiful city of Edinburgh.

You will all perhaps agree with me the multiple significance of holding the convention in this destined land of the Scots. I say destined, for we all know that it was only in mid-July of this very year that under unavoidable circumstances, the earlier finalized venue had to be changed to Scotland.

Your presence here and the fact that the Scottish Parliament is probably the youngest Parliament in the world signifies your belief in democracy. It also signifies the presence of courage and support in this very young parliament to the cause of the Tibetan people led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It also holds great significance considering Beijing and Dharamsala have in



Dolma Gyari is the Vice-Chairperson of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (Tibet's Parliament in Exile).

recent years renewed contacts, whereby His Holiness is seeking genuine autonomy for the people of Tibet comprising of U-Tsang, Do-Kham and Do-Mey—the three historical regions of Tibet.

It is also significant considering the fact that the United Kingdom holds the Presidency of the EU. In Strasbourg in the year 1988, His Holiness the Dalai Lama presented what is today popularly known as the “Strasbourg Proposal” giving up independence of Tibet, choosing to live in association with China in return for genuine autonomy of Tibet to be determined by the people of Tibet,

especially those living inside Tibet. I sincerely thank the Cross-Party Group on Tibet at the Scottish Parliament and the UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet for co-hosting the 4th WPCT.

I would also like to thank the members of the Organizing Committee for their hours of hard work, looking into every aspect of the Convention making our visit fruitful and comfortable. Above all making the convention a grand success.

I am grateful to the delegates - the honourable members of Parliaments—for taking out time from your busy schedules and giving it to the cause of Tibet. Time of course, is running out for Tibet. Therefore your time, your concerns, your expression of support for the non-violent struggle of Tibet gives hope and encouragement not only for us Tibetans but also to those who believe and choose the path of non-violence for finding peaceful political resolutions. Thank you very much indeed for making the Convention an effective reality by your participation.

I am equally grateful to the distinguished speakers and experts for enriching the convention, enlightening us on the Sino-Tibet dialogue, the geo-political importance of Tibet, and briefing on the activities of the TSGs. Here I would like to also express our

deep appreciation to the TSGs for their continued support and for their presence at the Convention.

We will all carry the saga of Takna Jigme Sangpo la, the former political prisoner, in our hearts. Ladies and Gentlemen, the grand old man with the walking stick is a symbol of the spirit of the Tibetan people inside Tibet. The flame of Tibet will continue to burn till the Tibetan issue is resolved - until human dignity and happiness is restored inside Tibet. Unhappy people make an unstable government. While expressing our highest regard to Takna Jigme Sangpo la, I salute all those brave men and women of Tibet, who have sacrificed and dedicated their lives for Tibet.

I would also like to thank the honourable Eva Lichtenberger from the European Parliament for the compact yet wonderful presentation this morning filling the little gaps that were missing in this Convention otherwise. I thank her and the European Parliamentary Group for Tibet for their deep concern regarding Tibet. In fact, I would like to thank all the governments, parliaments, groups and individuals supporting the resolution of the Tibetan issue. On behalf of the Assembly of the Tibetan People Deputies, I urge you, I appeal to each one of you to continue to support and speak for the

voiceless people of Tibet. During these two days, we discussed many issues, especially today in the working committees. We may not have been able to adopt the Action Plan or the Declaration without the Chairmanship of our respective committees and the drafting committees. I thank the Chairs and the members of the drafting committees for their commendable work in such a short period of time.

I want to once again express our gratitude to the Lady Provost and the City Council of Edinburgh for the warmth and honour bestowed on us. Thank you very much. I am also thankful to the Isdell Foundation and the International Campaign for Tibet, Europe and individuals for their financial support for the Convention.

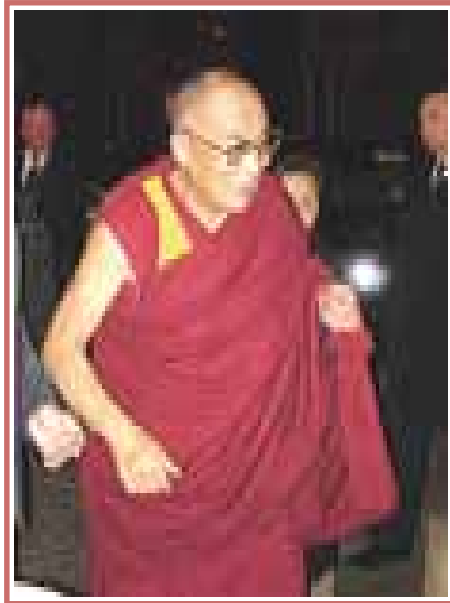
Last but not the least, though very hesitant, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Assembly of the Tibetan Peoples' Deputies to express our gratitude to your Holiness for your Holiness's selfless

leadership, for your Holiness's vision, love and compassion. Your Holiness, despite our reluctance, You pushed us on the path of Democracy. Today, we realize that this democratic principle is the most precious treasure that we will carry back home to Tibet.

Your Holiness, time and again, you overwhelmed us with your love and compassion. Your Holiness's message to the Tibetans inside Tibet, to protect them from harm and harassment, advising them to defame, criticize and speak against your Holiness if so directed by the Chinese authorities, is yet a simple manifestation of your love and compassion.

Under your leadership, your Holiness, we pray and look forward to the happy reunification of the Tibetan people on the soil of our motherland, where happiness and peace will return to the Tibet of your vision, a sanctuary of peace, a zone of Ahimsa.

Thank you.



CLOSING CEREMONY



PARLIAMENTARY ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE 4TH WPCT

The All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum for Tibet (APIPFT) organised a felicitation ceremony on the evening of 6 December, 2005 at the Parliament House Annexe in honour of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's selfless contribution towards promotion of international peace and harmony. Over 130 members of the Indian Parliament and other dignitaries attended the ceremony.

H.H. THE DALAI LAMA

As a respect, I would like to stand and speak. Of course my English is very bad. Although my study of English started, I think in 1947, as old as India's independence (*laughs*), but never progressed much (*laughs*)

Anyway, respected parliamentarians of the most populated democratic country. It is indeed a great honour for me to have one more meeting with some of the parliamentarians. I very much appreciate the bouquets of flowers and the felicitation letter presented by the members.

I came to this country as a refugee or in other words, a guest of the Indian government. I have been the guest of the Indian government for more than 46 years. I've spent the most and the best part of my life in this country. I really enjoy your freedom. Not only me but around a hundred thousand Tibetans also enjoy your freedom, in spite of some difficulties



here and there. Basically, because of India's rule of law and freedom. I think in a way, the Tibetan refugee community in this country, is not only quite a successful refugee community but also one of the happiest ones.

The Tibetans, even those living in the very remote nomadic areas of Tibet, know India. They've heard the word, '*gyagar*', India, because of Buddha Dharma, although they may not know where India is. Since the 7th century, we Tibetans have become genuine followers of Buddha Dharma, which is one of the most important messages of India.

Since then, the whole Tibetan way of life has changed. As a result, I feel, comparatively, the Tibetan community is a more compassionate community. Of course, amongst the Tibetan community, there are cruel people, liars, even murderers as in any other human community but overall, the Tibetan community is a more compassionate society.

Therefore, our relationship (Tibetan and Indian) is very unique, very close. I always describe our relationship as that of *guru* and *chela*. So Indians, including Indian politicians are our *guru* (*laughs*). We Tibetans are students or *chela* of India. As for me personally, although I have lived in India for 46 years, my Hindi is still very *thora-thora*, little-little (*laughs*). Sometimes I feel very ashamed when I meet Indians during my visit to foreign countries, they immediately speak to me in Hindi and I cannot respond in Hindi (*laughs*).

So, my little intelligence here (*pointing to his temples*) and my little warmheartedness here (*pointing to his heart*) is not by Tibetan genes but because of India's centuries old spirituality, which is Buddha Dharma. One of the Buddha Dharma's unique concepts is Pratitya Samudpad. That concept is very helpful to think or to look at things in a more holistic view. The concept of Pratitya Samudpad is

very helpful to view an event whether it's positive, or negative or an individual, a society, the world or the whole universe. That concept has been personally very helpful for the proper development of human intelligence.

Then the message of *karuna* and *ahimsa*. I believe *ahimsa* is the expression of *karuna*. That message fills my heart. As a result, in spite of many difficulties, my mind, generally speaking is quite stable and steady. All this is because of our centuries old relations with India. So I want to express my appreciation on behalf of not only the present generation, but also thousands of years of Tibetan generations.

I usually tell my Indian friends, since we have this very unique relationship of that of a *guru and chela*, when *guru* gets into trouble, the *chela* must take serious concern and should help and serve in whatever way possible. Similarly, when the *chela* is facing some problem, then the *guru* also has some responsibility to look after the *chela* (*laughs*). I always feel that millions of Indians emotionally have some kind of a special feeling towards Tibet. Whether they are Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs or followers of any other religion, there exists a feeling of closeness.

For millions of Hindus, Mount Kailash, the Mansarovar and Ganges that flows from Tibet are sacred to them. So emotionally there is a very close feeling. As I mentioned before, Tibetans call India '*gyagar phagpai yul*' or the *Arya Bhumi*, the land of the excelled beings. It is a very close relationship. Therefore I really feel great honour, not only great honour but also great joy. So thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Now as a *chela* I have the responsibility to report to our *gurus* what the *chela* is doing (*laughs*). Now, you know, I have three commitments. One is serving the entire sentient beings. Of course, we have no direct contact with the sentient beings of other planets. So we can only pray for them. But for the sentient beings of this planet, I think the humanity as a whole has a special role to serve the whole world. I am one of the more than 6 billion human beings. So I feel in order to usher in a more peaceful, more happier world for the entire sentient beings of this planet, first we human beings should be more warmhearted so that the, millions of other sentient beings on this planet will get less disturbance, more happiness and more normal life.

When we human beings have too much greed, we neglect their rights and their feelings. I think we human beings exploit the



other sentient beings of this planet a lot. So in order to transform humanity and make it more genuine and warm-hearted, I feel the most important things are the basic human values, which we learn from birth, not necessarily from religion. Obviously the first thing after birth, we immediately approach our mother or someone else who is acting like a mother to seek milk. That does not come through religious faith or through education, but by nature. For survival we need someone else's care. So the part of emotion, which we call affection or intimacy, bonds the mother and the child.

According to modern medical scientists, the next few weeks after birth are very crucial period for the development of the human brain. During that period, a simple physical touch to a baby is a very crucial factor for proper development of the brain. Then obviously we know those children who grow up in an atmosphere of compassion,

affection, sense of care, sense of concern become not only physically but also mentally much more healthier. That I consider is the most important part of human value. So now a days, through the experiments of modern scientists, it's becoming more and more clear that the positive emotions are very important for our health. The negative emotions such as hatred and anger are very bad for our health. So not just from the religious viewpoint but also from the health viewpoin, it is important to pay more attention to our inner values. With that background, wherever I go I always try to promote human values through awareness. This is my number one commitment.

My second commitment is at the level of being a Buddhist - as a believer of the faith. According to my own experience, if you sincerely practice and implement religious faith, there is a great potential to transform our negative emotions into more positive emotions. In any case, we are in the 21st century. In spite of progress in the field of science and technology and material progress, we are facing lots of problems and tragedies. For example, the September 11 event happened. At that time I really felt that human intelligence, the sophisticated human mind and technology, when guided by human hatred and afflicted emotions, it becomes a disaster. So the modern

technology, if used wrongly, brings more troubles.

So the different religious traditions have an important role to play in this respect. All the major religious traditions in spite of different philosophies and different ways of approach, are basically theistic and non-theistic in approach. In theistic views, there is a central authority; God, absolute, rest of us is created by God. Non-theistic religions do not talk about that. One of the non-theistic religions is Buddhism.

According to Buddhism things are not created by one central thing but are created by their own causes and conditions. So the Buddhist concept is the law of causality-cause and effect, something like Darwinian evolutionary theory. That is why you see Buddha's first teaching Four Noble Truths speaks about cause and effect. So there are big differences, fundamental differences. Therefore some people, some religious faiths do not consider Buddhism as a religion. Some say Buddhism is a science of mind but some say Buddhism is a kind of atheism. So some people consider me a non-believer (*laughs*).

The big differences in the philosophical field do not matter. What matters is the real message and the real practice. They all carry the same teachings. Teaching of love,

compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, self-discipline, contentment, all these values, all these subjects are carried by all the different religious traditions. So then we can see the purpose of these different philosophies or different ways of approaches. You see the same goal, the same message but different approaches. Obviously among humanity there are so many different mental dispositions. Therefore, to some people theistic religion is more effective and to some people non-theistic religion is more effective. It is our choice.

What's important is that once we accept religion, we should be serious and sincere. I always tell the Tibetan Buddhist as well as Chinese and also my Indian friends that it is not sufficient to just recite some Sanskrit *shlokas* without understanding the meaning, or to burn incense and offer flowers, and bow down or recite something like *Ram, Ram, Ram* without much thinking or much enthusiasm to practice. This is not sufficient. We must be serious. Whether we accept religion or not, it is up to the individual. If you want to be non-believer then that's absolutely fine but once we accept religion then we should be serious and should implement what we believe. Once we gain some inner spiritual experience, then it is much easier to see the value of other traditions also.

What is important is the harmony among the different religious traditions. This is very essential. As far as different philosophies are concerned, there is a purpose, but what's important is that they all carry the same message to serve humanity. There is a sort of common ground, common aim, and common method, therefore there is a sound basis of harmony among the traditions. So I always try to promote religious harmony. These two commitments are life-long voluntary commitments.

Then my third commitment is for Tibet. This is not necessarily a voluntary commitment. I'm a Tibetan, and because I carry the Dalai Lama's name, people inside as well as outside, particularly inside, really put a lot of trust and hope in me. Therefore, I have more responsibility to serve them as much as I can. Since this is not necessarily voluntary, for the last four years we have an



elected political leadership. Since then my position is that of semi-retirement. Now I am 70 years of age. In 1992, I made it very clear that when the day of our return comes with a certain degree of freedom, I will hand over all my legitimate authority to the local Tibetan government. That would be my real, final and total retirement. So if that comes sooner then my retirement comes sooner. So I'm looking forward to that day (*laughs*).

Actually I asked my elected political leadership to please come with me today in order to meet our Indian parliamentary friends, because in case some detailed explanation is needed then you should explain. My position is already something akin to semi-retirement. So I have no direct responsibility. The direct responsibility lies with the elected political leadership as far as political issues are concerned because we really want a democratic institution. We came to this country in April 1959 and in 1960 we already started working for democratization. Then in 1963 we adopted our draft constitution for future Tibet. That draft constitution is in conformity with the democratic principles. Then around 1969 I made it clear whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not is up to the Tibetan people. Then in 1992, as I mentioned before, when the day of our return comes I will hand over my authorities

to the local government. That local government will eventually be an elected democratic government. So we are totally dedicated to democracy. Since the last four years, we have already achieved the highest political leadership through elections. The elected political leadership is already here.

So my responsibility is something like an advisor, perhaps senior advisor to him (*pointing towards the Kalon Tripa, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche*). Fortunately, he listens to all my suggestions with few exceptions. But that's very good. That's what I really like. Sometimes he disagrees with me, which is very good. As I mentioned earlier, we really enjoy India's freedom. Therefore, we Tibetans now express different views, some even very critical about our policy. For example, many Tibetans, like the youth organization, openly criticize our Middle Way Approach. We welcome them. If we really want democratic, open society with freedom of speech, and freedom of thought in practice, we must welcome criticism.

With regards to the Tibetan issue, past is past. In many parts of the world there are new realities whether planned or not, whether one likes it or not. Once at a conference in Germany about 15-20 years ago, a representative from Native American group gave a long speech. The main thing he said

was that they wanted to expel all the white people from the American continent (*laughs*). In a way the European Americans are outsiders, they are not native people. So in a way they have some reason. But they have to think about the new reality.

Therefore we are looking at a new reality. The government of India recognizes Tibet as an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. I think this concept was established after the Shimla Convention. So what we are trying to achieve is not independence/separation from the People's Republic of China but to remain within the Constitutional framework of the People's Republic of China. The Chinese Constitution provides for autonomous regions. That special political status of an autonomous region should be a genuine one. It should be implemented on the ground and should not remain just on the papers. That is what we are trying to achieve.

Unfortunately there is always a big gap, a big difference between what is there on the paper and the reality. Therefore, we are trying to explain to the Chinese government that on the ground we are really facing lots of problems. What kind of problems? Number one, as I mentioned earlier, the Tibetan Buddhist spirituality and the Tibetan unique cultural heritage is not only an ancient

cultural heritage but also very relevant to today's world. So it is really worthwhile to preserve it. Here I usually express, whether intentionally or unintentionally, some kind of cultural genocide is taking place in Tibet.

Second, of course is the Tibetan environment. This I feel is not only in the interest of the Tibetan people but also in the interest of the whole northern India. I don't know about southern India, but no doubt, the whole of northern India, their life depends on those rivers, which come from Tibet and also all three major rivers of China come from Tibet. According to some scientists because of Tibet's high altitude, the balance of nature on the plateau will have serious effect upon the monsoon in India as well as in China.

And then obviously, the worldwide issue of global warming. Within my own lifetime, we noticed many snow mountains reducing decade by decade. These big changes in nature are very difficult to restore or to control. But then we can take more care about the natural environment. As you can see, if we pay more attention, we can change or reduce large-scale deforestation and mining.

Then politically, my dream is that eventually, Tibet should be a demilitarized zone of peace. Because once the Tibetan plateau,



which lies between mainland China and India, becomes a zone of peace, with fewer soldiers on both sides, it will be of immense benefit economically, environmentally and politically. On that basis you can develop genuine friendship and mutual trust. Then once more you can genuinely say *Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*. Otherwise, diplomatically there may be some smiles but deep inside there'll be doubts and difficulties. So in order to develop genuine friendship on the basis of mutual trust. I think Tibet can play an important role. So the friendship, genuine friendship between India and China is very essential because these two nations are the two most populated nations.

Our government is not seeking independence, nor seeking separation, but according to the new reality, we're trying to achieve meaningful self-rule that is of mutual benefit to Tibet and to China as a whole because the Chinese government's top

priority is prosperity through stability and unity. We also totally agree with that. So now, prosperity on the basis of unity and stability must come from within, from the heart and not from gun. The Chinese, especially the local authorities, are trying to achieve stability by gun. I think this is a wrong method. For the short term it might seem to work but for the long run, now forty to fifty years have passed, this is not the right method. They should treat Tibetans as genuine brothers and sisters. Respect the Tibetans including their culture and their delicate environment, trust them, give them self rule, then Tibetan loyalty to the Chinese government will automatically come. This is genuine unity. With that genuine stability will be achieved and through that way genuine prosperity will come. And also as far as our culture is concerned, since Tibet is an autonomous region of People's Republic of China, our culture is also a culture of the People's Republic of China. Especially Buddhism is not alien to millions of Chinese. Therefore, preservation and development of Tibetan spirituality is immensely helpful to enrich Chinese culture or spirituality in general. So with these, my report concludes.

Thank you.

Hon. Michael Danby, MHR, MP from the Labor Party tabled a motion in the House of Representatives in the Australian Parliament:

To move That, in light of recent calls by world leaders, including the President of the United States, for a resolution of the Tibet issue prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the statement by Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, Prime Minister of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile at the 4th World Parliamentarians for Tibet Convention in Edinburgh on 18 November 2005, this House calls on the Government to:

1. Urge the Government of the Peoples Republic of China to finalise negotiations with the Tibetan government-in-exile for the granting of autonomy to Tibet within the People's Republic of China, prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics;
2. Congratulate the Government of the People's Republic of China for re-opening negotiations with the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile;
3. Call on President Hu Jintao to demonstrate his personal commitment to resolving the issue of Tibet by meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama as soon as possible at a mutually agreed venue;
4. Call on the Government of the People's Republic of China to issue an invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit China and the traditional regions of Tibet;
5. Call on the Government of the People's Republic of China to bring a halt to the destruction of historic buildings and other items pertaining to the cultural heritage of Tibet;
6. Request the Government of the People's Republic of China to free all Tibetan political prisoners, including the Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima;
7. Request the Government of the People's Republic of China to commit to the preservation of the Tibetan language and Tibetan culture; and
8. Request that the Government of the People's Republic of China give genuine consideration to the recommendations of the Declaration of the 4th World Parliamentarians for Tibet Convention, Edinburgh, 19 November 2005.

Hon. Senator Di Nino tabled a motion in the Senate of Canada on November 24, 2005:

MOTION

BY the Honourable Senator Di Nino, seconded by the Honourable Senator _____:

THAT the Senate support the declaration of the IV World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet adopted by parliamentarians from 30 different countries on November 19, 2005 in Edinburgh, Scotland in support of Tibet's goal of genuine autonomy;

THAT the Senate support His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way approach to resolve the conflict between the People's Republic of China and the Tibetan government in exile through negotiations in the spirit of non-violence and reconciliation;

THAT the Senate commend the Chinese government in inviting the Dalai Lama's special envoys for four rounds of high-level meetings in Beijing and Berne between September 2002 and June 2005;

THAT the Senate support the creation of a zone of *ahimsa* (peace and non-violence) throughout the Tibetan plateau; and

THAT the Senate deplore the refusal of the Chinese government to release political prisoners, in particular the Panchen Lama, Gebhum Choekyi Nyima, who has been held in a secret location since 1995, when he was only 6 years old.

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet introduced in South Africa:

The South African Inter-Parliamentary Group for Tibet (SAIPGT) was formally inaugurated on February 7, 2006. An official inaugural function was held at the official chamber of Mr Tony Leon, Leader of the Official Opposition Party the Democratic Alliance, at Cape Town, South Africa.

The function was attended by 30 MPs of South African Parliament. These MPs belong to the Democratic Alliance and Inkatha Freedom Party. The former is led by Mr Tony Leon, leader of the opposition political party and the latter is led by Prince M. Buthelezi.

Mr. Dawa Phunkyi, Tibetan MP, officially represented the Assembly of Tibetan Peoples' Deputies (ATPD). In March 2006, the representative of the SAIPGT visited Dharamsala.

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet introduced in Australia:

On 6 December, a group of parliamentarians met in Parliament House, Australia, to inaugurate the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Tibet. The group announced that 2006 will be observed as the Year of Tibet in Australia.

The group will work to highlight the urgency of preserving the unique Tibetan culture, environment and support initiatives for a peaceful resolution of the Tibet issue.

At their first meeting on 6 December, the Parliamentarians re-affirmed support for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach.

The group called on the People's Republic of China to enter into constructive negotiations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives on the future of Tibet.

The group called on the Australian Government to consider offering to host the 5th round of the China-Tibet dialogue in 2006 in Australia.

Michael Danby, MP of Labour Party in Australia, briefed the group on his attendance at the 4th World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet held in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 18-19 November 2005.

The group elected Michael Danby as Chair, and the following as Vice Chairs: Senator Bob Brown (Australian Greens), Hon Peter Slipper MP (Liberal) and Senator Natasha Stott Despoja (Australian Democrats).

Co-Hosts

Cross Party Group on Tibet at the Scottish Parliament
The UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet at Westminster

Organising Committee Members

Penpa Tsering (Co-ordinator)

Kesang Takla

Victor Spence

Tsering Jampa

Lobsang Choedon

Tenzin Norbu

Stephanie Turner

Barry Mason

Caroline Forbes

Stewart Watters

Drafting Committee Members

Michael Van Walt Praag

Thupten Samphel

Sonam N Dagpo

Mark Ballard

Michael Collie

Tenzin Dargyal

Chonpel Tsering

Dechen Pemba

Special Mentions to

Chris Ballance MSP

Harry Cohen

Mike Pringle MSP

Rosemary Burnett

Linda Fabiani

John Bagust

Thomas Warrior

Graham Kitchener

*Paul Boast
Cheryl Hutton
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