



TIBETAN BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER 2016

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Conference of Tibet Support Groups

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking during his talk at Lucerna Palace in Prague, Czech Republic on October 19, 2016. Photo/Olivier Adam

A view of the stage at the Zenith Arena during His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teaching in Strasbourg, France on September 17, 2016. Photo/Olivier Adam



His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs in Strasbourg, France on September 15, 2016. Photo/Olivier Adam

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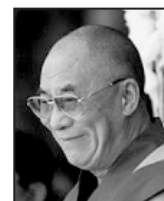
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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2016

Dharamshala Celebrates 56th Tibetan Democracy Day

Tibetan leadership reaffirms commitment to the Middle Way Approach and pledged to carry forward the vision of His Holiness by strengthening the foundations of Tibetan democracy

The Tibetan diaspora across the world celebrated the joyous occasion of its 56th anniversary of Tibetan democracy day at Dharamshala, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration, the occasion was marked with an official function at Tsuglagkhang attended by Tibetan Justice Commissioners, Tibetan parliamentarians, members of the Kashag and Tibetan officials along with the public.

The chief guest at the official function was Mr Mukut Mithi, former Chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh and current member of Rajya Sabha, while the special guest was Dr Arun Kumar, a member of the Indian parliament in the Lok Sabha. Both the distinguished guests were long-time supporters of the Tibetan cause in the Indian parliament.

In his address, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay spoke briefly about the evolution of Tibetan democracy and highlighted His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision and constant efforts in steering the democratic institution of Central Tibetan Administration towards success.

"Before the Chinese occupation of Tibet, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama set up a reform committee in an attempt to make structural changes in the Tibetan political and administrative system and transform them into a modern democratic institution. But owing to many formidable challenges the changes weren't implemented. However, soon after his arrival in India, His Holiness followed his vision by making the political system of exile Tibetans a democratic institution," Sikyong said.

"In 1960, on this very day, the Tibetan parliament-in-exile was established with the assumption of responsibilities by members of Tibetan Parliament elected from three provinces and various religious sects representing Tibetans inside and outside Tibet. Henceforth, the

Tibetan democratic system progressed and matured into a full-fledged democratic system, and this is due solely to the pioneering and visionary efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama over the last 56 years. So I take this opportunity on behalf of every Tibetan to express our heartfelt gratitude to our most revered leader."

Sikyong also urged the Tibetan public to fulfill His Holiness the Dalai Lama's sacred aspiration to forge internal harmony and unity among the three traditional provinces of Tibet, and be mindful of the responsibilities that come along with democratic rights.



Tibetan school children performing Tibetan cultural song, 2 September 2016. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

"Likewise as citizens of a democratic institution we need to be mindful of the fact that while democracy bestows us with the rights it also expects us to shoulder our responsibilities. Like two sides of the same coin, rights and responsibility are closely entwined. Democracy confers you with the right to speech and freedom of expression and in a democracy diversity of opinion should be respected. But these rights and privileges shouldn't be misused. As much as democracy gives you the right and freedom, it also demands accountability, ownership and agency. Engaging in acts of defaming His Holiness the Dalai Lama and leveling unfounded criticism against the CTA is an affront to the gift and tenets of Tibetan democracy," Sikyong said.

At the same time, Sikyong drew attention towards the abysmal human rights situation prevailing inside Tibet and urged the Chinese government to shoulder responsibility to alleviate the human rights

situation and protect Tibet's environment so that China could become a responsible stakeholder in the global affairs.

Sikyong concluded his address by reaffirming the CTA's commitment to the Middle Way Approach and pledged to carry forward the vision of His Holiness by strengthening the foundations of Tibetan democracy.

The Chief Guest Mr Mukut Mithi, in his keynote address, said that Tibet and India are attached culturally, historically and sentimentally. Therefore, as an Indian, he said that he have been closely associated with the Tibet cause and raised the Tibet issue several times in various forums.

He lauded His Holiness the Dalai Lama's admirable leadership in strengthening Tibetan democracy by establishing the Central Tibetan Administration, and said that the world including India stands with the Tibetan people in their just and peaceful movement.

He also promised to raise the Tibet issue in the Indian parliament and said that the All Party Indian Parliamentary Forum For Tibet, of which he is an esteemed member, has decided to make an appeal to invite His Holiness the Dalai Lama to address the Indian parliament.

Dr Arun Kumar, in his address, applauded the non-violent and vibrant democratic institution of the Tibetan people established through the vision and efforts of His Holiness. "The way you have established a democratic institution with judiciary, legislative and executive body is truly remarkable. It sends a strong message to China that the Tibetan movement will go on unless China resolves the Tibet issue soon," he said.

Further expressing his support, he said that the Tibet issue is linked to the entire humanity, as the Tibetan civilization is a unique and ancient civilization. "China's attempt to annihilate Tibetan culture and civilization is completely immoral and India should intervene to safeguard Tibet's culture and environment as well

as for its own protection,” he added. Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel read out the statement of the Tibetan parliament. In the statement, the Tibetan parliament underlined the need to strengthen democratic institutions in exile and ensure that compatriots in Tibet enjoy the similar rights to live in freedom and with dignity.

“As to whether the democratic system of the Tibetans in exile will attain stability and make progress, much will depend on the intellectual maturity, the capability to uphold the greater good of the whole above all else, and the existence of a sense of cooperation within the Tibetan public,” Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel said.

“Inside China, there is no indication that the government of China may change its policy towards Tibet. In fact, the policy has been becoming ever more repressive and ominous,” he noted and cited a few examples of violation of fundamental rights of the Tibetan people over the past several months.

He further called on China to reform their failed policies to resolve the Tibet issue as soon as possible and at the same time called on Tibetans to remain unrelenting and adhere steadfastly to their commitment at all times in persevering to reach their goal.

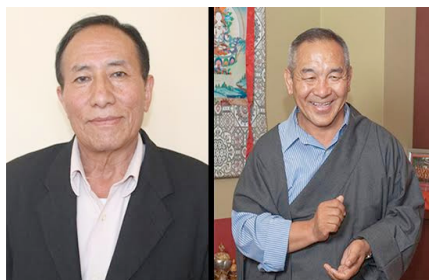
The function also featured cultural performances and presentation of awards to meritorious students and Tibetan Entrepreneurship Development (TED) investment award winners.

Justice Commissioner Tsering Dhondup Retires from Service, Dr Ngawang Rabgyal Elected as New Justice Commissioner

Mr Tsering Dhondup Namey Lhakang, one of the two other Justice Commissioners of the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission retired from service, according to a circular issued by the Ti-

betan Supreme Justice Commission on 24 September 2016.

Dr Ngawang Rabgyal, Secretary of Department of Education was elected as new Justice Commissioner in a voting held on the sixth day of the second session of 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.



*Mr Tsering Dhondup Namey Lhakang(L)
Dr Ngawang Rabgyal Norpa(R)*

Dr Ngawang Rabgyal got 24 votes against 18 for Ms Nangsa Chodon, Secretary of Department of Information and International Relations, CTA. Their nominations were proposed by a 3-member selection committee of former Chief Justice Commissioner Mr Namgyal Tsering Drelngang, former Kalons Kirti Rinpoche Lobsang Tenzin and Ven Tsering Phuntsok, which was constituted by a committee of Chief Justice Commissioner, Speaker of Tibetan Parliament, Deputy Speaker and Sikyong.

According to the circular, Justice Commissioner Mr Tsering Dhondup is retiring a year early; his retirement will be effective as of 1 November 2016.

Mr Tsering Dhondup Namey Lhakang was born in Shelkar, Shigatse in 1952. He came to exile in 1959 and received education in both modern science as well as traditional. Since 1973 till date, Mr Tsering Dhondup served in various capacities in the exile Tibetan community. In his early career, he served as Manager of Tibetan handicraft factories, President of FTCI (Federation of Tibetan Co-operatives in India), Tibetan Settlement Officer, Local Election Commissioner. He also served in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi, Department of Finance and as Additional Secretary of Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission. For a period of one year, Mr Tsering Dhondup served as Acting Secretary of Kashag Secretariat

and Chief legal consultant of CTA. On 16 February 2006, he was appointed as Secretary of Department of Religion and Culture. On 24 March 2010, he was sworn in as Justice Commissioner of Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission.

Dr Ngawang Rabgyal Norpa was born in Shingri, Tibet. He came to exile in 1959 and joined the Central School for Tibetans in Dalhousie where he completed higher secondary education in 1974. He received BA (Hons), MA degree in Political Science from Delhi University and obtained PhD in International Relations from Kiev University, Ukraine. He has been serving the Central Tibetan Administration in various capacities across three continents since 1980. From 1987-1993, he served as Deputy Secretary at Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi. From 1993-97 he served as Representative of His Holiness at the Office of Tibet based in Moscow, Russia. Later in 1998, he was appointed as Additional Secretary at DIIR, Central Tibetan Administration. From 1999-2005 he served as Representative of Office of Tibet, New York (now based in Washington, DC). From 2005-08, he served as Administrative Secretary of DIIR. From 2008-15, he was appointed as Representative of Office of Tibet, Moscow. In 2015 he was appointed as Secretary of Department of Education, CTA.

Secretary Sonam Norbu Dagpo Appoint- ed Official Spokesper- son of Central Tibetan Administration



Mr Sonam Norbu Dagpo, Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations,

Mr Sonam Norbu Dagpo, Secretary of the Department of Information and International Relations, has been appointed as the official spokesperson of the Central Tibetan Administration, according to a circular issued by the Kashag Secretariat.

The appointment was effective from 03 September 2016.

With over 25 years of experience, Secretary Sonam Norbu Dagpo is one of the senior most secretaries in the Central Tibetan Administration. During his long and accomplished career, he has undertaken various prominent roles in the Central Tibetan Administration including as Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Australia and as member of the Tibetan delegation that met Chinese representatives to resolve the issue of Tibet.

Reshuffle in Several Top Posts of Central Tibetan Administration

Ms Nangsa Chodon, currently serving as the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Office of Tibet based in South Africa, is transferred to the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration. She will take charge as Secretary of Department of Education from 1 November 2016.

Former Tibetan Parliamentarian Ms Tenzin Dhardon Sharling, has been appointed to Secretary-equivalent post in the Information office of Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR). She took charge from 4 October 2016.

Mr Kaydor Aukartsang, former Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Office of Tibet based in Washington DC, has been appointed as the new Director of Social and Resource Development (SARD). He took charge from 04 October 2016. In this capacity, he will serve as the Chief Resilience Officer of CTA where his primary responsibilities will include mobilising financial, human and technological resources;



From left: Representative Ms Nangsa Chodon, former Tibetan Parliamentarian Ms Tenzin Dhardon Sharling and former Representative Mr Kaydor Aukartsang.

maximising innovation, engaging with key stakeholders; and managing various projects and key relationships that will contribute to the long-term resilience of CTA.

Ms Nangsa Chodon was appointed as the Representative at OOT South Africa on 2 April 2014. She was earlier the Secretary of the Tibetan Public Service Commission. She is one of the senior most Tibetan bureaucrats, having served in various capacities in the Central Tibetan Administration. She is also a Fulbright scholar.

Ms Tenzin Dhardon Sharling was born in the year 1981. She is an alumnus of TCV school and has a degree in MA Journalism from Chennai. She attained another MA degree from the United Kingdom. From 2009, she served as a central executive member of Tibetan Women's Association and from 2009; she was the chair of International Tibet Network. She was a member of the 15th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and was also elected to the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-exile with a massive margin.

Mr Kaydor Aukartsang is the former Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Office of Tibet based in Washington DC since September 2013. Before taking up the post, Mr Aukartsang served as a Special Adviser to Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the democratically elected leader of the Tibetan people. Prior to that, Mr Aukartsang served as President of the Tibetan Association of Northern California; Development Director at the Natural Capital Institute; and Philanthropic Adviser with the Tides Foundation. Mr Kaydor Aukartsang holds BA degree from St. Stephen's

College, University of Delhi, India, and MA degree in International Business and Politics from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Boston, USA.

USAID Awards a Grant of USD 23 Million to Strengthen Self-reliance and Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded a grant of USD 23 Million over five years to strengthen self-reliance and resilience of Tibetan communities in South Asia. The grant will be effective from 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2021.

The overall goal of the program is to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of Tibetans and Tibetan communities in South Asia by equipping them to thrive economically, become effective leaders; and maintaining the vitality of Tibetan communities and institutions while sustaining their unique identity and culture.

Key program areas consists of Leadership Development including institutional capacity building; establishing of a banking-like institution, and an integrated Settlement Development through community participatory process. The programs will maximize local participation and ownership of the development process and a crosscutting gender component will incorporate women's perspective and participation in the design

and implementation of all sustainable livelihoods strategies.

Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Tibetan community would like to deeply thank the government and people of United States for this generous development assistance. CTA will partner with the Tibet Fund and other organisations and make maximum efforts to achieve the core program goals.

New Taiwanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet Formed at Taipei

A press conference was held at the Taiwanese parliamentary building to announce the formation of a new Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet on 8 October 2016.

Taiwanese lawmaker Mr Freddy Lim, Chair of the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet, explained the aims and objectives for establishing this parliamentary group. He said that this parliamentary group is a bipartisan group of parliamentarians from across the Taiwanese political spectrum who will collaborate and consolidate efforts to highlight the issue of Tibet in Taiwan as well as on the international stage.

Ms Hsiao Bi-khim, Vice-chair of the parliamentary group, said that she has attended the World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet several times and expressed her continued support for Tibet.

The chief guest at the press conference was Mr Dawa Tsering, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Office of Tibet based in Taipei. He thanked the Taiwanese parliamentarians for their support to Tibet and said that the Tibet issue is not restricted to independence or the Middle Way alone. It is also about minority rights, sinicisation of Tibet through population influx, destruction of Tibet's environment, human rights, religious freedom and cultural preservation, etc. He added that all these issues need to be looked into with a special focus.

Members of the Tibetan Parliament Mr Lobsang Dakpa and Ms Tsering Lhamo, who were specially invited by the Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet, also addressed the press conference. They explained the political situation of Tibet and called for a collective effort to raise the issue of Tibet and more collaboration between the Tibetan and Taiwanese parliaments.

Ms Kolas Yotaka, Ms Yu Mei-nu and Mr Tuan Yi-kang, members of the Taiwanese parliament also spoke at the press conference. The Thank you speech was delivered by Mr Tashi Tsering, President of Tibetan community.

A delegation of Taiwanese parliamentarians led by Mr Freddy Lim visited the Central Tibetan Administration in September. During their visit, they met



A group photo of the Taiwanese parliamentarians and Tibetan parliamentarians with Representative Mr Dawa Tsering and Mr Tashi Tsering, 8 October 2016.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and other leaders of the Tibetan movement.

The newly formed Taiwanese parliamentary group for Tibet has more than 30 members from various Taiwanese political parties including the New Power Party, Kuomintang party, Democratic Progressive Party, etc.

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'Thank You India' Program Begins in Orange City of India, Nagpur

The third leg of 'Thank You India' program organised by the Central Tibetan Administration began today at the Drag-on Palace Temple in Kamptee, Nagpur on 9 October. Around 500 people gathered at the venue to mark the program.

A lighting of lamp and brief prayer ceremony was conducted at the beginning of the program to pay condolence to the 144 Tibetans who have self-immolated for the cause of Tibet since 2009.

The chief guest at the event was Shri R K Khriemey, National Convener, Core group for Tibet Cause and Shri Arvind Nikose, National Co-Convener and Shri Sandesh Meshram, Regional Convener of Maharashtra. Other guests include Mr Karma Gelek, Members of Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Mr Karma Dhargyal, Tibetan Settlement Officer of Norgyeling, Bhandara, Mr Jigme Tsultrim, Coordinator, India Tibet Coordination Office, staff of Tibet Museum and researchers of Tibet Policy Institute, Central Tibetan Administration.

In his introductory remarks, Shri R K Khriemey, National Convener of Core group for Tibet Cause said that 'the arrival of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India was a blessing for Buddhists in India'.

He further elaborated on the peaceful border shared by Tibet and India prior to 1959, the subsequent brutal occupation of Tibet by China in 1959 and the escalating border tension between India-China over the years as a result of the Chinese occupation of Tibet. "Crores of rupees are spent for the security of these borders these days," he said.

The first day program featured two sessions of talk series by several speakers, photo exhibitions on the titles 'Indo-Tibet Relations' and 'A Long Look Homeward'. A special stall focusing on Sowa Rigpa, a traditional Tibetan



healing science was opened by the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute's branch clinic based in Bhandara.

The first session of the talk series was moderated by Shri Amruth Bansood, General Secretary, Indo-Tibet Friendship Society of Bhandra, Maharashtra.

Researcher at Tibet Policy Institute Zamlha Tempa Gyaltzen spoke in great detail about the 'Ecological importance of Tibet'. He explained the significance of the Tibetan plateau, the current environmental situation in Tibet and its global implications particularly the increasing frequency of natural disasters as a result of excessive damming on Tibetan rivers.

TPI Researcher Mr Tenzin Tsultrim, gave a presentation on the 'Militirisation of Tibet' leading to an arms race along the Indo-Tibetan border.

Professor Shyam Nath Mishra, Department of Political Science, Government College, Khetri, Rajasthan spoke about the 'Human Rights Situation inside Tibet'.

Dr Puran Meshram, Registrar, Nagpur University gave a presentation on 'Tibet's Role in Sino-India Relations'.

Advocate Sandesh Bhalekar, Translator and activist, Tibet Support Group, Nagpur shared his opinion and knowledge about Tibet to the participants.

The second session of the talk series was moderated by Shri Sachin Ramteke, Organising Secretary, Indo-Tibet Friendship Society, Maharashtra. Dr Bhau Lokhande, Head of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Chair, Nagpur University spoke on 'Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's thought upon Tibet'.

Ven Mehar Singh Negi, Ph.D, Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh gave a talk on 'Buddhism in Tibet and its relation to Nalanda Tradition' followed by Q&A session.

As a mark of gratitude to the People and Government of India for their genuine support and concern to the Tibet cause, Central Tibetan Administration has organised a 'Thank You India' program at various cities of India such as O.P Jindal University in Sonapat, Haryana, and Malabar Palace in Calicut, Kerala in the past few months. The same will be organised in the cities of Chennai in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in the upcoming days.

Older Generation are the Pillars of Tibetan Community: Sikyong at Closing Ceremony of 11th Settlement Officers Meeting cum Workshop



A group photo of Tibetan settlement officers with Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay at Nyatri hall, Gangchen Kyishong, 20 October 2016.
Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay addressed the closing ceremony of the 11th annual Tibetan settlement officers meeting cum workshop at Nyatri hall. Over 43 settlement officers across India, Nepal and Bhutan participated in the four-day meeting cum workshop.

The closing ceremony was attended by Home Kalon Mr Sonam Topgyal Khorlatsang, Acting Secretary Chemi Rigzin, Additional Secretaries Mrs Tsewang Dolma and Mr Karma Choeying and staff of home department.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the settlement officers meeting, Sikyong observed that the shared sense of progress and vision encapsulated in the four-day discussion laid a foundation for renewed efforts in serving the overall welfare of the community.

Sikyong particularly stressed that both the central and local administration need a renewed focus on radically addressing the grievances of the poorer section in Tibetan community and improving care for elder people who are more vulnerable to poverty.

Unveiling improved schemes and support for older section of Tibetan community, Sikyong avowed that the older generations are the pillars of our community and expressed in-depth gratitude and respect for their lifelong contribution to the community. "The elder people of our community are the pioneer generation who spearheaded the Tibetan movement in its most difficult phase and led us on a path of development which has transformed the lives of the exile Tibetan population. They are the pioneer generation who experienced first hand, the brutal occupation of Tibet and fought real battles against the Chinese army."

Sikyong asserted that the local administration are central to addressing public grievances and therefore, must do what they can to protect the overall welfare of the people.

Mr Karma Choeying, Additional Secretary of the home department delivered the vote of thanks.

Some of the key proposals and discussions in the four-day meeting cum workshop includes proposals to set out improvement in elderly-care; revamped schemes to provide a vital safety net for the poorer section of our community including immediate financial and medical support; formulation of an all-round sustainable development projects; registration and acquisition of official status for the Tibetan settlements at its respective district administration; establishment of a complete database information system for Central Tibetan Administration and its offices.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Inaugurates 7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups

His Holiness the Dalai Lama graced the inauguration of the seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups at Saint-Louis University, Brussels, on Thursday, 8 September 2016.

His Holiness was welcomed at the entrance of the University by Mr Thomas Mann, President of the Tibet Interest Group in the European Parliament, Thomas Mann, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the Tibetan Parliament.

Entering the hall His Holiness gradually made his way along the front row, shaking hands and waving to many old friends. Encountering blind Chinese activist Chen Guangcheng he took off his glasses and invited him to feel his face by way of greeting.

The inaugural ceremony of the conference began with welcome remarks by Moderator Tsering Jhampa of ICT Europe. She mentioned that Brussels was a fitting location for such a meeting since, in the face of China's economic expansion, it is important for bodies like the European Union to develop appropriately strong policies.

First speaker, Thomas Mann, welcomed his fellow guests and remarked that this 7th TSG Conference provided an opportunity to send a message to China. He said the European Parliament and the European community stand by their Tibetan friends.

Mr Thomas Mann was followed by Mr Henri Malosse, former President of the European Economic and Social Committee, who told the gathering that coming from Corsica he was personally familiar with a people's struggle to preserve their identity. He recalled coming to Dharamsala to address the 10 March Tibetan Uprising Day in 2014, much to the local Chinese Ambassador's irritation. He encouraged the pursuit of dialogue to achieve progress, saying:

"We must never forget to mention human rights, civil rights and political freedom for everyone. When the EU is tough on small countries about these issues, why does it go easy on China? The Tibet issue affects us all because our response to it reflects our values."

Cristian Preda, Vice Chair of the Human Rights sub-Committee and Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, assured the meeting of the widespread support for the Tibetan issue in the European Parliament. He suggested that despite China's having rejected the Middle Way Approach, the need to enter into dialogue is ever more urgent.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay began by acknowledging his sense of honour to be in the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is a beacon of hope regarded by the Tibetan people as the life and soul of Tibet. On behalf of the Central Tibetan Administration, (CTA) he thanked everyone participating in the conference, suggesting that what was required was the wisdom of elders and the enthusiasm of youth. With those, he asserted, "We will succeed. We will fulfil the aspirations of Tibetans in Tibet." He noted that because the next two years will see potentially great changes in China it would be crucial to enter into dialogue to resolve the issue of Tibet.

Alluding to the grim reality that Tibetans are still repressed and Tibet is still occupied, a situation so desperate that three nuns have recently committed suicide and 144 other Tibetans in recent years have self-immolated, he expressed his determination to find a peaceful solution and make the Middle Way Approach a success. He expressed confidence that there will be a return to Tibet, to the Jokhang, Ramoche and the Kalachakra ground before the Potala.

Tsering Jhampa thanked the Sikyong for his uplifting speech and assured him, "We will make a difference." She invited

Jan Peumans, Speaker of the Flemish Parliament to address the gathering. He resolved to come up with fresh ideas to fulfil the cause by peaceful means. He remarked that while he and his fellow countrymen and women live on a different continent and look different from Tibetans, what brings them all together is, "We are all human beings."

Not previously scheduled to speak, Richard Gere called on the conference to take the opportunity to think again, to be visionary, not to feel beaten down by increasing Chinese economic power, but to view it as part of a world of opportunity. "We have to try to create the world we want our children to live in," he said, "taking His Holiness's sense of fairness and justice as a guide. We have to see the Chinese people as brothers and sisters. We need to look ahead to a brighter future."

Stating that what keeps many Tibet Supporters going is the inspiration they derive from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as well as the Tibetan people in Tibet, Tsering Jhampa invited His Holiness to speak.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in his keynote address, began:

"Since we are all human beings, I always prefer to talk informally. I'm a Tibetan and therefore one of the 7 billion human beings alive today. If we look back at the last century there was a huge amount of killing and violence because people thought that the use of force was the way to solve problems. In the interdependent world in which we find ourselves, this is completely out of date. The essence of Tibetan Buddhist culture is peace, non-violence and compassion—what the whole world needs. I believe all 7 billion human beings have a responsibility to make an effort to create a more compassionate world. We won't see a result next year or even in the next decade, but if we start now we may see positive change

within this century.

“I do whatever I can on the basis of Shantideva’s advice that if a problem can be solved we should act to do so, but if it can’t be solved, worrying about it is of no use. Consequently my mind is calm.

“Scientific findings that basic human nature is compassionate is a source of hope. Remembering that we are all equally human beings, we have to think of the welfare of all.”

His Holiness called on his friends and supporters of Tibet to take a broader view; to work to emulate his commitments to promote human happiness and encourage inter-religious harmony. In addition, he described himself as Tibetan and someone the Tibetan people trust. He described being interested in democracy since childhood and after failing to implement reforms in Tibet, working to establish it in exile. The result was that with an elected leadership he felt able to semi-retire in 2001 and retire completely in 2011. What’s more he willingly put an end to the Dalai Lamas taking a political role in the future.

He said his retirement allowed him to work for the preservation of Tibetan culture and language. One of the ways of doing this has been engaging in dialogue with modern scientists. Many of them are interested in learning from Tibetan experience and understanding of the workings of the mind and emotions.

“What’s important is to understand how disturbing emotions like anger, fear and suspicion can be. They lead to violence. Prayer won’t help, but understanding, developing and applying compassion, unbiased and free of attachment, can.”

His Holiness also touched on the importance of proper ecology on the Tibetan plateau for Tibetans, Chinese and the world at large. With regard to Tibet, he said there is a problem. It’s not good for Tibetans, but it is also not good for Chinese. It is something that must be resolved. He mentioned his belief in truth, that in the short term the power of the gun may seem stronger, but in the long term it is the truth that endures. Finally, he noted that while leaders and governments come and go, the people as a whole remain, so growing contacts and

sympathy among the Chinese people are significant. The meeting ended with Marc Liegeois, President Les Amis du Tibet, Belgium, offering a vote of thanks. Continuing to interact with people as he left the hall, His Holiness returned to his hotel.

At least 250 delegates from over 50 countries including 29 Chinese participants and 103 European participants are currently participating in the three-day conference.

The five decades old Tibetan struggle led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama generated intense and active interest for Tibet from people of all walks of life internationally since 1959. As a result, numerous Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) have been formed around the world, giving a major fillip to the international Tibet support movement. These support groups, formed voluntarily and working in close cooperation with the Tibetan people but independent of CTA, have helped in creating increased awareness about the situation in Tibet and generating an impressive level of world-wide support for Tibet.

Statement of 7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups

The Seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups (TSGs) was convened in Brussels by the Tibet Interest Group in the European Parliament, and co-hosted by the International Campaign for Tibet, Lights on Tibet, les Amis du Tibet and the Tibetan Community in Belgium and facilitated by the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration. Over 250 delegates representing support groups from 50 countries and all continents, members of other NGOs and special guests participated in the conference.

The Conference drew inspiration and strategic benefit from the diverse skills and perspectives and from the sense of common purpose of TSGs from around the world. It examined the current situation in occupied Tibet, especially the political, human rights and environmental developments there, assessed the state of

the Tibet freedom movement, and drew up plans for coordinated action.

During the inaugural ceremony on September 8, 2016, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who addressed the Conference as the Guest of Honour, explained his three commitments, in view of his recent devolution of political authority. Other speakers at the inaugural session included members of the European Parliament, Thomas Mann and Cristian Dan Preda, and the Speaker of the Flemish Parliament, Jan Peumans, as well as the former President of the European Economic and Social Committee, Henri Malosse, and the Chairman of the International Campaign for Tibet, Richard Gere. Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay reiterated the Tibetan leadership’s commitment to resolve the issue of Tibet through the Middle Way approach and called on the international community to support these efforts. The Conference was graced by the

participation of the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament, Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, the Vice President of the German Parliament, Claudia Roth, and member of the European Parliament, Csaba Sogor, who addressed the closing session.

The Conference welcomes the strong participation of Chinese lawyers, scholars and human rights activists in its deliberations and regards their engagement as an expression of the growing solidarity between the Chinese people and the Tibetan people.

The Conference notes with great concern the worsening of the human rights situation in Tibet, including the repression of religious freedom and the suppression of the Tibetan national identity and language under the increasingly authoritarian regime. It expresses solidarity with all Political Prisoners in Tibet. In this context, the Conference welcomes recent

joint actions by concerned governments on China and, building on this, urges increased action on Tibet.

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

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

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

The Conference considers the Chinese government's demand that His Holiness declare that Tibet has been a part of China since antiquity entirely unacceptable both because of the falseness of this historical claim and because this precondition forms an obstacle to earnest negotiations. It reaffirms its conviction that Tibet has not historically been a part of China

and that the Tibetan people have the right to determine their own destiny. The Conference emphasizes that the PRC cannot obtain legitimacy for its rule over Tibet by attempting to force His Holiness and members of the international community to endorse its untruthful claims. It can only gain legitimacy for a role in Tibet from the Tibetan people themselves, through a mutually beneficial agreement and by implementing real changes in its policies and behavior towards the Tibetans in accordance with the latter's needs and aspirations. The conference consequently calls on the Chinese government to unconditionally resume dialogue and on other governments to resist Chinese government pressure to endorse China's claim to Tibet, and to persuade China's leaders to abandon the shameless precondition.

The Conference commends the Tibetan community in exile and individual Tibetans for exercising their democratic rights in electing the leadership of the Central Tibetan Administration, the legitimate-representative of the Tibetan nation and people.

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

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

Human Rights action

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

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

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

Action on language rights at the United Nations.

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

Reclaiming the truth

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

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

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

Chinese outreach

Translate Tibetan testimonies and personal stories for distribution in Chinese.

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

Environmental action

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

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

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

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

Address of Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel, at the Seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, Brussels



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel speaking at Seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, Brussels.

On behalf of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile I would like to offer my greetings to the guests, the delegates from the Tibet Support Groups, and, likewise, to all those who have taken interest and responsibilities in organizing this Seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups.

You all have sacrificed precious time in devoting yourself to making efforts in support of the Tibetan cause. And it is in the course of making such efforts that you have especially come to attend today's conference and taken part in holding discussions to bring forward the most desirable and the best possible proposals designed to benefit the Tibetan cause. We are particularly grateful to you that this conference has taken place in a period of such great tragedy as today in the history of Tibet and the Tibetan people. Your sense of altruism, fortitude, and unwavering determination has instilled trust and pride in us towards you. Likewise, this has become a new source of courage and faith in the Tibetan people in Tibet. In this connection, let me quote at this forum what His Holiness the Dalai Lama routinely says about your dedication to the Tibetan cause: "I do not consider those who support the Tibetan cause to

be anti-China and pro-Tibet. Rather, I consider them people who have faith in and support the truth." Just as His Holiness the Dalai Lama reiterates this repeatedly, you have stood on the side of truth and extended your support to us. We offer heartfelt thanks to you for your stand.

As you all know very well, it has now been about 57 years since the government of China occupied and annexed Tibet through the use of armed force. Likewise, this is also the number of years His Holiness the Dalai Lama has lived in exile. I do not wish to go into a discourse on the history and the historical status of Tibet at this time. Immediately after arriving in the friendly neighbouring country of India – to which we owe a great debt of gratitude – His Holiness the Dalai Lama, with great commitment, took gradual and determined steps towards the noble path of democratizing the Tibetan governance system in exile. It was in continuance of this course that this year general elections to the 16th Tibetan Parliament in exile and to the post of Sikyong, the political leader of the Tibetan people, were successfully held, reaffirming the democratic vibrancy of the Tibetan administration system.

Within the Tibetan community in exile, the various settlements, schools, monastic centres, and Tibetan associations, and likewise, the non-governmental organizations and others, continue to make unprecedented efforts in the struggle for the just cause of Tibet and, likewise, in the areas of upholding the Tibetan religious heritage, culture, and language. Our wish is that the government of China agrees to enable the realization, in a short period of time, of a day when His Holiness the Dalai Lama returns to Tibet and when the Tibetan people in exile and those remaining in Tibet are reunited. We must remain ready at all times to grab the opportunity, wasting no time, for the possibility of the realization of such an eventuality. But even if such a fortunate turn of events is to take a long time to realize, the Tibetan people living in exile are already in a more or less strong enough position to be able to carry forward the national struggle and preserve their linguistic and cultural heritages.

Tibetans living in Chinese ruled Tibet have no freedom and opportunities. They are under pressure at all times to be careful and cautious about how they carry on their day to day living. Besides, the government of China continues to exercise such severe controls and restrictions as to effect a day to day degeneration of the Tibetan people's customs, religion, culture, and language. Just few examples will suffice to prove this point. In 2007, China issued what it called "Measures on the Management of the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas". And in 2015 it launched an "Online Database of Living Buddhas". These are clear proof that China exercises severe control on Tibet's unique religious system of reincarnation. And this proof is further reinforced by the fact that this year the government of China launched a drive to demolish residences of monks and nuns at the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy so as to reduce the student population at this globally famed centre for the study of Tibetan Buddhism.

The situation of the political prisoners in Chinese ruled Tibet too has been continuing to get more severe. Many of them are given long prison sentences. And without any consideration to their health and physical conditions, many Tibetan political prisoners are subjected to such severe and brutal beating and torture that some of them die in prison. The most prominent example of such death is that of the highly respected religious figure Tulku Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche. Some of the Tibetan political prisoners, although released, fail to remain alive for long due to chronic ailments resulting from severe ill-treatment during their incarceration. Few reported example of such cases are that of Gyaye Phuntsog, a nomad of Domey Tsolho. Another reported example is that of Ashagtsang Norlha of Kham Derge. Yet another very recent example is that of monk Khyenrab of Dhingri Shelkar Monastery near Shigatse.

To sum up, China is actively carrying out in Tibet its aims to colonize the territory. For example, take the case of Tibet's capital Lhasa. A little over a decade ago, it was already being estimated that for every one Tibetan, there were six Chinese people living in it. In fact, in the urban areas of Tibet, the Chinese people are fast outnumbering the local Tibetan residents.

Likewise, in 2008 almost the whole of Tibet was hit by large scale peaceful protests against Chinese rule. And in 2009, Tibetans began protesting against Chinese rule by setting themselves on fire. Since then, until 23rd March 2016, a total of 144 monks, nuns, and lay Tibetan men and women have immolated themselves. Among them, 124 are known to have died. And there is still no clear information whether the remaining 20 are alive or had died. The demands and aspirations of all those Tibetan martyrs were the same: That His Holiness the Dalai Lama should be invited to return to his homeland of Tibet; Tibetans should be allowed full enjoyment of their freedoms, and so on. They have raised these demands in various forms – in their slogans while carrying out the self-immolation as well as in the last messages many of them left behind. But far from paying any heed and taking interest in their sac-

rifices and demands, the government of China resorted to humiliating the families and spouses of the self-immolators, blaming in all sorts of other ways for the reasons for the self-immolations in order to carry out a false publicity about the actual situation.

Across the world as a whole there is a phenomenon of inability to think things in terms of ethics, on the basis of affection for others, with a feeling of equality of everyone and so on due to economic imperatives, pressures of military might and threats arising from new generations of nuclear weaponry, and, likewise, the need to combat various kinds of threats posed by terrorism. Likewise, the government of China puts up an appearance of being the very model of uprightness in its behaviours, with the people being claimed to be in full enjoyment of their rights. In reality, however, the government of China relies on the power of its economic and military strength to ignore many of its citizens' rights and to conceal this fact in an effort to ensure that the outside world does not come to know about the true situation.

On the issue of Tibet, there has been a series of talks between envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the government of China. However, the government of China did not make any ethical change in its attitude. Nevertheless the Tibetan efforts to achieve a just solution to the issue of Tibet on the basis of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's proposal for a middle way solution, which is also the political stand of the Central Tibetan Administration, continues. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has repeatedly stressed that in the 21st century, in which we live today, HH

efforts should be continued to resolve differences through peaceful, non-violent means. This call is founded on a sound reasoning and we have full faith that the issue of Tibet will be resolved accordingly. From the side of the government of China too, there should be a repeated consideration of the issue of Tibet in a sustained and numerous efforts. I wish to take this opportunity to again appeal to the government of China to make efforts to resolve the Sino-Tibetan dispute through a negotiated settlement.

The fact that this Seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups could be held in Brussels over a period of three days; that His Holiness the Dalai Lama very graciously attended its inaugural session; that many prominent public figures attended it and addressed the conference; and that, likewise, numerous members from Tibet Support groups in many countries held free discussions on numerous important topics such as the real situations of the Tibetan people in Tibet, the state of the issue of Tibet on the world stage, the environmental situation in Tibet, and ways to achieve the just cause of the Tibetan people through Sino-Tibetan interactions, have succeeded in sending a clear message to China too.

We remain confident that throughout the period from the end of this conference till such time as when the just cause of the Tibetan people will prevail, the members of the Tibet Support Groups will, with great spirit and enthusiasm, succeed in persuading peoples, governments, parliaments and so on both internationally and within their own respective countries to realize the urgent need to take interest to support the Tibetan cause. Likewise, we are greatly pleased that many Chinese people living overseas have been able to attend this conference. We perceive great benefits in terms of influencing the government of China and creating an understanding of the real situation in Tibet if you are able to discuss the Tibetan issue amongst yourself with a degree of emphatic interest. We therefore felt an urge to request you all to do your best to try to bring this about.

Thank you; I will end my closing statement here. I once again take this opportunity to offer my thanks to all the invited guests at this conference, all those who have organized and facilitated the organizing of this conference, and the Tibet Support Group members who have attended this conference. Tashi Delek.

By the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile

10 September 2016

7th International TSG Conference Concludes, Proposes Comprehensive Action Plans

China can only gain legitimacy for a role in Tibet from the Tibetan people themselves, by implementing real changes in its policies and behavior towards the Tibetans, Tibet Support Groups say

The Seventh International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, facilitated by the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) concluded successfully on Saturday, 10 September, after three days of intense deliberation and discussions.

Over 250 delegates from Tibet Support Groups based in 50 countries met to examine the current situation in Tibet, especially the political, human rights and environmental developments, and drew up plans for coordinated action to amplify the worldwide Tibet movement.

The chief guest at the concluding session of the conference was Ms Claudia Roth, Vice President of German Bundestag. Other guests at the session include Mr Csaba Sogor, member of the European Parliament, Tibetan political leader Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel of the Tibetan Parliament and Mr Sonam Norbu Dagpo, Secretary of international relations at the Department of Information and International Relations.



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay offering ceremonial Tibetan scarves to the guests as a token of gratitude for their support towards the Tibetan movement.

In her address Ms Claudia Roth, Vice President of German Bundestag, said:



Delegates at the 7th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups posing for a group photo.

“Please feel assured that my party – the Green Party in Germany – and so many people in Europe stand at the side of Tibet, when it comes to fighting climate change and also what is now 57 years of non-violent resistance by the Tibetan people.

This is why gathering like this at the 7th International Tibet Support Group conference is of paramount importance to fight for justice.

Today Tibetans are recognised as victim of what can only be described as reckless power politics. The Tibetan non-violent struggle has turned into a symbol of peace, therefore and for many other reasons I would like to take opportunity to express my most profound respect and gratitude to Tenzin Gyatso the 14th Dalai Lama.

Let the people in Tibet live in freedom, give them the power to decide upon their own destinies and give Tibetan culture the opportunity to thrive and flourish.

Of course this message goes primarily to the leaders in Beijing who don’t want to hear a thing about the Tibetan people’s right.”

During the three-day conference, the TSG members expressed its complete and continuing solidarity with the non-violent struggle of the Tibetan people for freedom and restoration of their fundamental human rights.

They also expressed great concern at the devastating impact of China’s policies on Tibet’s fragile and globally vital environment, notably the damming of Asia’s rivers, destructive mining practices and coercive settlement of Tibetan pastoral nomads.

Placing the responsibility of the crisis in Tibet on China and their failed policies, the TSGs said the Chinese government should implement real changes in its policies and behavior towards the Tibetans and resume dialogue with Tibetan representatives to arrive at a mutually beneficial agreement.

They further called on governments and the international community to resist Chinese pressure to endorse China’s claim to Tibet and urged them to persuade China’s leaders to abandon the shameless precondition.

“We reaffirm our commitment to support His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration leadership’s persistent call for earnest dialogue to resolve the Tibetan issue,” the TSGs said.

“We will further strengthen our efforts to press the international community to persuade the Chinese leadership to resume dialogue and will continue our dedication until a satisfactory solution has been achieved,” they added.

The three-day conference also outlined a series of Action Plans to be carefully considered and developed including joint and individual action by governments on violation of religious freedom, legal action in national courts on the basis of universal jurisdiction, action on language rights at the United Nations, list the 1959 Tibetan national uprising among the UNESCO’s heritage of Memories of the World, to press all affected countries in particular the PRC to enter into a water-sharing agreement regarding the waters originating from the Tibetan plateau, etc.

Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the Occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day

2 September 2016, the outstanding day on which we commemorate the 56th anniversary of the establishment of the noble Tibetan democratic system which incorporates the best of religious and political ethos. On this occasion, I, on behalf of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, offer my greetings and good wishes to my beloved fellow-Tibetans both in Tibet and in exile.

In 1959, the communist government of China seized by use of military force the entire territory of Tibet and imposed its occupation rule over the Tibetan people. Because of it, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the supreme temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet, was left with no choice but to escape his homeland and seek refuge in the sacred land of neighbouring India. More than eighty thousand Tibetans were, likewise, forced to flee into exile in the footsteps of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Immediately on stepping foot on Indian soil, His Holiness the Dalai Lama set out to build from scratch all the institutions of a Tibetan government in exile. Along with it, he began the process of newly establishing a Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile with its members representing all the three traditional provinces of Tibet as well as Tibet's different religious traditions. And on 2 September 1960, the first members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile formally took their oath of office, heralding the establishment of a noble democratic system of Tibet. In 1961, a document outlining the basic features of a constitution for a future Tibet was announced. And in 1963, a constitution of Tibet was promulgated. In 1991, His Holiness the Dalai Lama fixed the term of the elected parliament, increased the number of its members, and introduced other changes to transform it into a meaningful lawmaking body. In keeping with this development, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, on 28 June 1991, gave his assent to the Charter of Tibetans in Exile which had been discussed and adopted by the 11th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Over the years since then, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has been able to adopt,



Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel delivering the statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the occasion 56th anniversary of the Tibetan democracy day. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

so far, a total of nearly thirty legislative acts as well as rules and regulations of different lengths of the Central Tibetan Administration. In 2001, a new system was instituted by which the Tibetan people directly elected their Kalon Tripa, the executive head of the Central Tibetan Administration. This was a big step forward in the exile Tibetan people's progress towards democratic development. In particular, in 2011, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, by especially keeping in mind both the immediate and long term interests of the Tibetan people, and after appraising the numerous pros and cons and the reasons underlying them, devolved all his historical political and administrative powers to the leaders elected by the Tibetan people themselves. And His Holiness agreed to be a symbolic representation of the aspirations of the Tibetan people living both in Tibet and in exile and resolved to be of effective service to them. And the exile Tibetan democratic institutions have continued to be carried on in as close a conformity as one may imagine with the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

As to whether the democratic system of the Tibetans in exile will attain stability and make progress, much will depend on

the intellectual maturity, the capability to uphold the greater good of the whole above all else, and the existence of a sense of cooperation within the Tibetan public. It was with this understanding that recently, after they took their oath of office, the members of the 16th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile were divided into teams and designated to visit all the different places where Tibetans have settled. And the agenda of the teams was to make the Tibetan people understand – and thereby boost their morale – with explanations of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's enormous, ever flourishing deeds, how truly tragic the situation in Tibet today remains, about the status of the Tibet issue in the context of the global political situation, about the legislative and other parliamentary works of the Tibetan Parliament in-Exile, about the importance for the Tibetan people to maintain and strengthen their internal solidarity, and so on. And the submissions made by the local Tibetan settlements and colonies, their different sections as well as individuals in matters pertaining to their grievances were forwarded to the executive Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration as the principal organ and the relevant departments and other administrative bodies under it to enable

them to provide timely help and resolution or alleviation of problems. This method of attempts to solve the problems of the Tibetan people remains an ongoing endeavour. Through efforts such as these, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has assumed a position akin to a bridge between the Central Tibetan Administration and the general Tibetan public in its ongoing efforts to fulfil its duties.

One important point bears reiterating this time with regard to the development of the Tibetan democracy in exile. With the recent Tibetan general elections for the elections of the Sikyong and the members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Those elections saw fair amounts of incidents of Tibetans forgetting how tragic the situation in Tibet and the people in Tibet had continued to remain and the failure by some to appreciate the importance for the Tibetan people to preserve and adhere to the noble traditions and customs which were supposed to inherent in them without any degeneration. Rather, there were crossing of limits in all areas of the campaigning which was highly adversarial and partisan, imitating the kind of bellicose electioneering which takes place in fully independent, powerful democratic countries of the world. It all led to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the incomparable leader of the Tibetan people, feeling upset and being seized by a compulsion to speak out. Later, during the ceremony at which the Sikyong took his oath of office, His Holiness said, among other things, “to engage in sectarian partisanship and, likewise, provincial and other kinds of strife based on narrow local interests for the sake of a minor temporary purpose for the present can lead to nothing but what one may call parochial minded selfish gains. This is not at all good. We, the Three Province of Tibet, are one as a people, enjoying our happiness together and, likewise, being as one in moments of sorrow. In other words, we are a community of one people, sharing our moments of joy as well as sorrow in togetherness. We all should strive to ensure that there will never be any communalizing of differences based on such things as provincial bias and I want all of you to keep this in mind.” And later His Holiness the Dalai Lama when speaking to a gathering of Tibetan people

in the US state of California, gave this very comforting assurance, “All the discordant issues which cropped up during the recently concluded Tibetan general elections has now completely subsided, like the sky being cleared of all tarnish and the earth of all dust. You can all now be at ease.” As thus spoken by His Holiness, with the elections of the heads of both the executive Kashag and the Tibetan parliament in exile having been concluded, both are now fully immersed in the discharge of their respective duties. All Tibetans must now pool their efforts on the fundamental basis of adhering to an unshakeable bond of fraternity, driven by unequivocal commonality of thought and utterance and through actual deeds, maintaining a singled-pointed chisel like unity. It is therefore time that all the officials of the Central Tibetan Administration and the general Tibetan public work in a cooperative manner to make a positive difference that can result from a unity of purpose.

There is no indication that the government of China may change its policy towards Tibet. In fact, the policy has been becoming ever more repressive and ominous. Let me cite a few examples of the development of such a situation over the past several months. China has been putting out misleading information that by carrying out its plan to build a railway line up to the Tibetan county of Kyirong, which is close to the border with Nepal over the Himalayas, by the year 2020, it intended to link Tibet with the major markets in the Southeast Asian countries and especially India. It also falsely seeks to explain how by establishing a flourishing tourism industry in Kyirong which has beautiful sceneries, the livelihood problems of the local Tibetan people will be solved. However, in reality, the project is seen as being designed to carry out China’s long term expansionist aim that apart from Tibet also poses serious territorial risks to other neighbouring countries such as Nepal and India.

The pieces of land which farmers and nomads across the Tibetan Plateau had owned and freely used as they wished through many successive generations have been taken away by use of force or otherwise partitioned and divided up,

resulting in immense livelihood pressure on them. Tibetan nomads who had petitioned to the authorities to seek equitable ownership and division or return of their traditionally owned grassland were not only totally ignored but in addition also subjected to persecution. For example, just recently, a Tibetan Buddhist monk named Soepa was arrested from the gateway of the Sershul County government secretariat after he sought to petition the authorities, asking them for a fair redistribution of land which had illegally been confiscated by force from the local Tibetans. After being taken away by the Chinese police, local government officials told him that the land ultimately belonged to the government, that the Tibetan nomadic community should know that they did not have any ownership right over it. He was also told that if in future Tibetans resorted to petitioning the authorities by refusing to respect decisions of the government of China over land issues, police would be sent to arrest and jail them. Given the situation such as this, it has become extremely difficult for the Tibetan people to sustain their livelihood in their own ancestral land.

Likewise, China had earlier, in the year 2002, carried out a brutal policy on the Serta Larung Ngarig Nangten Lobling in Serta County of Karze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Tibet, imposing a severe reduction in the number of monks and nuns who could study in it, demolishing residences of monks and nuns to be expelled, and carrying out other kinds of repression. And this year China again issued a similar order, saying the religious academy had too many monks and nuns and their numbers needed to be drastically reduced, that the number of residences of monks and nuns was also too high and that many of them therefore needed to be demolished. The order began to be carried out on 20 July and it is still continuing without any care and concern for the sanctity and dignity of the famed Larung Gar Buddhist Academy. This remains a matter of serious concern to us. The government of the United States of America and others as well as various other major forums have paid attention to this development and also expressed serious concerns. The monks and nuns of the Larung Gar Buddhist Academy have

been devoted solely to studying Buddhism and its culture and science and to seeking to benefit Buddhism and sentient beings without being involved in any sort of illegal activity. These actions of the government of China clearly expose its hypocrisy on policy towards religious freedom: it routinely claims that there is religious freedom in Tibet. But it clearly expose in reality the restrictions and prohibitions in religious freedom.

Likewise, on 28 July 2016, the government of China distributed to each residence of the monks of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County a booklet titled “case-based law learning textbook for monasteries” and issued a stern order, saying each monk must intensely study the text. This case-based law learning textbook for monasteries was written in both Tibetan and Chinese languages. Tibetans in Tibet have explained that this is nothing but an attempt by China to give an appearance of legality to its implementation of brutal policies in Tibet which are in violation of international law. The communist government of China has been publishing such misleading documents, making baseless allegations against the Tibetan people, as a cover for its policy of vio-

lent repression. With regard to all aspects of the Tibetan people’s struggle for their fundamental cause, governments across the world, including the United States of America and European countries, parliaments, organizations of various kinds and so on have been continuous in rendering support. In particular, the support from the government and people of India has been especially crucial. Recently, led by the Deputy Speaker, a delegation of members of the Tibetan Parliament in exile called on a number of members of both the Houses of the Indian Parliament during its Monsoon Session in New Delhi. The purpose was to establish rapport, raise awareness about all aspects of the issue of Tibet, and seek support for it. And today, as we commemorate the 56th anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day on the Thekchen Choling compound here, we have been joined in our celebrations function by members of the Indian parliament who with giving of speeches and in other manners have extended their support for the issue of Tibet. I take this opportunity to offer my thanks to them all for their having taken interest in the issue of Tibet and for giving support for it.

On the fundamental question of the ways in which the just cause of Tibet should be seen resolved, the cultural and religious heritage of the Tibetan people preserved and carried on, and on other related matters, the main factor remains the zest of the Tibetan people to produce results in all their endeavours at all times in keeping with the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We accordingly call on every Tibetan to remain unrelenting and adhere steadfastly to their commitment at all times in persevering to reach their goal. This is a matter of utmost importance.

Finally, we pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the irreplaceable leader of the Tibetan people, live for a hundred aeons, that all his wishes be seen spontaneously fulfilled, and that the just cause of the Tibetan people be realized in all speediness.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile,

Dharamshala

2 September 2016

The official website of 34th Kalachakra at Bodh Gaya



The Organising Committee of 34th Kalachakra Initiation has launched official website of Kalachakra 2017 viz., www.kalachakra2017.net or www.kalachakra2017.org. It aims to provide necessary information concerning 34th Kalachakra Initiation to be conferred by the His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, from 3 -14 January 2017 at Bodhgaya, Bihar, India. It also gives information on various facilities like tents, medical and sanitation arranged by the Committee and includes facility for online registration for the foreigners, Monks & Nuns and Himalaya region disciples attending the initiation.

Kashag's Statement on 56th Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day

On the special occasion of the 56th anniversary of Tibetan Democracy day, I on behalf of 15th Kashag and the Tibetans across the world, bow down in deference and gratitude to His Holiness the great 14th Dalai Lama for establishing and steering this democratic system of Central Tibetan Administration. I would like to extend a warm greeting to my fellow Tibetans inside and outside Tibet, the Tibet supporters from both governmental and non-governmental organization and to everyone present here today.

Before the Chinese occupation of Tibet, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama set up a reform committee in an attempt to make structural changes in the Tibetan political and administrative system and transform them into a modern democratic institution. But owing to many formidable challenges the changes weren't implemented. However, soon after his arrival in India, His Holiness followed his vision by making the political system of exile Tibetans a democratic institution.

In 1960, on this very day, the Tibetan parliament-in-exile was established with the assumption of responsibilities by members of Tibetan Parliament elected from three provinces and various religious sects representing Tibetans inside and outside Tibet. Henceforth, the Tibetan democratic system progressed and matured into a full-fledged democratic system, and this is due solely to the pioneering and visionary efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama over the last 56 years. So I take this opportunity on behalf of every Tibetan to express our heartfelt gratitude to our most revered leader.

On 1st July 1960 in Dalhousie, His Holiness shared his vision of democracy. He said, "It is wrong and very dangerous to harbor prejudices between provinces, regions and sects. You should continue to develop internal harmony and be as firmly united as an iron ball." In 1961, a draft democratic constitution for future Tibet was written and in 1963 His Holiness the Dalai Lama promulgated the



Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay delivering the statement on the 56th anniversary on Tibetan democracy day. Photo/Tenzin Phende/DIIR

constitution, which was mainly based on universal values and ideals of democracy. At His Holiness' insistence a clause containing the provision of impeachment of the Dalai Lama was added. In 1964, a female representative was elected to the parliament and this is a great political stride as compared to other democracies in the world where women were disenfranchised. In 1976, representatives of Bon religion were elected to the parliament.

In 1991, His Holiness announced further democratization by making the Tibetan parliament in exile a full fledged legislative body. The Charter of Tibetans in Exile was adopted by the Tibetan Parliament and enacted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Charter provided enlargement of the Tibetan Parliament with powers to elect members of the Kashag after nomination of candidates by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In 1992, the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission was formed, thereby completing the establishment of the three pillars of democracy.

In 2001, His Holiness declared his status as semi-retired and called for the first direct election of the Kalon Tripa, the ex-

ecutive head of Central Tibetan Administration. A decade later His Holiness made a historic change with the announcement of devolution of his political responsibilities to the elected political leader. His Holiness declared on August 08, 2011 at the swearing-in-ceremony of Tibetan political leader that he has fulfilled his 'long cherished goal' of bringing democracy to the Tibetan people. The Tibetan electorate took active part in the election process and the voter turnout in the general elections increased dramatically overtime – from 35,184 voters in 2001, to 49,184 in 2011 to 58,742 in 2016. Yet the recently concluded election witnessed some unfortunate incidents of internal bickering and regional discord that negatively impacted Tibetan unity and caused disappointment for His Holiness. I would like to reminisce the statement of Kashag made on the occasion of His Holiness' 81st birth anniversary and reiterate our steadfast commitment to foster unity among Tibetan people and make electoral reforms to complement the ideals of our unique democracy.

Our freedom movement based in exile follows a democratic system and this is unique and to be celebrated. There is a growing global recognition of the ac-

accomplishments of our democracy. Recently on June 15, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) presented a citation to Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay to recognise and honour the democratic accomplishments of the Central Tibetan Administration, as envisioned by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The event was held at US capital Washington DC, in the gracious presence of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Mr. Martin Frost Chairman of NED board of Directors, in his remarks, expressed the admiration that the organization has for the leadership provided by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Tibetan people:

“Tibetan community under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration has thrived. The Tibetan Diaspora once housed mainly in camps in India and Nepal, is now global. Yet despite the dispersal, nearly six decades in exile and the pressures of assimilation, Tibetan retained a distinct sense of identity and community”

“The CTA has grown significantly over the last 60 years. At the core of the CTA is a commitment to democratic values in institutions, electing the members of Parliament since 1960 and directly electing the Prime Minister also known as a ‘Sikyong’ since 2001,” he added.

Likewise as citizens of a democratic institution we need to be mindful of the fact that while democracy bestows us with the rights it also expects us to shoulder our responsibilities. Like two sides of the same coin, rights and responsibility are closely entwined. Democracy confers you with the right to speech and freedom of expression and in a democracy diversity of opinion should be respected. But these rights and privileges shouldn't be misused. As much as democracy gives you the right and freedom, it also demands accountability, ownership and agency. Engaging in acts of defaming His Holiness the Dalai Lama and leveling unfounded criticism against the CTA is an affront to the gift and tenets of Tibetan democracy.

We vehemently condemn the fringe group of extremists who bear the name

of Shugden and have been making concerted efforts to denigrate the work and accomplishments of His Holiness. While we deplore the planned demonstrations against His Holiness, orchestrated by the Chinese government, we vow to confront these matters.

After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the situation continue to remain grim with an abysmal human rights situation, crackdown on religious freedom and with the Chinese policies in Tibet leading to the obliteration of Tibetan identity and sinicization of Tibet. Till date 144 Tibetans in Tibet have self-immolated in protest against the Chinese policies. Tibetans working for the welfare of Tibetans inside Tibet are arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up charges. In 2015, respected Tibetan Buddhist leader Tenzin Delek Rinpoche died in custody after serving 13 years in prison on trumped-up criminal charges.

China's policies of infrastructure development, mining and rapid urbanization have aggravated environmental degradation across Tibet impacting the quantity and quality of water resources which affect multiple downstream nations. China's fast-paced large hydropower and water diversion projects on the Tibetan Plateau have already started impacting water quality and freshwater fish in Tibet. If these dam projects continue operation or are implemented at the current rate, the water security of nearly 1.4 billion people downstream will be heavily compromised.

In China, crackdown on civil society groups, lawyers and democracy activists and their arbitrary arrests and disappearances is rampant. Independent human rights groups and many governments, including the United States and Congressmen have deplored the situation in China and the Chinese government controlled regions. The recent appointment of Wu Yingjie as the new party secretary for TAR needs to be complemented by a review of China's failed policies in Tibet and a commitment to heed to the true aspirations of people inside Tibet.

The recent spate of global events point to China's adeptness at obfuscating issues

of global and shirking of its responsibility as a global stakeholder. China's abject rejection of International law has led to the creation of conflict and disturbances in its neighboring countries and substantiates China's growing arrogance in Asia. China continues to assert pressure to the world leaders and religious heads against hosting His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is undoubtedly the most revered Buddhist leader in today's world. We vehemently oppose such authoritarian acts and bullying tactics of the Chinese government and call on them to be a responsible stakeholder in the global affairs.

While the Panchen Lama His Holiness the Gendun Chokyi Nyima continue to be abducted since 1995, the Chinese government appointed Gyaltzen Norbu recently conferred the Kalachakra teachings in Shigatse, Tibet. Tibetans in the region were mandated to attend the teachings. Such parochial measures testify the lack of religious freedom in Tibet.

Larung Gar, which is the largest Buddhist academy on the planet voluntarily built by devotees from all over the world including China, is today facing demolition on the hands of Chinese officials. The institute houses over 10,000 devotees and official orders restrict the number to 5000 after the demolitions. Saddened by the destruction of the institute and unable to bear the sight of the government-ordered demolition, three nuns (Rinzin Dolma, Tsering Dolma, 20 and Semgha) committed suicide since July this year. The demolition of Larung Gar is an attempt to control Tibetan culture and religious life and is an act of trampling on the basic religious freedom and democratic rights of the people in Tibet.

Recent reports suggest that the Chinese government is taking measures to make self-immolations a separatist-related crime. Monks in Tibet are being forced to learn legal texts that highlight such offences. In the past the government has resorted to criminalization of the self-immolator's family members. Such tyrannical measures will only exacerbate the situation inside Tibet and only validates the reputation of Chinese government as a repressive regime. Instead, heeding to the legitimate grievances of Tibetan peo-

ple inside Tibet and according them the rights they are entitled to will address the aspirations of the Tibetans.

The issue of Tibet requires a political solution and the Middle Way Policy offers a mutually beneficial solution. CTA remain firmly committed to the Middle Way Policy and we are convinced that only dialogue can bring about a peaceful solution to the long-standing issue of Tibet. As we iterated in the press release held after the Tibetan Task Force on Negotiations meeting held in July this year,

we believe that dialogue between the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government should take place. Kashag will continue with its efforts to carry forward the vision of His Holiness by strengthening the foundations of our democracy and ensuring an effective functioning of the CTA.

On this special occasion, we would like to express heartfelt gratitude to the international community, especially the Tibet support groups, individuals and organizations for supporting the just and non-

violent struggle of the Tibetan people. While we wish India on its 70th year of independence, we express our profound gratitude to the people and government of India for according highest respect to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and for generously hosting the Tibetan people. Finally we pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and for the immediate resolution to the issue of Tibet.

KASHAG

2 September 2016

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Expresses Regret at Shimon Peres's Passing Away

In a letter to the Director of the Peres Peace House His Holiness the Dalai Lama wrote that he had been saddened to learn that Shimon Peres had passed away following a recent stroke. He added:

“I offer my prayers for him and convey my condolences to the members of his family at this difficult time.

“Mr. Peres and I met on several occasions in different places over the years, the last being Jordan in 2006 when we were attending a conference of Nobel Laureates and other thinkers addressing global concerns.

“I admired his efforts to promote peace between Israel and Palestine, which actually did lead to the historic Oslo Peace Accords of 1993.”

Noting that Peres often spoke of the importance of compromise, he quoted him once saying that as the Palestinians were Israel's “closest neighbours” they might become its “closest friends.” His Holiness concluded:

“I pray that this may soon come true.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Expresses Condolences at the Passing Away of the King of Thailand

In a letter to H.M. Queen Sirikit, His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed his sadness on learning of the passing away of H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand who the Thai people have looked to as a source of hope and inspiration for more than 70 years. He offered his condolences to Her Majesty, the members of the family and the people of Thailand in their grief. His Holiness recalled the honor of meeting the late King during his first visit to Thailand in 1967.



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Mind & Life Europe - Power & Care - First Day

dalailama.com

The streets of Brussels were still quiet as His Holiness the Dalai Lama drove to the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts. The route took him past grand government buildings, various ornate churches and the impressive equestrian statue of the Crusader Godfried of Bouillon in Royal Square. Walking from the car through the Bozar Centre to the Henry le Boeuf Hall, old friends, well-wishers and members of the public pressed forward to interact with him.

Once His Holiness and the first session's panellists, as well as the audience of 1900 people had taken their seats, Managing Director of Mind & Life Europe, Sander Tideman welcomed them to the 31st Mind & Life dialogue, the first in Brussels, the capital of Europe. He expressed gratitude to all who had contributed to the organization of the event, particularly the volunteers. In his welcoming remarks Pierre Gurdjian President of The Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) suggested that one aspect of the theme of the conference—Power & Care—was leadership, remarking that those who want to change the world are leaders.

Moderator for the morning session, Ven. Matthieu Ricard said there were three



Dr Thubten Jimpa, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's interpreter, looks on as His Holiness comments on the presentations at the Mind & Life Dialogue at the Bozar Centre in Brussels, Belgium on September 9, 2016. Photo/Olivier Adam

days to explore the relations between power and care, during which he hoped it would be possible to find a healthy balance between the two. He invited Prof Franz de Waal to open discussions under the heading Ethology. De Waal talked about what he has learned from

close study of chimpanzees and bonobos about power and relations of dominance. He identified the bipedal swagger of the dominant male and the bow of the submissive one, amusingly comparing photos of primates with those of known politicians. De Waal pointed out that the leadership of a dominant male chimpanzee or bonobo can involve a combination of power and care, for one of the ways he exercises it is to put a stop to fights in the troop. And while consoling is generally associated with females, the dominant males exhibit a talent for this too.

Asked to comment, His Holiness replied: "I'm very glad to be here attending this Mind & Life meeting and appreciate all the effort that has gone into making it happen. We've been holding meetings like this for more than 30 years now and I'd like to pay tribute to Francisco Varela, who was an early inspired participant. During my first visit to Europe in 1973, I began to realize that while many of these countries were highly developed, not all their people were happy. They suffered from too much stress and competition. Material development provides physical comfort, but does not set the mind at ease. I thought that sharing methods for establishing inner peace, irrespective of your personal belief, might contribute to creating a better world. At the time I was warned off by members of our monastic community afraid that science would disrupt our traditions and Western friends who warned that science is the destroyer of religion. We went ahead, embarked on our discussions and now here we are in Europe."

His Holiness spoke of the conflicts that have wracked Europe in the past culminating in the violence and destruction of two World Wars. In the light of this the formation of the European Union was a great idea and a sign of maturity. He quoted his one-time physics tutor Carl Friedrich Freiherr von Weizsäcker, who told him that in his childhood for the French every German was an enemy and for every German the French were

viewed likewise, but no more. This has changed.

He praised Mind & Life for paying attention not only to material developments, but also to their accompanying inner values. The result he hopes to see



His Holiness the Dalai Lama delivering his closing remarks at the end of the afternoon session of the Mind & Life Dialogue at the Bozar Centre in Brussels, Belgium on September 9, 2016.

Photo/Olivier Adam

is more widespread physical well-being and inner peace. He pointed out that it is not only those who believe in religion who need love and compassion—we all do. Although studying chimpanzees can tell us something about human behaviour, His Holiness remains sceptical about what it can reveal about human intelligence, the misuse of which leads to conflict.

Prof em Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, under the heading - Anthropology - examined different ways of nurturing infants. Where a chimpanzee mother may not break skin contact with her infant for the first four months of its life, among some human hunter-gatherers new born babies are handled by others right from the moment of birth. The difference is that the humans are aware that others' help is essential if the child is to survive. A human child can be dependent for 15 years, during which time mothers receive a lot of help.

His Holiness mentioned something that has intrigued him. Where human mothers are compassionate and bond with their children, turtles lay their eggs in sand and are not present when they

hatch. Between young turtles and their absent mothers there is no bond of affection.

He repeated that scientific findings that basic human nature is compassionate is a source of hope. It means that if we make the effort, we can make positive change. He said that the natural openness of children, who do not care about superficial differences with their playmates, often does not survive into adulthood because of the inadequacies of an education system that has little room for inner values.

In connection with Ecology, Prof Johan Rochström explained that we have built our economies on wrong assumptions. We assumed that we are a small world on a big planet, whereas we have become a large world on a small planet. Although the planet seemed to be able to cope until 1990, we are now on the tipping point of catastrophe. On a brighter note he pointed out that action was taken to address ozone depletion and the damage was repaired—now we need to establish a fossil-fuel free future.

Listening with interest and concern, His Holiness's comment was "Wonderful, thank you," and the meeting broke for lunch.

The afternoon session, moderated by Roshi Joan Halifax, focused on perspectives from psychology, endocrinology and neuroscience. Prof Dr Alexandra Freund began by contrasting powerful people. She suggested that if asked to name someone really powerful, people might mention Hitler or Mao. However, she suggested that in taking power from the British and delivering it to the Indian

people, Mahatma Gandhi exercised great power through peaceful means. She spoke of the power motive, referring to the goal to which you direct your efforts. She said power is about exerting influence, whether over people or the environment and that we can discern a dark and a bright side to power.

Concerning endocrinology Prof Dr Markus Heinrichs talked about the effects of hormones such as oxytocin, testosterone and cortizone. He concluded that distributing the 'love hormone' oxytocin through air conditioning systems or nasal sprays was not going to change the world.

Prof Dr Tania Singer, a Neuroscientist talked about her findings in relation to power and care from work she has done with people undertaking secular meditation training in care and compassion. She observed that people do not just become more compassionate with age. It's necessary to engage with compassion through training and involves effort. What's more, meditation is not a universal panacea, the effect of your meditation depends on what meditation you do. Recent findings in neuroscience suggest that altruism and compassion can indeed be developed through training, leading to brain plasticity and pro-social behaviour.

Prof Dr Richard Schwartz is a psychiatrist who works with family systems. He suggested that destructive emotions are often the expressions of power and care that have become extreme. He intrigued the audience with his tale of a patient who was concerned about his impulse to kill his ex-wife. He struggled with this and resisted examining why he felt this way.

When he was finally persuaded to do so he became aware of a fear of powerlessness that derived from an episode in his childhood. Dr Schwartz concluded:

"My message is that we should address our inner enemies with the same care and compassion that His Holiness advocates applying to our external foes."

In his closing remarks, His Holiness said: "I appreciate people's taking interest in mind and emotions. This is a good beginning. I mentioned this morning that the real trouble makers are in our own minds. If you have peace within, external problems will not disturb your mind. You may even be able to manage your own pain. When it comes to meditation, analytical meditation, in contrast to concentrative meditation or mere mindfulness, require us to employ our intelligence.

"As far as developing compassion is concerned we all have a basic biological response derived from the affection we receive as young children to build on. Tania Singer asked if there is a sequence to its development and there is. Normally we start by developing a sense of equanimity.

"None of us wants problems and yet we create so many for ourselves. If we want to change, where do we start? Not with the government or big institutions, but with ourselves as individuals. Through transforming our minds and developing inner values we can change ourselves, influence our families and communities and so bring about a change in humanity. Starting with ourselves we have to let compassion become part of our daily lives."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama Visits the European Parliament and Council of Europe in Strasbourg

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As His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrived at the European Parliament, the flags of member states arrayed outside flew freely in the breeze, lit by the early morning sun. His visit began with a meeting with President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz. This was followed by discussions with Elmar Brok, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, prior to meeting with

the Committee. Welcomed as an advocate of freedom, human rights and protecting the environment, His Holiness was given the floor.

"Respected brothers and sisters, as human beings there are no differences between us, we belong to one human family. It's a great honour for me to have this opportunity. I am an admirer of the

spirit of the European Union. In relation to our own problems in Tibet, we are not seeking separation from the People's Republic of China; we are not splittists although that's what Chinese hard-liners continue to accuse us of being.

"Since 2011 I have completely retired from political responsibility, which is handled now by an elected leader. I'm

81 and some friends say I look younger and ask my secret. I think it's to do with peace of mind and tackling the destructive emotions. Basic human nature is compassionate and all human beings have the potential to create inner peace. And I believe world peace can only be built on the basis of inner peace.

"I have three commitments I'd like to tell you about. The first is to promote a sense of the oneness of humanity, that we are all equally human beings. Generally we pay too much attention to secondary differences between us, such as our religious faith, nationality, whether we are rich or poor etc. and neglect what fundamentally we have in common. As I mentioned before, I admire the spirit of the European Union and would like to see such a union in Africa and Asia."

His Holiness explained that as a Buddhist monk, a follower of the Nalanda masters, thinkers and philosophers of ancient India, his second commitment is to fostering inter-religious harmony. He remarked that all religious traditions make love their main message, supported by tolerance, contentment and self-discipline. He observed that in India all the world's major traditions are represented and live together in harmony. He asked if India can do it, why not other countries too?

His Holiness clarified that a concern for the preservation of Tibetan culture, a culture of peace, non-violence and compassion, the language that conveys it and the protection of the Tibetan environment constitute his third commitment.

Among questions and comments from the floor was the observation that despite its burgeoning economic strength, China is far from being a major power because it reveals no respect for human rights. His Holiness countered this to some extent by pointing out that despite still being ruled by the same system and the same communist party there has been significant change over the last 40 years, not least the emergence of 400 million Chinese Buddhists.

Another questioner asked about the persecution of the Rohingya Muslim

community in Burma. His Holiness responded that when he first heard about it he appealed to Burmese Buddhists to imagine the face of the Buddha with the understanding that if he were there he would protect the Rohingyas. He remarked that since the tragedy of September 11th he has made a point of defending the Muslim community. He repeated his belief that it is wrong to refer to Muslim terrorists or Buddhist terrorists because once they engage in violent terrorism these people have ceased to be proper Muslims or Buddhists and it's wrong to blame a whole community for the mischief of a few.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs in Strasbourg, France on September 15, 2016. Photo/Olivier Adam

Leaving the Committee on Foreign Affairs to warm applause and the press and clamour of people wanting to shake His Holiness's hand or take selfies with him, he drove the short distance to the Council of Europe. He was greeted at the start of this official visit by Head of Protocol, Rafael Benitez who escorted him and his delegation to the Palais de l'Europe. He was welcomed by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, and signed the Golden Book of the Council of Europe. He held a short meeting with the Secretary General before being welcomed by Pedro Agramunt, President of the Parliamentary Assembly and signing its Golden Book. Following their short meeting, Mr Agramunt solicited His Holiness's support for a youth campaign to counter terrorism - #no hate no fear.

On the way to a meeting with members of the Commission on Human Rights, His Holiness was surprised to come across a bust of his old friend, the late Václav Havel, and stopped to pay his res-

spects. Mr Jagland introduced him at the meeting, but left to fulfil responsibilities in the Parliament.

Addressing the meeting, His Holiness began by acknowledging the members as brothers and sisters and reiterating his commitment to fostering a sense of the oneness of all human beings. He mentioned that many of the problems we face arise from our emphasising secondary differences such as nationality, ideology or religion. He is also committed to fostering religious harmony in the face of conflict stoked by short-sightedness, narrow-mindedness and political manipulation. He stated his third commitment as a Tibetan to protection of the environment of Tibet and preservation of Tibetan language and culture.

"It's my duty to thank our friends in Europe for their support on behalf of the 6 million Tibetans in Tibet."

In his answers to questions His Holiness stated that he thinks the idea of freedom and rights is based on an assumption that human nature is compassionate because such rights and freedoms don't allow you to kill or harm others. He repeated what he's said early this year in Geneva about human rights violations having causes such as an anger or hate filled motivation. He said:

"The current education system with its material goals and an absence of inner values is inadequate. And unless we can change it the 21st century is destined to repeat the mistakes of the 20th century with its violence and misery."

Anne Brasseur, Ambassador for the no-hatenofear movement offered him the movement's badge, telling him they had three targets—poverty, corruption and hatred.

His Holiness's final words to the meeting were that "every human being can make a contribution to creating a better world. The key is to start to take action now."

At Strasbourg City Hall Tibetans offered His Holiness a traditional welcome. He was received by Mayor Roland Ries and his wife who escorted him inside. During

a short reception he signed the Golden Book and was presented the Marcel Rudloff Tolerance Prize. He joined a number of religious leaders for a lunch hosted by Mayor Ries.

During a public talk at Strasbourg Convention billed as ‘The Dalai Lama Chooses Strasbourg to Meet Young People’ and attended by 900 students and 1100 members of the public, His Holiness was cheered as he took the stage. Speaking English translated into French by Ven Matthieu Ricard, he said:

“Young brothers and sisters I’m happy to be with you. Meeting with younger people like you makes me feel younger. I belong to the 20th century, a time which has gone, which is now only a memory. The past can’t be changed, but the future can still be shaped and it will be done by you, who belong to the generation of the 21st century. This is why you are the basis for hope.

“The 20th century was strewn with violence, none of which made the world a better place. So this century should in-

stead be an era of peace, bearing in mind that world peace depends on people cultivating inner peace in their hearts. If, however, we are full of fear and anger, we’ll find no peace. It will take determination and will-power and a strong sense of optimism without which nothing will succeed.”

At the end of a warm and affectionate interaction, the students cheered His Holiness once again as they saw him off. As he left City Hall a light rain began to fall.

Forum 2000 - the Courage to Take Responsibility

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The overcast skies and cold weather did not detract from the warmth of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s reception by the Minister of Culture, Mr Daniel Herman, and a group of parliamentarians of the Christian and Democratic Union - Czechoslovak People's Party. The Minister and His Holiness first visited a chapel within the Ministry before sitting round a table to exchange views.

His Holiness remarked that human beings have a unique ability to extend their concern to all other beings. Scientists report findings that indicate that human nature is basically compassionate. He suggested that this accords with the idea of being creatures of a creator who embodies infinite compassion.

“Among 7 billion human beings none are free from problems,” he said, “but the best way to keep calm under such circumstances is to cultivate compassion for others. Religion should have a role in reducing violence by fostering a calm mind. Violence springs from anger, hatred and fear. However, in the world today, in addition to those who have no faith, there are those who only pay lip-service to religious belief and practice. If religion is to mean anything to us, we need to be serious about it.”

The Minister thanked His Holiness for his advice and told him he and his colleagues were interested in practical ways to move forward.

“In today’s world we have a quite materialistic culture,” His Holiness remarked, “but material goods only provide us with

physical comfort. Compassion, on the other hand, brings inner strength and inner peace. No matter how prosperous or poor you may be, if you have compassion for others you can be a peaceful happy person. However, it seems there are those who attend their places of worship, but whose lives are relatively untouched by the religious teachings involved.”



His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking at a Forum 2000 panel on The Paradox of Religion in Prague, Czech Republic on October 18, 2016. Photo/Olivier Adam

His Holiness mentioned his admiration for Pope John Paul II and the inter-religious Assisi meeting he organised in 1986. He reported his telling the Pope it should be the beginning of a movement for religious groups to get to know each other and exchange their different experiences with each other. As the gathering broke up, members of the parliamentary group clustered round His Holiness, requesting him to sign books or take selfies with them.

Minister Herman accompanied His Holiness on the short drive to Manes Hall where they were both due to be panellists in a discussion of the Paradox of Reli-

gion as part of Forum 2000. Moderator of that meeting, Shlomo Avineri welcomed them on arrival. He introduced the panellists, who also included Egyptian author and journalist, Tarek Osman to the audience of 150 and invited the Minister to begin. He spoke of being a Roman Catholic with Jewish roots who found, as he grew up in Czechoslovakia, that religion gave him a freedom of heart that remains an inspiration in his work as an active politician.

His Holiness spoke of his own three commitments.

“As a human being I am concerned with encouraging people to be happy, to understand that if their minds are upset mere physical comfort won’t bring them peace. Whereas if their minds are at peace even physical pain won’t disturb their calm. Over the last 30 years I’ve had serious discussions with scientists. I take their finding evidence that basic human nature is compassionate as a source of hope.

“On the one hand, all major religious traditions convey the same message of love and compassion. On the other, more than 1 billion people today have little interest in religion. Therefore, we also need to find other ways to educate people about the importance of inner values, such as compassion.

“In seeking to promote harmony among our religious traditions, it is useful to realise that the once prevalent notion that there can only be one truth and one re-

ligion best applies to personal practice. In terms of community and the world at large, there are evidently several truths and a multiplicity religions. When I was still in Tibet, I considered Buddhism was best. But once I reached India and came into contact with people like Thomas Merton and Mother Teresa, as well as wonderful Hindu, Jewish and Muslim friends, I developed a real appreciation and respect for other traditions.”

In discussing a secular approach to ethics, His Holiness remarked that there are different ways to understand the word secular. He prefers to use it as it is understood in India to mean an unbiased respect for all religions and even the views of those who have no faith. He suggested that when Bolshevik and French revolutionaries historically advocate secularism, they were less opposed to religious teachings than to religious institutions.

In his contribution, referring particularly to the Middle or Near East, Tarek Osman spoke of its recent turbulent history. He suggested that in a climate of turbulence, religion has the appeal of providing order. Difficulties arise however when that sense of order becomes control.

Daniel Herman mentioned parallels he has drawn between experience of the collapse of communism and the biblical account of the Jews’ exodus from Egypt and their 40 years in the desert on the way to the Promised Land. A real change in mentality takes more than one generation to achieve.

His Holiness returned to his emphasis that too many problems facing humanity revolve around too great a focus on secondary differences of faith, race, nationality, economic status and so forth. The important thing to remember is that fundamentally we are all the same—we are all equally human beings. Challenges like climate change and upheavals of the global economy require us to acknowledge the oneness of humanity. Because we have to live together, we have to be more realistic.

Shlomo Avineri wound up the meeting by recalling what his friend Edward Said had said about the responsibility of intel-

lectuals to speak truth to power, but added that power has to be open to dialogue.

After lunch at the Zofin Palace, His Holiness walked to the Forum Hall to attend a closing panel on The World and Its Current Challenges. He was joined on the panel by Prof Tomas Halik, President of the Czech Christian Academy and Manal al-Sharif, a Writer and Women’s Rights Activist from Saudi Arabia. She is a recipient of the Vaclav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent.

Moderator, Sociologist Surendra Munshi, took some time to give an overview of the conference so far that touched on issues of leadership, the role of intellectuals, and a sense of truth. He invited His Holiness to speak first.

“I feel that if looked at from a close and narrow perspective our problems can seem intractable. However, if we can step back and view them from a wider perspective and in the longer term, they don’t seem so grave and often reveal positive aspects.

“Since common sense and scientific findings indicate that anger, hatred and fear disturb our peace of mind, our education systems need to pay more attention to inner values like compassion and warm-heartedness. The need is to be more concerned about the whole of humanity, as well as concerned about our planet. I admire the spirit of the European Union in according greater concern to the larger community than to narrow national interests.

“If we can develop inner peace, we can build on it to create world peace. Many experts agree that current education systems are. What we require is a more universal approach to human values that can appeal to everyone. There are grounds for optimism.

He concluded: “I admired President Havel and his struggle for truth. And although he is no longer physically with us, we have a responsibility to carry his spirit forward and to fulfil his vision.”

In his remarks Prof Halik referred to the effects of globalisation and the need

for confidence. He expressed the view that globalisation defeated communism, which as a monopoly could not withstand an open society. Today however, we are experiencing a less positive response to globalisation. The world is fragmenting and globalisation may have contributed to the outbreak of religious extremism. Halik added wryly that the invisible hand of the market has given rise to the hidden hand of corruption.

Manal al-Sharif mentioned that realisation has dawned that her country, Saudi Arabia, exports oil, but has also exported a brand of fundamentalist Islam. She reported that despite being informed that God had appointed guardians for them, women were now saying, “I am my own guardian.” She said it takes courage to take responsibility for your situation and it takes courage to take action.

His Holiness added that there are three aspects to religious traditions: basic religious practice of love and forgiveness; philosophical views such as whether or not to believe in a creator and cultural aspects. Cultural aspects relate to customs and ways of life from the past. Many of them are now out of date and so should change.

In answering one or two questions from the floor, Manal al-Sharif observed that there are 1.7 billion Muslims in the world, while ISIS comprises perhaps 4000 fighters. This is an example of the loud minority and quiet majority. In connection with resolving the growing gap between rich and poor, His Holiness stressed the importance of self-confidence in people’s ability to improve their lot. His final remark was that while killing in the name of religion is wrong, to remain indifferent to it is wrong too.

Surendra Munshi brought the meeting to a close with thanks to the panellists for sharing their thoughts. Once again members of the audience converged on the stage clamouring for His Holiness’s attention as they sought his signature, a handshake or the opportunity to take a photograph with him. He steadily met all requests before going into his final meeting of the day with the Forum 2000 International Advisory Board.

In Tibet, religious freedom comes with Chinese characteristics

Agence France-Presse

The sun has yet to rise over Lhasa, but dozens of colourfully dressed pilgrims are already gathered and reciting prayers at the entrance to Jokhang, the most sacred temple in Tibetan Buddhism.

Many of those gathered – Tibetans and Han Chinese visitors – say religion is flourishing under Beijing's rule, with adherents enjoying the freedoms they need to follow their faith. But this sense of freedom does not extend to the men who live inside the monasteries, analysts and monks say.

Their lives and their movements are heavily regulated by a government eager to avoid any hint of disobedience in the restive region which, although technically autonomous, is tightly controlled by Beijing.

"We are not free," said a 33-year-old monk from the neighbouring province of Sichuan, who is not being named.

"To get into Tibet from another province, you need a certificate with your name, address and identity card number.

"Everything has to be stamped by the monastery, the Bureau of Religious Affairs and the police," he said outside the Jokhang monastery.

Nearby, groups of policemen – some from Tibet itself – are discreetly patrolling, some holding walkie-talkies and others guns.

This area of the capital is calm for now, but authorities are not taking any chances. In 2008 it was the site of deadly riots which erupted following protests by monks against Beijing's rule in the region.

The government clamped down after a period of violence against non-Tibetans, in particular the Han Chinese – who remain a minority in Tibet.

Faith is an integral element of Tibetan identity and nationalism and is therefore perceived as a potential threat to the au-

thority of the Chinese state, explained Kate Saunders of the US-based NGO International Campaign for Tibet.

Some ordinary Tibetans dismiss the idea that their religious freedom is being curtailed. "I come here morning and night," said Zangmai, a 31-year-old Tibetan taxi driver. "I have never had any problem.

"I've been praying here since I was about five or six, and one day I'll bring my son here too," he said as he threw dried grass into a large incense burner, which belched out grey smoke.

For Zhaxi Nima, a 37-year-old Tibetan pilgrim whose left leg is amputated below the knee, faith remains an integral part of his routine.

"Why do I come to pray, despite my handicap? Tibetans are just like that, it's our way of life," he said.

It is not so simple for religious figures and institutions, experts say.

"Temples, monasteries ... Of course, they are controlled," said Jens-Uwe Hartmann, a specialist in Buddhism at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and an expert on Tibet.

"What they are doing is very closely observed."

If religious leaders emerge who are not approved by the Chinese Communist Party, they simply disappear, Hartmann said, adding: "So you'd better keep your mouth shut."

Beijing says it "peacefully liberated" Tibet in 1951 and insists it has brought development to a previously backward region.

But many Tibetans accuse the Chinese government of exploiting natural resources, as well as promoting Han activities and business at the expense of locals and the environment.

They also accuse authorities of diluting their culture and faith as a way of exerting further influence.

China recently unveiled an initiative to get tens of millions more tourists to visit the region, and many of them wander through Jokhang along with the faithful.

Barkhor, the road around the temple that pilgrims walk in a clockwise direction as a sign of respect, displays little Chinese flags on the first floor of buildings. The street is dotted with shops and restaurants to cater to visitors from other regions.

"People's faith here is very impressive. It's not something you see anywhere else in China," said 22-year-old Peng Meng.

"In the rest of China, because of the Party, countless temples were destroyed," said a young Han Chinese visitor, miming a fist coming down on a building.

"In Tibet, Buddhism is preserved," he said, although many religious structures were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s.

Wang Xiaobin of the China Tibetology Research Centre, an official body based in Beijing, said monks were required to use travel certificates after a wave of self-immolations which began in 2009.

A total of 145 Tibetans, the majority of them monks, set fire to themselves in the past seven years in protest against Beijing's rule and 117 of them died, according to International Campaign for Tibet.

"Most of them came from Tibet's neighbouring provinces. And the regional government is worried that some of them are coming to self-immolate in Lhasa," Wang said.

"China recognises 'freedom of religious belief', not 'religious freedom'. Those are different things," he added.

"Clearly one has the right to believe, but there are limits to religious activity."

Dalai Lama envoy says Canada-China free trade must factor in Tibetan crisis

Stephen Smith, CBC New

The self-immolation protests of 144 mostly young Tibetans since 2009 cannot be ignored as Canada embarks on exploratory free trade talks with China, says the Dalai Lama's special representative to the United States and Canada.

"They should look at the reason why people are doing this," Penpa Tsering said in an interview from Washington.

"This is happening with a lot of younger people who see only what the Chinese government is doing right now."

Among the latest to die was 18-year-old monk Kalsang Wangdu who, according to reports, set fire to himself in China's Sichuan province in March and died from his injuries soon after.

'A strong, more stable relationship'

On Thursday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, accompanied by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, announced the two countries were embarking on exploratory talks about a free trade deal that would double trade between them by 2025.

Li's visit came just three weeks after Trudeau met with him and President Xi Jinping in China.

Asked what advice he would give to Trudeau as he engages in trade talks, Tsering said Canada must negotiate on the basis of national values as well as national interest.

"You have your national interests, but also make sure your values are preserved and respected," Tsering said. "Put your national values in the forefront when you negotiate with powers like China."

A role for Trudeau

One important contribution that Canada could make is getting China back to the negotiating table with the Dalai Lama and his representatives, Tsering said. Carole Samdup, executive director of the Canada-Tibet Committee, said she

believes Justin Trudeau might have the credibility on both sides to actually make that happen.

Talks between the two sides broke off in 2010 and have never resumed.

In Shanghai earlier in September, Trudeau told businessmen gathered there that "a stronger relationship makes it easier for our two countries to have regular, frank discussions" on topics including human rights.

While agreeing that such discussions are important, Samdup said they need to happen now as part of exploratory talks on free trade.

"Tibetans have no voice," Samdup said.

"They can't speak out. They can't have a campaign. They can't have a demonstration. They can't go to the courts. We can't go there and monitor. We can't bring people here to testify before Parliament."

The self-immolation protests of 144 mostly young Tibetans since 2009 cannot be ignored as Canada embarks on exploratory free trade talks with China, says the Dalai Lama's special representative to the United States and Canada.

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Calls for impact assessment

The Canada-Tibet Committee greeted news of the exploratory talks with a news

release saying the Canadian government should conduct a "full and immediate" human rights impact assessment of any free trade deal with China.

Samdup said such a process would ensure that a trade agreement respects Canada's "international treaty obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights."

"Given the systemic nature of human rights violations in Tibet today, Canada has a moral responsibility to ensure that new trade rules will not entrench existing human rights violations or derail efforts to resolve them in the future," Samdup said.

Tsering backs such a study, which he said must include an assessment of whether the Chinese government is prepared to respect the Tibetan language, culture, religion and environment.

"I think the importance of China respecting human rights for its own people and its national minorities should be mentioned in [trade deal] documents to ensure it's a holistic document and not just about the economic gains for each side," he said.

Samdup, however, said conducting a human rights assessment of Tibet that is both transparent and participatory — two fundamental features of any legitimate impact study — is essentially impossible at the moment.

Situation 'very grim' in Tibet

Tsering described the situation for Tibetans in China today as "very grim." The self-immolation protests are one result of government policies to suppress Tibetan culture in China's western provinces and the Tibet Autonomous Region itself, he said.

A wave of protests against Chinese rule in those areas in 2008 resulted in the introduction of a series of repressive measures, including forced "patriotic re-ed-

ucation” programs for monks and nuns involved in the uprisings.

Tibetans now live under constant surveillance, which Tsering compared to East Germany at the height of the Cold War.

“Physically and mentally, you’re not free to do what you want ... Every minute you’re being watched,” he said.

China has also ramped up its colonization of Tibet by ethnic Chinese migrants to the region while exploiting its natural

resources and building infrastructure mega-projects like dams with no consultation of indigenous Tibetan communities, Samdup said.

Economic benefits?

China’s position is that its policies are working to lift Tibetans out of poverty and bring them into mainstream Chinese life.

But Samdup argues that Tibetans draw little economic benefit from Tibet’s development, and she worries a trade

agreement will only deepen the economic divide that now exists.

“There are two economies in Tibet — the dominant Chinese economy, and Tibetans who operate in a rural economy and provide the inputs and raw materials,” she said.

“If a trade agreement came in on top of that, it would exacerbate those inequities and entrench what’s already happening there.”

China says countering Dalai Lama is top ethnic priority in Tibet

Reuters

China will make countering the Dalai Lama’s influence the “highest priority” in its work on ethnic affairs in Tibet, the region’s Communist Party boss has said, vowing to uproot the monk’s “separatist and subversive” activities.

Beijing says its Communist troops peacefully liberated Tibet in 1950 and regards the 80-year-old, Nobel Peace Prize-winning Buddhist monk as a separatist.

The self-exiled Dalai Lama says he merely seeks genuine autonomy for his Himalayan homeland.

China’s Foreign Ministry expressed anger and threatened countermeasures this month after the Tibetan spiritual leader spoke at the European Parliament in France.

“First, we must deepen the struggle against the Dalai Lama clique, make it the highest priority in carrying out our ethnic affairs, and the long-term mission of strengthening ethnic unity,” Tibet party secretary Wu Yingjie said in a speech published on Friday in the official Tibet Daily.

“(We must) thoroughly expose the reactionary nature of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, crack down on separatist and subversive activities, and strive to eliminate at their roots harmful elements that damage ethnic unity,” Wu said.

Public veneration of the Dalai Lama, who fled China in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule, is prohibited in Tibet, though in private, many Tibetans revere the monk and display his picture.

Identifying the effort to crack down on his influence the top task in the region’s ethnic affairs suggests Wu will ratchet up the government’s already hardline approach in the devoutly Buddhist region, which is prone to anti-Chinese unrest.

Wu was appointed Tibet’s top official in late August, and has vowed stronger criticism of the Dalai Lama.

The government rejects criticism from rights groups and exiles who accuse it of trampling on the religious and cultural rights of the Tibetan people, saying instead that its rule has brought prosperity

to a once-backward region. Nonetheless, China faces no shortage of problems in the region, including those stemming from poverty, language barriers, and development that has at times clashed with a traditional herding lifestyle.

Tibetans, one of China’s 56 officially recognized minority groups, are guaranteed legal protection for their languages and cultures. But they are often marginalized and treated with suspicion by Beijing, which views them as potential separatists.

Officials see ethnic affairs work, such as improving Mandarin proficiency among minorities, as key to ensuring national cohesion and creating economic opportunity.

There has been resistance to greater Mandarin education in schools in Tibet, with people fearing the government wants to culturally assimilate them. The government denies that.

(Reporting by Michael Martina; Editing by Robert Birsell)



www.tibetonline.tv

Dalai Lama solution, not obstacle: Tibetan PM in-exile to China

(ANI) Financial Express

Reprimanding the Chinese government's recent statement that "countering Dalai Lama is its top ethnic priority", Prime Minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile Lobsang Sangay on Monday said the Dalai Lama is a solution to the issues concerning Tibetans, and not an obstacle. Alleging that "it's a wrong policy on the part of Chinese government", Sangay said, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a solution to the (Tibetans') issue and not an obstacle. They (China) know for sure that they are dealing with situations in Xinjiang, Mongolia and other parts of China."



ment's statements are wrong, and it will be wrong as long as they maintain that policy," Sangay added.

"A leader is an important component of a solution when there is an agreement. Now, you have a leader, a great leader in the form of His holiness the Dalai Lama whom 99% of Tibetans follow. Hence, if there is an agreement, he is the person to make sure that it is implemented. So, he is the solution to the issue not an obstacle, and therefore, the Chinese govern-

Sangay's reaction came in the wake of Communist Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region Wu Yingjie's statement to a Tibetan daily on Friday, "First, we must deepen the struggle against the Dalai Lama clique, make it the highest priority in carrying out our ethnic affairs, and the long-term mission of strengthening ethnic unity."

As per media reports, China had said that it would make countering Dalai Lama's influence "highest priority" in its work on ethnic affairs in Tibet, vowing to uproot the monk's "separatist and subversive" activities, after the spiritual leader while speaking at the European Parliament in France said he merely seeks "genuine autonomy for his Himalayan homeland". Exiled Tibetans and rights groups say China, which took control of Tibet in 1950, has tried to stamp out religious freedom and culture in the Himalayan region. China rejects the criticism, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development.

In 1959, Chinese army brutally quelled a people's uprising in Tibet. Thousands of Buddhist monasteries were attacked and destroyed by China's People's Liberation Army. It was then that the Tibetan spiritual leader, Dalai Lama, sought refuge in India, with many of his supporters following suit.

Czech politicians meet Dalai Lama in contrast to pro-China policy

Reuters

Czech ministers and senior parliamentarians held a private meeting with exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Tuesday, risking upsetting China just as Prague is trying to boost ties with Beijing.

By contrast, the country's four highest-ranking officials kept their distance from the meeting and issued a rare joint statement stressing that the Czech Republic accepted Tibet as part of China and wanted to maintain good bilateral relations.

The Dalai Lama met Deputy Prime Minister Pavel Belobradek, Culture Minister Daniel Herman and the deputy speakers of both houses of parliament during a visit to an annual conference launched by the late Vaclav Havel, the country's first president.

Havel had close personal links with the now 80-year old monk and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The ministers and deputy speaker of the lower house of parliament are Christian Democrats, junior partner in the ruling centre-left coalition, and the upper house speaker is allied with them. The meetings were labelled as private.

The Chinese embassy did not respond to a request for comment. Beijing usually scolds countries for giving any recognition to the Dalai Lama, whom it accuses of promoting independence for the Himalayan region.

China's Foreign Ministry said on Monday it would retaliate after Slovak President Andrej Kiska met the Dalai Lama.

In their joint statement released by the office of President Milos Zeman, the four highest-ranking Czech officials said: "Personal activities of some Czech politicians do not express a change of the official policy of the Czech Republic and we would regard as unfortunate if anybody saw it as such."

The Czech government has been keen to boost ties with China. China was grateful for Zeman's attendance as the only western leader at a military parade in Beijing in 2015 marking the end of World War Two.

Chinese president Xi Jinping visited Prague in March to forge a "strategic partnership" with the Czech Republic.

For detailed news visit:
www.tibet.net

Milan makes visiting Dalai Lama honorary citizen, angering China

Reuters

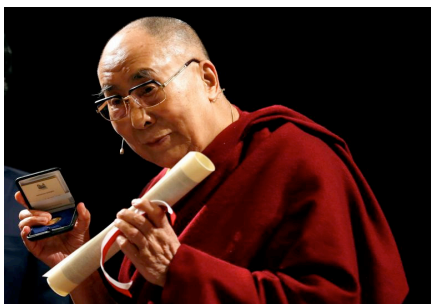
Milan welcomed Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, on Thursday and gave him an honorary citizenship on a visit to the northern Italian city, angering China, which sees him as a separatist.

The 80-year-old Nobel Peace prize-winning monk says he only seeks genuine autonomy for Tibet, the Himalayan region that Communist Chinese troops took control of in 1950.

Milan's mayor Giuseppe Sala, who is an ally of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, posted a photograph on Twitter of himself wearing a Buddhist scarf and clasping hands with the Dalai Lama.

Sala tweeted: "Milan, an open city. In the past, the present and the future." Italian media quoted him saying he did not fear "repercussions" from the meeting.

The Dalai Lama was also received by



Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama poses after receiving honorary citizenship of the city of Milan at the Arcimboldi theater in Milan, Italy October 20, 2016. REUTERS/Stefano Relandini

senior Roman Catholic cardinal Angelo Scola. There was no suggestion he would meet Pope Francis, who is pushing to improve relations with China.

Beijing frequently expresses its anger with countries who host the Dalai Lama at official gatherings, and promised to retaliate after Slovakia's president saw him this week. Few foreign leaders are

willing to meet him.

"We resolutely oppose a country's officials in any capacity conducting meetings with the Dalai Lama," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters in Beijing on Thursday.

The Chinese embassy in Rome said Milan city officials meeting with the Buddhist leader "had gravely hurt the feelings of the Chinese people".

Chinese companies have invested heavily in Italy in recent years, buying tyre maker Pirelli in 2015 and fashion house Krizia in 2014. A Chinese consortium has agreed to buy one of Italy's leading football teams, AC Milan.

The head of Sino-Italian business association UNIIC, Francesco Wu, was quoted by AGI news agency saying he was against the visit.

Demolition of Larung Gar Monastery by China 'inhuman', 'unconstitutional': Former Tibetan PM-in-exile

ANI, Business Standard

Former Tibetan prime minister-in-exile Samdhong Rinpoche has termed demolition of Larung Gar Monastery and eviction of thousands of monks and nuns in his homeland as inhuman and unconstitutional.

Rinpoche said it was not for the first time that Chinese authorities had completely demolished Larung Gar, as a similar drive was carried out in 2002-03 after which the monastery was reassembled day by day.

"I think the Chinese government is more concerned those people who from mainland China and they are coming there more and more and become a big monastic institution so they are doing it again so what I can it is just condemning the act is not enough. It is inhuman and it is against their own constitution," said Rinpoche.



Larung Gar, a valley in the China-administered Sichuan province in East Tibet, where thousands of monks, nuns and students, who come to study, reside and live together. The population of over 40,000 comprises primarily monks and nuns, making it one of the largest religious institutions in the world.

Exiled Tibetans and rights groups say China, which took control of Tibet in 1950, has tried to stamp out religious freedom and culture in the Himalayan region. China rejects the criticism, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development.

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QUOTES

“Among 7 billion human beings none are free from problems,” he said, “but the best way to keep calm under such circumstances is to cultivate compassion for others. Religion should have a role in reducing violence by fostering a calm mind. Violence springs from anger, hatred and fear. However, in the world today, in addition to those who have no faith, there are those who only pay lip-service to religious belief and practice. If religion is to mean anything to us, we need to be serious about it.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama during a Forum 2000 - the Courage to Take Responsibility on 19 October 2016.

“Tibetan community under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration has thrived. The Tibetan Diaspora once housed mainly in camps in India and Nepal, is now global. Yet despite the dispersal, nearly six decades in exile and the pressures of assimilation, Tibetan retained a distinct sense of identity and community” Kashag’s Statement on 56th Anniversary of Tibetan Democracy Day on 2 September 2016

“On the fundamental question of the ways in which the just cause of Tibet should be seen resolved, the cultural and religious heritage of the Tibetan people preserved and carried on, and on other related matters, the main factor remains the zest of the Tibetan people to produce results in all their endeavours at all times in keeping with the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We accordingly call on every Tibetan to remain unrelenting and adhere steadfastly to their commitment at all times in persevering to reach their goal. This is a matter of utmost importance.” Statement of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile on the Occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day on 2 September 2016.

“The quality of every human activity ultimately depends on your motivation. If you are motivated by hatred, fear or jealousy, whatever you do is unlikely to turn out well. On the other hand an outburst of destructive emotions like anger tends to be a spontaneous response to some other event. As human beings our intelligence allows us to train in unbiased compassion. When we are motivated this way, the result is more enduring, whereas the result of anger is relatively short-lived. Whatever you do motivated by genuine, unbiased compassion will never give you cause for regret. This doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with religion because it is rooted in common sense and our common experience..”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama during Inter-faith Event at University of Louvain on 12 September 2016.
