

Eighth International Conference of Tibet Support Groups Dharamshala, 3-5 November 2019

The 8th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups was convened in Dharamshala from 3 to 5 November 2019 by the Core Group for Tibetan Cause at a time of major political changes in the world, just as when the first such conference met in Dharamshala, in March 1990. To meet the opportunities and challenges of such a time of change, the reinvigoration of the Tibet movement is not only called for, but is already evidenced by the participation of 180 delegates from Tibet support groups and other supporters from 42 countries in all regions of the world, as well as by their determination to intensify their efforts for the freedom of Tibet and its people.

The participants met for an extended time with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and were greatly encouraged by his explanation of his four commitments—promotion of human values, promotion of religious harmony; preservation of Tibetan language, culture and Nalanda Buddhist heritage, as well as the protection of Tibet's natural environment; and revival of ancient Indian knowledge—which reflect his altruistic vision for the future.

Participants fully endorse his conviction regarding the profoundly important contribution the Tibetan people and culture can make to human development, and are therefore persuaded that support for the Tibetan cause is support for humanity as a whole.

The conference was addressed by the Sikyong (President) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, which is called the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and the Speaker of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile. The conference heard speakers from Tibet, Hong Kong, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia and Taiwan, as well as from India, South Africa, the U.K, Australia, China, and the US, all of whom shared a sense of optimism and actively participated in the proceedings of the conference.

We, the participants in the Conference express deep concern that, whereas the situation in occupied Tibet has gone from bad to worse, there are still no signs that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is ready to engage in negotiations with representatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the CTA to resolve the conflict caused by the PRC's illegal invasion of Tibet almost 70 years ago and by its occupation of the country and repression of the Tibetan people ever since. We call on the Chinese government to resume the dialogue, which occurred on the basis of the Middle Way Approach, and engage in earnest negotiations without delay, and we urge the UN and members of the international community to persuade the Chinese government to do so. At the same time, we commend His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration for their continued commitment to non-violence and to seeking a mutually beneficial negotiated solution. We are deeply moved by the courage of the Tibetan people in Tibet in their non-violent resistance to Chinese repression and in their efforts to protect their national identity.

We deplore the fear displayed by many governments to stand up to the PRC in the face of decades of its gross and systematic violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms in

Tibet and in East Turkestan (Ch. Xinjiang) as well as in Southern Mongolia (Inner Mongolia), and currently, in the face of sustained protests, also in Hong Kong. Instead of firmly acting on the side of truth and justice, those governments and a number of corporate actors betray our core values of democracy, rule of law, self-determination and human rights in pursuit of commercial gain. Similarly, they fail to challenge the PRC's attacks on those very values and the institutions that embody them in our own countries. We are determined to expose such betrayal of and attacks on our values and will forge powerful coalitions and alliances to do so.

Given the critical role of the Tibetan Plateau, as the Third Pole, in global climate change, we commit to insert Tibet, which is at the frontline of the climate crisis, into the debate of this most urgent issue of our time.

Conscient of the immense contribution of Tibetan Buddhism to the understanding of the mind and of human behavior, including the generation of love and compassion and other qualities essential to human happiness, and therefore the value of scholarly works in which this vast knowledge is contained, it is imperative to protect the Tibetan language and culture that provides access to it.

Supporting the decision of the 3rd Special General Meeting of the Tibetans in Dharamshala in October, we insist that all decisions regarding the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama are the exclusive responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his Gaden Phodrang Trust. Any interference in this process by the PRC authorities and any attempt at selecting or appointing a Dalai Lama by the Chinese government will have no legitimacy and should be condemned and subjected to sanctions by the international community.

The struggle for Tibetan freedom is a struggle for justice, truth, and freedom. We are committed to continuing the work until the conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of the Tibetan people. As long as the Tibetan people remains under alien occupation, subjugation and exploitation, and is therefore denied the exercise of its right to self-determination, the Tibetan struggle for freedom and justice is everyone's struggle for freedom and justice. And so, just as we call for solidarity with the people of Tibet, so too we express solidarity with all who suffer under the PRC's repressive policies, indeed, all other peoples deprived of their freedom, for no one can be truly free so long as others are oppressed.

Dharamshala 5 November 2019