



10 POINT CALL TO ACTION

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama said: “This blue planet is our only home and Tibet is its roof.” Tibet, known as the “Roof of the World”, is an environmentally strategic area and is critical to the health of the planet. As the world focuses on climate action at COP23, Tibet must be central to any discussion on climate change. An environmental catastrophe can be avoided and this 10-Point Call to Action points the way.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

1. Upholding commitments made at COP21 Paris Agreement

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) wants to see all member parties to uphold their commitments made at the 2015 Paris Agreement. The CTA urges world leaders gathering in Bonn to recognize Tibet's importance to the environmental health of the planet and to make Tibet central to global climate change discussions.

The urgency for action must be recognized, and sincere efforts to implement Paris Agreement should be made by all parties involved.

2. Recognition of the Global Significance Tibetan Plateau

The UNFCCC should recognize the global significance of the Tibetan Plateau and world leaders gathering in Bonn must make Tibet central to global climate change discussions. The Tibetan Plateau, because of its environmental importance, is often referred to as the “Roof of the World”, the “Third Pole”, the “Water Tower of Asia” and the “Rain Maker”. This important and fragile ecosystem must be protected.

Tibet is not only the largest and highest plateau in the world; it is home to the third-largest store of ice and the largest source of accessible fresh water on the planet. It is also the head source of Asia's six largest rivers, flowing into the 10 most-densely populated nations and supporting almost one-third of world's population.

The timing and intensity of the Indian and East Asian monsoons are greatly influenced by climate change on the Tibetan Plateau. A comprehensive understanding of global climate change is impossible without taking into consideration what is happening on the Tibetan Plateau.

3. Climate Change Research on the Tibetan Plateau

The UNFCCC should launch scientific research studies to better understand both the impact of climate change on the Tibetan Plateau and the Plateau's critical role in reversing the effects of global climate change. Such studies would inform and enable Tibetans, the Chinese government and the international community to protect, mitigate and adapt to climate change on the Tibetan Plateau.

To avoid a socio-environmental catastrophe, the UNFCCC must act now to protect the Tibetan Plateau's fragile ecosystem.

People's Republic of China

4. China's Environmental Protection Law

Although there is skepticism about whether or not the Law will be rigorously enforced, it is a legal framework that can be used to hold the Chinese government to account.

China's new Environmental Protection Law should be fairly and rigorously implemented in Tibetan areas.

5. Environmentally Sustainable and Socially Responsible Mining

The Chinese government must respect and protect the rights of the Tibetan peoples' cultural belief in the sanctity of the sacred mountains, lakes and rivers of the Tibetan Plateau. The Chinese government must set firm, uncompromising and transparent license procedures for mining permits in Tibetan areas. The issuing of such permits should be based on competitive and reliable Environmental Impact Assessments and Social Impact Assessment reports. The Chinese government should also strictly monitor and prohibit mining companies from dumping hazardous mine waste in the surrounding areas and rivers.

6. Traditional Knowledge and Way of Life

Tibetan pastoral nomads are the expert custodians of the alpine pastures and their knowledge and experience must be incorporated into climate mitigation and adaptation practices. Decision-making mechanisms should be transparent and inclusive of all regional stakeholders, especially Tibetan nomads. There should be an immediate halt to the forceful removal of Tibetan nomads from their lands and those already re-settled should be allowed to return to their pastures if they so wish.

The Chinese government must also promptly address the poorly-planned re-settlement programs of Tibetan nomads. Having lost their traditional, self-reliant way of life, the Chinese Government must provide the newly-resettled nomads with jobs, education, healthcare services, and business opportunities so as to restore their dignity.

As a positive sign, the Chinese government has been declaring more and more national parks and nature reserves across Tibet in recent years. For formulation of any such laws and policies, the Tibetan cultural sentiments and local knowledge should be considered. Life of millions of Tibetans who live in the areas declared nature reserves should not be undermined. People's voice and needs should be listen to and respected.

7. Strictly Regulate Urbanization and Tourism

The rapid expansion of towns and cities places a severe ecological burden on Tibet's fragile ecosystem. Clear urban planning guidelines must be established and rigorously adhered to by the Chinese government. The mistakes made by the Chinese government in urbanizing inland China must not be repeated on the Tibetan Plateau. The Chinese government must involve the local Tibetan population in decision-making processes for any major development projects in Tibetan areas.

Urban planning should also take into consideration the impact of climate change. There has been increasing number of natural disasters in Tibet since 2016 with loss of life and damage to property. The situation was exacerbated by unregulated and poorly planned urbanization. The influx of tourists into Tibetan areas must be regulated with clear guidelines to protect the Plateau's fragile ecosystem.

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International Community and Governments

8. Inter-Governmental Engagement

Governments around the world should urge the Chinese government to protect the Tibetan Plateau from excessive mining and damming. The destruction of Tibet's environment will not only increase natural disasters in Tibet but it will also exacerbate the global warming further, resulting in severe extreme weather across Asia and Europe.

9. Neighboring Downstream Countries and Protecting Water Source

Asia's six largest rivers (names in English/Tibetan: Yangtze/Drichu, Yellow/Machu, Mekong/Zachu, Salween/Gyalmo Ngulchu, Indus/Senge Khabab, Brahmaputra/Yarlung Tsangpo) flow from the Tibetan Plateau to downstream neighbouring countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal and Bhutan). In order to safeguard their water/food security, these countries must actively engage in the protection of Tibetan rivers from excessive damming and contamination.

10. Global Citizen Action for Tibet's Environment

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said: "This blue planet is our only home and Tibet is its roof." The Tibetan Plateau needs to be protected, not just for Tibetans but for the health and sustainability of the entire world. Global citizens must lobby their governments to help protect Tibetan Plateau. Environmental non-governmental organizations also have a role to play by ensuring that Tibet is on the global climate change and environment agenda.

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