



# Concept Note

The objective of the 2nd Tibet Environment Conference is to offer an academic platform to renowned scholars and scientists from across the world, working on climate and environmental issues related to the Tibetan Plateau, to discuss issues of concern and to consider the prospects of consensus on problems for a possible way forward and open new channels of communication.

## Objectives

The global significance of the Tibetan Plateau is reinforced and acknowledged.

- The state of ecology of the Tibetan Plateau and the growing ecological and transboundary water crisis that affects the livelihood of millions of people is assessed.
- Important findings are shared and space for diverse range of opinions, analysis as well as aspirations for the protection of the Tibetan Plateau provided.
- Confidence building exercises are instituted in pursuit of mutually beneficial development and resource stewardship on the issues of water and ecology on the Tibetan Plateau.

## Expected outputs

- The effects of climate change on the Tibetan Plateau and its global impact are better understood.
- Knowledge and information on current environmental situation on the Tibetan Plateau is recorded for considering changes and alterations in policy.
- New channels of communication are opened amongst the participating scholars.
- A publication containing all papers presented at the conference is brought out.

## **Background**

The Tibetan Plateau is an immense upland comprising an area of 2.5 million square kilometers, at an average altitude of 4000 meter above sea level, thus making it the largest and highest plateau on earth. The Tibetan Plateau is one of the most ecologically diverse and vulnerable regions on earth. It includes the most intact examples of mountain rangelands in Asia and is one of the largest remaining terrestrial wilderness regions left in the world.

This vast plateau is the source of Asia's six largest and most important rivers. Yarlung Tsangpo or Brahmaputra, Senge Tsanpo or Indus, Driчу or Yangtze, Machu or Yellow, Zachu or Mekong, Gyalmo Nyulchu or Salween and other rivers providing fresh water and sustaining life for some of the world's most populated nations like India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Thus constitute an important common heritage belonging to all humanity.

Recent developments and increasing impact of climate change has accelerated the deterioration of the environment of the Tibetan Plateau, this is a cause for global concern.

Permafrost degradation, glacier retreat, grassland desertification and natural disasters not only have serious impacts on the ecological health of the Tibetan Plateau and its people, but also have immense impact on the sustenance of more than 1.3 billion people living in the region and beyond. Thus the preservation of the ecology of the Tibetan Plateau as well as to increase efforts to mitigate imminent natural disasters becomes a globally shared responsibility especially including by those administering and living in the region.

Below are some of the important issues that the 2nd Tibet Environment Conference will deliberate upon:

## 1. CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

- Rapid Grassland Desertification on the Tibetan Plateau and its Possible Implications;
- Glaciers and climate change in the Third Pole: Status and Impacts
- Increasing Natural Disasters in Tibet: A case study on the Jomda Flood and Landslide

## 2. NOMADS, NATURE PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN TIBET

- Resettlement to what end? Revisiting China's ecological Migration policy (Shengtai Yimin) and its original goals.
- The Role of National Parks on Environmental Conservation in Tibet and Possible Impact and Benefits for the Locals;
- China's Environmental Policies and Its Implementation in Tibet

## 3. STATE OF TIBET'S TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS

- The State Of Mekong River - Conflicts, Cooperation and Policies;
- State of Indian Rivers originating from the Tibetan Plateau: Its importance and Implications for local residents in India;
- China's Policies on the Tibet's Transboundary Rivers: A Case Study on the Brahmaputra River

These are some important areas the conference proposes to address for better scientific understanding. Notwithstanding complexities of these issues, scholars and members of leading civil society organisations will form stronger inter regional linkages for sharing of information, and explore new innovative ways to enhance sustainable protection of this fragile region.

# Programme Schedule

09:45am-10:10am Registration and High Tea

## Inaugural Session

10:10am-10:15am **Welcome address** - *Mr. Tenzin Lekshay*  
Deputy Director, Tibet Policy Institute,  
India

10.15am-10.20am Launching of **The State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau**

10.20am-10.35am **Keynote Address**- *Mr. Shyam Saran*  
Former Foreign Secretary of India

10:35am-10:50am **Special Address** - *Mr. Martin Bursik*  
Former Deputy Prime Minister and  
Former Environment Minister, Czech  
Republic

## Panel Session One

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

- 10:55am-11:00am      **Session Moderator - Prof. Siddiq Wahid**  
Former Vice Chancellor of Islamic University, Kashmir, India
- 11:00am-11:20am      **Rapid Grassland Desertification on the Tibetan Plateau and its Possible Implications**  
*Mr. Ethan Goldings*  
Former Director, Winrock International in People's Republic of China
- 11:20am-11:40pm      **Glaciers and Climate Change in the Third Pole: Status and Impacts**  
*Prof. Milap Chand Sharma*  
Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
- 11:40pm-12:00pm      **Increasing Natural Disasters in Tibet: A case study on the Jomda Flood and Landslide**  
*Mr. Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha*  
Head, Environment and Development Desk, Tibet Policy Institute, India
- 12:00am-12:30pm      **Q & A session**
- 12:30pm-01:30pm      **Lunch break**

**Panel Session Two**  
**NOMADS, NATURE PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**POLICIES IN TIBET**

- 01:30pm-01:35pm: **Session Moderator-** *Mr. Martin Bursik*  
Former Deputy Prime Minister and  
Former Environment Minister, Czech  
Republic
- 01:35pm-01:55pm **Resettlement to what ends? Revisiting**  
**China's ecological migration policy**  
**(shengtai yimin) and its original goals**  
*Dr. Tashi Nyima*  
Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway
- 01:55pm-02:15pm **The Role of National Parks on**  
**Environmental Conservation in Tibet**  
**and Possible Impact and Benefits for**  
**the Locals**  
*Prof. Ruth Gamble*  
David Myers Fellow, La Trobe University,  
Australia
- 02:15pm-02:35pm **China's Environmental Policies and**  
**Its Implementation in Tibet**  
*Dr. Lobsang Yangtso*  
Tibet Third Pole & International Tibet  
Network, India
- 02:35pm-03:00pm **Q & A Session**
- 03:00pm -03:15pm **Tea break**

### **Panel Session Three**

#### **STATE OF TIBET'S TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS**

- 03:15pm-03:20pm      **Session Moderator-** *Mr. Jayadeva Ranade*  
President, Centre for China Analysis and  
Strategy, India
- 03:20pm-03:40pm      **The State Of Mekong River- Conflicts,  
Cooperation and Policies**  
*Dr. Le Anh Tuan*  
Deputy Director, Research Institute for  
Climate Change, Can Tho University,  
Vietnam
- 03:40pm-04:00pm      **State of Indian Rivers originating from  
the Tibetan Plateau: Its importance  
and Implications for local residents in  
India**  
*Dr. Arvind Kumar*  
President, India Water Foundation, India
- 04:00pm-04:20pm      **China's Policies on the Tibet's  
Transboundary Rivers: A Case Study  
on the Brahmaputra River**  
*Ms. Dechen Palmo*  
Research Fellow, Tibet Policy Institute,  
India
- 04:20pm-04:40pm      **Q & A SESSION**
- 04:40pm-04:45pm      **Vote of thanks– FNVA**
- 04.45pm-05.30pm      **High Tea**



# Speakers Bio and Abstracts

## Keynote Address

*Mr. Shyam Saran*

Former Foreign Secretary of India

Shyam Saran is a former foreign secretary and has served as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Nuclear Affairs and Climate Change. He is a former chairman of the National Security Advisory Board, and the Research and Information System for Developing Countries. He is currently a member of the governing board and a senior fellow at CPR, Life Trustee of the India International Centre, a trustee of the World Wildlife Fund (India), a member of the National Executive of FICCI, and an independent director at the Press Trust of India.

In January 2011 Shyam Saran was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honour, for his contributions to civil service. He writes and speaks regularly on foreign policy, climate change, energy security, and national and international security related issues.

## **Special Address**

*Mr. Martin Bursik*

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Environment Minister, Czech Republic

Martin Bursik born in 1959 in Prague, Czech Republic. He graduated in environmental studies from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Charles University Prague, in 1984. He has served twice as the Minister of Environment in 1998 and 2008 respectively, and second time vice-prime minister. He is one of the leading environmental experts in the country. His fleet as an expert include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Climate Change Mitigation and Sustainable Energy, the Climate Finance Readiness Program, and GIZ, Germany. He is also the Chief Advisor to the Chamber of Renewable Energies of Czech Republic. During the Czech Presidency in 2009, he represented the EU Council at the international climate negotiations with Mayor Economies of U.S.A., China, India, Canada, Japan, Russia, Australia and African states. Mr. Bursik founded the Czechs Support Tibet, and is a member of the Steering Committee of International Tibet Network.

## Panel Session One

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

#### **Moderator**

*Prof. Siddiq Wahid*

Former Vice Chancellor of Islamic University, Kashmir, India

Siddiq Wahid is currently a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) in New Delhi and Adjunct Fellow the Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) in Delhi. He has been Director, UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institute of Kashmir Studies at the University of Kashmir. Previous to that he was the Founding Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science & Technology, Kashmir and Maharaja Gulab Singh Chair Professor of Modern History at the University of Jammu. Prof. Wahid is also associated with the Tibet Policy Institute (TPI). He is currently also a participant in the Borderland Project of the India China Institute at the New School University in New York. He has taught in the United States and India, and has lectured widely in South Asia, Europe and the United States in his field of study. He received his PhD in the field of Inner Asian and Altaic Studies at Harvard University where he specialized in Tibetan and Central Asian political History. He has published widely in his fields of interest in India and the United States.

## **Speakers**

### *Mr. Ethan Goldings*

Former Director, Winrock International in People's Republic of China

Ethan Goldings is a Tibet Specialist and was the Director of Winrock International in the PRC. Now based in Chengdu, he was trained in East Asian studies at Harvard and Stanford universities, and first traveled to Tibet in 1983. He has more than 35 years of research and project management experience in Tibet using innovative, long-term approaches to community development and implementation that emphasize partnerships and capitalize on local strengths. Mr. Goldings helped set up Trace Foundation's operations in Tibet and introduced the first yak cheese production sites there. He designed the winning proposal for Winrock International's first USAID funded project in Tibetan areas: The Sustainable Tibetan Communities Project. Mr. Goldings went on to serve as the Chief of Party of the USAID-funded TSERING and SET projects to strengthen the capacity of Tibetan communities throughout Tibetan areas to meet their socio-economic needs, conserve the environment, and preserve Tibetan cultural heritage. He pioneered innovative approaches to environmental conservation such as deputizing local communities to document illegal logging, mining, and poaching, mobilizing monks and cultural resources to protect biodiversity and water sources, and setting up self-sustaining funding mechanisms for the restoration of degraded rangelands.

## **Abstract**

### **Rapid Grassland Desertification on the Tibetan Plateau and its implications**

The impact of climate change on the delicate, high-altitude ecosystems of the Tibetan plateau are even more pronounced than the effects experienced in lowlands. The rapid spread of deserts over marginal and even fertile grasslands is putting extreme pressure on communities, especially those which rely on animal husbandry for their income and way of life. A potentially disastrous feedback loop is accelerating the rate of desertification and increasing the pressures on the remaining herding communities, which in some cases are unfairly blamed for overgrazing the remaining natural resources. Some winter settlements, which were among the most fertile, are now being literally buried in sand dunes, with the inhabitants becoming ecological migrants and refugees. However, Tibetans in some threatened semi-nomadic communities are combining indigenous knowledge, advanced rangeland science, and national and international financial resources to turn back the spread of deserts and reclaim a distinctive sustainable way of life. In the Northeastern regions of Tibet where Kham and Amdo meet, herders have set up committees to remove fencing and restore traditional rotational grazing; used their herds to replant and fertilize severely degraded rangelands; and worked with scientists to measure the carbon sequestered in the new root structures to be sold on national and international carbon offset markets. This self-sustaining virtuous cycle has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a large scale at the same time as it enables a traditional way of life to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Prof. Milap Chand Sharma*

Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Milap Chand Sharma's areas of research interest and specialization include Glacial Geomorphology, Temporal Glacial Fluctuations, Palaeoclimatic Reconstruction, Glacial Chronology, Mass Movements and Earthquakes in the Himalayas. He has had a vast experience of teaching. He taught undergraduate courses in Himachal Pradesh for 11 years before teach and supervising postgraduates for next 12 years. His international collaboration and consultancy expand to InterGIS and UniGIS with University of Salzburg, Austria, and University of Cincinnati, U.S.A on Glaciation in Nanda Dev. A few of Dr. Sharma best peer-reviewed publications are "Landscape Modification and Geomorphological Consequences of the October 1991 Earthquake and the July-August 1992 Monsoon in the Garhwal Himalaya" (1995), "Cosmogenic Radio Nuclide Dating of Glacial Landforms in the Lahul Himalaya, Northern India: Defining Timing of Late Quaternary Glaciation" (2001), and "Terrestrial Cosmogenic Nuclide Surface Exposure Dating of the Glacial Successions in the Himalayan Orogen: Ladakh Range, Northern India" (2006). Dr. Sharma has also recently authored books and journal articles such as "Assessment of Coastal Geomorphic Processes in Erasama Block, Jagatsinghpur District, Orissa" (2009), and "Anthropogenic Impact on the Sediment flux in two Alpine Watersheds of the Lesser Himalayas" (2010).

## Abstract

### Glaciers and Climate Change in the Third Pole: Status and Impacts

Human activities in the world have certainly brought about discernible changes not only in the natural landscape that he/she lives, but also on the atmosphere and hydrosphere that make this the only known habitable planet. It is now a reality that global ice/snow cover, the most sensitive climatic indicator to climate change, has shown large-scale shrinkage and recession post industrial revolution. Similarly, catastrophic natural events are on an increase in these vulnerable regions, threatening a large humanity world-over. These changes are now popularly termed as anthropogenically induced climate change, projecting it to be the most disastrous for ecology, if not addressed in time.

The Miyar, our field monitoring watershed, is a major watershed of River Chandrabhaga (*Chenab*) in Himachal Pradesh, India. This basin of  $\sim 936 \text{ km}^2$  contains 76 ice bodies, with 16 valley glaciers of varied dimensions; the largest is 27 kilometers long. Glaciers still cover  $\sim 25\%$  ( $232 \text{ km}^2$ ) of the total basin area and provide year-round availability of water. Ironically, being a designated cold desert, this region is entirely dependent on the snow and glacier melt for irrigation and the domestic purposes.

The very episode of the Himalayan-Tibet Uplift truly played a catalytic role in changing the Global Weather Circulation, thus producing the most spectacular landscape and large glacier cover. The Himalaya-Karakoram-Tibet region, called the 'Third Pole', contains a large glacier/ice cover of over  $33000 \text{ km}^2$ . These glaciers have responded to the climate changes many times over, either terminating at very low altitudes or retreating to the higher altitudes in the response to the prevailing global/regional/local climates. These changes were induced primarily by changes in temperature/precipitation regime, affecting the equilibrium-line

altitudes (ELAs) during the large expansions. With the population explosion and changes in the mode of production, be it transport, energy consumption or industries, it is presumed that these activities would invariably impact the very existence of glacier and ice cover, if not changed.

The presentation would illustrate; a) cryosphere changes in recent past and on a millennial scale, b) probable climate induced migrations in the past, c) and the future promise for development within this basin and beyond (trans-national rivers).



*Mr. Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha*

Head of the Environment and Development Desk, Tibet Policy Institute, India

Tempa Gyaltzen Zamlha is currently the Head of the Environment & Development Desk at the Tibet Policy Institute – the think-tank of the Central Tibetan Administration based in Dharamshala, India. He is a research fellow with general focus on the current environmental situation in Tibet and a special focus on the socio-environmental impact of climate change on the Tibetan plateau. He is a member of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS), the Association for Nepal Himalayan Studies (ANHS) and the Young Tibetan Research Scholars (YTRS). He has also been a regular participant at the UN Climate Change Summits to represent Tibet like the 2012 Rio Earth Summit, COP21, and the 2015 Paris Climate Summit. He has spoken at various seminars in Mongolia, Delhi, Norway, Taiwan, Nepal, and at universities like Univ. of Delhi, Univ. of Westminster in London, Univ. of Bonn in Germany, and Univ. of Zurich in Switzerland.

## **Abstract**

### **Increasing Natural Disasters in Tibet: A case study on the Jomda Flood and Landslide**

The Tibetan Plateau has seen massive climatic shifts in its geological history that had global implications, but the phase and extent of natural disaster has never been as alarmingly obvious as it has being in the recent years. The simultaneous floods, lands slides and avalanches across Tibet in year 2016 was unprecedented to the historical memory of its inhabitants. The fear of a new climatic trend setting in on the plateau was further strengthened with another set of natural disasters across Tibet in 2017, which continued into 2018 and 2019. The plateau with vast surface area of 2.5 million sq.km in its area, sits at average elevation of more than 4000 meters above sea level. This makes it the world's highest and largest plateau in the world and any change on this massive mountainous region will have severe global implication both within and beyond its geographical boundary. The focus of this paper is on one particular area in Tibet, i.e., the Jomda County. The region has seen two unprecedented natural disasters – a severe flood that inundated the Jomda town and a massive landslide that blocked the Drichu (Yangtze River) in Bolo Township. The paper will try to examine the possible sociological, environmental and geographical factors that could have led to the natural disasters and exacerbated its impact in the region.

**Panel Session Two**  
**NOMADS, NATURE PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**POLICIES IN TIBET**

**Moderator**

*Mr. Martin Bursik (Bio given above)*

**Speakers**

*Dr. Tashi Nyima*

Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway

Tashi Nyima is a Tibet-born research consultant at the Evolution Institute in Florida, U.S. He obtained his doctoral degree in Chinese Studies from the University of Oslo in 2016. His research interests are development policy, environmental humanities, Tibetan pastoralism, Tibetan language and urbanization in contemporary Tibet. His publications include “Newly recognized languages in Chamdo: Geography, culture, history, and language” (2019), “In the name of conservation and harmonious development: The separation of pastoralists from pastures in Tibet” in *On the fringes of the harmonious society: Tibetans and Uyghurs in Socialist China*, (2014), and “Development discourses on the Tibetan plateau: Urbanization and expropriation of farmland in Dartsedo” (2010). He has also contributed a few other works in Chinese to publications in China on nomadic resettlement, employment and ethnic discrimination in Tibetan area. He also works as an official translator in Norwegian and Chinese for various government ministries and agencies in Norway. He has previously worked at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Peace Research Institute in Oslo, and the University of Oslo.

## **Abstract**

### **Resettlement to what ends? Revisiting China's ecological migration policy (shengtai yimin) and its original goals**

Nomadic resettlement is being depicted as an integral part of a development and ecological protection program in the grand scheme of China's development strategy in Tibet. In a matter of a decade and a half after the program was first launched in 2003, thousands of nomadic resettlement camp were built throughout the Tibetan plateau in a top-down and technocratic policy implementation, affecting hundreds and thousands of Tibetan nomads. This was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of China's pastoral governance in Tibet with far-reaching consequences for both ecology and nomadic culture in the region. This paper takes a closer look into the project of nomadic resettlement, including what it is, and what it is not. By doing so, I will outline the main objectives of the policy and its socio-economic, political and ecological implications. I will present and discuss the process of resettlement per se, and how it is being implemented with a focus on Sanjiangyuan of Qinghai province, a pastoral area with approximately one fourth of total nomadic population on the Tibetan plateau. I will then present the current situation of the resettled nomads, including the underlying tension between local state agents and the resettled nomads. This includes diverse strategies and counterstrategies, as well as forms of resistance deployed in the interface between the resettled nomads and local state agents. Finally, I will wrap up with a few concluding remarks concerning what this policy means for the future of nomadic life in Tibet, as well as for pastoral livelihood and resilience.

*Dr. Ruth Gamble*

David Myers Fellow, La Trobe University, Australia

Ruth Gamble is a David Myers Fellow at La Trobe University in the Department of Archaeology and History, the China Studies Research Centre, and the Centre for the Study of the Inland, in Australia. She is an environmental and cultural historian of Tibet and the Himalaya. Her first book, *Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism: The Third Karmapa and the Invention of a Tradition* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2018), traces the links between Tibet's reincarnation lineages and its sacred geography. Her second book, *Flowing Concrete: the Transformation of a Himalayan river* (2020), is an environmental history of the upper Brahmaputra River. Dr. Gamble has co-authored a textbook *Series* titled *Introduction to the Tibetan Language* (Australian National University Press, 2018), and published numerous articles and book chapters on Himalayan sacred, secular and geopolitical environments.

## **Abstract**

### **The Role of National Parks on Environmental Conservation in Tibet and Possible Impact and Benefits for the Locals**

The creation of a national park is as much a political act as it is an environmental one. National Parks are, after all, “national”, and nation-states make decisions on their designation for the perceived national benefit. Sites are usually designated national parks because of their ecological, cultural and national significance, but not all such sites with this significance become National Parks. National parks are also usually created in places that are deemed “empty”, which in practice means that they do not contain high-worth, easily-extracted commodities and are occupied by disenfranchised people. Historically, these people have tended to be indigenous and minority people, and the sites of national parks have tended to coincide with their lands, thus creating or exaggerating dispossession. They represent a version of conservation called “fortress conservation,” in which areas of land are locked up, and human access to them is limited. Given all this, it would seem counter-intuitive to suggest that the establishment of national parks on Tibetan land in the People’s Republic of China would offer opportunities for Tibetans to re-connect with the land. But this is, indeed, what this paper will argue. Using the specifics of National Park construction in the Tibetan Plateau, it will show how the National Park space can give Tibetans the opportunity to exercise greater sovereignty than elsewhere in this polity. And using examples from Australia and Canada, it will suggest ways to develop the role of Tibetans in these spaces.

*Dr. Lobsang Yangtso*

Research and Campaign Assistant to Tibet Third Pole & International Tibet Network, India

Lobsang Yangtso was born in Tibet and received her schooling from Tibetan schools in India. She completed her Bachelors in English Literature and Masters in International Studies from Stella Maris College, Chennai, and M.Phil in Chinese Studies under the Centre for East Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. She completed her PhD. with a thesis titled “China’s Environmental Security Policies in Tibet: Implications to India, 2001-2013” from the same department. Currently, she works as a Research and Campaign Assistant to Tibet Third Pole under International Tibet Network. In past, she has worked as a research associate at the Centre for China Analysis and Strategy, New Delhi. Dr. Lobsang has published articles in various journals. She has also presented various papers at international and national platforms like Dharamshala, Delhi, Gwalior, Bergen, and Copenhagen.

## **Abstract**

### **China's Environmental Policies and Its Implementation in Tibet**

China has introduced various environmental policies and measures to protect the Tibet's environment since the 1950s. However, Tibet continues to face various environmental problems. The Western Development Campaign was an important and urgent economic and ecological plan for Tibet. The study evaluates the rationale behind the Western Development Campaign and how this programme has brought environmental changes in Tibet. China introduced four major ecological protection plans in Tibet – afforestation, grassland and biodiversity protection, and construction of nature reserves. The study critically analyses the impact of those policies on the environment and people. The paper further studies the formulation of environmental regulations and legislation in Tibet. Finally, the study will review China's ecological protection projects in Tibet.



## Panel Session Three

### STATE OF TIBET'S TRANSBOUNDARY RIVERS

#### **Moderator**

*Mr. Jayadeva Ranade*

President, Centre for China Analysis and Strategy, India

Jayadeva Ranade is a member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and a former Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India. He is also a Member of the Core Group on China of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi. He is a security and intelligence expert, and a seasoned China analyst with almost 30 years experience in the field. He has also dealt with matters relating to Terrorism and Pakistan. He has been directly involved in formulation of policy at the highest levels in the GOI. He was conferred the organization's two highest awards, both out of turn. His foreign assignments have included Hong Kong, Beijing and his last foreign posting, prior to retirement in late 2008, was as the Minister in the Indian Embassy in Washington. Mr. Ranade has authored *China Unveiled: Insights into Chinese Strategic Thinking* in 2013. He contributes to many mainstream national newspapers, magazines and leading publications, mostly on strategic and security issues relating to China, Tibet and East Asia, his chosen fields of specialization. He has contributed chapters on specialized aspects on China that have been published in thirteen books. He attends various forums worldwide to speak on China/East Asia and other subjects, including on Intelligence.

## **Speakers**

### *Dr. Le Anh Tuan*

Deputy Director, Research Institute for Climate Change, Can Tho University, Vietnam

Le Anh Tuan is the Deputy Director of the Research Institute for Climate Change, Can Tho University. He has been working at the university since 1982, and currently holds the position of Senior Lecturer at the College of Environment and Natural Resources and the Research Institute for Climate Change, Can Tho University, Vietnam. He completed his Bachelor of Engineering in Water Management and Land Improvement at Can Tho University, Vietnam, in 1982, and Master of Engineering in Water Resources Engineering at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand in 1990. He holds a PhD. in Applied Bioscience and Engineering with a specialization in Environmental Hydrology from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. Dr. Tuan has vast experience in teaching and research in the fields of Water Resources Planning and Management, Environmental Engineering, Constructed Wetlands, Natural Disaster Prevention and Preparation, and Rural Development Projects. From 1993–1999, he worked at Champasak province in the South of Lao as an engineering expert for the implementation of many irrigation systems and water supply stations in a rural development project. In the Mekong River Delta, he was engaged in many water management, environmental education and rural development programs. Recently, he participated in research projects involving Climate Change and Adaptation in the Mekong River Delta.

## **Abstract**

### **The State of the Mekong River: Conflicts, Cooperation and Policies**

The Mekong River is the largest river in Southeast Asia. It originates from the Tibetan region, which runs down about 4,350 km through 6 countries: China, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and finally to Vietnam before flowing into the East Sea, connecting with Asia and Pacific waters. The Mekong River Basin covers 797,000 square kilometres of land containing many different wetland ecosystems and rich biodiversity habitats of the world. In the upstream areas, the Mekong River has high potentials on hydropower development while in the Lower Mekong Basin has great agriculture, fishery and forestry productivity following seasonal variations in water levels and the range of inundated lands, distributing fundamental to the viability of natural resource-based livelihoods of a population of 60 million people living along the water bodies.

Water utilities and exploitation in the Mekong River have many conflicts including the construction and operation of mega-dams in the upstream river in as well as water diversion for irrigation purposes and industrial development to the fishery sources and agricultural livelihoods in the lower river delta region. The dams and the reservoirs block the river flow, leading many negative effects as the Mekong's hydrology altered, sediment trapped, riverine ecosystems degraded, migratory fishes disrupted and then, the delta will sink gradually.

*Dr. Arvind Kumar*

President, India Water Foundation, India

Arvind Kumar is water activist, author and columnist. He is the President and Founder of India Water Foundation (Special Consultative Status with UN-ECOSOC), Observer Status Governing Body of UNEA, Observer Status with UNFCCC. He holds a PhD. in Defense Studies. He is also the Governor on Board of Governors of the World Water Council. He specializes in ecosystem-based adaptation, water energy-food nexus, with specific emphasis on inter-linkages between water, environment and SDGs. He jointly edited a publication with SAC Dhaka titled “SAARC Outlook on Water Energy-Food Nexus in SAARC Region”, and has published over 350 research articles. He is a member of the National Wetlands Committee, MoEF & CC, GOI, Technical Advisory Committee for India's Third National Communication and Biennial Update Reports to UNFCCC. He is also a Member of the General Body of CAPART, Member Working Group on Water Resources Development, Management and Efficient utilization to seek inputs for development agenda for New India @75, NITI Aayog under GOI. He is also the member of Meghalaya State Water Resources Council and Meghalaya Council for Climate Change and Sustainable Development.

## **Abstract**

### **Water issues - State of Indian Rivers originating from the Tibetan Plateau: Its importance and Implications for local residents in India**

Tibet is the Water tower of Asia. The major rivers that originate on the Tibetan Plateau and flow into India are Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), Indus, Karnali and the Sutlej making them the four trans-boundary rivers between Tibet/China and India. Ecosystems here are becoming less resilient to stress and strains. By 2025, water scarcity is predicted to affect 1.8 billion people, particularly in Asia. Rivers dependent on Himalayan glacial melt are slowly diminishing on one hand and the rapidly growing economies in India and neighbors are intensifying social and environmental demands on the rivers. Under such circumstances, it is significant to understand the importance and implications for the local residents in India.

*Ms. Dechen Palmo*

Research Fellow, Tibet Policy Institute, India

Dechen Palmo is a research fellow at the Environment and Development Desk of the Tibet Policy Institute, Dharamshala. She researches on Tibet's Trans-Boundary Rivers focusing mainly on the Mekong and the Brahmaputra rivers. Dechen also writes on the damming crisis and China's strategic interests on the rivers. She pursued her Masters in International Studies from Stella Maris College, University of Madras. For her M.Phil. in International Relations from the University of Madras, she wrote a dissertation titled "China's Four Modernization Programme". She has written and published widely on environmental issues in Tibet caused by the developmental projects of the Chinese government.

## **Abstract**

### **China's Policies on the Tibet's Transboundary Rivers: A Case Study on the Brahmaputra River**

Tibet, as the water tower of Asia, is the source of many international rivers running through ten different countries and supports a population of around 2 billion. Considering the importance of Tibet's transboundary river, it is imperative for policy makers to be aware of China's actions and their potential consequences. Therefore, this paper examines the Chinese government's policies regarding conservation and management of Tibet's water resources, focusing on the Brahmaputra River in South Asia. This paper also assesses the social, environmental and political impacts these policies may have on downstream countries. This research finds that China's dam building on the Brahmaputra River is seen as potentially undermining national growth, development and security of downstream India.

# About the organizations

**The Tibet Policy Institute** is a research center of the Central Tibetan Administration, located in the pristine hill of Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India. It was established in 2012. The institute focuses its research on China's policies in Tibet, ecology, infrastructural development, human rights, surveillance, cyber security, social media, gender issues, Himalayan studies and historical records. The TPI strives to serve as an intellectual hub for Tibetan scholars across the globe and also serves as the think tank to help the Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to identify potential prospects and problems for Tibet and the Tibetan people.

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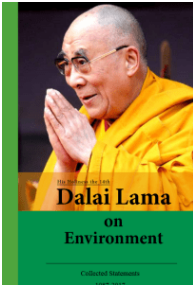


**The Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives** was established in 2009 as a not-for-profit, non-partisan public policy organisation. The objectives of FNVA are to study & analyse developments in China, the Tibet Plateau & the Himalayan frontier region & their implications for India's security, including the study of environment and climate change, political transitions and human security. FNVA serves as a forum for regional dialogue and publishes reports & briefs for policy & decision makers in government & politics.

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# EDD Publications



## **His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on Environment: Collected Statements 1987-2017**

Published by Environment and Development Desk (EDD), The Tibet Policy Institute

Year of Publication: 2017

ISBN: 81-86627-39-1

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## **Environment and Development in Tibet: A Critical Issue**

Published by EDD, DIIR, CTA

Year of Publication: 2008

ISBN: 81-86627-31-6

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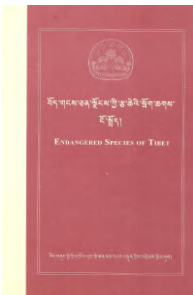
## **The Impacts of Climate Change on the Tibetan Plateau: A Synthesis of Recent Science And Tibetan Research**

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Year of Publication: 2009

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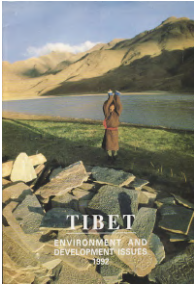
## **Endangered Species of Tibet**

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Year of Publication: 1995

ISBN: 81-86627-36-7

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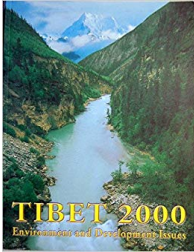


### **Tibet 1992: Environment and Development Issues**

Published by EDD, DIIR, CTA

Year of Publication: 1992

Pages: 124



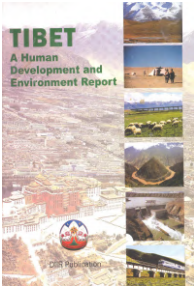
### **Tibet 2000: Environment and Development Issues**

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ISBN: 81-86230-29-7

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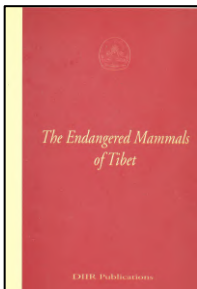
### **Tibet: A Human Development and Environment Report**

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ISBN: 81-86627-68-5

Pages: 267



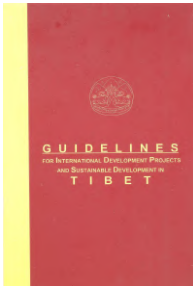
### **The Endangered Mammals of Tibet**

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Year of Publication: 2005

ISBN: 81-86627-44-8

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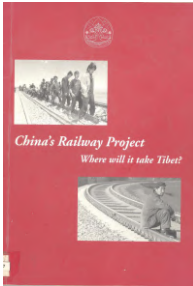
## **Guidelines for International Development Projects and Sustainable Development in Tibet**

Published by EDD, CTA

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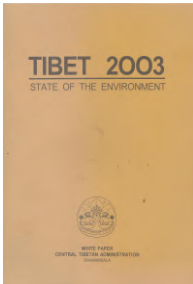
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## **China's Railway Project: Where will it take Tibet?**

Published by EDD, CTA

Pages: 44



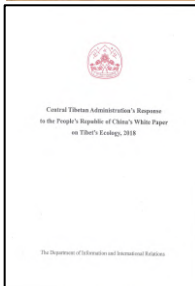
## **Tibet 2003: State of the Environment**

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Pages: 29

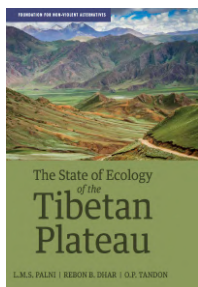


## **Central Tibetan Administration's Response to the People's Republic of China's White Paper on Tibet's Ecology, 2018**

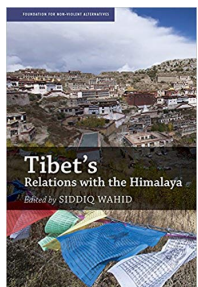
Published by Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR), CTA

Pages: 21

# FNVA Publications



**The State of Ecology of the Tibetan Plateau**  
Edited by Lok Man S. Palni, Rebon Banerjee  
Dhar, O.P. Tandon  
Published by Academic Foundation in  
association with FNVA  
Year of Publication: 2019  
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Pages: 296

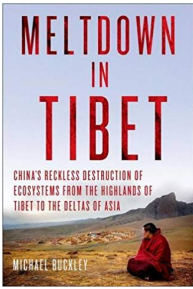


**Tibet's Relations with the Himalaya**  
Edited by Siddiq Wahid  
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association with FNVA  
Year of Publication: 2017  
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Pages: 300



**Reappraisal of India's Tibet Policy**  
Published by FNVA  
Year of Publication: 2013  
Pages: 55

# Books on Tibet's Environment



## **Meltdown in Tibet: China's Reckless Destruction of Ecosystems from the Highlands of Tibet to the Deltas of Asia**

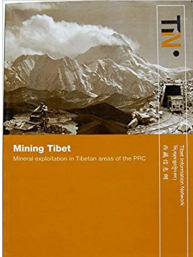
By Michael Buckley

Published by Pan Macmillan India

Year of Publication: 2015

ISBN 9781137279545

Pages: 256

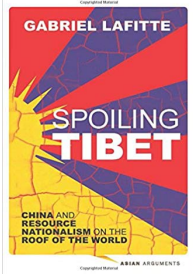


## **Mining Tibet: Mineral Exploitation in Tibetan Areas of the PRC**

Published by Tibet Information Network (TIN)

ISBN: 978-0954196127

Pages: 216



## **Spoiling Tibet: China and Resource Nationalism on the Roof of the World**

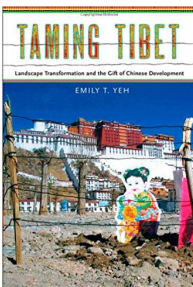
By Gabriel Lafitte

Published by Zed Books Ltd

Year of Publication: 2013

ISBN 978-1780324364

Pages: 216



## **Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development**

By Emily T. Yeh

Published by Cornell University Press

Year of Publication: 2013

ISBN: 978-0801478321

Pages: 344

# Quotes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Environment

This blue planet of ours is a delightful habitat. Its life is our life; its future our future. Indeed, the earth acts like a mother to us all. Like children, we are dependent on her. In the face of such global problems as the greenhouse effect and depletion of the ozone layer, individual organizations and single nations are helpless. Unless we all work together; no solution can be found. Our mother earth is teaching us a lesson in universal responsibility.

*-His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Rio Earth Summit 1992*



Climate change threatens us all. It's one of those natural challenges that teach us that we must work together, making a common effort to reach a common goal.



We must share responsibility for meeting the problems like climate change, depletion of natural resources and expanding population that affect us all. To limit our concern to our own nation alone is out of date.



We depend on each other for our survival. In terms of the threats we all face from climate change, national boundaries have no meaning.



Climate change affects everybody. Treat it as a global issue and national interests will automatically be addressed.