

Minutes of Cross-Party Group on Tibet, 5th October 2016

Present: Linda Fabiani, MSP (LF); Ross Greer, MSP (RG); Mr. Chonpel Tsering (CT, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama), Martin Mills (MM), David Hudson (DH), Roger Eames, Bruce Clark, plus 19 members of the public and Tibetans from Scotland.

1. Election of Officers

Election of Chair: Linda Fabiani, MSP

Election of Vice-Chair: Ross Greer, MSP

Election of Secretary: Dr. Martin A. Mills

Election of Treasurer: Mr. David Lloyd Hudson

Officers elected unanimously.

The Chair opened a general discussion on the goals and priorities of the Group across the next parliament. There was broad agreement that the Group should in future seek a balance in emphasising political issues with a celebration of Tibetan culture, literature, art and music.

2. Timing of Meetings for Upcoming Year

It was agreed that formal meetings of the Group would occur quarterly, preferably with as much notice as possible, with the next meeting in January/February.

3. Possible Future Events and Actions

3.1: Exhibition: A lengthy discussion occurred on the possibility of a large exhibition in the Main Hall of Parliament, introducing Tibetan issues to MSPs and members of the public and focused on Scotland-Tibet connections. Focus of this discussion was mainly on the 1904 Younghusband Expedition to Tibet, collections from which are widely available across Scotland. Precise narrative of the exhibition would require some thought and planning. The timeline on this would be about two years.

3.2: Music: Other opportunities to display Tibetan culture and music were also discussed, either in the context of the Parliament itself, or other venues such as the Edinburgh Festival. The Chair mentioned the possibility of using parliamentary Committee Room 1 for this purpose.

3.3: Edinburgh University Tibet Society: The question of the present absence of a Tibet society at Edinburgh University was discussed, and it was suggested that members of the group might give talks there to promote its re-establishment.

3.4: Briefing papers: As a standard aspect of the Group's work, briefing papers were recommended. There is already one in the pipeline, on mining and relocation. Future topics that were proposed included: Tibetan writers and songwriters; Tibet & Scotland; Tibetan Women's Association.

3.5: 10 March Commemoration: It was noted that there was no March 10 event this last year. Tibetans in the Group discussed the general problem of communication and co-ordination amongst Tibetans

themselves here, and it was generally agreed that this needed to be worked on. CT noted that 10 March and His Holiness' birthday were minimal obligations for Tibetans in exile.

3.6: Confucius Institutes: The recent statement by Edinburgh University was noted. It was recommended that Edinburgh University should be asked to facilitate dialogue between CI and representatives of Tibetans. The agenda for these engagements would be then lead to facilitated dialogue between Representatives of Tibetans and the PRC. Some discussion followed on the impact of CIs and the degree to which it depends on local conditions. General agreement that this was a delicate matter that would require considerable thought and careful consultation.

4.0 Statement by His Holiness' Representative

Chonpel Tsering thanked the Group for its work across the years, and noted the importance of non-Tibetans' involvement in seeking a just resolution of the Tibetan situation.

5.0 Performance of Tibetan Songs

The meeting was completed by the performance of three Tibetan songs by two members of the group, which were met with universal acclaim.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm, retiring to the Kilderkin for refreshments.

Action Points