

Minutes the Cross-Party Group on Tibet

Meeting (Teams) 11 February 2021

Attendance

Linda Fabiani, MSP Chair (LF)

Ross Greer R (Ross), MSP (RG)

Maureen Watt MSP (MW)

Dr Martin Mills, Secretary (MM)

Roger Eames, Treasurer RE)

Sonam Frasi, Representative to His Holiness the Dalai Lama (SF)

Mark Watson (MW)

Gabriel Latiffe (GL)

Christa Meindersma (CM)

Maxwell Macleod (MMac)

Mike Lean (ML)

Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren (EBR)

Ron Scrimgeour (RS)

Other initials

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (HHDL)

Cross Party Group on Tibet (CPG)

Scottish Centre for Himalayan Research (SCHR)

MINUTES

Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for attendance.

1. Minutes of last meeting not available.
2. For the benefit of guests attending, Linda Fabiani MSP and Maureen Watt MSP are retiring from Holyrood at the May election. Ross Geer MSP is standing for re-election. If successful, he would be able to help with the reconstitution of the new group
3. A legacy statement will be produced for the last meeting of the Cross-Party Group to be forwarded to the new group. This will enable the new Cross-Party group to move

forward quickly. SCHR paper on the Third Pole would form a major part of the legacy paper. Discussion then followed on –

- a. SCHR Paper
- b. COP 26

This was followed by an extended discussion of the way forward both before and after the parliamentary election period regarding the Climate Change issue. The importance of public understanding and reception was emphasised here, as the SCHR work remained very academic in tone and length. It was noted that recent events in Utturukand could be highlighted as a core example of the impact of climate change at work in the region.

For the period prior to those elections, it was agreed that a shorter, 2000-word Group Statement was required for the next meeting on the 17th March, to be followed in the period running up to COP26 by videos, interviews and further publications. Proposals and offers were made, in particular by MMac regarding funding possibilities in this regard, which were received by the Group with thanks.

The Secretary concluded discussion by agreeing that the draft readers of a Group statement would be MM, LF, MW, MMac and JS.

COP 26

The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on. 1 – 12 November 2021. It is the UK Government which is hosting this, not the Scottish Parliament. The CPG agreed that this was an important platform to promote the importance of the Third Pole

RG explained the Green Zone and Blue Zone. COPs are organised into two zones; the inner Blue Zone and the outer Green Zone. The inner Blue Zone is beyond the security cordon and only Ministers, accredited government officials plus other accredited individuals and organisations get into this area. Beyond the Blue Zone is the Green Zone. Within the Green Zone organisations that can afford it and secure space will have their own ‘pavilion’, exhibition or event to show what they are doing about climate change or get their climate change message to a wider audience. None of this is in the official COP programme but there is an official Green Zone programme and this zone attracts lots of attention from those that can’t get into the Blue Zone, particularly from the media.

RG explained that Green Parties have a presence in the Blue Zone reserved space in the Green Zone and MM added that Aberdeen University had also put in a bid. RG was happy to host an event on the Tibetan Plateau. RG and MM would discuss a joint approach. SF indicated that the Office of Tibet was hoping to be involved with a display stall in one of the Green Zone venues. This stall would have printed take-away material, possibly including the Third Pole paper or an extract if funds were available. SF is also talking to Free Tibet and the Tibet Network so that they can work together.

The CPG agreed that there should be a joined-up approach to these eco issues to enhance the overall impact of individual initiatives and not just seem to be random groups acting alone.

LF asked when we would know which groups were successful in bids for display and presentation space. SF said that this would be revealed in May 2021.

The Secretary opened discussions as to the question of the Secretariat of the Group, arguing that a larger team would be appropriate in this regard.

AOB

MW advised the group the Scottish Government had a Hydro Nation strategy. It was committed to making Scotland a 'Hydro Nation' where water resources are developed so as to bring the maximum benefit to the Scottish economy. MW recommended Dundee University as a leader in water research and recommended that the CPG could follow this up. Scottish Water is a sponsor of COP26 and offered a possible connection to our efforts.

MMac also recommend Rod Bradley SNH as a possible source in regard to water issues.

Next Meeting

Date of the next, Wednesday 17th March 2021. Agenda items to be forwarded to the Secretary.