

A Sino-Tibetan conference 'Finding Common Ground' was held in Geneva from 6–8 August 2009 attended by Chinese and Tibetan scholars, educators, writers and human rights advocates. The aims of the conference are to inform the Chinese people and the international community that Tibetan culture and way of life are gravely endangered and that the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people are seriously being violated by the Chinese regime. In addition, the conference aims to outline effective measures to support the Tibetan people in their struggle to regain their freedom and to sustain and promote its unique culture. In this way, the conference will also respond to the heartfelt remarks made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in His opening address.

Based on these aims, the conference has reached the following common positions:

#### I. Fundamental Values and Principles

The universal values established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which include freedom, democracy, rule of law, human rights, equality and coexistence of multiple cultures, are the fundamental spiritual values and principles that the conference has followed.

#### II. The Origin and Nature of the Tibetan Issue

- The root cause of the Tibetan issue is not a conflict between the Chinese people and the Tibetan people, but rather the autocratic rule of the People's Republic of China in Tibet and its cultural genocide in Tibet.
- The Beijing government's claim that 'Tibet has always been a part of China' is factually incorrect.
- Tibetan culture, religion, language and way of life are on the verge of extinction.
- The Tibetan people have been deprived of their fundamental human rights including the rights to national self-determination, political participation and religious belief.
- The official media of the Chinese government distorts the nature of the Tibetan issue and incites confrontation between the two peoples.

#### III. Ways Towards Resolving the Tibetan Issue

- Respect the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people, including the right to political participation and the right of religious freedom and belief.
- The resolution of the Tibetan issue is closely related to the democratization of China.
- The Chinese people should engage in a critical reflection on Han chauvinism and fully respect Tibetan culture and way of life.
- The Chinese government must comply with the principle of the rule of law.
- The undeniable right of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return to his homeland must be respected.

#### IV. Recommendations to the Tibetan Government in Exile

- To establish Sino-Tibetan friendship associations, Sino-Tibetan forums and civil society organizations across the world in order to promote cultural exchange and emotional ties between the two peoples.
- To establish a research institute for Chinese and Tibetan scholars to promote the study of Tibetan history and culture for the purpose of recovering historical facts.
- To adopt measures to counteract the blockage of information on His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the monopoly on Tibetan issues by the Chinese regime, which would facilitate access to independent information for the Chinese people and the international community.
- To create favorable conditions for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to promote his values to the Chinese community as a contribution to the renewal of spiritual values amongst the Chinese people.

The common wish of this Sino-Tibetan conference is for the Tibetan people to regain freedom and to prevent the extinction of Tibetan culture. We share a fundamental belief: freedom is the highest value; Tibetan culture is a precious treasure among the many cultures of humanity. Without freedom for Tibet, there will be no freedom for China. The extinction of Tibetan culture would not only be a tragedy for the Tibetan people, but would be a disgrace for the Chinese people and an irreplaceable loss for the whole of humanity.

Participants of the Geneva Sino-Tibetan Conference  
8 August 2009

A full documentation of the conference is available at: [www.tibet-china-conference.org](http://www.tibet-china-conference.org)