



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dalai Lama, Richard Gere spotlight Tibet's climate crisis through 'million trees' campaign

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The Dalai Lama and International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) Chairman Richard Gere are raising awareness of Tibet's environmental crisis through a British newspaper's enormous campaign to plant trees.

The Daily Mirror's "MillionMirrorTrees" campaign encourages readers to fight climate change by planting trees at home and in their communities. The goal is to plant at least 1 million trees over five years and to protect trees that are already in the ground.

To support that goal, the paper is giving away 20,000 native trees to its readers to plant.

Dalai Lama's hope when planting trees

The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, offered enthusiastic support for the campaign.

"We need to work together to meet the climate challenge that affects us all, and one of the ways we can do that is to plant trees," he said. "Whenever I do so, I make the following wish 'when the tree is fully grown, may the world have become a happier more peaceful place.'"

When the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize 30 years ago, he became the first Nobel laureate to be recognized specifically for his support of environmentalism, along with his nonviolent campaign for human rights in Chinese-occupied Tibet.

Today, the Dalai Lama remains committed to protecting the world's environment.

Noting his gratitude to Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, he told the Mirror: "The time has come for us to take a non-violent stance, not only towards each other, but towards the natural world, which means planting, not cutting, trees."

Tibet might be canary in coal mine, Gere warns

Richard Gere supported the #MillionMirrorTrees campaign by planting a tree at a Buddhist center in Grabnik, Poland.

Gere, ICT's longtime board chair, took the opportunity to highlight the advanced climate crisis in Tibet, which he said "may be the canary in the coal mine."

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“The Dalai Lama’s home, Tibet—the roof of the world—is warming nearly three times as fast as the rest of the earth,” Gere said. “This matters to all of us. Tibet has the biggest reserves of freshwater outside the Arctic and Antarctic, and is the source of most of Asia’s major rivers. Its changing climate affects not only the monsoon in Asia but weather patterns in Europe and the rest of the Northern Hemisphere.”

The Tibetan Policy and Support Act, proposed legislation introduced in Congress this fall, includes support for international action to address water security and other environmental problems in Tibet.

Gere meets Polish lawmakers

While in Poland, Gere also visited the country’s capital to meet with a working group in Parliament on issues concerning Tibet.

His visit was part of ICT’s continuing efforts to expand support for Tibet around the world.

“We have been quite successful at making Tibet part of our China policy [in the US],” Gere told reporters. “I think we can share that mechanism with our European friends and here in Poland as well.”