



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dalai Lama addresses climate change, discrimination, inequality in G7 video

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Showing sympathy for the vulnerable people who have already suffered from global warming, the Dalai Lama called on national leaders to unite against climate change during a virtual meeting of the G7 speakers this morning.

“Now we should pay more attention about global warming,” the Tibetan Buddhist leader said in a video message today, Sept. 12, 2020, for the annual meeting of speakers and heads of parliaments from around the world.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., hosted the meeting, which brought together her peers from Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

The theme of the gathering was “Addressing the Climate Crisis with Economic and Environmental Justice for All.”

“As House Speaker, I am proud to host this critical meeting of parliamentary leaders to call for urgent, strong and coordinated international action to combat the climate crisis and to advance justice in all our communities,” Pelosi said in a statement before the meeting.

Dalai Lama’s environmentalism

One of the most admired leaders in the world, the Dalai Lama has long spoken out about the need to combat climate change and protect the environment for future generations.

When he earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, 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.

In 2019, the Dalai Lama took part in the Daily Mirror’s “MillionMirrorTrees” campaign alongside International Campaign for Tibet Chairman Richard Gere.

The Dalai Lama also plans to release a book on climate change in November titled “Our Only Home: A Climate Appeal to the World.”

Inequality

In his video address, the Dalai Lama said he found the G7 “very, very encouraging,” adding that he feels the current generation has a greater sense of shared interest.

“If you look [at] past history, too much emphasis individual nation, individual religion, including color,” he said. “So it creates a lot of problem. Basically, you see, they are selfish, self-centered attitudes.”

The specter of climate catastrophe makes it imperative to look at all 7 billion human beings as one human community, he said.

However, climate change is already having a disproportionate effect on some of the least powerful people in the world.

“Due to global warming, too much rain some area. Some area dry. So these people suffer,” the Dalai Lama said, “particularly like in Africa and some area in India and China also.”

Climate change is also having a disparate impact along economic lines, he added.

“The rich people, big hotel, not much serious sort of feeling,” the Dalai Lama said. “But poor people, they really face serious problem.”

Climate change in Tibet, Dharamsala

The Dalai Lama noted the environmental importance of Tibet, the central Asian homeland he had to flee in 1959 as China annexed the historically independent country.

As the source of many of the largest river systems in Asia, Tibet provides water to more than 1 billion people downstream.

However, a study this year found the Chinese government used its dams on the Dzachu River in Tibet (known elsewhere as the Mekong) to prevent the flow of water in 2019, contributing to a devastating drought in Southeast Asia.

In addition, decades of reckless policies by the Chinese government—including mining and the forced relocation of Tibetan nomads—have helped cause Tibet to warm at nearly three times the global average.

“Tibetan people also now notice less and less snow,” the Dalai Lama said.

And in Dharamsala, the city in northern India where he lives as a refugee, “we notice the amount of snowfall less and less.”

Pelosi’s support for Tibet

For her part, Pelosi has been one of Tibet’s foremost political supporters—in addition to being a strong advocate for the environment.

Last year, Pelosi spoke at ICT’s “Why Tibet Matters” event in San Francisco alongside Gere and Jetsun Pema, the Dalai Lama’s younger sister and the driving force behind the Tibetan Children’s Village school system in India.

Along with Pelosi, the following officials took part in today’s G7 meeting:

- Anthony Rota, speaker of the House of Commons, Canada
- David Maria Sassoli, president of the European Parliament, European Union
- Richard Ferrand, president of the National Assembly, France

- Wolfgang Schäuble, president of the Bundestag, Germany
- Roberto Fico, president of the Chamber of Deputies, Italy
- Tadamori Ōshima, speaker of the House of Representatives, Japan
- Lindsay Hoyle, speaker of the House of Common, United Kingdom

Others who appeared at the meeting included former US Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and John Kerry, Jane Goodall and U2 singer Bono.



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