



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **State Department convening panel on Himalayan water security**

<https://www.savetibet.org/state-department-convening-panel-on-himalayan-water-security>

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The US State Department in partnership with the International Water Management Institute is convening a panel this week on Himalayan water security at the World Water Week Conference in Stockholm, which the International Campaign for Tibet is co-sponsoring. The panel will feature two Tibetan experts based in exile.

Tsechu Dolma, founder of the Mountain Resiliency Project, and Lobsang Yangtso, senior researcher at the International Tibet Network, will speak on “Addressing Water Security Challenges in the Himalayan Region,” a panel at the World Water Week Conference in Stockholm on Thursday, Aug. 24.

The panel, which is open to attend virtually or in person, will focus on environmental sustainability and climate change on the Earth’s “Third Pole,” as the Himalayan region is known.

The third panelist will be Manohara Khadka, the Nepal country representative for the International Water Management Institute, which will host the event with support from the State Department.

Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya, who serves as the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, will provide a prerecorded message for the discussion, as will Rebecca Peters, a water policy advisor at the State Department.

“He who controls water controls life,” said Franz Matzner, government relations director of the International Campaign for Tibet, which is cosponsoring the event. “The stakes are incredibly high. China’s occupation of Tibet and unfettered dam building aren’t only about environmental impacts. They grant the CCP an ability to turn on and off the region’s tap. In the face of China’s agenda of global political control, world leaders must find ways to intervene.”

[Sign up to attend the panel virtually or in person.](#)

### **Himalayan water security**

The Himalayan region is home to one-fifth of the world’s freshwater supply. Glacial runoff forms rivers in almost every country across South and Southeast Asia, with an estimated 1.8 billion people dependent on this water’s healthy, unimpeded flow.

The integrity of Tibet’s ecology is critical to the Tibetan’ people’s way of life and directly contributes to the stability and economic wellbeing of downstream countries in South and Southeast Asia.

However, large-scale water diversion projects and hydropower development are having dramatic downstream consequences, including lack of access to freshwater, economic disruption and negative impacts on downstream ecosystems.

During the panel, the panelists will propose policy solutions to speed up progress in different forums related to water, climate change, sustainable energy and water storage in the Himalayas.

## **US support for Tibet**

The State Department's convening of the panel is another sign of growing US support for Tibet, a Himalayan country that China has brutally occupied for over 60 years.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken [appointed Zeya the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues](#) in December 2021. Since then, Zeya has [visited the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration](#) in their exile home of Dharamsala, India twice and she has called on the Chinese government to resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama's envoys.

The US Congress and White House have also stepped up support for Tibet in recent years through the enactment of the [Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2018](#) and the [Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020](#).

Congress is currently considering the [Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act](#), a bipartisan bill that will pressure China to get back to the negotiating table to peacefully resolve Tibet's status.



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