

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Anita Couvrette and I am a member of the Canada Tibet Committee. The CTC is an across-Canada, non-violent group. Our mandate is to increase awareness of current conditions in Tibet and promote human rights and freedoms there.

I am here today to share our concerns around Canadian Extractive Companies doing business with the Chinese government over land that China is illegally occupying in Tibet. At present we are aware of 5 Canadian mining companies who are making deals with the Chinese Government. We are concerned that the process has not included open and fair consultation with the Tibetan people NOR has it invited the Tibetan government-in-exile to the negotiating table.

HISTORY:

Tibet is situated between China and India and was an independent country when the People's Liberation Army of China invaded in 1949. In 1959, there was a national uprising against the Chinese occupation and in the ensuing violence 87,000 people were killed. The Dalai Lama, his government and 100,000 Tibetans fled into exile in India.

Since that time:

Over 1.2 million Tibetans (1 out of 5) have died as a direct result of Chinese occupation. Over 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed. Work of arts & literature destroyed or sold. In 1960 the International Commission of Jurists declared that China had committed genocide in Tibet.

To maintain control over the Tibetan people:

- China has militarized the Tibetan Plateau. There are now 200,000 Chinese troops permanently based in Tibet and up to ¼ of China's nuclear missile force.
- In 1999, the Chinese government launched the Western China Development Plan - an aggressive industrialization plan to further consolidate its control and marginalize the Tibetan people. Millions of dollars have recently been poured into infrastructure development, including the construction of the Golmud-Lhasa railway (with Bombardier building the high altitude trains) and major extractive projects like mine operations and pipelines.

We are concerned that our Canadian Companies are unwittingly – or greedily – falling into step with the Chinese Government's agenda and enabling the genocide of a gentle and spiritual people.

## HUMAN RIGHTS:

The Chinese government's repression and human rights abuses of Tibetans are well documented. Tibetans can be arrested for writing songs, saying "Free Tibet" or having a photo of the Dalai Lama, their spiritual leader. Once arrested - they have little access to counsel, are subject to 're-education programmes' and forced labour camps. They are tortured and sometimes executed. There are hundreds of political prisoners inside Tibet today and the use of torture is widespread in the Chinese prison system.

While these conditions continue to exist, Canadian mining companies – all companies - need to get out of Tibet and follow the World Bank's example in 2000 when it pulled its funding for a resettlement of Hans farmers after finding that in Tibet there existed "disturbing and dramatic examples of what can only be described as a climate of fear".

It is clear that companies doing business with China in Tibet – without consulting with the democratically elected Tibetan government-in-exile – are supporting and helping to finance the Chinese government's genocidal agenda. They need to be held accountable.

## MINING AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: (an oxymoron?)

These Roundtables on mining and social responsibility are vitally important and long overdue. Canadian Extractive Industries are a blight on Canada's image around the world. Motivated by greed they have little regard for the environment or the aboriginal people whose lives they destroy. Voluntary adherence to international human rights and environmental standards is not working.

Why I'm so cynical:

I'm originally from the Sudbury area. My father worked for Inco and I can personally attest to the environmental devastation due to its SO<sub>2</sub> emissions – Sudbury has been compared to Mordor in Tolkien's Lord of the Rings. – and its community legacy of social unrest and violence. Inco is Canada's top mining polluter with its Ontario smelters the leading cause of acid rain and climate warming in North America. There have claims on or blockades to its mines around the world including Guatamala, New Caledonia, and Port Colborne, Ontario.

We also know that Inco signed deals with the Government of Indonesia when it was ruled by Suharto – one of the world's most corrupt dictators in modern times. Talk about "Doing business with the Devil". Suharto made it a welcome environment for foreign investment and Inco helped finance a criminal and corrupt regime. That, in my estimation, makes them complicit in crimes against humanity.

We are very concerned that history is once again repeating itself in Tibet and our Extractive Industries will place profits before human rights.

WE URGENTLY RECOMMEND:

1 - That Canadian Extractive Industries comply with the highest standards of international human rights and environmental protection and **that this compliance be compulsory.**

2 - That Canadian companies and their directors be held accountable in Canada when found complicit in human rights abuses and environmental destruction abroad (and at home.)

3 – That large, punitive fines be levied for environmental degradation and/or cultural annihilation and that no government assistance be given to businesses that don't comply with item 1.

4- That the 5 mining companies\* - that all companies - presently operating in Tibet **cease their operations** and

5 – That any negotiations between Canadian businesses and China in Tibet include the democratically elected Tibetan Government-in-Exile at the negotiation table.

- Continental Minerals Corp., Eldorado Gold Corp., Dynasty Gold Corp, Inter-Citic Inc. and TVI Pacific Inc.