



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Forests: Nature at Your Service

In support of the UN International Year of Forests



Earth - - Care



EARTH-O-CARE

Report on

*A World Environment Day Campaign
to Generate Environmental Awareness and
Highlight the Impacts of China's
Anti-Environmental Policies in Tibet,
on Tibetans, India and the World*

Launch of the Tibet-India Forum (TIF)

5th June, 2011
World Environment Day

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Introduction

World Environment Day is an annual event that is aimed at being the biggest and most widely celebrated global day for positive environmental action. World Environment Day (WED) was established by the United Nations General Assembly to mark the opening of the 1972 Stockholm Conference. Celebrating WED is about the inspirational power of individual actions that collectively become an exponential force for positive change. WED celebration has become one of the main vehicles through which the UN stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and encourages political attention and action. WED is also a day for people from all walks of life to come together to ensure a cleaner, greener and brighter outlook for themselves and for future generations.

Each year, the UN chooses a theme for the WED and the theme for this year was “Forests: Nature at Your Service”. The theme underscores the intrinsic link between quality of life and the health of forests and forest ecosystems. The WED theme also supports this year's UN International Year of Forests. It is interesting to note that India has been the nominated host country for WED 2011. India is a country of 1.2 billion people who continue to put pressure on forests especially in densely populated areas where people are cultivating on marginal lands and where overgrazing is contributing to desertification. India is also grappling with a deepening water crisis as **more and more of India's rivers are being affected by climate change, pollution and urbanization pressures**. Two of India's most prominent cities – Delhi and Mumbai - were the venue for this year's global celebration, with a myriad of activities over several days to inspire Indians and people around the world to take action for the environment.

Joining hands with UNEP's WED celebrations in Delhi this year, **Delhi Greens NGO** with support from the **Indo Tibetan Coordination Office (ITCO)** organized a day long **Earth-O-Care Campaign** to promote the cause of environmental protection especially with respect to Tibet and its environment. The campaign was launched in the morning of 5th June during the Rally at India Gate with the Indian **Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh** as the chief guest. Shri Jairam Ramesh met the Tibetan volunteers and acknowledged their participation in the campaign. The campaign highlighted the threats being faced by the Tibetan plateau, generated awareness on the impacts of these threats on Tibetans, on India and on the world and sensitized the citizens about “**our common environment**” which we need to protect. The campaign also highlighted the critical ecosystem services provided by global natural landscape such as the Himalayas, the oceans and the poles and discussed Tibet as the Third Pole which is rapidly melting. A Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus with an equal number of Indians and Tibetan volunteers took the messages of the campaign to different parts of Delhi throughout the day.

Proceedings: Earth-O-Care Campaign

Delhi Greens has been working to highlight the cause of Tibet among the general public across India and has been working to create awareness about the ecological importance of the Tibetan region in context to India. The entire Tibetan plateau is of much significance to the Indian sub-continent especially because of its strategic location for the region. The rivers originating from the Tibetan plateau feed over millions of people who depend on them for their survival and livelihoods. In particular reference to India, most of the Himalayan rivers drain into the Ganges-Brahmaputra river basin. River Brahmaputra itself originates as the Yarlung Tsangpo River in western Tibet. At the same time, the Third Pole that is Tibet also helps regulate global climate and prevents rapid changes in the weather system. Any rapid, anthropogenic, unplanned and short sighted activities in the Tibetan plateau will therefore invariably have an immediate adverse impact on the economy and environment of the world, beginning with Asia and in that India.



With this as the backdrop, Delhi Greens launched a Tibet-India Forum (TIF) on 5th June, 2011, the World Environment Day, as a platform to highlight the significance of Tibet to India during the Earth-O-Care campaign. The Earth-O-Care campaign was joined by volunteers from the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA)'s 'Women's Environment and Development Desk' (WEDD).

Green Walkathon Rally

The campaign was kick started during the Rally at India Gate with a 'Green Walkathon' with **Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh** as the Chief Guest. Others present during the occasion was the Health Minister of Delhi Dr. Kiran Walia and key officials from the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF), Government of India and the Department of Environment, Govt. of NCT of Delhi. The President of the TWA was also among the members of the Tibetan community who were present at the Rally and during the Earth-O-Care Campaign.



The Green Walkathon Rally began in the early hours of 5th June, 2011 and was joined by citizens of Delhi, school children, government officials, morning walkers, businessmen and women, teachers, students and young and old alike. Over 1,000 people joined the rally which was kick started by the Environment Minister **Jairam Ramesh** after a lecture and an oath taking ceremony. Everyone present took an oath to protect Mother



Nature and contribute their bit in safeguarding our environment. Groups of people walked on the Raj Path from India Gate towards the President's House and back. The Delhi Greens' Earth-O-Care bus, decorated with green banners and slogans followed also formed a part of the Rally. Volunteers from the Tibetan community were present in the bus and also walked along with others, shouting slogans for protecting Tibet's environment and carrying relevant banners and pamphlets.



After the Rally, the Green Bus invited members from the Tibetan as well as Indian community to join the Earth-O-Care campaign and a ride across the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. The Green Bus was taken to key strategic places with greater public presence. The threat of a Delhi close-down because of the previous night's adventure of the Delhi Police at Ramlila Maidan made it difficult to take the bus to certain pre-defined public spaces. However, that did not deter the confidence of the campaigners and after a round of India Gate, the bus went to various places in Connaught Place, Metro stations, the University of Delhi before concluded its journey at Majnu Ka Tilla. Campaign volunteers, who had earlier collected green messages at the India Gate Rally, distributed pamphlets and flyers to the public each time the green bus stopped at a public space.

The Bus also had a banner on its side on which people were asked to sign a pledge after duly understanding the cause it represented. The Green bus inspired green living transformation in citizens and collected signatures and pledges from across the capital city. The Earth-O-Care Campaign sensitized the citizens of Delhi about “**our common environment**” and the threats that it faces. In doing so, it helped the citizens of Delhi and India to think beyond borders and across disciplines so they can better understand the political and ecological importance of protecting the fragile environment of the Third Pole: Tibet.



The campaign facilitated the participation of the Tibetans and ensured that not just the Indian Environment Minister Shri Jairam Ramesh, but also each and every participant acknowledged the Tibetan presence and was made to appreciate the gravity of the problem of the destruction of Tibet's pristine environment. A unique platform in the form of a **Tibet-India Forum (TIF)** with an environmental focus, and where issues that are of equal importance to both the countries was created during the Campaign. TIF will now be taken forward in the form of a programme that works to achieve the similar objectives highlighted and will work as a platform to deliberate on issues of common interest to Tibet and India. In addition to the tangible output in the form of the TIF, the Earth-O-Care campaign also helped in creating global and sustainable citizens who can globally while acting locally and who can see the larger picture in terms of environmental degradation. These men, women and children will now be ready to fight for protecting 'our common environment' as and when necessary, in order to ensure a clean, green and more sustainable Planet Earth!



Some Media Coverage of the Event:

- <http://www.thetibetpost.com/en/news/exile/1764-tibetan-women-in-a-push-for-a-greener-india-and-a-healthier-planet>
- <http://tibet.org/tibet3rdpole.org/?p=490>
- <http://delhigreens.com/2011/06/09/green-walkathon-and-stakeholder-gatherings-india-paved-the-way-for-a-green-economy-this-wed/>
- <http://www.orissadiary.com/Shownews.asp?id=27105>