



Climate Change, Its Impact on Tibetan Plateau and the Corresponding Educational Solutions

Transcript of the Online Forum

In cooperation with

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Panelists

Speakers

Michael Soder, PhD, MSc

Dr. László Flamm

Prof. Dr. Yang Minghong

Ms Pema

Martin Sörös

Dr. Bernhard Müller

Organizing Representatives

Dr. Bernhard Müller, BA, MPA
Urban Forum

Prof. Helena Chang, MA
Sinopress

Moderator

MMag. Sascha Mundstein

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Urban Forum -
Egon Matzner-Institut für Stadtforschung

Tel.: +43/2622 21132 | Fax.: +43/2622 21388 E-Mail:
office@urbanforum.at | www.urbanforum.at
Neunkirchner Straße 15/7, 2700 Wiener Neustadt
ZVR-Zahl: 169347700 | Titelseite: © Bigstock

Transcript

Moderator: Welcome to this forum on the Climate Change and its Impact in the Tibetan region! I am Sascha Mundstein, your moderator for today's panel discussion. It is my pleasure to welcome a distinguished panel of experts from Europe and China!

Allow me to introduce the background of this discussion.

While global warming is causing fatal disasters in Europe, America, Asia and other continents, the urgent climate issue needs acknowledgement, discussion and action-taking around every corner of the world. The Tibetan regions are not to be ignored, either. Likewise, the wildlife there is threatened due to disappearing Himalayan glaciers. And the prevailing temperature trends are affecting human life in the region. There are, furthermore, concerns shown for Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures, for instance, Garze Autonomous Prefectures in Sichuan Province where ethnic Tibetans live. A deeper look into the region might be necessary to understand more about its geographical formation, the social environment, the regional educational policies and the daily life under the climate change there.

It's only natural that people from different cultural backgrounds react to changes in different ways. The global problem of the climate crisis, however, can only be solved by the global efforts with international communities holding onto the agreed principles. Otherwise, nothing but more hostility and tension shall be created. As a legally binding international treaty on climate change, can the 2016 Paris Agreement/ 2024 Baku Agreement be well implemented with the next USA government possibly dropping out? Could the EU and China work together to build more trust and understanding for each other so as to strengthen the climate protection measures?

I am looking forward to an animated discussion on this and related topics.

We are honored to have the following panelists with us today:

1. **Michael Soder**, M.Sc.Ph.D. Institute for Social Change and Sustainability, WU (Vienna University of Economics and Busi-

ness), Austria

2. **Dr. Laszlo Flamm**, Historian and Foreign Policy Expert, EuropeHaus Budapest, Hungary

3. **Prof. Dr. Yang Minghong**, Deputy Dean of the Institute of Social Development and West China Development, Sichuan University, China

4. **Ms Pema**, English Teacher, Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, China

5. **Martin Sörös**, Senior Journalist, Austria

6. **Dr. Bernhard Müller**, Secretary General, Urban Forum of Egon-Matzner Institute, Austria

Mr. Soder, I would like to invite you first to take the floor, if you don't mind. As is well known, the global warming is causing fatal disasters in Europe, America, Asia and other continents. How is the climate change affecting the human environment and the social life?

Michael Soder: I think climate change impacts human environments and social life in two ways. Firstly, environmental changes affect societies differently due to inequalities in education, income distribution, and the ability to adapt, be it at regional, national, or global levels. Secondly, if we take climate change seriously and proactively address it by changing the energy foundation of our production and consumption, this fundamental transformation will also affect society. The key difference lies in the choice: uncontrolled climate change will bring disaster, while proactive action allows us to control its trajectory and avoid catastrophe. We can either be victims of climate change or active agents of change, preventing disaster.

The global economy is currently transforming. This affects not only the increasing geopolitical tensions, but also the economic structures. Global economy comes in combination of digital and green technologies. While the United States is strongly in digitization technologies, China is aiming for the global leadership role in green and clean technologies. To succeed the transformation, it should be socially just, though. It must therefore be the task of economic policy: the negative social upheavals that the current structural change is reduced and avoided by digitization and decarbonization. In addition, the transformation will only



succeed if it focuses on people. So far, Europe's economic strength has always been in the minds of people. It is important to invest courageously in this resource and to promote knowledge, education and thus skills.

Moderator: Thank you, Mr. Soder! As you mentioned, we have different impacts on the global and regional levels. Actually, there's a lot of inequality in these relationships. Some suffer more from climate change than others. This leads us directly to the second part of today's focus, which is the Tibetan Plateau.

The climate crisis is around every corner of mother earth. We hear that in Tibet, the wildlife is threatened due to disappearing Himalayan glaciers. Not to be ignored are several geographically intricate Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures including the ones in Sichuan Province.

Mr. Sörös, you have travelled a lot as a journalist, and we heard that you were in Sichuan too. What was your impression of the region as far as the climate is concerned?

Martin Sörös: Yes, that's right. I have circled the world several times as part of my international activities. By the way by plane – sorry for that.

I love my experience in Sichuan. People are friendly there. Food is delicious. And the weather is hot. I have been to Chengdu and the areas around, not in the Tibetan prefectures. But even around Chengdu, I see the region has difficult geographical conditions. The weather and the lifestyle of the locals must be much influenced by these conditions. As far as I know, the Chinese government has been making huge efforts and implementing accurate strategies to tackle the environmental problems in the regions. I know we have two experts from Sichuan with us today. I'd like to listen to them talking about the present situation there.

There is no doubt that overcoming the climate crisis, global warming, the environmental and nature conservation is one of the biggest challenges for today's generation, more for the generation of tomorrow. It can no longer be denied that we have all been living these past few years as if there was no tomorrow.

Allow me to throw a touch of critical tone about the politics in Europe into the discussion – For me, nothing has done more damage to the entire environmental and climate issue than the Green Party's participation in government in Germany and Austria in recent years. On the one hand, the measures were too radical, ineffective and, above all, based on torturing the population instead of taking them along on this journey. We won't save our world if we ban McDonalds from using straws and we won't save our world if – as happened in Austria – we tell people that we should only shower twice a week to save water. This is pointless and a nuisance.

It would be much more important to let people understand the situation in a realistic way at an early age as to how to deal with the environment and natural resources. What you don't learn as a child, you won't learn later. This is primarily not a question of the environment, but a question of upbringing, behavior and respect.

And very important: If we touch other countries, we should be open to differences because we don't necessarily understand everything there.

Moderator: Obviously, you oppose to eco-dictatorship, Mr. Sörös! Having heard about Mr. Sörös' impressions in Sichuan, I am interested in understanding more about this region.

Prof. Yang, you are from Sichuan. And your academic research field covers the Tibetan regions. How is the climate change effecting the farming and animal husbandry in the Tibetan region? We believe that the demand for expertise to tackle with the challenge in the agricultural business must be increasing drastically. How is the educational system there? Are there enough schools for preparing skilled workers with modern agricultural methods and the green technology?

Yang Minghong: Thank you! I'm happy to share my view on the issues. According to my research, climate change impacts agriculture and animal husbandry on the Tibetan Plateau in several ways:

1. Rising Temperatures: The plateau experiences significant warming, especially

during summer and winter, which directly affects the growth season and productivity of grassland plants. High temperatures and drought lead to grassland degradation, reduced resources, and decreased livestock production.

2. Precipitation Changes: Altered precipitation patterns, including reduced rainfall and snowfall, limit water resources and grassland availability, hindering livestock development.
3. Increase in Extreme Weather Events: Climate warming has increased extreme weather events, such as heavy rains, hail, and droughts, threatening livestock production and ecosystem stability. In winter, rising temperatures may melt permafrost, increasing flood risks and affecting the sustainability of animal husbandry.

Addressing these challenges requires effective measures. Education becomes a keyword there years. Before 1959, Tibet had no modern schools, with education solely managed by monasteries. Modern education systems now cover all levels, with a pre-university enrollment rate exceeding 92% and university enrollment reaching 58%.

To tackle the severe agricultural issues caused by a variety of serious climate problems, Tibetan region has set up over 100 vocational schools that train workers in modern agricultural methods and green technologies. As a matter of fact, Tibet's education advancements include implementing a 15-year-long free education policy and hosting 3,339 schools with over 922,000 students. This accounts for one-fourth of the whole population there. Many students come from agricultural and pastoral families. Education allows them to see brighter future and encourages them to achieve remarkable academic success. Tibet's educational model is shaping a generation ready to face modern challenges, in my opinion.

Moderator: But we heard from media that in Tibetan regions, there are a lot of government-supported boarding schools which are enforcing assimilation policies that intentionally erase Tibetan language and traditional culture. Could you throw some light on this, Prof. Yang? What do children learn in these boarding schools?



Yang Minghong: Establishing boarding schools is a necessary choice for the development of education in Tibet. This is due to Tibet's unique geographical features. Anyone who has been to Tibet knows its particularly wild natural conditions. It is vast in territory but sparsely populated, with inconvenient transportation, high altitudes, and cold and hypoxic environments. It is a big challenge to develop education under those unique instable climate situations. In pastoral areas, the average altitude is 4,000 meters, with some even reaching 4,500 meters. Imagine living at half the cruise altitude of an airplane. At such altitudes, it would be like establishing a school on the peak of Mont Blanc in Europe. Can you imagine children climbing every day to and fro the school? By doing this, they won't be studying but climbing peaks all the time. Many herdsmen live in these areas. Their residences are scattered, with some families living several kilometers or even tens of kilometers away. This geographical environment presents imaginable difficulties for educational institutions. Establishing boarding schools is a necessary choice.

Based on my investigations in farming and pastoral areas on the Tibetan Plateau, I have several findings regarding boarding education: Firstly, whether students board or not is completely voluntary, based on personal family situations and educational needs of the students and their parents. Secondly, starting from improving management systems and refining work processes, boarding schools have standardized management for students' learning, dining, accommodation, extracurricular activities, mental health, and safety during travel. Thirdly, boarding schools in Tibet have maintained close relationships with families. The channels for communication between students and their families are open. Boarding students have the right to return home during weekends and holidays. They also have summer and winter holidays plus vacations during festivals. Students can take leave anytime if they have family emergencies or are sick. Students can call their parents anytime, and parents can communicate with teachers in various forms at any time. Boarding schools are not isolated islands detached from families.

I'm sad to know that you hear from some media that Tibetan boarding schools are forbid-

ding children to learn Tibetan language. As a matter of fact, learning, use, and promotion of Tibetan language and script, as well as the standard Mandarin language, are both guaranteed in the schools. Article 4 of the Chinese Constitution stipulates: „All ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own customs and habits.“ Article 19 stipulates: „The state promotes the nationwide use of Mandarin (the common spoken language based on Beijing dialect with some standardizations).“ These are the provisions of China's supreme law.

China is a unified multi-ethnic country with Han as the major ethnic group and over 50 ethnic minorities. Languages coexist with each other as well as the traditions. I don't see instances of deliberately deleting Tibetan language and its cultural traditions just for the sake of promoting Mandarin.

To answer your question of what students learn in the boarding schools – Besides languages, they learn the basic knowledge of modern science, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, and other courses. Tibetan Buddhism content is not included in school curricula. Students can choose to study Tibetan Buddhism in monasteries after reaching adulthood.

Moderator: Thank you very much, Prof. Yang, for giving us much input into the school system there! Today, we have a young lady Ms. Pema from Sichuan Province with us, too. Ms. Pema teaches in a school where many students are ethnic Tibetan. Ms. Pema, as far as I understand, you teach in a boarding school. Many students live in the school during the weekdays, right? Could you tell us more about the children you teach there. How is their life in the school? Why do they board? Do they learn Tibetan language there?

Pema: My school is a comprehensive K12 (from kindergarten to Grade 12) public school in Kangding, the capital city of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. Let me introduce our school to you first. As a teacher there, I find our school modern and advanced in teaching facilities like bright classrooms, standard stadiums and basketball courts as well as professional labs, etc. We have 4 clean and cozy student dormitories

which provide 24/7 hot water. Each apartment is assigned with a special administrator responsible for the safety of the students in the dormitory.

Due to different cultures and customs of ethnic groups in the school, our 2 cafeterias offer diverse meals that respect ethnic dietary preferences, such as tsampa and butter tea. The school also emphasizes holistic development through over 100 clubs, including a Tibetan language society.

Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is big and geographically challenging. It covers an area of 149,700 square kilometers, which is almost twice the size of Austria. There are fewer than 7 people per square kilometer, however. Boarding is a practical solution for students from dispersed and remote rural areas. It reduces family burdens and concentrates resources to provide quality education. Boarding students in my school have ample opportunities to learn Tibetan. All signs and materials in my school are bilingual, in Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese. Students can freely use both languages, or other languages, like Yi language. Some interested Han Chinese students have also learned basic Tibetan here.

Every year, many of our students enter prestigious universities in China. Education is so important. It transforms lives. It enables Tibetan students to move from rural areas to the wider world. I'm happy for them.

Moderator: Thank you, Ms Pema, for bringing us into your campus! Now we heard from both Prof. Yang and Ms Pema that Tibetan is indeed taught in the schools in the Tibetan region, we were wondering why a VOA article last year specifically mentioned the shutdown of a middle school in Qinghai due to its teaching of Tibetan language. The article said that the Chinese government has been closing all Tibetan schools in the Tibetan regions. Anything similar happening in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in Sichuan Province, Prof. Yang?

Yang Minghong: No. Regarding Tibetan language education in Tibetan-inhabited areas of Sichuan, I have observed two primary educational models. The first model uses Tibetan as the primary language of instruction, in-



roducing courses in Mandarin – the national common language and script in the third or fourth grade of primary school. Lessons are primarily conducted in Tibetan, while the national common language and script are taught as separate subjects. The second model employs Mandarin as the primary language of instruction, initiating courses in these from the first grade of primary school, while also offering Tibetan language courses. This model primarily adopts a „bilingual“ teaching approach.

Based on the local conditions, different regions choose between the first and second models. Meanwhile, the country vigorously cultivates „bilingual“ teachers and compiles „bilingual“ textbooks. Overall, the quality and ability of „bilingual“ teachers have significantly improved compared to the past, and „bilingual“ textbooks basically meet the needs of „bilingual“ education. Parents and students hold positive and satisfied attitudes towards the national „bilingual“ learning policy.

I would also like to mention that the college entrance examination system is aligned with „bilingual“ education. Current examinations are divided into the „ethnic minority language examination for ethnic minority students“ (Min Kao Min) model and the „ethnic minority students examining in the national common language“ (Min Kao Han) model. „Min Kao Min“ refers to ethnic minority students using their ethnic language to answer questions in the National College Entrance Examination. Students who take this route mainly apply to universities or majors that use their ethnic language for instruction. „Min Kao Han“ refers to ethnic minority students using the national common language to answer questions in the National College Entrance Examination. Students who take this route mainly apply to universities or majors that use the national common language for instruction. Tibetan students fully benefit from this policy. The trend indicates that due to the broader range of options and better employment prospects for „Min Kao Han“ schools compared to „Min Kao Min“ schools, parents and students prefer the latter, which facilitates easier employment.

One more thing to mention: China implements a policy of separation of religion and

politics in Tibetan region, which means that monasteries can only engage themselves in religious activities. Their function of education is taken over by the government-run school system instead. After China’s reforming and opening-up policies, some monasteries seem to have shown willingness to connect themselves to school education by getting young children into the temples to learn religious knowledge, Tibetan language and its cultural traditions. But the real practice is different, away from the legal requirements.

We all know that the Tibetan language and script are crucial carriers of Tibetan culture. Its effective preservation and development are vital in maintaining this ancient civilization. And China is making efforts in keeping Tibetan language and script instead of destroying it. After all, it is important for the local business and modern husbandry facing the complication of the climate change.

Moderator: Thank you, Prof. Yang, for offering us concrete observance concerning the situation of the Tibetan language education in Sichuan. It’s difficult for us to judge before we hear from the locals or make a trip ourselves there to see what is fact and what is fake news.

Mr. Flamm, you are a historian and in the past years you have done quite some research in relation with China. What are your findings in connection with education in Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures?

Laszlo Flamm: Historically, Tibetan education has been deeply intertwined with Buddhism, with monasteries serving as the epicenters of learning, culture, and spiritual practice for over 1,200 years. These monastic institutions were the primary sources of education, primarily catering to males pursuing a monastic life or those sent to study Buddhist classics, philosophy, literature, and other subjects.

While comparative studies of Eastern and Western civilizations must be approached with caution, striking parallels can be observed. From the Middle Ages until the 19th century, the Catholic Church played a dominant role in education in Europe. During the Early Middle Ages (5th to 10th centuries), schools were typically attached to monasteries, convents, and churches, providing

education predominantly to boys preparing for religious vocations. However, children of the aristocracy and wealthy families also had access to classical education in Latin, philosophy, theology, and other subjects through these institutions. Both Tibetan and medieval European education systems were characterized by:

- Limited access: Educational opportunities for the general population were restricted.
- Religious dominance: Education was dominated by religious institutions.
- Gender disparities: Education was primarily accessible to males.
- Feudal influence: Educational opportunities were shaped by feudal structures.

Additionally, there are captivating stories of cultural and historical exchanges involving European Catholic missionaries, particularly between the 16th and 18th centuries. During this period, Western European missionaries, including Jesuits and Puritans, ventured into China and Tibet to spread Christianity. This marked the beginning of direct interactions between the East and West. Some missionaries learned Tibetan and compiled dictionaries to foster mutual understanding.

The modern education system in Tibet, as understood by contemporary Western standards, began to take shape after 1951, particularly following the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. This period saw tangible advancements, including a significant decrease in illiteracy rates, the founding of numerous schools, and the expansion of primary education.

In 2020, Tibet had approximately 890,000 children enrolled in 3,195 schools of various types, including 2,199 kindergartens, 827 primary schools, and 155 middle schools, staffed by 61,239 teachers. Recent statistics indicate that both the number of schools and enrolled students have continued to grow in Tibet in recent years.

During my research, I found the following data to be particularly impressive:

- “Three Guarantees”: Since 1985, the Chinese government has implemented the „three guarantees“ (food, clothing and accommodation) for Tibetan children in border and



agricultural areas. This policy reminds me of the free and egalitarian school systems that were in place in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and other Eastern European countries during the socialist era.

- **Textbook Compilation:** Over 200 Tibetan-language textbooks for primary and secondary education have been compiled and published in recent years. For comparison, Germany has around 200-250 different textbooks, France approximately 150-200, and Hungary provides free textbooks for all students, with an estimated 100-150 different textbooks.
- **Classroom Technology:** Every classroom in Tibet now features electronic whiteboards. In 2019, Tibet boasted 9,484 multimedia classrooms in primary and secondary schools, with all teachers equipped with computers. Unfortunately, many schools in the Western world do not yet match these technological advancements.
- **Preferential Policies:** China's preferential policies to support ethnic minority students include bonus points for university entrance exams. These policies aim to promote educational equity and help ethnic minority students overcome systemic disparities. The additional points can improve their chances of admission to China's top universities. These preferential policies also apply to Tibetan students, a system not widespread in Europe and the USA.
- **Cultural Studies:** Tibetan students can study Tibetan culture and history in their own language at universities in Lhasa and mainland China, including prestigious institutions such as Peking University. A unique example is the Tibet University for Nationalities, located in Xianyang, Shaanxi Province, which is an ethnic university under the jurisdiction of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Why did I come up with these research results?

In light of Western media reports suggesting that Tibetan boarding schools enforce assimilation policies that undermine the Tibetan language and tradition, a fact-based approach becomes crucial. The aforementioned

facts provide a clearer perspective on our discussion today.

It is important to recognize that compulsory education in the national language is a standard practice worldwide. Proficiency in Mandarin Chinese is indispensable for success in the domestic labor market and can open job opportunities across China.

Canadian language teacher and journalist Lisa Carducci aptly stated that "from high school (or even from middle school), teaching in all subjects should be exclusively in Chinese. If children have completed six years of primary school in Tibetan, there is no risk that they will forget how to read, write, and speak the language. Later, they can major in Tibetan if this is their choice."

My conclusion is that it is essential to strike a balance between promoting the national language and preserving minority languages and cultures. Bilingual education programs can facilitate this balance by offering instruction in both the national language and the minority language, enabling students to maintain their cultural identity while gaining proficiency in the national language.

Moderator: That was a well-done research, Mr. Flamm! Thank you for sharing the historical moments with us. Very interesting!

Mr. Sörös, would you like to add something to the account by Mr. Yang, Ms Pema or Mr. Flamm according to your personal observations?

Martin Sörös: I believe I have gained more insight into the reality in the Tibetan regions and prefectures. As Prof. Yang mentioned, the rise in temperature leads to the melting of frozen soil, which increases the risk of floods, affecting the operation and sustainable development of animal husbandry. To cope with the challenges in the agricultural field, the existing education system including the boarding schools in the regions and the prefectures came into being. It makes absolutely sense to stay in the school out of security consideration. Who can come and go during one day for the schools located in such difficult geographical territories? No time for it. Not possible.

I'm glad to hear that the learning, using, and promotion of Tibetan language are supported and guaranteed in the schools where the ethnic Tibetan live. This ancient language is a treasure of human civilization. To keep it alive is to inherit the human culture and spirit. I knew that in the old times, only those young males going into the temples might have the opportunity to learn this language. Now that the schools offer everyone the chance to study it, what good news!

Ms Pema's description of her school raises my interest to pay a visit there. With its facilities and the comfortable living environment, the students who board there must be happy. I am also attracted by the description of the cafeteria there. The dishes for the sake of different eating habits of different ethnic groups. Maybe one day, Ms Pema will invite me to go there to enjoy the food with her students together.

Pema: Sure, you are very welcome!

Martin Sörös: Thank you, Ms Pema! So we have an appointment already!

Moderator: Now that we have a much deeper understanding of what is happening in Sichuan, let us turn back to the global question of Climate Change.

Mr. Soder, the 2016 Paris Agreement has been a legally binding international treaty on climate change. This year, the Baku Agreement has been signed, too. Can the Agreement be well implemented with the next USA government threatening to drop out of it? What might be the new situation also in light of the most recent conference in Azerbaijan?

Michael Soder: Education is crucial for change and reform. Beyond focusing on youth education, adult education is equally essential to adapt to a transforming world. Regarding the potential U.S. withdrawal, we should consider broader trends: the declining costs of technologies like solar, wind, and batteries have already improved the environment and boosted economies. Investment in education and these technologies remains beneficial.

While political shifts, like a new Trump administration, might slow progress, they cannot stop it. Climate change initiatives and

transformations are already underway. We might achieve the Paris Agreement's goals later than hoped, but progress remains inevitable.

Moderator: Thank you, Mr. Soder, for your insights and sharp analysis!

As we know, it is always a challenge to understand each other with different mentalities and cultural backgrounds. To prevent the climate crisis, however, the global effort is necessary with international communities holding onto the agreed principles. Mr. Flamm, you are an expert on foreign policies. In your opinion, how shall the EU and China come close to each other, build more trust and mutual understanding so as to work together to save Earth?

Laszlo Flamm: The key themes of my response are global cooperation for peace, security, and managing the climate crisis.

The justification for awarding this year's Nobel Peace Prize underscores the interconnectedness of global peace, the climate crisis, and security. These three critical issues will significantly influence global policies in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is imperative for global policymakers to collaborate rather than act antagonistically.

Currently, strained China-EU relations hinder the establishment of new cooperation in crucial areas such as climate change management. However, time is of the essence. I recommend that within the framework of the United Nations, China and the EU should enhance their cooperation in the areas of peace, security, climate crisis, education and sustainable development.

The UN's structure is well-suited for coordinating and initiating China-EU collaborations. The urgency for this new collaboration may arise sooner than anticipated. The incoming Trump administration has indicated intentions to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement and reduce the USA's financial contributions to the UN, potentially jeopardizing global goals that impact humanity and future generations.

Consequently, the responsibility for global stewardship will increasingly fall on China

and the EU. It is essential to consolidate trust and mutual understanding between these two entities. The next step is to define a robust framework for cooperation.

I believe that the UN provides an excellent platform for joint efforts between China and the EU, yielding optimal results for the world. Existing programs such as the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN's New Agenda for Peace, and UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education Program are exemplary initiatives that can facilitate this collaboration.

Moderator: Thank you, Mr. Flamm! We all hope that the international organization like UN can work efficiently to help solve more urgent climate issues. Thank you all, dear panelists, for the valuable insights, input and contributions which helped us gain deeper understanding of the climate change and its impact in the Tibetan region!

I would like to extend thanks to the organizers Dr. Müller from Urban Forum and Prof. Chang from SINOPRESS. Allow me to have the honor to give the floor to Dr. Müller who is going to offer us the closing remarks for today's forum. Dr. Müller, the floor is yours!

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, Sascha!

Dear ladies and gentlemen! Distinguished panelists!

During the Covid pandemic, we had to hold webinars as face-to-face events were not possible. This emergency situation has turned into a success story for the organizers SINOPRESS and Urban Forum. Today's topic is one of the most important discussions in the international online forums to date. Global warming does not stop at any region. Therefore, we must not only think about the continents, but also about individual countries and their regions. The consequences of climate change and man-made global warming affect us on a large scale, but also on a small scale. We can only solve the devastating consequences of global warming multilaterally.

It is unacceptable for small countries to say 'We don't need to do anything about climate change, the big nations have to do it.' Nor should we accept large countries saying

'We are much bigger, small countries have no advice to give us'. During US President Donald Trump's term number I, I was invited to a conference on sustainability in Beijing. The President of the Vienna State Parliament, Ernst Woller, presented the Green & Smart City Vienna. This conference was largely organized by the Ambassador of the European Union to China. If, in his second term of office, Trump once again cancels the Paris Climate Agreement and does not want to do anything to protect the climate, the People's Republic of China and the EU will have to move closer together.

We live in times of multiple crises with wars, famines, enormous price rises that cause impoverishment, terrible environmental disasters as a result of climate change, religious terrorism, etc. These crises and problems do not stop at national borders. We need all the stronger international alliances against them. If the US withdraws from the multilateralism game, it will be up to China and the EU to build bridges and overcome differences. Trust and the ability to engage in dialogue will become even more important. And we will not forget education as a key, and we'll have to combine education and ecology!

Thank you for the good cooperation. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a successful, healthy and peaceful 2025!

20th December 2024