



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INPaT Announces Tibetan Election Observation Mission (TEOM) to Europe and North America

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Amsterdam/Brussels/Zurich, Washington, DC/Toronto – The International Network of Parliamentarians for Tibet (INPaT) will deploy a team of experts to conduct a Tibetan Election Observation Mission in Europe and North America on 20 March, 2011 when Tibetans in the free-world vote to elect the Kalon Tripa (Chairman of the Tibetan cabinet) and the 44 members of the 15th Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPIE). TEOM Members composed of parliamentarians will observe Tibetan polling stations in Brussels, Zurich, New York and Toronto.

INPaT's Bylakuppe Statement on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Tibetan Democracy Day on 2 September, 2010, called upon the Tibetan Election Commission to invite international election monitoring entities to observe the 2011 parliamentary and Kalon Tripa elections.

In response, INPaT was formally invited by the Tibetan Parliament in Exile (TPIE) "to initiate a process of observing the final elections on the 20th of March 2011 in different parts of the world where Tibetan exiles vote for their leaders in the Cabinet and the Parliament."

INPaT TEOM Co-Chair Mr. Matteo Mecacci following a preparatory visit to Dharamsala, India formally reached an agreement with the Tibetan Election Commission to get its full co-operation and assistance, including the guarantee of full access to the polling stations and the counting centres.

"We believe this unique and worldwide Tibetan election process which is an unprecedented achievement for a refugee community needs to be observed and appreciated by the communities of democracies in this world," said Mr. Matteo Mecacci.

INPaT TEOM has embarked on this initiative to lend its political support to the democratic institutions initiated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and established by the Tibetan Refugee Community and to convey its findings and recommendations to the international community and the Tibetan people.

Given the situation that this is the first instance the Tibetan Elections will experience external observers, INPaT TEOM will not be a full fledged election monitoring exercise in accordance with the international accepted norms and technical requirements.

INPaT TEOM will be following the developments in South Asia where we plan to release the final report when the Tibetan Election Commission announces the results in April, 2011. INPaT TEOM remains gravely concerned about the seizure of ballot boxes from the Tibetan community when the preliminary voting took place on 3 October, 2011 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

According to the Tibetan Election Commission more than 80,000 Tibetans are registered to vote on 20 March.

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Note:

-- 133 Members of 33 Parliaments who took part in the 5th World Parliamentarians Convention on Tibet (18/19 November 2009, Rome) adopted the "Rome Declaration on Tibet" which decided to set up an International Network for Parliamentarians on Tibet (INPaT).