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FOUNDED 1959

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Dear Friends,

For over 60 years, Tibet society has stood shoulder to shoulder with Tibetans inside and outside Tibet. Founded in 1959, within weeks of the Dalai Lama's forced exile to India following the uprising against China's occupation, the Society quickly became *the* voice for Tibet in the UK and beyond.

Our organisation continues to work actively for the freedom of the Tibetan people and their right to self-determination. However, today's challenges present a very real threat to the continued existence of the Society and we have had to make some difficult decisions over the past few years. That is why today, I'm happy to announce that we have completed a formal merger with Free Tibet, the largest Tibet support group in the UK.

The consolidated position of Free Tibet and Tibet Society together will no doubt strengthen not just the organisations but the Tibet movement as a whole in the UK. We will draw on the vast knowledge, expertise and experience of Free Tibet's campaign work & Tibet Society's history of advocacy to raise the issue of Tibet in parliament and to effect meaningful policy change in the UK. Together we will be a stronger, more effective advocate for Tibet – in parliament, at the United Nations and in the streets.

Amidst an era of social media, 24-hour news coverage and the growing might of China, the issue of Tibet has gradually faded away from media coverage and as a consequence, we have witnessed the declining support from the general public. We must address this and it's for this reason that we are most excited to be joining forces with our friends at Free Tibet. This partnership will strengthen our advocacy for Tibet, providing new approaches to counter the power of Chinese influence, and support for the younger generation of advocates for Tibet. Free Tibet is on the cutting edge of campaigning on Tibet, with recent victories against Liverpool Football Club, Google and the Telegraph and we are excited to be joining them for a new chapter in Tibet Society's story.

Thank you, truly, for all your support for the Tibetan people. It continues to be a humbling experience to witness the strength of feeling associated with this most important of causes. As we move forward into a new era for Tibet Society, I hope that your passion, commitment and determination to see freedom in Tibet will remain. For six decades the Society has stood steadfastly with the people of Tibet; through the 1987 uprising, the Beijing Olympics, the increased repression under Xi Jinping and much more besides. And now, alongside Free Tibet, we will continue to stand with them for as long as it takes. You'll be hearing more from us again soon, but for now, thank you and *Bhod gyal lo!*

Yours faithfully,

The Council of the Tibet Society:

Fredrick Hyde-Chambers OBE, Dalha Tsering & Pempa Lobsang