



European Economic and Social Committee

PRESS

CES/10/12
28 January 2010

Statement by President Mario Sepi.

EESC President Mario Sepi welcomes the resumption of dialogue on Tibet and the consideration of economic and social concerns

As President of the European Economic and Social Committee, which was able to lead a fact-finding trip to Tibet in September 2009 to analyse the economic and social situation of Tibetan society, I am delighted with the progress in the ongoing dialogue on Tibet that has been made over the last few days.

The resumption of discussions, marked by the meeting between the Dalai Lama's envoys and delegates from the Tibetan government in exile on the one hand, and the Chinese government on the other, followed on from the major symposium on Tibet, which looked at issues around economic development of the Tibet autonomous region.

I am pleased to see that economic and social problems are so central to the discussions on the future of the Tibetan people and that the aspects of economic and social conditions we could observe during our trip to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) are at the heart of the talks.

Among other issues, I would particularly like to highlight the significant difference between urban and rural areas and the fact that the poorer rural areas are mostly populated by Tibetans.

I am also very positive about the extension of the development plan for Tibet to the Tibetan-populated areas of the four contiguous Chinese provinces. This is a sign of the awareness of the significance of the issues around the level of participation by Tibetans in the region's economic development, a matter that was of major concern during our trip to Tibet.

If Tibet is to enjoy genuine, integrated development, it is of the utmost importance to invest seriously in the human factor and in greater civic participation by Tibetans.

Mario Sepi