

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Human Rights Council

Fifty-third Regular Session

June 28, 2023

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Statement delivered by Vincent Metten on behalf of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Mr. President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur for his report on *The employment guarantee as a tool in the fight against Poverty*.¹

According to Chinese State media, by the end of 2019, 628,000 people inside the Tibet Autonomous Region were “lifted” out of poverty.² This included 266,000 farmers and herders who were expelled from their ancestral homelands and through force or coercion transferred into consolidated, urban dwellings.

The Chinese government claims this policy is a successful example of the Party’s benevolent rule. This is counterfactual. Based on Chinese government media sources explicitly addressing nomadic populations, at least 1.8 million nomads have been displaced.³ The uprooted families are then forced to accept low-paid, low-skilled work. Targeted Tibetans are rarely provided the ability to refuse dislocation nor do they receive proper compensation.

In sum, China’s purported strategy to meet development goals in Tibet have not been designed in

¹ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G23/071/64/PDF/G2307164.pdf?OpenElement>.

² CGTN, 16 October 2020, ‘Tibet: How China’s toughest battleground defeated absolute poverty?’, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-10-16/How-Tibet-eliminated-absolute-poverty-despite-harsh-climate--UDkSdO4J5S/index.html>.

³ China Daily, 6 July 2012: ‘Over 1 million Tibetan nomads choose settlement’, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/06/content_15555645.htm; Xinhua, 1 December 2012: ‘Massive nomad settlement to protect “mother river”’, <http://en.people.cn/90882/8041990.html>; China Daily, 6 July 2012: ‘Over 1 million Tibetan nomads choose settlement’, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-07/06/content_15555645.htm; and Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, 5 December 2009, ‘青海 3 万多□□牧民迁新居 : “小□政 “托起”大民生”[Ch. ‘Qinghai san wan duo hu nong mu min qian xinju: “xiao caizheng “tuoqi” da minsheng’, ‘More than 30,000 farmers and herdsmen in Qinghai moved to their new homes: microfinance support the people’s livelihood]’, http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2009-12/05/content_1481036.htm; Human Rights Watch, ‘They Say We Should Be Grateful’, 2013, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/tibet0613webwcover_0.pdf, page 4; China Daily, 7 August 2015, ‘Families moving into the modern era’, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/tibet50years/2015-08/07/content_21525294.htm.

a way that is culturally adequate, inclusive, or provides Tibetans any role in the decision-making process.

We urge the Special Rapporteur and Member States to demand China include local input in development and poverty reduction decisions as it is essential that Tibetans have the space and freedom to draw on their culture, needs, and expertise to define their vision for the future.

Thank you.