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SURMANG FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER 2010

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## Surmang Signs Historic Agreement with Chinese Government



Surmang Foundation and the Chinese Government, Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, signed an historic agreement to rebuild 4 Yushu township clinics and add Surmang's unique rural health care delivery system. These township clinics were in the epicenter region and destroyed by the April 7.1-level earthquake. Unofficial estimates speak of over 10,000 dead. The infrastructure – roads, schools, hospitals, clinics were brought to their knees.

The partnership agreement was signed in Yushu (*Jiegu*, Tib) after 5 months of assessment and negotiation. Present at the signing were senior advisors Dr. Ray Yip, Director, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation China; Bill Valentino, VP of CSR Bayer and Prof. Tsinghua University; Christy Huang, Project Director Surmang/amara; Lee Weingrad, Director, Surmang Foundation, amara foundation.



The setting for signing the accord was amidst the dust and reconstruction of Yushu. Almost all the buildings are down and the town is wasteland of rubble, dust and scrap metal. At 3800 meters (12,600 ft) Yushu's winter weather is frigid, and the thin atmosphere easily disperses body heat. The two nights and three days the Surmang team stayed at one of 3 still-standing hotels that have walls and beds. During the visit there was water, heat and electricity for only 6 hours.

But the situation for locals is much worse, since they live in government-issued relief tents. Tibetans are a hearty bunch,



but the Yushu residents are hardly tent-dwelling nomads. According to unofficial sources, the dearth of businesses, the fact that all HS and Junior HS students have been sent to special locales outside town, has taken its toll on locals.



But arising from these ashes are several rays of hope. According to Surmang Director Lee Weingrad, "This agreement is the crowning achievement of our work of the past 18 years at Surmang. It brings a good idea and a good health care delivery system into the public health system. We've done it by reaching out to partners in the community, in the government, in the international business community, and among tens of thousands of supporters of our cause. Everything in our Surmang model is in the partnership agreement.

"It shows that the obstacles to relieving suffering and bringing health to the ultra-poor—be they remoteness, lack of access to services, lack of provider training, bureaucratic indolence—are not merely workable. We have the means and the ability at our disposal, we have the ability to let this model of life-support and suffering relief shine throughout China and the rest of the underdeveloped world. This is especially poignant for me during this time of great sadness, tragedy, destruction and devastation for the Tibetans of Yushu. We should never forget them."