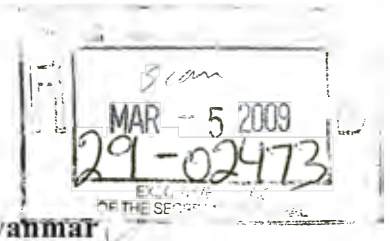


Myanmar
ASEAN

ACTION
COPY



Note to the Secretary-General

Outcome of the 14th ASEAN Summit in relation to Myanmar

1. On 1 March 2009, the 14th ASEAN Summit concluded with the following reference to Myanmar in the Chairman's Statement, Prime Minister Abhisit of Thailand:

"42. We had open discussions on Myanmar. We were briefed by H.E. Prime Minister Thein Sein on recent political development and the progress made in the implementation of the 7-step Roadmap to Democracy. We encouraged the Myanmar Government to facilitate the national reconciliation process to be more inclusive so as to strengthen national unity, thereby contributing to peace and prosperity in Myanmar. In this connection, the release of political detainees and the inclusion of all political parties in the political process leading to the general elections in 2010 will contribute significantly to the national reconciliation process. We underscored the necessity for and welcomed Myanmar Government's willingness to engage in active cooperation actively with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in order to address the international community's concern about the situation in Myanmar."

2. On 27 February, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed to extend the mandate of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force for the Victims of Cyclone Nargis and the Tripartite Core Group until July 2010. The Chairman's Statement said, "We welcomed the success of the ASEAN-led mechanism to help the victims of Cyclone Nargis and pledged to continue supporting Myanmar in its recovery efforts following the launching of the Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP). We also welcomed the decision of our Foreign Ministers to extend the mandate of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force and the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) until July 2010." According to the ASEAN Secretariat, the Myanmar Government explained that it is not in a position to extend the TCG beyond 2010 as they will have elections in "mid-2010" and a new Government after that, and the current administration does not want to make a commitment on behalf of the future Government.

3. At the press conference following the Summit, PM Abhisit in his capacity as ASEAN Chair said that "the ASEAN leaders encouraged Myanmar to continue cooperation with the United Nations and to make sure that the roadmap continues according to plan, and that the process would be as inclusive as possible, which includes, of course, the continuation of the release of prisoners or political detainees and also the participation of political parties in the upcoming election." Separately, PM Abhisit has been quoted to call on all parties in Myanmar to participate in the planned 2010 election, and PM Thein Sein of Myanmar has been widely reported as telling his Thai counterpart that Myanmar would agree to international observers for the election. In addition, PM Badawi of Malaysia reported that "the Myanmar PM said that they would like to deal with the United Nations and not ASEAN", adding that "[ASEAN] will not be the interlocutor." PM Lee of Singapore was quoted as having told the meeting that "we should not encourage UN Secretary-General to visit Myanmar unless there are concrete deliverables", adding that "such a visit will raise unrealistic expectations that cannot be met, and would be counter-productive."

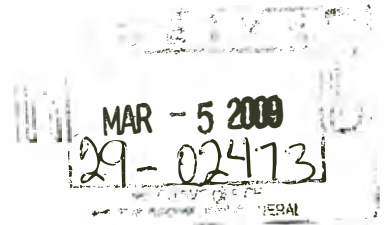
4. It is clear from the above that ASEAN's potential to collectively leverage Myanmar remains limited, both out of principle and likely out of concern to preserve consensus among all its members in the implementation of its new Charter and in response to the global financial crisis. The Chairman's Statement – which clearly endorses the Government's planned election in 2010 – is noticeably less demanding on Myanmar than that of the last Summit under Singapore's Chairmanship immediately following the demonstrations in 2007. Notably absent from this year's Statement, for example, is any reference to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and to the need for dialogue or at least a more level playing-field. But while ASEAN may appear to be taking a "backseat" behind the United Nations, its call on Myanmar to "engage in active cooperation actively" with your good offices is a clear recognition of the UN's unique political role as the primary channel of engagement between Myanmar and the international community. At the same time, ASEAN will remain institutionally invested in Myanmar through the extension of the TCG, the first such ASEAN mechanism to be developed to assist national efforts in response to a humanitarian crisis. With regard to reports on PM Thein Sein's reference that Myanmar would agree to international observers for the election, it remains to be verified whether this is an official change in the Government position. Taken together, and as recommended in my mission report of 4 February, the outcome of the Summit potentially offers a good basis to maximize your own engagement on this issue, both with ASEAN collectively and with Myanmar bilaterally, at the upcoming UN-ASEAN Summit in April.



Ibrahim Gambari

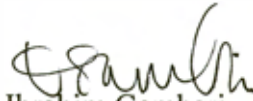
4 March 2009

Note to Mr. Nambiar



Outcome of the 14th ASEAN Summit in relation to Myanmar

Please find attached for the attention of the Secretary-General a note on the outcome of the 14th ASEAN Summit in relation to Myanmar. I would be grateful if you could kindly bring the attached to the Secretary-General's attention.


Ibrahim Gambari
4 March 2009

cc: Mr. Pascoe
Mr. Kim