

Secretary-General

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SECRETARY-GENERAL, IN ADDRESS TO SECURITY COUNCIL, URGES PROMPT MEETING

BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF MYANMAR, POLITICAL OPPOSITION

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2007/sgsm11208.doc.htm>

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's opening remarks to the Security Council on Myanmar in New York today, 5 October:

We meet at a time when events in Myanmar are attracting unprecedented world attention. My Special Adviser, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, just returned from a short mission yesterday and will brief this Council shortly. I asked Mr. Gambari to convey to the senior leadership in Myanmar very clear messages from me, on which Mr. Gambari will elaborate in his briefing.

I am deeply concerned about the recent events in Myanmar and the reports of continued human rights violations. I must reiterate that the use of force against peaceful demonstrators is abhorrent and unacceptable. While I am relieved to hear of reports that some military forces have been withdrawn and that some restrictions were eased, the overall situation still remains of serious concern, especially with regard to the unknown predicament of the large number of individuals who were arrested without due process. I hope that those detained will be released without further delay.

Now more than ever before, the Government of Myanmar should take bold actions towards democratization and respect for human rights. The national reconciliation process must be accelerated and be made as broad-based, inclusive and transparent as possible. A serious and comprehensive political dialogue between the Government and the political opposition is indispensable. One important outcome of my Special Adviser's mission is the announcement by the Government of a possible meeting between Senior General Than Shwe and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. I welcome this announcement and urge both parties to meet as soon as possible. It is too early to measure the impact of Mr. Gambari's visit, or to label it a success or a failure. It appears, however, that a window of opportunity has opened, and it is vital that the Government of Myanmar responds positively.

Advancing the cause of democratization and the development of a peaceful and prosperous Myanmar will require sustained engagement by the United Nations with the active support of the international community, including especially the countries in the region. A united Security Council could play an important role in support of the ongoing efforts of the United Nations.

In this regard, I want to thank ASEAN and its members for their support for my initiative, as well as their own interest and engagement in this issue. I trust that they will remain seized with the situation in Myanmar and actively engaged in finding a solution.

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