



(ASEAN, Government of Myanmar, United Nations)

TRIPARTITE
CORE
GROUP
(TCG)

Closing Remarks
By H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, ASEAN Secretary-General
At the Launch of Post-Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP)

United Nations Convention Center (UNCC), Bangkok, 9 February 2009

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is extremely heartening for me and ASEAN to listen to many of the positive statements that you have raised for our first ever ASEAN's wide regional engagement on humanitarian task/mission like this one. Nargis was one of the highlights of my first year as a Secretary-General and as I said, ASEAN was very much affected in a positive way, on how to cooperate and how to coordinate and how to deliver in critical needs in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. So it was part of, unfortunately, our growing theme as an organisation. It is unfortunate that it has to be made on top of the suffering of the people of Myanmar. But we turned the table around. We made the crisis into an opportunity to show ASEAN's resiliency, ASEAN's capability, ASEAN's willingness and essentially a new ASEAN under the Charter. In that sense, I think the success has been very much recognised. But again, it's the success of the cooperation, the success of the partnership with all of you that so we appreciate so much; all guidance and advice from all of you.

Now that the report is launched, it is very, very important that we put it into practice as soon as possible. We have to create and seize the momentum and impress all donors and potential donors that we are committed to make it work. ASEAN has as its immediate mandate about five months left until July but we will make the best use of it until the ASEAN Foreign Ministers make the consideration and decision to give us a direction to cover the three years of the PONREPP, your contribution and your support today is certainly going to be very important. The ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force and the TCG, Mr. Chairman, from now on will have to work together closely, how to integrate ourselves into the mechanism elaborated in the PONREPP, that we're going to put in place. AHTF and the TCG will have to decide how to put those mechanisms forward and how to transfer our experiences into the new mechanisms and how to guide them and how to work with them, how to make them effective in the implementation of this report.

The next important task is to establish the Recovery Trust Fund, so that donors will have a central focal point to contribute, you can pick and choose from the description which column, which item, which activity you think is most appropriate to your particular government policy on the eight areas that are spelt out very clearly in the report. We need the Fund to coordinate the contribution from various donors.



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PONREPP will also create a window of opportunity for ASEAN Member States to make their own contributions both financially, in kind and in cash. I am happy to report that we have set up our own Humanitarian Trust Fund immediately after the Cyclone Nargis. We got \$100,000 from Nippon Foundation; \$50,000 from a friend in the Middle East; the government of the Philippines gave us \$50,000 and the government of Timor Leste pledged \$500,000, and we have used the major part of it for our volunteer projects in the Delta. Certainly this is an open opportunity for ASEAN Member states to continue to show their generosity. We hope the ASEAN Member States will contribute towards the activities of the PONREPP.

The USD 691 million over the next three years as indicated in PONREPP, represents about one-fifth of international community's response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 and that is an indicative number. But, it will depend on how much momentum the TCG, the Task Force and the donors can generate. We will then re-evaluate and re-assess the need.

But the Government of Myanmar holds the key. The international community, from what we have heard today and from what I have heard around the world including ASEAN, is very much willing and committed to give, to continue and to participate. The experience in the last five months has been very encouraging and it is logical for us to expect that experience will be continued, will be repeated. ASEAN will do its part and the international community is willing to do its part. But, we need to hear a very strong signal from the Government of Myanmar that this is the way we are going to continue into the future in the form of tripartite cooperation, in the form of ASEAN-led mechanism, in the form that all involved will have full confidence that we will have be given full access and the cooperation from the Government of Myanmar.

Mr Chairman, we are comforted by your work, by your pledge and by your relating to us, the words of your high leadership, that you will continue to guide us in this humanitarian mission together and it is our common objective that we can deliver the assistance to the people of Myanmar. There is hope that we can do more. There is hope that there is a close consultation in the Tripartite Core Group. We hope that as the momentum is gained in the next few months, there will be space for serious and heart-to-heart discussion on how to do things better because in the end, we want to build back better. ASEAN will have gained something out of this experience. The international community will have gained something in the new way of working together in a special situation like this. The donors will have gained something from this humanitarian engagement. We also hope that the people and the government of Myanmar will gain some degree of confidence when the world is standing by, ready to extend and ready to cooperate, coordinate and share on the basis of openness, transparency, of mutual respect, we will achieve our "Build Back Better" objective and we hope that it will be better for everyone.