

**41st AMM
17 - 24 July 2008
Shangri-La, Singapore**

**Special ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting Chairman's Statement, 19 May
2008**

The Foreign Ministers of ASEAN met in Singapore on 19 May 2008 to discuss how we could assist Myanmar in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. We expressed our sympathy and deep concern over the massive loss of lives and devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis on 2-3 May 2008 and reaffirmed our support for the people of Myanmar in overcoming this grave humanitarian disaster.

The Foreign Ministers recognized with appreciation, the outpouring of goodwill and strong determination of the international community to help the victims of Cyclone Nargis. The Foreign Ministers have agreed to establish an ASEAN-led coordinating mechanism. Drawing from the Indonesian experience during the 2004 Tsunami, this mechanism will facilitate the effective distribution and utilization of assistance from the international community, including the expeditious and effective deployment of relief workers, especially health and medical personnel. International assistance to Myanmar, given through ASEAN, should not be politicised. On that basis, Myanmar will accept international assistance.

To this end, the Ministers agreed to establish a Task Force, to be headed by ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan, which will work closely with the UN as well as a central coordinating body to be set up by Myanmar, to realize this ASEAN-led mechanism. The meeting agreed that this ASEAN-led approach was the best way forward.

For a start, the Myanmar Government has agreed to accept the immediate despatch of medical teams from all the ASEAN countries. ASEAN has sent an Emergency Rapid Assessment Team to Myanmar and is ready to provide additional support. Myanmar should allow more international relief workers into the stricken areas, as the need is most urgent, given the unprecedented scale of the humanitarian disaster.

The international community also stands ready to assist and provide additional resources to alleviate the situation. Myanmar is also prepared to accept the expertise of international and regional agencies to help in its rehabilitation efforts. ASEAN will work with the UN to hold an ASEAN-UN International Pledging Conference, to be held in Yangon on 25 May 2008.

.....

19 May 2008

www.41amm.sg