



P. O. Box - 49, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, 50202, THAILAND
Email: <office@encburma.org>, Website: <http://www.encburma.org>

MISSION STATEMENT
Washington DC, USA
4-9 June 2007

We, the delegates of the Ethnic Nationalities Council of the Union of Burma, are here in Washington DC, the capitol of the United States of America, to express our sincere thanks to the people of United States of America and its government for their support for our struggle for democracy, human rights and freedom in the Union of Burma. We particularly thank the government of the United States for its effort to bring Burma's problems to the United Nations Security Council on 12 January 2007. Although the draft resolution, sponsored by the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was vetoed by China and Russia along with South Africa, we still believe that there must be a way and means that the international community can help the peoples of Burma through the United Nations, such as the good offices of the Secretary-General under the mandate of the General Assembly.

We, therefore, come here and seek further assistance and support from the United States. We particularly request the government of United States to take the initiative for an international conference on Burma, which would put strong pressure on the military regime (called the State Peace and Development Council or SPDC) to engage in a meaningful political dialogue with those seeking to bring democracy to Burma. The Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC) believes that the best means to solve the political crisis in Burma, including more than five long decades of civil war, is a negotiated settlement brought about by dialogue and compromise.

Since 1994, successive United Nations General Assembly resolutions have called for a "tripartite dialogue" in Burma between the military government, the National League for Democracy (the political party led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that won the 1990 election) and the ethnic nationalities, who were founding partners in the creation of the Union of Burma in 1947. We strongly endorse these resolutions. The call for a "tripartite dialogue" reflects the tripartite nature of the political crisis in Burma. The crisis in Burma is not merely an ideological conflict between democracy and a military dictatorship. Instead, the crisis comes from a constitutional problem: Burma's governments have always denied the right of self-determination for ethnic nationalities who joined the Union of Burma as equal partners at the 1947 Panglong Conference. That denial brought on civil war even before the military came to power; indeed, the military seized control as a result of the unrest bred by the underlying constitutional problem. Merely to restore democracy without addressing the deeper causes of conflict will not

lead to long-term peace. Burma's problems can therefore be solved only through a federal constitution of the sort agreed by General Aung San, the leader of Burma's independence movement, and the leaders of the ethnic nationalities at Panglong.

We are hopeful that China and Russia will be able to collaborate with the United States, the United Kingdom and other members of the international community in organizing an international conference on Burma under UN auspices. Although both countries vetoed the draft resolution on Burma at the UN Security Council, they acknowledged that Burma is "facing many political, economic and social challenges and that some of its problems are quite serious." They further acknowledged that Burma, indeed, is "faced with a series of grave challenges relating to refugees, child labor, HIV/AIDS, human rights and drugs," and suggested that the UN should address those problems through the good offices of the Secretary-General under the mandate of the General Assembly.

We, therefore, request the United States to take the initiative for an international conference on Burma, which may include the United States, China, Russia, India, Japan, the EU and ASEAN, under the aegis of the United Nations. We are aware that unless our neighboring countries, especially China, India, Japan and ASEAN, are involved in solving Burma's problems together with the USA and EU, the suffering of the peoples of Burma will unnecessarily be prolonged. We, therefore, need an "International Conference on Burma" in order to find common ground that will allow a democratic transition and national reconciliation to begin.

To solve our own problems, the ENC and other democratic forces have prepared ourselves in many different ways. We have drafted a federal constitution for the Federal Republic of the Union of Burma and, within that federal framework; we have also developed state constitutions for the seven ethnic states that have been the traditional homelands for many ethnic minorities. We also prepared a "Road Map for Rebuilding the Union of Burma" which has been generally accepted by all ethnic nationalities and democratic forces. However, we are unable to find common ground for a democratic transition with the military regime, for they still refuse to engage in a meaningful political dialogue. We, therefore, need the assistance of the international community to start the transition process in Burma.

While we need an International Conference on Burma to find a long term solution, we also need humanitarian assistance in order to relieve the suffering of the peoples of Burma. We, therefore, request such assistance from the United States and the international community, especially cross-border assistance to ethnic areas where the suffering is more acute. We also need financial and technical assistance for capacity building, especially in the fields of health and education. We need to train and empower our people, especially youth and women, in order to rebuild our country and lay a solid foundation for future generations!

Contact persons:

Dr. Lian H. Sakhong

General Secretary

E-mail: liansakhong@peacebuilding.se

David Taw

Joint General Secretary

E-mail: tawdavid2002@yahoo.com