

ETHNIC NATIONALITIES COUNCIL
Union of Burma

Kofi Annan,
Secretary-General,
United Nations,
New York, USA

18 May 2005

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

I would like to thank you for the efforts you have personally made for the people of the Union of Burma. It is much appreciated that in spite of your busy schedule and the many pressing issues that you have to deal with in the world, you have made time for Burma. My colleagues and I were encouraged when you met with Senior General Than Shwe in Indonesia in April 2005.

The work of your Special Envoys, the many UN Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights, and the agencies of the United Nations to improve conditions in Burma is also much appreciated. We especially appreciate the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly since 1994 that call for a 'Tripartite Dialogue' - amongst the military, democracy advocates and the ethnic nationalities - to resolve problems and as a way to establish a sustainable democracy in Burma. The Ethnic Nationalities Council is fully committed to the 'Tripartite Dialogue'.

You are no doubt aware of my open letter to Senior-General Than Shwe in April congratulating him for meeting with you and encouraging him to cooperate closely with the United Nations and with ASEAN. I also stressed the need for national reconciliation and called upon him to initiate nationwide peace talks. I called on him to include Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political leaders from every party and ethnic group in order to build a national consensus. It is most crucial that the political deadlock in Burma be broken before the situation deteriorates further.

I understand that Senior General Than Shwe invited you to visit him. While it would be very unusual for you to visit Burma when there is no solution in sight, conditions in Burma calls for unusual measures. Your visit may be the only opportunity we have to try at this time to bring about a change in Burma, which is much needed. I have debated this issue with the leaders of the other ethnic nationalities and we are of the unanimous opinion that your visit could be the catalyst we need to move the issue. Senior General Than Shwe is convinced that Burma is doing well and he is determined to push ahead with his political agenda. But conditions in the country - the state of the army, the paralysis in the government, the economy, conflicts with the ethnic nationalities, and the general unrest - may not be able to withstand more 'shocks' to the system.

We believe that a visit by you before the National Convention is re-convened in November 2005 could change the course of events in Burma and the region. Even your stated intention to visit and the preparations needed for such a trip could open up many doors. We would, therefore, like to urge you to seriously consider visiting Burma. It may prevent a crisis and much suffering.

Sincerely,



Saw Ba Thin Sein
Chairman