

OTTAWA DECLARATION

30 August 2007

A number of prominent Burmese activists, scholars, ethnic leaders and journalists residing in Asia, Europe and North America met on August 29 in Ottawa to examine the role of regional powers - China, India and ASEAN – in Burma. The political consultation by civil society actors was facilitated by the Canadian Friends of Burma (CFOB).

Conclusions:

1. The ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is causing instability in Burma – especially by its economic policies and its policies towards the ethnic nationalities who make up over 40% of the population;
2. Both China and Burma changed their policies nearly twenty years ago. In China, this has resulted in unprecedented economic growth, whereas in Burma, the economy has deteriorated and is causing increased poverty and hardships for the people;
3. The Ottawa Consultation noted that Mr. Wang Guangya, China's representative at the United Nations Security Council, stated on 12 January 2007 *that – "It cannot be denied that Myanmar is now facing many political, economic and social challenges and that some of its problems are quite serious... China sincerely hopes and expects that the Myanmar Government will give due consideration to those recommendations, listen to the call of its own people, learn from the good practices of others and speed up the process of dialogue and reform, so as to achieve prosperity for its nation, bring benefits to its people and contribute to peace, stability and development in South-East Asia" and that "China encourages and supports the Secretary-General's good offices under the mandate of the General Assembly.*
4. The Ottawa Consultation believes that If appropriate policies were to be adopted in Burma, it could alleviate the suffering of the people and Burma could become the gateway for both China's southwest and India's northeast to world markets;
5. The Burmese participants call on Burma's neighbours – Bangladesh, India, China, Laos and Thailand to cooperate with the United Nations to bring about the much needed change in Burma;
6. The Consultation further calls on Canada, ASEAN, the European Union, the United States of America, Russia and Burma's neighbours, to convene a multi-party talk similar to the Six-party Talks on North Korea, to facilitate reforms and a transition.
7. The Ottawa Consultation calls on Canada and the international community to urgently address the deteriorating political, economic and humanitarian situation in Burma;
8. The Ottawa Consultation is encouraged by the initiatives taken by UN General-Secretary Ban Ki Moon and his Burma Advisor Ibrahim Gambari. The call by UN Human Rights Commissioner Ms Louise Arbour was also appreciated.
9. The Consultation also welcomes efforts by the international community to help alleviate the suffering of the Burmese people;
10. Finally, the Ottawa Consultation calls on Canada to find an effective way to support the empowerment of civil society and democratic development in Burma.