

Statement
by
H.E. Mr. Sihasak PHUANGKETKEOW
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations
during the 2nd Part of the 6th Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)
on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar
(12 December 2007)

Mr. President,

I have listened attentively to the views expressed by all the previous speakers. I find it very constructive that we have been able to exchange views in such a candid manner. Certainly, there are many varying and well-founded perspectives on this issue. But I believe that underlying our common concerns is our common desire to move forward the process of dialogue and engagement with the Government of Myanmar.

It is in this spirit that I would like to thank Prof. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, for his report and his continuing efforts. I wish to reiterate that Thailand attaches much importance to his recent visit. Allow me to underscore, once again, our support for his mission along with the mission of the UNSG Special Envoy, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, on an issue which is of serious concern to us all. We view these efforts as part and parcel of an ongoing process of constructive dialogue and engagement with the Government of Myanmar.

In the same vein, we also welcomed the decision of the Government of Myanmar to receive Prof. Pinheiro as being a positive step in itself, and we are pleased with the cooperation that was rendered by the Government of Myanmar during the visit of Prof Pinheiro.

As a friend and next-door neighbour of Myanmar, we welcome the positive developments that have taken place and urge Myanmar to maintain and deepen its cooperation and dialogue with the United Nations and with her friends in the region and beyond.

At the ASEAN Summit in Singapore last month, the ASEAN leaders reiterated their call for the Myanmar Government to continue to work with the United Nations in order to open up a meaningful dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all the political forces in the country. They urged that Myanmar make full use of the good offices of the UN Secretary-General and Mr. Gambari with a view to moving towards national reconciliation and democratization.

It is also significant that the new ASEAN Charter was signed by all ASEAN leaders, including Myanmar, which indicates a firm commitment to international human rights and humanitarian principles. The Charter pledges to set up an ASEAN human rights body, which reflects the will of the peoples of ASEAN to adhere to the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. These pledges and commitments bind all the ASEAN countries to the promotion and protection of human rights in our respective countries and in the region as a whole.

Mr. President,

The report presented by Prof. Pinheiro contains a number of important elements which will require serious consideration and further implementation. Clearly, there are issues that need to be further addressed. At the same time, it is necessary for us to also acknowledge the fact that certain progress has been made, which we hope will be further built upon. If there is progress, it is only right that we here, at this meeting, express our sense of support and encouragement in order to provide further impetus to the positive developments.

We must seek not only to debate the issue, but also to propose positive and practical recommendations on how we can help assist the situation in Myanmar to move forward in a constructive and positive direction. Prof. Pinheiro's mission is not a one-off event. It is part of a process which needs to be given further momentum. We must therefore take incremental steps in order to build up the confidence and comfort level among all parties concerned.

We urge Prof. Pinheiro to continue with his efforts. We urge Myanmar, as a friend and next-door neighbour, to continue its cooperation and positive engagement. And we urge the Council to use this opportunity to demonstrate to the international community how it can positively address human rights situations in specific countries, by engaging in a constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Thank you.
