



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Burma/Myanmar

*2870th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 26 and 27 May 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council reaffirms its solidarity with the people of Burma/Myanmar affected by Cyclone Nargis. The Council underlines that the scale of the disaster is so extensive that the combined efforts of UN, ASEAN countries, international and local agencies and NGOs are required in order to bring relief to those who have survived the cyclone. In this context, particular attention should be given to the needs of all vulnerable groups.

The Council reiterates its support for the central role of the UN in response to the disaster and welcomes the decision of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 19 May to establish a mechanism to expedite the delivery and distribution of aid inside Burma/Myanmar. In this context it notes the outcome of the International Conference in Yangon on 25 May 2008 co-sponsored by the UN and ASEAN and the commitment of the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to participate in the UN/ASEAN mechanism agreed at the Conference. The Council stresses that the most pressing priorities are immediate access and a significant increase in the speed and volume of aid reaching those in most need. It hopes that the Conference will help to deliver this.

The Council welcomes the reports from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon that the authorities of Burma/Myanmar have agreed to grant access to foreign aid workers regardless of nationality, and takes note of the gradual openings made so far. The Council calls on the authorities to implement this commitment and ensure that national and international aid workers and transport will be allowed to deliver aid on the scale the people in the affected areas of the Irrawaddy delta desperately need.

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The Council reiterates that full access to these affected areas is urgently required for humanitarian experts of all nationalities, to enable the efficient and prompt delivery of emergency assistance to all populations in need and to enable a comprehensive needs assessment of the disaster zone.

The Council urges the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to give the highest priority to overcoming obstacles to the delivery of immediate humanitarian relief to all affected regions of the country. The Council calls on the UN Secretary General, the UN Humanitarian Relief Coordinator and the ASEAN Secretary General to remain closely involved to ensure that there is much needed progress on the ground.

Whilst the delivery of emergency aid to the affected populations remains the international humanitarian priority, the Council recognises the importance of a thorough international assessment of rehabilitation and reconstruction needs, which can pave the way for a credible rehabilitation plan.

The EU stands ready to continue to contribute technical and material assistance to humanitarian and rehabilitation needs assessments, within the terms of the Council Common Position."