

We are concerned that stability in another part of the region remains elusive. I am speaking of Burma, where the military regime continues to block democratic reform, detain political opponents without trial and impose harsh and unjust treatment on large segments of the population. While Burma's opening to its neighbours after decades of self-imposed isolation is encouraging and may offer the hope that the regime's policies will moderate over time, we need to see evidence of real commitment to political reform.

We call on the Burmese regime to respond to the concerns of the international community by releasing all political prisoners and by taking concrete measures for the restoration of democracy. We hope that other countries, including our ASEAN partners, will take account of these concerns in their approach to Burma, perhaps in the form of benchmarks that would measure the progress of reform.

Canada is committed to develop its relations with the Asia-Pacific community. With the new ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN PMC, and APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum], we now have a complete range of fora to address specific issues and to engage in co-operation in specific areas.

We look forward to working closely with you.

Thank you.