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AIPMC STATEMENT FOR 18TH ASEAN SUMMIT AND RELATED MEETINGS, Jakarta, 6-8 May 2011

Inclusive democracy must come before the ASEAN chairmanship for Myanmar

The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus (AIPMC) calls on ASEAN leaders attending the 18th ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on 7-8 May 2011 to reject the application by Myanmar to chair ASEAN in 2014 unless real democratic and human rights reforms are made by the Myanmar government.

The election which took place in Myanmar in 2010 was not a step towards peace and democracy. The new parliament in Myanmar remains subordinated to the military, which continues to hold significant extra-parliamentary powers and have access to special military funds. A new military conscription law was passed even before parliament went into session. The resumption of armed conflict in Myanmar's border areas and the use of the four cuts strategy by the Myanmar Army give cause for concern that war crimes and crimes against humanity will be committed in ethnic nationality areas of the country.

Myanmar urgently needs to release all political prisoners, cease attacks against ethnic nationalities and embark on an inclusive dialogue to ensure a genuine transition to democracy and respect for human rights in the country.

The oppression in Myanmar constitutes a black stain on the credibility of ASEAN and will be an obstacle to efforts by ASEAN to build an ASEAN Community by 2015. ASEAN should rather consider suspending Myanmar from the organization over its flagrant violations of the ASEAN Charter. We call on ASEAN to show greater courage in its approach to Myanmar and to make use of this summit to fully address the situation in Myanmar especially in the context of the severe and systematic violations of human rights that continue in this country. We urge Thailand in particular to refrain from any considerations to repatriate refugees from Myanmar currently on Thai soil. Most importantly, we call on ASEAN to support the call for a UN-led Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity in Myanmar as a step towards ensuring that this region will no longer tolerate impunity and violations of human rights and to press upon Myanmar the need for tangible steps towards inclusive democracy in the country. **END**

**By decision of the AIPMC Steering Committee
Done in Bangkok
30 April 2011**