

**PM: Asean should step up humanitarian efforts**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Jun 3, 2008**

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said Southeast Asian nations should step up humanitarian assistance following a deadly cyclone which pounded Burma a month ago.  
MCPX

Abdullah said the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), which includes Burma, should quickly establish the joint humanitarian relief centre which it agreed on in 2004.

pm asia pacific roundtable 030608 abdullah badawiHe also recommended the speedy implementation of a 2005 pact on disaster management and response among member nations.

"The case of Myanmar (Burma) has forced Asean to respond as a regional body and take a lead role in facilitating interaction between Myanmar and the international community," Abdullah said in a speech to a regional conference.

"Asean has had better success than others in persuading Myanmar to be more receptive to international assistance," he said.

"Asean, however, can do more in the area of humanitarian assistance."

Burma's secretive military junta has been reluctant to admit foreign aid workers but it did ask Asean nations to coordinate the international relief effort after Cyclone Nargis hit on May 2-3, leaving 133,000 dead or missing.

Asean has often been criticised for failing to act firmly against its member Burma, a military-run nation which has frequently embarrassed its neighbours with its refusal to shift towards democracy.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/83875>