UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says Burmese Snr-Gen Than Shwe should set clear dates for the 2010 election.

WASHINGTON — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday that he is closely monitoring the situation in Burma, and Snr-Gen Than Shwe should set clear deadlines and dates for the 2010 election.

Than Shwe recently was quoted in the Burmese media that a general election would be held, but no date was announced.

“I have taken note of that report, and this is an encouraging one,” Ban said. “But at the same time, I expect that there should have been a clear and firm date when this election would be held.”

Ban was responding to question on Burma after his address to the Security Council on Afghanistan.

“As I have made it quite clear in my meetings with Snr-Gen Than Shwe, and other senior government officials of Myanmar [Burma], I have urged them to first of all make it clear about all the electoral systems, and there should be clearly set deadlines for the election,” he said.

Ban was asked about the selection of a new UN special envoy for Burma, a post which has been vacant since Ibrahim Gambari was transferred to a new position.

Inner City Press—a UN watchdog—had earlier reported that this post would be shared by Ban's Chief-de-Cabinet, Vijai Nambiar, a former Indian diplomat.

“I am also in the process of identifying a candidate who can take Mr. Gambari's responsibilities,” Ban said. “I am not leaving this position open.”

“Even during this time, either Mr. Gambari, or some other senior officers within the Secretariat, are taking this job, and the responsibilities. You should not worry about a gap, or vacancies, of our responsibility and our commitment to see through the democratization process of Myanmar,” Ban said.