



REPUBLIC OF NAURU

Statement by the Honourable Mathew Batsiua MP

Minister for Justice and Border Control

FOURTH BALI PROCESS MINISTERIAL LEVEL CONFERENCE, MARCH 30, 2011

(Check Against Delivery)

Honourable Chairman,

Before I make my brief intervention, I wish to take this opportunity to thank and commend the co-organisers of the 4th Bali Process Ministerial level conference, the Governments of Indonesia and Australia for not only their excellent arrangements for this particular conference but also for their continued leadership in our region on a topic that presents serious challenges for us all. The issues are complex and emerge for all sorts of reasons and the easy thing to do would be to undertake and pursue solutions in a knee-jerk fashion. That is why we in Nauru recognise the importance of strong leadership in our region on such issues to ensure our efforts are done in a systematic and cooperative fashion, to keep a sustained focus on such matters within our respective countries and also in our region and to ensure that vulnerable people who are victims of transnational organised crime are provided protection.

It goes without saying that we need to work together, but in doing so we need to keep challenging ourselves to come up with solutions that lead to practical outcomes and makes a difference on the ground. If we are to be partners in pushing actions to combat these problems, then we must truly embrace a partnership approach that transcends and goes beyond promising words. We must be frank with one another, feel free and be open to make suggestions and not feel intimidated to do so.

Consequently we do commend the approach proposed by the Government of Australia for a stronger and more robust regional framework to handle and manage irregular movement of people within our region. Nauru believes that this is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman,

In years gone by, there was much greater emphasis on capacity building under the auspices of the Bali Process, particularly in the period between the second Ministerial level meeting in 2003 and the third meeting in 2009. There were several opportunities for participation in training provided to immigration and other border control personnel, as well as for legal and policy officers. Recent opportunities have been limited and appear to have been targeted mostly at Asian countries. It is important to ensure that opportunities for capacity building are offered to Pacific countries as well.

Previous activities of relevance to Nauru and other Pacific countries included issues concerning refugees and irregular movements, legislative reform, identity management, lost and stolen passports and false document detection.

While people smuggling and human trafficking are perhaps not as much of an issue for Pacific countries – compared with those in Asia – it remains important to ensure that capacity and adequate border control systems are built and maintained across all Bali Process countries – “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.”

Immigration and border control officers in Pacific countries can learn from the experiences of their counterparts in Asia, and experience has demonstrated the considerable value that can be gained from ensuring strong networks and personal contacts across the entire Bali Process region. Nauru supports and encourages the growth of these networks through greater interactions, placements of key personnel and so forth.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to the Governments of Indonesia and Australia for facilitating and hosting this important dialogue. I particularly congratulate the Government of Indonesia through the Honourable Co-Chairman for the excellent welcome and warm hospitality my delegation from Nauru has received from the time when we arrived in Denpasar. The beauty of this island, the positive spirit of your people and the richness of your culture as expressed by the entertainment at last night's dinner makes me understand why Bali has become a well renowned destination for tourists from all walks of life.