

The Bali Process: A Model for Regional Cooperation in the Fight against Human Trafficking

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The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Trans-national Crime (Bali Process), established in February 2002, has provided a regional forum to address people trafficking as well as people smuggling issues in the Asia Pacific region. In addition, the Bali Process has created an enabling environment for practical cooperation and has led to the development of a more integrated approach to cooperation in a range of other regional and sub-regional forums in regional bilateral relationships. As a result of this environment of comprehensive cooperation, real progress has been made in deterring people smuggling and trafficking region-wide.

A range of workshops have addressed initiatives to reduce source country drivers of trafficking through public education and targeted development assistance programmes. The following workshops have been held to date on trafficking:

- **Korea** has hosted two workshops in 2003 and 2004 on the protection of victims of trafficking and public awareness;
- **Indonesia** has hosted workshops in Bali in 2004 and 2006 focusing on victim support;
- **Japan** has hosted a workshop in 2004 on developing National Plans of Action to combat trafficking; and
- A joint **Bali-Budapest Process workshop** on harmonising National Plans of Action to Prevent Trafficking also took place in Vienna 2005.

A number of workshops on related issues such as document fraud and child sex tourism have also been held in recent years.

A Bali Process initiative to establish anti-people trafficking legislation has also been a success. This has paved the way for countries to conclude bilateral agreements and arrangements on mutual assistance in criminal matters necessary to bolster extradition and prosecution efforts. As one example, an agreement was signed between Indonesia and New Zealand to support closer cooperation on legal and illegal migration management.

Other Bali Process members have passed anti-people trafficking legislation more recently, including Malaysia in 2007.

Greater cooperation among regional law enforcement agencies to deter and combat trafficking has strengthened information and intelligence sharing among governments in the region on these issues. Steps are being taken to identify key people traffickers in the region. This information will become an important reference and resource.

Work is also underway to enhance cooperation on border and visa systems through INTERPOL and APEC's Regional Movement Alerts System (RMAS) to detect and prevent illegal movements and enhance cooperation to verify the identity and nationality of illegal migrants. The RMAS system has been in operation since December 2005 and now has three participating economies (Australia, New Zealand and the US) with a number of other Bali Process countries currently evaluating joining.

Through the hosting of workshops, increased cooperation and collaboration among governments and information available on the Bali Process website, the Bali Process has highlighted the importance of public campaigns. These are aimed at making victims aware of the dangers of trafficking and the provision of appropriate protection and assistance to the victims of trafficking, particularly women and children.

The Bali Process website (www.baliprocess.net) also serves as a valuable repository of knowledge and information about issues being addressed under the Bali Process, and as a link with other organisations and processes undertaking related work.

Over the past six years, in addition to two Regional Bali Ministerial Conferences, 23 Bali Process workshops/meetings have been held targeting public awareness; legislation to assist with the exchange of information on lost and stolen passports (in conjunction with work being undertaken by APEC); child sex tourism; regional training programmes on border control and law enforcement; mutual assistance and extradition issues; targeting of known people smugglers and traffickers; and an increased focus on trafficking. For example, New Zealand and Australia co-hosted the third Bali Process Lost & Stolen Passport Information Sharing Workshop in August 2007. The workshop provided information on emerging systems such as the RMAS and INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Document System (INTERPOL MIND/FIND), and created a resource of technical materials, contact points and capacity building opportunities to assist participants to advance border management and passport authentication systems to better combat trans-national crime – in particular people smuggling and trafficking.

A number of workshops are being planned for 2008/2009 to build on work already underway and to maintain momentum on these important issues confronting the Asia Pacific region.