

**Statement by
H. E. Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of Indonesia**

**At the Preparatory Meeting for
The Second Regional Ministerial
Conference on People Smuggling,
Trafficking in Persons and
Related Transnational Crimes**

Jakarta, 27 March 2003

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset allow me to welcome everyone of you to Jakarta and to the Preparatory Meeting for the Second Bali Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crimes. It is indeed a privilege for me to be with you here today.

I am pleased to tell you that there has been much progress since you met here in this very room more than a year ago. Within such a short span of time, the two Bali Ad-hoc Experts' Working Groups have carried out their respective work programmes through various meetings, surveys, assessments and workshops.

For such remarkable achievement, I should like to commend Ambassador John Hayes, Coordinator for the Ad-hoc Experts' Group on Regional and International Cooperation, and Police Maj. Gen. Krerkphong Pukprayura, Coordinator for the Ad-hoc Experts' Working Group on Legislative Framework, Policy Issues and Law Enforcement, as well as the members of their Working Groups.

It is just unfortunate and lamentable, however, that we gather here today while a war is raging in Iraq. The full global impact of that war and the humanitarian disaster that it has brought about are yet to be fully gauged, but a number of dire consequences are already evident: refugees are streaming out of the country.

The outflows of refugees will not only strain the economies and environments of neighbouring countries, but will also create lucrative hunting grounds for people smugglers and traffickers who prey on women and children displaced by war. Indeed, all sorts of transnational criminal networks are bound to exploit the plight of the victims of such a massive conflict as the one we are witnessing in Iraq.

This sort of humanitarian tragedy and other causes of irregular people movement are among the various backdrop to the Bali Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crimes (BRMC), which is now

in its Second Conference and generally referred to as the "Bali Process".

Since the convening of the First Regional Conference last year, a growing public awareness of its follow-up activities have put the issues of people smuggling and trafficking, and related transnational crimes high on the regional agenda and on the national agendas of regional countries. The humanitarian tragedy in Iraq and its potential in generating new irregular flow of people will underline the urgency of these agendas.

As mandated by the Ministers last year, the Second Bali Ministerial Conference, which will be convened from the 28th to the 30th of April 2003, will review the progress of the follow-up measures that have been taken in combating people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crimes.

Because this Preparatory Meeting is aimed at assisting and facilitating the work of the Ministers in Bali next month, it is of crucial importance. This Meeting has to formulate and refine, among others, the considerations and notions that will become the substantive content of the Co-Chairs' Statement, which will be the main outcome of the Conference.

That Statement is expected to include recent global and regional developments, a review of the progress achieved since BRMC I, outcomes of review meetings of the Ad-hoc Experts' Working Groups, an affirmation of our shared commitment to build on our current regional cooperation and a projection on the challenges and opportunities ahead of us.

As I said earlier, I am pleased that there has been a great deal of progress that we can report on. The Ad-Hoc Experts' Working Group on Regional and International Cooperation has completed a lot of work in the field of information sharing and exchange among participating countries, and has made studies on the feasibility of establishing a regional information network.

It has also conducted a public awareness promotion campaign and has identified capacity needs and ways to fulfill them.

We are just as pleased to cite the accomplishments of the Ad-hoc Experts' Working Group on Legislative Framework, Policy Issues and Law Enforcement (AHEG II). It has completed a survey and assessment of national legislation of participating countries, established networks of cooperation among relevant law enforcement agencies, and begun establishing model laws for criminalizing smugglers and traffickers.

It has also identified areas for further capacity building and cooperation, as well as measures to enhance capacities for identity verification, document examination, and effective enforcement.

The positive impact of the Bali Process has been so far-reaching that it has stimulated various salutary developments that, I am sure, will reinforce the effectiveness of the Bali Process itself.

In Indonesia, we are now revising Law No. 9/1992 on Immigration so that it will now include provisions criminalizing people smuggling and trafficking in persons. As to the trafficking of women and children, Indonesia has enacted Law No. 23/2002 on the Protection of Children. Moreover, several Presidential Decisions have been issued to effectively protect the welfare of women and children through preventive measures and enforcement.

We are happy to note that the number of recorded incidence of irregular migration to Indonesia has declined steadily during the past year. Since 1999, a total of 1,111 irregular migrants in Indonesia have chosen voluntary return or have been resettled in third countries. Nowadays incidents of irregular movement of people are greatly diminished.

In 2002 alone, after the holding of the Bali Regional Ministerial Conference, 298 Afghani irregular migrants to Indonesia chose voluntary return. In this connection, I would like to take note the significance of the visit by H. E. Mr. Enayatullah Nazari, Minister for Refugees and Repatriation of the Afghanistan Interim Administration to Indonesia in April 2002.

I do hope that this is a trend that is being reflected all over the region as a result of our common endeavours to address the problem of irregular migration.

Both Foreign Minister Alexander Downer of Australia and I, in our capacity as the Co-Chairs, envision that, unless other views prevail, no further ministerial meetings will be scheduled after the Second Bali Regional Ministerial Conference next April. In that context and in relation to the decision last year that after a twelve-month period, the follow-up of the Process would have to be passed on to existing regional and international mechanisms, I would like to invite delegations to seek common resolution on the matter.

The results of our concerted efforts so far give me confidence that we can maintain and strengthen the momentum of the Bali Process. For that, we need the constant help and commitment of everyone involved in this worthy undertaking.

You are certainly among those we are counting on. The results of your discussions in this Meeting will provide the Ministers with invaluable input for their deliberations during the Conference next month.

Thus you will be making a major contribution to the efficacy of the Bali Process and to making our region as well as the world a more secure, more pleasant place to live in.

It is now my honour and privilege to declare this Meeting open.

I thank you.

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