

Joint Media Release 1

28 April 2003

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer the Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Philip Ruddock and the Minister for Justice and Customs, Sen. Chris Ellison

Second Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

Australia and Indonesia will co-host a second Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime in Bali from 28 to 30 April. Foreign Minister Downer will co-host with his Indonesian counter-part, Dr Hassan Wirajuda. Senator Ellison, the Minister for Justice and Customs will accompany Mr Ruddock, the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, who will lead the Australian delegation.

The Government is delighted with Indonesia's commitment to co-chairing the second Conference. This is a reaffirmation of the strength of our bilateral relationship and of our commitment to working together to tackle serious issues that affect us both.

At the Conference, Australia will be seeking regional endorsement of a forward-looking agenda that will build on the results achieved. The Conference will take stock of the significant progress which has been achieved in regional cooperation to combat people smuggling and other forms of illegal migration since the first regional Ministerial Conference in Bali in February 2002. It will also consider the way forward for cooperation on these issues.

The achievements of the two Ad Hoc Experts' Groups, that Ministers agreed to establish at the first Conference, will provide the basis for further cooperative measures. Both of the Experts' Groups have developed Plans of Action which will be presented to Ministers for their endorsement at the Conference. The Experts' Groups have a strong practical focus. They have, for example, sought to strengthen legislation and law enforcement. They have developed model legislation, strengthened cooperation between law enforcement agencies and established a website to facilitate information exchange.

The series of indiscriminate terrorist acts which have been perpetrated in our neighbourhood since the first Regional Ministerial Conference have

only served to underline the need for tightened border security and strengthened law enforcement.

Ministers and senior officials from approximately 30 countries are expected to attend the Conference.