

**BALI PROCESS AD HOC GROUP SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING  
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 31 OCTOBER 2017  
CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT**

1. The 12th Ad Hoc Group (AHG) Senior Officials' Meeting of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) was held in Kuala Lumpur on 31 October 2017.

2. The Meeting reviewed progress of AHG activities and achievements since the Sixth Bali Process Ministerial Conference (BPMC) (23 March 2016, Bali) and the 11th AHG Senior Officials' Meeting (16 November 2016, Colombo). This included the activities of the Bali Process Working Groups on Trafficking in Persons and Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks, and of the Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO), and the key outcomes adopted by Ministers, including establishment of a Consultation Mechanism, implementation of the Review of the Andaman Sea Events of 2015, and launch of the Government and Business Forum. The Meeting discussed Bali Process engagement with the *Global Compact on Refugees* and the *Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration*. The AHG also considered a further updated Bali Process Strategy to incorporate key initiatives to sustain the momentum in regional cooperation achieved at the Ministerial Conference.

**Key Themes**

3. The Meeting acknowledged the ongoing challenges of irregular migration, increasingly mixed migration flows, displacement and humanitarian situations globally and in the Asia-Pacific region. The Meeting welcomed recent concerted responses by the international community and regionally to address these situations, including the *United Nations High Level Summit for Refugees and Migrants*, the *Seventh Global Meeting of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration*, and affirmed recent statements including the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*. The meeting noted that these statements, together with the *Bali Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime*, emphasised the need and determination of States to strengthen cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally, to address people smuggling, trafficking in persons and associated irregular migration and displacement.

4. The Meeting recognised that since the *New York Declaration*, global and regional meetings have reaffirmed the importance of the key priorities outlined at the Sixth Ministerial Conference and in the *Bali Declaration*, including: addressing the root causes of irregular migration, greater business and private sector engagement, safe and legal migration pathways, returns and reintegration of persons found not to be owed protection, and further cooperation in tackling criminal syndicates engaged in people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crimes.

5. The Meeting welcomed an updated *Bali Process Strategy for Cooperation*, incorporating developments since the Sixth Ministerial Conference to continue and enhance coordination to combat people smuggling and trafficking in persons. In doing so, the Meeting affirmed the Strategy as a 'living document' to give practical direction to the priorities set by Ministers, as well as changing regional and global circumstances. As agreed at the 8th AHG SOM, the Strategy will continue to be refined and updated at least annually.

6. The meeting recalled Ministers' call for more agile, timely responses by Bali Process members to regional circumstances, including through a voluntary, non-binding mechanism

to authorise the Co-Chairs to consult and convene meetings, as necessary, to discuss urgent irregular migration events in the region. The Meeting noted the work by the Co-Chairs and participating members in convening the first meeting of the Consultation Mechanism (13 October 2017, Jakarta) and highlighted the commitment of member countries to ensure that the Bali Process stands ready to work together and assist the region in responding to irregular migration crises.

## **Proceedings**

7. The Meeting welcomed presentations from UNHCR and IOM on global and regional irregular migration developments, and from IOM on the *Seventh Global Meeting of Regional Consultative Processes*.

8. The UNHCR also presented on the development and implementation of the *Global Compact on Refugees*. Members welcomed the work of UNHCR and stakeholders in developing the *Global Compact on Refugees*, which will enhance global capacity to address protection and assistance for displaced people and refugees.

9. The Meeting welcomed a presentation from IOM on the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, highlighting the extensive consultation process and its key themes and outcomes. This included mechanisms for migration governance at the regional and inter-regional level—as well as acting as the main platform for policy dialogue on migration, peer learning, exchanges of good practices, innovation and capacity-building.

10. Members adopted an agreed Bali Process statement which will form a contribution to the *Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* to be held in Bangkok on 6-8 November 2017.

11. The Meeting recalled the *Bali Declaration*'s recognition of the need to engage constructively with the private sector, including to combat human trafficking and related exploitation. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed Indonesia's overview of the launch of the inaugural *Bali Process Government and Business Forum* (24-25 August 2017, Perth). The Forum brought together Bali Process ministers and senior private sector leaders from the region to discuss and make recommendations on supply chain transparency, preventing trafficking in persons and modern slavery. Members looked forward to the recommendations of the Working Groups, which will be submitted to Ministers at the next *Bali Process Regional Ministerial Conference*.

12. The Meeting commended the Trafficking in Persons Working Group (co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia) for the strong progress in delivering its forward Work Plan, including convening its third annual meeting (25 May 2017, Bali). Members endorsed the new 'Following the Money' Policy Guide and associated training module. The Meeting thanked those members who participated in drafting the Guide, and welcomed advice that the Guide and training materials will be translated into regional languages, printed and distributed, and used in training workshops in interested Bali Process countries.

13. The Meeting commended the Working Group on Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks (co-chaired by Malaysia and New Zealand), and emphasised the strong results achieved during the 3rd Joint Period of Action. Between March to August 2017, law enforcement and immigration agencies from ten countries – Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the

USA – carried out nine joint operations aimed at dismantling people smuggling and trafficking in persons networks in the Asia-Pacific region. Criminal networks involved in the online commercial sexual exploitation of children were also targeted. Members look forward to building on these results through the next Joint Period of Action, next year, and welcome confirmation that Malaysia and New Zealand will continue as co-chairs.

14. The meeting welcomed the RSO's ongoing work in carrying out its role of facilitating capacity-building, exchange of best practices and pooling of technical resources, among members. The Meeting commended the RSO's implementation of its 2015-17 Work Plan, including partnerships with the Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders (CIFAL)-Jeju and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC). The Meeting further recognised the practical value of RSO activities, such as the development of Quick Reference Guides on Interviewing Victims of Trafficking, the development of a Regional Strategic Road Map, a tool to allow States to monitor their own progress across various policy and legislative tools to combat trafficking in persons. The Meeting encouraged members to continue to participate in, and support, RSO activities including through considering secondment of staff. The Meeting also considered the RSO's annual Work Plan, which will be finalised following input from members subsequent to this AHG SOM.

15. The Meeting welcomed an update on the ongoing progress with the Regional Biometric Data Exchange Solution (RBDES) to facilitate the secure exchange of biometric data between interested member countries. Members noted Ministers' affirmation of the value of biometric data sharing for verifying traveller identities and tracking migration flows and commended the RSO and IOM for engaging Member States to develop bilateral and multilateral agreements to use RBDES. Members agreed for the RSO to establish an Oversight Committee with a minimum of three members.

16. Additionally, members welcomed Australia's proposal to revitalise the AHG Workshop on Biometrics for Identity Integrity in Immigration. This workshop will provide a platform to discuss emerging biometric technologies, potential risks and increase collaboration through regional data exchange.

17. The Meeting welcomed presentations from New Zealand and the United States of America, which demonstrated the mutual benefits to the RSO and members arising from provision of secondments. The Meeting encouraged members to continue to participate in, and support, RSO activities including through considering provision of staff.

18. The Meeting welcomed progress on the Bali Process Pilot Joint Information Campaign to deter people smuggling and trafficking in persons. Australia and Bangladesh confirmed their ongoing partnership in progressing implementation of the pilot, with targeted communication activities implemented by IOM and local non-government organisation partners in key communities. Bangladesh gave a presentation on "Reducing Irregular Migration by Sea" which uses a smartphone application game to raise awareness among target audiences of regular migration pathways and the dangers of irregular migration. Bangladesh noted that the pilot aligned with National Plan of Action activities already underway.

19. The Meeting commended the ongoing activities of UNODC, including work to encourage use of the Voluntary Reporting System on Migrant Smuggling and Related conduct (VRS-MSRC), and support members to improve data collection and reporting into the system.

Members welcomed the increase to 23 in the number of States and Territories using the VRS-MSRC.

20. The Meeting further recalled the *Bali Declaration*'s recognition of timely, safe and dignified return of those found not to be entitled to international protection, as an important element of orderly migration. In that context, members welcomed confirmation that Australia and the Philippines would co-chair a Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration, which will exchange and examine best practices on sustainable returns and reintegration. Members looked forward to the meeting to be held in early 2018.

21. Following the 11th AHG SOM's endorsement of the Review of the 2015 Andaman Sea events, the Co-Chairs updated members on implementation of the Review's outcomes. This included establishment of a Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) to support the Consultation Mechanism, by enhancing cooperation among operational officials. The TFPP has met twice, with its first meeting in Bangkok (27 January 2017) and its second meeting in Bali (18-19 May 2017). The second meeting took the form of a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) based on a hypothetical scenario to encourage greater awareness, cooperation, and coordination among national-level operational officials.

22. The Meeting welcomed an update from the Co-Chairs on the fifth meeting of the Track II Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (10-12 September 2017, Manila), and affirmed the ongoing positive contribution made by the Dialogue to the Bali Process. Members looked forward to further close engagement with the Dialogue, including provision of ongoing input to Bali Process activities. Members agreed that the Co-Chairs continue to work with the Asia Dialogue and seek further opportunities to engage with civil society.

23. The Meeting noted the recommendation from the Steering Group that the request for membership of the Bali Process by the International Labour Organization (ILO) be submitted for approval at the next Bali Process SOM.

24. The Co-Chairs thanked Malaysia for its hospitality in hosting the 12th AHG Senior Officials Meeting and the preceding 32nd Steering Group Meeting.

25. The administrative and logistical support provided by IOM was also appreciated, in addition to the important technical contributions made by IOM, UNHCR and UNODC across the range of Bali Process activities.

## **Participants**

26. The Meeting was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United States and Vietnam as well as representatives from UNHCR, UNODC and the IOM. Canada and the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration attended as observers. The RSO Co-Managers also participated in the meeting.