

**BALI PROCESS AD HOC GROUP SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND, 6 MAY 2015
CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT**

1. The 9th 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 Wellington on 6 May 2015.

2. The purpose of the meeting was to review progress and activities since the 8th AHG SOM and consider a program of new, practical initiatives in a draft updated Bali Process Strategy to inform the Sixth Ministerial Conference. In addition, the meeting updated members on activities being advanced through the Bali Process Working Groups on *Trafficking in Persons* and *Disruption of Criminal Networks involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons*, and considered the Regional Support Office (RSO) work plan for 2015-17.

3. The Meeting welcomed a presentation from UNHCR on irregular maritime movements in the region, noting that they have tripled in the Bay of Bengal since 2012, to 63,000 in 2014, and a large proportion of movers have protection needs. Members agreed that there should be a standing item in future meetings on regional irregular migration trends, as useful context for discussions on specific issues.

4. The Meeting reaffirmed the value of the *Bali Process Strategy for Cooperation: 2014 and Beyond* for promoting and implementing coordinated approaches to irregular migration challenges. The meeting discussed the need to review the Bali Process Strategy to better reflect the progress made since its adoption, as well as future activities. In connection to that, a draft updated Bali Process Strategy was submitted by the Co-Chairs to the Meeting. The draft updated Strategy reinforces Bali Process and Jakarta Declaration objectives, and members welcomed the increased emphasis on actions aimed at combating trafficking in persons, addressing the nexus between irregular migration and transnational organised crime, and strengthening linkages with other relevant regional fora. It also highlights the RSO and the Bali Process Working Groups as key delivery mechanisms for advancing Bali Process objectives.

I. Decisions and Recommendations on Future Activities

5. The Meeting reaffirmed that the Bali Process Strategy is a 'living' document that will be further revised and updated after the meeting. The draft updated Bali Process Strategy will be formally endorsed ahead of the Sixth Ministerial Conference. However, members welcomed proposed new initiatives in the Bali Process Strategy, and agreed that work on these should commence to sustain positive momentum. Members also noted the nexus between people smuggling and trafficking in persons, to inform further development of the Bali Process Strategy.

6. The Meeting welcomed progress in developing a regional mechanism to facilitate the exchange of biometric data between interested member countries, in line with directives provided at the Fifth Ministerial Conference and the 8th Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials Meeting. The voluntary, non-binding arrangement will provide a secure, electronic means of sharing biometric data, in alignment with an accompanying policy framework that ensures privacy and data protection. Members welcomed the practical demonstration of the data-sharing technology, as well as an update on the policy framework which is undergoing further consultation. Members commended the initiative as an innovative approach to improving identity verification to enable more efficient border processing

and improved detection of fraudulent immigration claims and noted the work would continue. The important role played by the RSO and IOM in support of this initiative was also noted.

7. Members recalled the need for coordinated, regional approaches to facilitating the return of persons found not to be owed protection to their countries of origin, consistent with the Regional Cooperation Framework and the Jakarta Declaration. Arrangements for involuntary removals were also noted as part of comprehensive approaches to migration management. Therefore, a roundtable will be held to facilitate an exchange of information and experiences among source, transit and destination countries. Building on the *'Technical Workshop on Repatriation and Reintegration'* hosted by the Philippines with technical input from IOM, in Manila in 2010, the roundtable will discuss challenges confronting member countries with respect to returns issues, and explore further appropriate options for Bali Process members to consider. Members agreed that the roundtable could focus on different models of bilateral and regional cooperation to facilitate returns and removals, including issues such as identity verification and issuance of travel documents, admission agreements and reintegration strategies. The Co-Chairs will work to identify a date for the roundtable in late 2015.

8. The Meeting noted that more work was required on communication strategies aimed at preventing people smuggling and trafficking in persons, and welcomed the handbook developed by the RSO with the assistance of communication and migration experts. It draws on best practice examples identified at the *Regional Information Campaigns Workshop* hosted by New Zealand and Indonesia in Bali, in November 2014, and highlights the importance of understanding target audiences and developing contextually-relevant messaging, including through cooperative, regional approaches. The presentation by Australia on its anti-people smuggling communication campaigns also reinforced these principles. Members welcomed a proposal from Australia and Indonesia to pursue a pilot joint information campaign in a Bali Process member country, using the handbook as a reference, and encouraged source and transit countries to consider volunteering to participate. This could lead to future joint campaigns involving other countries in the region. The Co-Chairs will consult AHG members and liaise with the RSO over the coming months with a view to identifying a pilot country to implement the activity.

9. The Meeting welcomed advice that a second set of Bali Process policy guides have been developed, on *Identification and Protection of Trafficking Victims*. The guides are short, practical aids to support practitioners and policy makers in member countries in complying with international standards and best practice in their approach to identifying and protecting victims of trafficking. The *Working Group on Trafficking in Persons* will identify training and capacity building opportunities to support implementation of the guides and work with the RSO to oversee their translation into regional languages. Members endorsed the guides and recommended that they be submitted to ministers at the Sixth Ministerial Conference.

10. The Meeting further welcomed advice from the Co-Chairs of the *Trafficking in Persons Working Group* that a *Regional Symposium on Trafficking for the Purposes of Labour Exploitation* was held on 25-26 March in Bangkok, to examine trends and identify opportunities for practical cooperation to address the issue. The Co-Chairs thanked Thailand for hosting the symposium, with technical support from IOM. It was attended by 117 participants, including officials from 35 Bali Process member countries, observers, and experts from government, academia, international organisations, industry

and civil society. Key themes included the difficulties in identifying victims of labour trafficking, and the need for raising awareness of safe migratory pathways and about the rights and obligations of migrant workers. The need for more training for frontline officials to support better investigation and prosecution of cases, and for robust mechanisms for international crime cooperation, was also acknowledged.

11. The Meeting welcomed the forward work program of the *Working Group on Trafficking in Persons*, endorsed at its inaugural meeting on 27 March in Bangkok. Key activities for the Working Group this year will be promoting the Bali Process Policy Guides on *Criminalising Trafficking in Persons* and *Migrant Smuggling*, and on *Identification and Protection of Trafficking Victims*, through training and other opportunities. The Working Group will also develop guidance for use by immigration, law enforcement and labour officials, to support more timely identification and response to trafficking cases, including labour trafficking. Ad Hoc Group members recommended that the Working Group also give consideration to engaging the business sector and to coordinate with the RSO.

12. The Meeting also welcomed an update from the co-chairs of the *Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons*. As its first initiative, the Co-Chairs proposed a Joint Period of Action, whereby interested Working Group members work collectively to plan and carry out coordinated law enforcement measures within their own national jurisdictions, over the same designated time period. It is anticipated that participation in this initiative will initially involve a small group of 4-6 states, and that further planning will be driven by law enforcement officials involved in the Working Group. Ad Hoc Group members confirmed their in-principle support for the initiative, noting that the proposal will be considered in detail when the Working Group meets on 19 May. The Joint Period of Action will be followed by a de-brief session of lessons learned, which will be open to all Ad Hoc Group members.

13. The Meeting welcomed an update from UNODC on the Voluntary Reporting System on Migrant Smuggling and Related Conduct (VRS-MSRC). Members noted the upcoming work to improve data networks, collection, management and reporting. The Meeting also supported the proposal for a future phase to include translation of support documents to languages other than English and the possibility of extending the system to capture human trafficking-related data.

14. The Meeting also noted the importance of other complementary regional initiatives to disrupt criminal networks such as the Port Intelligence Unit (PIU) initiative being implemented in Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand with UNODC, and encouraged the Bali Process to coordinate and facilitate its activities, as appropriate, and to encourage results and avoid duplication.

15. The Meeting reaffirmed the important role of the RSO in facilitating capacity-building, exchange of best practices and pooling of technical resources, and in providing administrative and coordination support for Bali Process activities. Members commended the RSO's progress and welcomed its work plan for 2015-17, which was developed under the oversight of the Bali Process Co-Chairs. The Meeting encouraged members to consider contributing funding and seconded officers to the RSO, as well as to promote broader member leadership in developing and hosting RSO work plan activities.

16. The Meeting welcomed advice that the RSO and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) partnership has been formalised to improve access to training in the region. Standardised induction training for frontline border officials is being developed to develop a common approach to frontline border control tasks. Work is also underway to develop thematic briefs on best practices in asylum procedures and on assisted voluntary returns and reintegration. This will be complemented by a program of protection-related capacity building, including a regional study exchange on refugee status determination and training on interview techniques.

II. Proceedings

17. The Meeting reviewed the activities undertaken since the eighth AHG Senior Officials Meeting of 6 August 2014. Members acknowledged the RSO's Training Workshop on Comprehensive Approaches for Addressing Irregular Movements by Sea, hosted by UNHCR and IOM in Bangkok in January 2015, which considered applicable legal standards governing maritime search and rescue, and thanked the United States for funding the activity. The Meeting also welcomed a report from Malaysia on a Workshop on Immigration Aspects of Airport Security, held in August 2014, noting the value of these meetings in reviewing industry-led developments influencing the future of air travel. Members also appreciated the reports from Sri Lanka and Malaysia on their recent Regional Immigration Liaison Officer Network (RILON) meetings, noting their value in sharing information on irregular migration and related visa and document fraud.

18. The Meeting welcomed advice from IOM that the 5th Global Meeting of Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) on Migration will be held in October in Cairo, to exchange updates and identify opportunities for 'cross-fertilisation' among RCPs. The Ad Hoc Group agreed that the Global Meeting should be used as an opportunity to discuss irregular maritime movements in the Asia Pacific, drawing on data provided by UNHCR in its earlier presentation.

19. The Meeting also welcomed an update from Australia and IOM on planned improvements to the public Bali Process website, and related communication activities, aimed at improving information outreach to members and communicating Bali Process objectives and achievements to a wider audience.

20. The Meeting noted the update provided by Indonesia that the 6th Ministerial Conference will likely take place in the third or fourth quarter of 2015 and that members will be formally notified as soon as the date is set.

21. The Co-Chairs thanked New Zealand for its generosity and hospitality in hosting the ninth AHG Senior Officials Meeting and the preceding 29th Steering Group Meeting. The logistical support provided by IOM was also appreciated, as was the important technical input IOM continues to make to so many of the activities of the Bali Process.

III. Participants

22. The Meeting was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam as well as representatives from UNHCR, UNODC and the IOM. Canada attended the meeting as an observer. The RSO Co-Managers also participated in the meeting.