



# The Bali Process

## on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

16<sup>th</sup> Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting

6 December 2022

### Co-Chairs' Statement

#### Opening

The sixteenth Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting (AHG SOM) of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process), was co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia in Bali, Indonesia on 6 December 2022, in hybrid format.

Noting the 20-year anniversary of the Bali Process, members reflected on the importance of the Bali Process as the premier regional forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and practical cooperation to address the challenges of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

#### **Addressing the Current Challenges arising from developments in the region, the COVID-19 pandemic, and misuse of ICT**

Members discussed progress against priorities outlined in the 2018 Ministerial Declaration and 2018 Strategy for Cooperation. Members recalled the Ministerial Steering Group meeting in Paris, February 2022, which expressed deep concern about the growing scale and complexity of irregular migration in the region due to the impact of Covid-19, and other regional developments.

The meeting recognised the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on social, economic and health situations globally, including in Bali Process member countries. Members reflected on lessons learnt from the pandemic, including the importance of collaboration in identification, information sharing and response, and the vulnerabilities of women, children and migrant workers in a pandemic situation. Members noted the need to incorporate, as appropriate, the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic into the forward plan of the Bali Process.

Members discussed the changes in patterns of human trafficking and people smuggling that have emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the increased use of technology as a means to recruit and exploit victims.

Co-chairs appreciated the ability of the Bali Process to adapt to the changing landscape, including through the use of technology to continue collaborating despite travel restrictions during this period. The meeting affirmed the value of continuing virtual and hybrid meetings, where appropriate, as well as in-person meetings when possible.

## **Steering Group Meeting**

Co-chairs briefed the Ad Hoc Group on the report from the 17th Bali Process Senior Officials Steering Group Meeting held on 5 December 2022. They discussed current and emerging trends and challenges in the region. The role of technology, both as a tool to exploit the vulnerable, and as a mechanism to deter, detect and protect formed a theme throughout all the discussions.

## **Working Group Updates**

### ***Working Group on Trafficking in Persons***

The meeting reviewed the report from the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons (WG-TIP), commending its activities including its Regional Webinar on the use of Technology in Trafficking, and acknowledged the emerging trends identified through its activities. The meeting welcomed plans to further strengthen collaboration with ASEAN on trafficking in persons and other related transnational crimes.

The meeting noted the WG-TIP's forward work plan and welcomed its progress towards the 2018 Strategy for Cooperation, including but not limited to, the Strategy's Priority Two, "Stakeholder engagement", Priority Six, "Victim protection and migration management", Priority Three, "Information sharing", and Priority Seven, "Returns and reintegration".

Some participants raised the issues of increased collaboration with technology platform providers, together with the Government and Business Forum, to identify possible ways and means to address trafficking risks in online spaces.

The meeting was briefed on the WG-TIPs intention to research different legislative approaches to the links between forced marriage and trafficking in persons used across the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting also welcomed plans by the WG-TIP to work alongside the Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO) to encourage members to launch public information campaigns on social media to raise awareness about how to avoid the dangers of trafficking and how to seek support and protection.

### ***Working Group on the Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks***

The meeting noted updates from the Annual Meeting of the Working Group on the Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks (WG-D) held in Bangkok in October 2022, which included sessions on trauma-informed investigations and use of open-source information. The meeting welcomed the intention of the WG-D to initiate another Joint Period of Action in 2023 to disrupt people smuggling and trafficking in persons networks, building on the successes of Joint Periods of Action in 2018 and 2019, which involved work on joint investigations and resulted in enhanced information about criminal syndicates and arrests.

The meeting also welcomed the briefing on the table-top exercise conducted jointly by the WG-D and TFPP, and held back-to-back with the WG-D Annual Meeting in Bangkok in October 2022 – an example of the benefit of streamlining the way in which Bali Process activities are conducted. They noted the value of the WG-D-led sessions at the table-top exercise on what would constitute an effective law enforcement investigation into a large-scale irregular movement of people involving both people smuggling and human trafficking, including decision-making around prosecution and digital evidence gathering.

### ***Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration***

The meeting welcomed the report from the annual meeting of the Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration (TEG-RR) and noted its work to share good practice in sustainable returns and reintegration.

The meeting took note of interest among TEG-RR members to continue cooperating on developing and strengthening national policies and procedures around return and reintegration, including preparedness for large-scale returns, which posed challenges during the pandemic, and facilitating access to services and livelihoods to improve sustainability and durability of returns. Members welcomed plans for further collaboration with the WG-TIP on the nexus between returns, the criminal justice process for those accused of people smuggling and trafficking, and protection of the interests of victims. The meeting welcomed the intention of the Working Group to update the Bali Process Policy Guide on Returns and Reintegration.

### ***Task Force on Planning and Preparedness***

The meeting commended the work of the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) presented in its report. This included virtual Policy Expert Gatherings (PEGs) focused on the impact of COVID-19 and health considerations related to people smuggling and human trafficking, and on the particular vulnerabilities of women and children. The PEGs, which were designed to respond in an agile way to emerging issues and trends over the COVID-19 period, brought together experts and civil society representatives to enhance Bali Process partnerships and include broader perspectives and experiences.

Members welcomed the collaboration between the TFPP and WG-D in holding a joint table-top exercise aimed at improving national and regional preparation for large-scale irregular movement by land, involving elements of both human trafficking and people smuggling, and migrants with a range of protection needs. The exercise demonstrated the value in building links between the different working groups of the Bali Process to achieve priorities identified in the 2018 Strategy for Cooperation.

The meeting took note the discussion on key priorities from the Strategy for Cooperation during the table top exercise, which were facilitated by the RSO, including: the need for multi-disciplinary responses to irregular migration; the value of national coordination mechanisms; and the benefit of the available training to enhance member governments' capacities to address trafficking in persons and people smuggling activities.

Senior officials reflected on the TFPPs unique role in building regional awareness and preparedness to respond to people smuggling and human trafficking by land, air and sea, including changing patterns and emerging trends, through further policy experts' gatherings, multi-disciplinary table-top, and futures planning exercises, as appropriate.

### ***Government and Business Forum***

The meeting welcomed the efforts of the Government and Business Forum (GABF) towards achieving the AAA (Acknowledge, Act, Achieve) recommendations and the key priorities of the GABF workplan acknowledged by Ministers at the 2018 Ministerial Conference. Members of the Ad-Hoc Group (AHG) commended progress made towards its key priorities of moving towards ethical employment, transparency of supply chains and safeguard and redress mechanisms. GABF representatives briefed the meeting on Consultation & Innovation Sessions on the Electronics, Garments and Shipping sectors held virtually to share insights and progress key actions that address labour exploitation and human trafficking.

## **Update from the Bali Process Regional Support Office**

The meeting was briefed on the progress of RSO programs to promote policy dialogue and good practice with a particular focus on enhancing awareness of victim-centred approaches in relation to identification, assistance and protection of the victims of trafficking, the Smuggling of Migrant's Protocol, and the role of corruption as a facilitator of smuggling and trafficking in persons and exploitation in supply chains.

The meeting noted the efforts to support voluntary return and reintegration of stranded migrants and the work undertaken to support improved civil registrations of vulnerable populations. Members of the AHG commended the RSO's active provision of technical support and strengthening of practical cooperation among Bali Process Members during the COVID-19 pandemic and thanked the RSO for hosting the Bali Process 20th Anniversary Constructive Dialogue on Irregular Migration, People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons and the RSO 10th Anniversary Border Cooperation in Practice and Technology Forum.

The RSO highlighted its ongoing commitment to strengthen border management and law enforcement cooperation through frontline capacity building and collaboration with the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC), People's Police Academy of Vietnam and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) CIFAL Jeju.

The meeting noted with appreciation the outline provided by the RSO on the proposed forward workplan focused on communication and engagement with members, and activities focused on technology-facilitated smuggling and trafficking in persons, improving identification, protection and reintegration of trafficking victims, practical tools to support Members with screening and referral of migrants with special needs. The RSO acknowledged the support provided by Bali Process Members and sought continued Members' support in the delivery of the proposed forward workplan.

## **Special briefing from Indonesia as ASEAN chair 2023**

The meeting welcomed the presentation from Indonesia as the ASEAN Chair in 2023 on its priorities with respect to people smuggling and human trafficking during its ASEAN Chair year, including the possibility to enhance cooperation on these issues, including with other relevant mechanisms, such as Bali Process.

Members of the AHG supported the Bali Process to continue to work to strengthen partnerships with other regional organisations, including ASEAN, and further Bali Process engagement with other relevant regional consultative forums on migration, such as the Budapest Process, the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

## **Preparations for BPMC 2023**

The meeting welcomed progress towards the planning of the Eighth Bali Process Ministerial Conference.

The Co-Chairs thanked all participants for their inputs, recommendations and fruitful insights during the 16<sup>th</sup> Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting.

## **Participation and support**

The meeting was attended by representatives of: Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, UAE, Thailand, USA, Viet Nam, IOM, UNHCR, and UNODC.