



Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Steering Group Paris, 21 February 2022

Co-Chairs' Statement

The Foreign Ministers of Australia and the Republic of Indonesia co-chaired a Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Steering Group of the Bali Process on 21 February 2022. The meeting brought together Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand and Thailand and senior representatives of the IOM and UNHCR.

Ministers discussed how COVID-19 continues to shape health, economic and social impacts and how – along with restricted travel – these have significantly impacted migration and increased risk factors for irregular movement. The pandemic has also increased the risk of exploitation by people smugglers and traffickers, particularly for women and children. Ministers recognised the risks will increase as our region emerges from the pandemic, travel resumes, and traffickers, smugglers and other transnational criminal groups adapt to the challenge and identify new opportunities. These will remain enduring issues for the region.

Ministers acknowledged the importance of the Bali Process closely following regional developments and fostering cooperation between members to prevent and respond to the issues relevant to its mandate. Ministers expressed deep concern about recent developments in the region, including in Myanmar and Afghanistan and the risks for regional security and stability. Ministers recognised the ongoing need for the creation of conditions to allow the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of displaced persons. Ministers were particularly concerned that women and children continue to be disproportionately affected by these crises.

Ministers recognised the many Bali Process members that have continued to generously host displaced populations, provide regular, safe and orderly pathways for movement, and render assistance to people on the move in distress, and identify and support victims of trafficking and exploitation.

Ministers also reiterated the importance of business engagement in helping to address supply chain transparency, ethical recruitment and worker redress, especially given the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers.

Ministers looked forward to the 8th Bali Process Ministerial Conference in person again in 2022, and events to mark the 20th anniversary year and reflect on how the Bali Process can continue to deliver practical outcomes for members in addressing these transnational crimes. Ministers directed Senior Officials to advance planning and encouraged all members to consider opportunities to mark the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Bali Process in their own national capacity.