

Opening Remarks by

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Related to Policy and Law Enforcement Response

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Distinguished Colleagues, Friends,

It is a pleasure to see you here in Macau, for the continuation of our work on strengthening regional cooperation in our effort to combat People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime.

Before I discuss our objectives for the next three days, I would first like to express my appreciation to the Secretary of Security of the Macau SAR for his kind support in hosting this important workshop. I would also like to thank the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China for its kind collaboration on the convening of this workshop and for arranging our visit to Zhuhai to view the activities of the Zhuhai border crossing.

As you are all aware, at the Senior Officials Meeting held in Brisbane, Australia, in June, a recommendation was made to Ministers that the "Bali process should continue, focusing on practical operational cooperation in areas where it could best add value. Senior officials also agreed that given the success of the Bali process in promoting increasingly self-sustaining regional cooperation to combat people smuggling and trafficking, its future activities needed to be streamlined".

As you are all well aware, this has been my *modus operandi* since I took on the role of coordinator of law enforcement and policy activities following the initial Bali Process Ministerial Conference in 2002 - that is to seek to identify and implement *practical* activities and measures to achieve our goals. In so doing, we have made significant progress on many fronts to strengthen our efforts; and, I look forward to that continuing over the next three days.

As many of you recall, we held the first Bali Process law enforcement workshop, in Shenzhen, China, in November 2002. At that workshop we

identified several key areas in need of strengthening to improve our national and regional law enforcement efforts. These included addressing:

- Operational Cooperation and Investigation
- Identity Verification and Document Examination
- Technical and Capacity Requirements for Effective Enforcement

Since this time we have held focused workshops on identify verification and document fraud, targeting of known people smugglers and traffickers, and have witnessed numerous national and bi-lateral efforts undertaken to improve upon operational responses. At the national level these have included the formation of specialized units or task forces in various departments and ministries to address people smuggling and trafficking in persons issues, capacity strengthening, among others. And, it is recognized that such efforts have contributed significantly to improving operational responses.

At the same time, though, we have seen a growth in parallel structures emerge as our respective enforcement agencies each incorporate the combating of trafficking and smuggling into their jurisdictional mandates. Such structures, though perhaps on paper operationally distinct, can lead to confusion when developing cooperative strategies for the sharing of information and investigation of cases. It is evident that effective coordination must be realized in a government-wide approach that supports internal coordination and cooperation initiatives that contribute to a "whole of Government" approach to trafficking that can be extended to bilateral, sub-regional and regional cooperation efforts.

In Shenzhen, we recognized that cooperation needs to be formalized to endure. Personal networks need to be reinforced by policy, systems, agreements and institutions and to have support from governments. Some recommendations based on existing models that were identified to support this objective, included establishing:

- A formal liaison unit to manage information exchange, provided it is closely integrated to the operational areas, immigration compliance networks, airline liaison officers and law enforcement officer networks, regional cooperation model, comprehensive plans of action.
- Holding Regular interagency meetings;
- Designating lead coordination agencies,

- Establishing a Combined Law Enforcement Agency Group or similar such body;
- Developing international networks to exchange intelligence, provide fora for regular meetings and building trust

Over the next three days, I would like to advance these recommendations through undertaking a mapping of our current law enforcement structures and seeking ways to refine our internal and external coordination efforts. My intention is to make this a highly interactive process, beginning with the formation of work groups very early on in our agenda that will engage in role play scenarios to help us to identify strengths and weaknesses in our current structures and, ultimately, agree on strategies to improve operational cooperation.

We will follow this up with presentations that will incorporate issues raised in our first day and seek to inform paths to overcoming obstacles and facilitating improved coordination practices. We will also facilitate this through examining the efforts of our Macau SAR and People's Republic of China hosts' cooperation at the Zhuhai border crossing, which can facilitate  $\frac{1}{2}$  million border crossings per day.

Additionally, we will also hear from an NGO representative, Ms. Sudarat Sereerat, who works closely with Thai immigration and police, as well as foreign police, in facilitating case investigations and prosecutions of child traffickers and exploiters. Ms. Sudarat will outline the valuable role that such specialized NGOs can play in facilitating police and immigration investigative efforts, particularly with regard to providing care and protection for the victims.

In short, we have a both stimulating and intense schedule for the next three days and I look forward to advancing our progress in achieving practical and durable results in our cooperation efforts.

Thank you.