

Joint Media Release

30 April 2003

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, the Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Philip Ruddock and the Minister for Justice and Customs, Sen. Chris Ellison

Second Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

The Foreign Ministers of Australia and Indonesia successfully co-Chaired the second Regional Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, in Bali from 28-30 April. The Australian delegation was led by the Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Mr Ruddock and included the Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Ellison. The Conference was attended by 28 Ministers from 32 countries across the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, representatives from the International Organisation for Migration and a further 13 international agencies and representatives from 14 observer countries.

There has been significant progress made since the first Regional Ministerial Conference in February 2002. The two Ad Hoc Experts' Groups established by that Conference have achieved concrete outcomes including the development, by China and Australia, of model legislation to criminalise people smuggling and trafficking, the strengthening of cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the mechanisms to facilitate information exchange. Such mechanisms included the establishment of a website, launched by the Australian and Indonesian Foreign Ministers, at the opening of the Conference in Bali.

The Conference accepted the Plans of Action of the two Ad Hoc Experts' Groups which had been established by that Conference. The Plans include future work on public awareness, returns, legislation, law enforcement, border management and improved measures to verify identity and procedures for document examination. Ministers agreed that officials would convene a meeting in approximately one year's time to review the implementation of the Plans of Action and report back to Indonesia and Australia as the co-Chairs. Ministers

agreed that the Ad Hoc Experts' Groups would continue, for the time being, to be chaired by Thailand and New Zealand. There was unanimous support for a further Ministerial meeting in two to three year's time to ensure that progress was maintained in tackling people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

The Bali process has boosted legal and enforcement cooperation in the region. The work undertaken over the last year provides an excellent basis on which to build further cooperation in combating other forms of transnational crime including money laundering, terrorist financing and drug trafficking.

The co-hosting of the Conference is another example of the excellent cooperation between Indonesia and Australia and of our commitment to working together with regional partners to tackle serious issues affecting us all.