BALI PROCESS AD HOC GROUP
TECHNICAL EXPERTS WORKING GROUP MEETING
'BEYOND DOCUMENTS'
COLOMBO, 29-31 OCTOBER 2014
OUTCOME STATEMENT

1. The Bali Process Technical Experts Working Group held a meeting on 'Beyond Documents' in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 29-31 October 2014. The meeting was co-chaired by Sri Lanka and Australia and attended by representatives from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives, New Zealand, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Vietnam, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Representatives from Bhutan, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Regional Support Office (RSO) attended the meeting as observers.

2. The meeting on Beyond Documents focussed on elements that contribute to verifying identity and highlighted their importance. Documents, biometric details and other publicly available sources of identity information were discussed. The meeting strengthened participants' understanding of what processes are used to establish and verify identity, including opportunities to work collaboratively to verify identity throughout the Asia Pacific region.

3. Delegates considered common processes in establishing identity to strengthen border integrity and the tools, training and technologies available to combat people smuggling, human trafficking and related transnational crime. It was also considered how Bali Process member States could work to overcome barriers to improve regional identity integrity capability.

Proceedings

4. The meeting was opened by Mrs Damayanthi Jayaratne, Additional Secretary – Ministry of Defence & Urban Development, and Ms Sue Knight, Counsellor – Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Australian High Commission, Colombo. The welcome addresses emphasised that the meeting provided an important platform for governments to share knowledge and foster closer working relationships to address cross-border movement issues. The Bali Process Technical Experts Working Group was considered an important forum to develop practical measures to address the challenges of smuggling migrants and trafficking in persons.

5. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Nihal Ranasinghe, Controller General, Sri Lankan Department of Immigration and Emigration and Ms Nadia Davies, First Secretary (Immigration), Australian High Commission, Colombo. Opening statements highlighted the importance of developing and sharing initiatives to enhance identity management across the membership.

Presentations

6. Canada presented an overview on their border operations and document integrity. The presentation outlined the significance of identity confirmation and the methods by which this can be achieved. Canada provided an insight into identity fraud prevention and discussed the importance of hindering security threats and organised crime through its rigorous border protection methods.

7. Sri Lanka outlined current identity integrity measures. The presentation gave participants a detailed overview on immigration and border operations and provided immigration malpractice statistics to participants. Fraud trends were highlighted and the importance of information sharing was promoted. Sri Lanka also discussed training methods for immigration border staff and challenges the future holds.

8. Sri Lanka also presented an overview of their Criminal Investigation Department (CID) based at Bandaranayake International Airport. The presentation detailed operations, including the investigation of people smuggling and trafficking. Sri Lanka also presented two case studies which demonstrated CID's ability to effectively detect identity fraud at the airport.

9. New Zealand presented on its border security framework and the various technological advances the country has made in relation to identity confirmation. Several case studies were examined where identity fraud was detected. New Zealand's identity systems and practices were outlined, including the advantages of sharing identity information.

10. Australia presented on current identity integrity measures. The presentation explained current identity confirmation technology as well as the advantages that a global biometrics gathering system has for collecting identity information and eliminating identity fraud from the visa application process to the border at international airports.

11. Australia also reviewed an identity case study which explored the value of obtaining a person's life story to assist with identity confirmation. The case study highlighted the importance of combining different methods to assist with identity confirmation, including advanced digital techniques and more traditional methods.

12. Indonesia presented on general immigration operations and how digital identity was captured at immigration offices and border crossings. The presentation outlined Indonesia's border control management system and how it assists officers with identity confirmation. Information on secondary digital identification documents was discussed as well future developments including automated check points.

13. Bhutan presented on the introduction of a biometrics system into its immigration program. Information about their identity enrolment process and online biometric system was described to delegates. Geographical challenges were discussed as well as the strategic placement of biometric verification stations around the country.

14. The Maldives presented the issuing process of their national e-passports. Identity integrity measures were discussed including the collection of biometric data contained in passport chips. The Maldives also highlighted the importance of using breeder documents for identity confirmation and explained the passport application process for citizens of the Maldives.

15. The United Kingdom explained the security features contained in Great Britain passports. Individual security features were closely examined as well as the passport and substrate manufacturing process. The United Kingdom provided delegates with an understanding of how advanced document manufacturing techniques protects the identity of its citizens at home and abroad.

16. Afghanistan delivered an overview on immigration operations at Kabul International Airport and at the various check-points throughout the country. Afghanistan discussed the geographical challenges the country faces to ensure identity integrity. A future plan was discussed which included the acquisition of more advanced identity technology.

17. The RSO delivered two presentations. The first presentation outlined its current and future activities. The RSO discussed Bali Process objectives and highlighted the advantages of regional cooperation.

18. The second presentation from the RSO provided an overview of the Regional Data Sharing Initiative. The presentation focussed on cooperation between Bali Process members to develop (through the RSO) a technical capability and policy framework to facilitate data sharing. The RSO also discussed scenarios in which biometric data sharing can facilitate identity verification.

Break-out group discussions

19. Delegates broke into three groups to consider building on processes and technology to improve identity confirmation.

20. The first group considered the essential common processes in establishing identity. Participants noted the benefits of technological advances including automated identity verification systems. Key discussion points included increased take-up of e-passport systems and the ability to share identity data information quickly and freely between countries.

21. The second group considered training, tools and technologies to improve identity integrity capability. Participants highlighted the effectiveness of on the job training in various identity checking roles and considered the emergence and importance of electronic identity training. Key discussion points included the need to improve identity integrity through training such as e-Learning, visa online verification, biometric data sharing and a greater commitment to meeting a minimum document manufacturing standard. The group discussed the benefits of sharing identity technology initiatives across the membership.

22. The third group considered the barriers to greater identity capability. Key discussion points included the difficulty of releasing identity information due to legal and privacy requirements, the challenges organisations face with personnel and funding, and the pressures frontline officers face in meeting processing times.

Recommendations

1. Participants acknowledged the importance of biometrics being incorporated into any identity framework and that consideration should be given to the use of a common primary biometric to facilitate data exchange.

2. Delegates acknowledged the opportunities and benefits of sharing biometric data and strongly encouraged member participation in the RSO regional biometric data sharing project.

3. Consideration should be given to developing policy guides on identity management.

Acknowledgements

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Australia and Sri Lanka (Co-chairs)
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Technical Experts Working Group
Beyond Documents
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