

REGIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE OF THE BALI PROCESS

**PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT: EXPANDING LEGAL AND LEGITIMATE LABOUR
MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES**

BANGKOK, THAILAND 1-2 SEPTEMBER 2016

EVENT SUMMARY

1. The Regional Support Office (RSO) of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime hosted an event designed to identify innovative regional solutions which provide refugees with temporary work rights whilst durable solutions are being pursued.
2. The meeting brought together representatives of government, the private sector, international organisations, academia and civil society. The event was facilitated by ThinkPlace and was attended by representatives from: governments, including Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Canada, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep. of), the Rep. of Korea, the Maldives, Myanmar, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, the United Arab Emirates and the United States of America; the private sector and affiliated organizations, including the Albukhary Foundation, Biometix, DLA Piper, Fast Retailing (UNIQLO), Flextronics, Experian, H.I.S., Manpower Group, Nexus Asia, Onyx, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Thomson Reuters and Tilleke & Gibbins; United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, including the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, UN Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Special Representative for the Secretary General for Migration and Development; and a number of civil society and other organizations, including Amnesty International, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, Asylum Access, BPSOS, Inc., the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the Centre for Policy Development, Chulalongkorn University, CSR Asia, Freeland, the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, the International Rescue Committee, the Japan Association for UNHCR, the Malaysia Bar Council, Migrant Forum in Asia, the Migrant Resource Centre, Save the Children, the Temple of Dawn, the Thai Red Cross Society, and the Thai Trade Union Congress.
3. The event focused on innovative strategies and solutions, based on the principles of collective responsibility and burden sharing, and overcoming the obstacles that have prevented refugees from accessing legal and legitimate labour market opportunities, in order to reduce their susceptibility to being trafficked, smuggled or exploited by criminal networks. The objectives of the event were to:
 - a. Consider factors surrounding the expansion or development of labour schemes;
 - b. Consider how the issue of labour market access for refugees intersects with the economic and social objectives of host communities and private sector actors;

- c. Consider host country concerns including, national security, community perceptions, social implications and economic considerations; and
 - d. Identify and develop innovative, practical and mutually beneficial strategies that would provide labour market access to refugees.
4. In advance of the meeting, participants were provided with short research papers which were commissioned to provide participants with relevant background information and to encourage innovative thinking. These papers featured: information about migration trends and refugee populations in the region; examples of labour schemes; the perspective of the private sector; and an introduction to the concept of “disruptive innovation” and its application to policy matters.
5. The event took place over two days. The first day was an Innovation Challenge involving approximately 35 participants from government, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. The second day was a Regional Forum which included approximately 85 participants from all of these sectors.
6. Throughout the event, participants recognized the importance of addressing protracted situations of refugee displacement in a manner that would benefit refugee populations, host communities and private sector actors alike, and of engaging with diverse stakeholders to develop innovative, practical and effective strategies for overcoming existing obstacles.

Proceedings

Day 1: Innovation Challenge

7. The Innovation Challenge was opened by RSO Co-Manager (Australia) Lisa Crawford, who provided an overview of the RSO and the role it plays in supporting Bali Process members in addressing issues relating to refugee protection and international migration in the context of people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime. The event was seen as an opportunity to use modern approaches and incorporate all actors, including governments, the private sector, international organizations and civil society to address regional challenges.
8. The event facilitator, ThinkPlace, introduced the concept of design thinking and the structure of the Innovation Challenge, highlighting the need to suspend judgement in order to build on and enhance collaborative thinking. ThinkPlace led the event participants through a series of collaborative and interactive exercises aimed at building multi-stakeholder collaboration.
9. Throughout the Innovation Challenge, participants identified a number of the obstacles and challenges that have previously prevented refugees from gaining temporary access to labour markets in the region. These included: concerns relating to national security, including risk of fraud and issues relating to data quality and security; community perceptions; and a lack of evidence to support decision making. Participants discussed strategies for overcoming these barriers, with reference to the research that had been prepared in advance of the event regarding these issues. Participants also discussed the benefits of empowering refugees to be self-reliant, including that it would enable them to make meaningful contributions to host communities during their temporary stay and that it would allow them to gain the experience necessary for them to make contributions in their home countries once they were able to return.

Day 2: Regional Forum

10. The Regional Forum was opened by Ms. Crawford, who welcomed participants and provided an overview of the RSO and its work with Bali Process members. Ms. Crawford highlighted the collaborative nature of the event and discussed the purpose and objectives of the Innovation Challenge and Regional Forum.
11. Alistair Boulton, UNHCR Assistant Regional Representative (Protection), provided participants with his reflections on the Innovation Challenge, emphasizing the importance and benefits of working with diverse stakeholders in a collaborative and interactive manner. Mr. Boulton then introduced Dr. Surin Pitsuwan to make the Regional Forum's opening remarks.
12. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the former Secretary General of ASEAN and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, focused his comments on the benefits that could result from aligning the economic reality of unrealised labour demand with the parallel reality that refugees exist in the region and are capable of contributing to that demand. He highlighted how practical cooperation and private sector engagement could lead to effective regional outcomes. He emphasized that effectively navigating and overcoming complex regional challenges would enhance the region's reputation and competitiveness.
13. Participants were introduced to the concepts that had been identified during the Innovation Challenge, which related to: sharing best practices, information and data sharing, the deployment of technology, improving community perceptions, capacity-building and enhancing regional cooperation. Regional Forum participants were then led through a series of interactive exercises designed to challenge and strengthen concepts.

Outcomes

14. The proceedings provided a valuable opportunity to engage in interactive discussions with a diverse group of stakeholders and recognized the value of building cooperative relationships between these stakeholders in order to maximize the potential for developing practical, nuanced and regional solutions for complex regional challenges.
15. The value of ongoing cooperation between event participants and other stakeholders, including on matters relating to data and information sharing, capacity building, community perception, regional cooperation and best practices was recognised.
16. The RSO expressed its gratitude to event participants for their active participation in the meeting and welcomed future opportunities for engagement.
17. The RSO expressed its thanks to the event facilitators, ThinkPlace, for leading interactive and collaborative discussions which successfully capitalized on the diverse expertise and experiences of event participants.