

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

Senior Officials' Meeting

**Bali, Indonesia
6 August 2018**

Co-Chairs' Statement

1. The Senior Officials' Meeting of the Bali Process was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 6 August 2018. The meeting reviewed developments in the Bali Process region and activities undertaken within the Bali Process working groups, other engagement mechanisms and the Regional Support Office (RSO). It considered priorities for the *Seventh Bali Process Ministerial Conference* on 7 August 2018.

Regional developments

2. The meeting acknowledged the regional and global challenges of displacement and irregular migration. It noted that these challenges pose social, economic and security concerns for affected countries. It expressed concern about the abuse of persons by people smugglers and human traffickers. It underlined that the transnational nature of irregular migration requires a comprehensive regional approach.

- . The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) drew attention to the challenges of irregular migration and the need for predictable search and rescue, disembarkation and reception measures to respond in a victim and protection-sensitive manner. It emphasised that access to livelihoods, justice and expanded migration pathways can prevent smuggling and trafficking of persons vulnerable to exploitation.
- . The International Organization for Migration (IOM) highlighted its activities to counter trafficking in persons in the context of crises, and the importance of data collection and sharing on irregular migration movements. It noted the role of the private sector in eliminating modern slavery in supply chains.
- . The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) outlined key patterns of people smuggling and trafficking in persons in the region. It emphasised the importance of data collection, recent trends and information sharing to counter people smuggling.
- . The Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) noted its engagement with the Bali Process and ASEAN on forced migration challenges, including the risk of displaced persons becoming victims of people smuggling and trafficking in persons. It saw the Bali Process as uniquely placed to facilitate policy dialogue and coordinate action on these issues, to collaborate with ASEAN to counteract trafficking, and to assist with safe, voluntary and sustainable return of those displaced.

Current and future priorities

3. The meeting welcomed the significant momentum in Bali Process cooperation to support implementation of the *2016 Bali Declaration* and other commitments made by Ministers at the Sixth Ministerial Conference. Bali Process cooperation was being driven through engagement on irregular migration situations, working groups and other engagement mechanisms, the *Government and Business Forum* and the initiatives pursued by the RSO. The meeting reviewed highlights of these activities.

Engagement on irregular migration

4. The meeting welcomed that the *Consultation Mechanism* first met in October 2017 to explore the perspectives of relevant members on the mass displacement of persons in the region. The meeting commended the senior official Co-Chairs' 'Good Offices' outreach with relevant countries in May 2018, and the commitment of those countries to remain engaged with the Bali Process. The RSO reported on its visits to those affected countries in July 2018 to explore possible capacity building assistance.

5. The meeting supported timely and constructive engagement on significant displacement and irregular migration in the region. It confirmed the role of the Bali Process as a forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and practical cooperation, rather than as a political mechanism.

Working groups and other engagement mechanisms

6. The meeting recognised the progress made by the *Working Group on Trafficking in Persons* (co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia) in delivering its Forward Work Plan. It endorsed the policy guide on *Following the Money in Trafficking in Persons Cases*, which fulfilled Ministers' request that training and guidance be developed on using financial investigation techniques. It welcomed the inaugural *Government and Civil Roundtable* in May 2018, which focused on how government and civil society can work better together.

7. The meeting commended the *Working Group on the Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks* (co-chaired by Malaysia and New Zealand) for enhancing cooperation to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks. It noted that ten member states were involved in the fourth Joint Period of Action in 2018. It recognised the success of preceding Joint Periods of Action, which contributed to numerous convictions, the rescue of trafficked victims, execution of search warrants, identification of new suspects, arrests, extradition requests and new investigations.

8. The meeting welcomed the progress by the *Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration* (co-chaired by the Philippines and Australia) to build consistency in regional approaches on returns and reintegration of persons with no lawful basis to remain in a country. It noted that members exchanged views and shared good practices. It supported a drafting committee taking forward a draft policy guide on returns and reintegration.

9. The meeting commended the activities of the *Task Force on Planning and Preparedness* (co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia). It noted that this was set up in 2017 to improve regional planning and preparedness for irregular migration events, particularly by sea. It noted that this has agreed operating modalities, undertaken scenario-based tabletop exercises, and reviewed national action plans. It supported future meetings considering disembarkation and reception measures, among other issues.

Regional Support Office activities

10. The meeting recognised the initiatives of the RSO to facilitate capacity building, information sharing and best practices, pooling technical resources, and developing policy guides, reference materials and training programs. The meeting endorsed the RSO's *Strategic Plan* and *Work Plan* and called on members to continue to support the work of the RSO.

Government and Business Forum

11. The meeting welcomed the establishment of the *Government and Business Forum*, which held its inaugural meeting in August 2017. It commended the objective of the Forum to contribute to ending human trafficking, forced labour, modern slavery and the worst forms of child labour. It noted that the Forum would complement and support global efforts to eradicate these crimes. It valued the extensive consultations and work undertaken by participating businesses, and the business Co-Chairs and Secretariat, to develop recommendations.

12. The meeting endorsed the Forum's recommendations to strengthen collaboration between government and business. It decided that these recommendations should be submitted to Ministers for adoption at the Ministerial Conference. It noted that these recommendations focused on catalysing action in three main areas –

- acknowledge – increase business and government understanding of the challenges associated with these crimes, and engender 'buy-in' to address them;
- act – encourage business to ensure ethical business practices and governments to strengthen policy and legislative frameworks and implementation;
- advance – to develop a governance framework for the Forum to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.

Strategy for Cooperation

13. The meeting endorsed the new *Strategy for Cooperation* (Attachment A). It noted that the Strategy is a living document that is amended to reflect member interests and regional developments. It noted that the new Strategy outlines priorities within eight main themes –

- law enforcement cooperation – including through the *Working Group on Trafficking in Persons* and *Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Syndicates involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons*, policy guides and training;

- stakeholder engagement – especially with the private sector through the *Government and Business Forum*, with civil society on human trafficking, and with other international consultative processes;
- information sharing – including through working groups and other engagement mechanisms, and information campaigns to reduce irregular migration;
- border management – focusing on training and capacity building activities;
- irregular migration – including engagement through the *Consultation Mechanism*, ‘good offices’ outreach and the *Task Force on Planning and Preparedness*;
- victim protection and migrant management – focusing on increasing awareness, piloting toolkits and training;
- returns and reintegration – focusing on cooperation through the *Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration*; and the *Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration* project;
- coordination and support – through the Regional Support Office to build capacity and enhance information sharing across Bali Process areas of focus.

Declaration and membership

14. The meeting endorsed the proposed *2018 Bali Declaration* for adoption by Ministers at the Seventh Ministerial Conference.

15. The meeting supported the International Labour Organization becoming a member of the Bali Process. The meeting agreed to expand scope for observers to attend Bali Process meetings, including from relevant regional consultative processes on migration.

Participation and support

16. Attending the meeting were representatives from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, France (New Caledonia), Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Lao PDR, Macau SAR, Maldives, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Syria, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, and Vietnam, as well as IOM, UNHCR, UNODC, ILO, and EU.

Also attending were representative from the following observers-Canada, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Marshall Islands, the Netherlands, Russia, UK, Spain, Federated States of Micronesia, South Africa, as well as ICRC, IFRC and the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration.

17. Appreciation was expressed to Indonesia for hosting the meetings, and for technical contributions by IOM, UNHCR and UNODC across the range of Bali Process activities, and for administrative and logistical support provided by IOM.