

Statement of the Philippine Delegation to the Bali Process Government and Business Forum  
(24-25 August 2017, Perth, Australia)

The Philippines is committed to actively participate and contribute to the global fight to end human smuggling, trafficking in persons and modern slavery. This commitment is manifested in our efforts to prevent the commission of trafficking in persons, to prosecute the perpetrators and to protect victims or survivors, within and outside the Philippines. In 2016, the Philippines became the first country in Southeast Asia to qualify for the Tier 1 ranking in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report. We have maintained that Tier 1 status this year. This ranking impels us even more to intensify our efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

With instructions from no less than the President of the Philippines and guided by the Strategic Plan on trafficking in persons and related crimes, the relevant agencies of the Government develop programs and conduct massive campaigns to educate the public on what is trafficking in persons and how to avoid becoming victims of it. Police forces and investigative bodies undertake operations to apprehend traffickers and all parties who benefit from the crime. Foreign service posts collaborate with host countries to identify perpetrators and assist victims. Relevant social welfare and health agencies provide support and offer needed psycho-social interventions to survivors. An inter-agency council against trafficking in persons (IACAT) was created in the Philippines to synergize the efforts of various government agencies in combatting human trafficking.

The Philippines recognizes the many forms and the multi-faceted nature of the nefarious crime of trafficking. The Philippines underscores the need for a creative, multi-skilled and multi-sectoral approach to finally end it. The Philippine Government already engages civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector and even ordinary citizens as partners in counter-trafficking measures. However, an increased level of involvement by the private sector will significantly address the causes and contributory factors to trafficking as well as assist in the apprehension of traffickers and identification of victims. It is well established that jobs with decent pay will deter persons, especially women, from falling prey to sex traffickers. Transport companies whose employees are made aware about trafficking can assist in curtailing the movement of traffickers and their victims. Businesses can police their ranks and report labor traffickers. Tech companies can provide the technology needed to equip governments to identify traffickers or disrupt criminal networks. Media outfits can be partners in information campaigns. Banks and remittance companies can be engaged in financial investigations to "follow the money" of trafficking syndicates. These are just a few of the hundreds of ways that business and government can work together to end trafficking in persons.

In view of the foregoing, the Philippines extends its full support to the Perth Forum.