

**STATEMENT BY MR CHRISTOPHER DE SOUZA**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNMENT PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND LAW AND MEMBER  
OF PARLIAMENT AT THE BALI PROCESS GOVERNMENT AND  
BUSINESS FORUM**

Co-Chairperson the Honourable Julie Bishop MP

Co-Chairperson Ibu Retno Marsudi

Co-Chairperson Mr Andrew Forrest

Co-Chairperson Mr Eddy Sariaatmadja

Your Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

1        The Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process last year noted the importance of engaging constructively with private industry to tackle human trafficking and related exploitation in our region. Singapore therefore welcomes the co-Chairs' efforts in convening the inaugural Bali Process Government and Business Forum. The Forum adds an important new dimension to our discussions by bringing in the private sector's perspectives.

2 Singapore's new National Approach Against Trafficking in Persons 2016 – 2026 which was launched in March last year builds on our National Plan of Action 2012-2015.<sup>1</sup> It sets out our key long-term strategies to fight human trafficking and ensures that our efforts are sustainable. Through our multi-stakeholder and whole-of-society approach, we will collaborate with the broader community under our holistic four-pronged strategy involving **Prevention, Prosecution, Protection** of victims of trafficking and **Partnerships** to combat trafficking in persons.

3 The private sector is an important partner given that many trafficked victims are lured into exploitative situations by promises of good jobs and financial gain. The Singapore Inter-agency Taskforce on Trafficking-in-Persons invites employment agencies and businesses to its annual trafficking-in-persons engagement sessions to share their views. The Taskforce also partners businesses to provide temporary employment to trafficked victims who are willing and able to work and voluntary welfare organisations like the Good Shepherd Centre to provide shelter to victims.<sup>2</sup> Singapore will continue to proactively engage employers, employment

---

<sup>1</sup> The National Approach Against Trafficking in Persons can be found at <http://www.mom.gov.sg/~media/mom/documents/foreign-manpower/trafficking/national-approach-against-trafficking-in-persons.pdf?la=en>.

<sup>2</sup> These businesses include a florist (Far East Flora), an F&B establishment (Food For Thought) and a commercial and home laundry service provider (SG Laundry Pte Ltd).

agencies and industry associations to support trafficked victims, ethical employment practices and prevent trafficking in persons in supply chains.

4 In terms of enforcement, Singapore's primary legislation against trafficking in persons is the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, which came into force in March 2015. It provides a robust legal framework to investigate and prosecute trafficking offences. Underlying the Act is also Singapore's commitment to protect and support trafficked victims and give them a sense of hope and dignity. Given the evolving modus operandi of traffickers, we will continue to review the Act and other laws to maintain their relevance.

5 Singapore actively participates in regional and international efforts and platforms to combat people smuggling and trafficking in persons. Our accession to the UN's TIP Protocol in September 2015 and ratification of the ASEAN Convention against TIP in January 2016, which entered into force in March this year, affirms our commitment to preventing human trafficking. We have proactively cooperated with the UN and ASEAN to develop safeguards against trafficking. We will continue to build on these and other partnerships to create a strong ecosystem of domestic and international stakeholders, to effectively address the crime of trafficking in persons.

6 Singapore would like to acknowledge the Bali Process, which has been a useful platform to advance regional cooperation to tackle people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime since 2002. An important factor for its success is the voluntary, non-binding and member-driven nature of the Process, which allows States to address these issues in ways that take into account their national circumstances.

7 On behalf of the Singapore delegation, I congratulate the Co-Chairs Indonesia and Australia for successfully organising the inaugural Government and Business Forum. I also want to thank the business leaders who have shown your commitment to this issue by taking the time to finalise the Work Plan for businesses' programme of work over the next twelve months. As we look ahead to the next Bali Process Ministerial Conference in 2018, Singapore welcomes further opportunities to work closely with our regional and international partners on these challenges.

. . . . .