

Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime  
**Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration**  
Colombo, Sri Lanka 13-14 February 2020

### **Co-Chairs' Statement**

1. The third meeting of the Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration (TEG-RR) of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 13-14 February, 2020, co-chaired by Australia and Sri Lanka.
2. The meeting brought together officials representing relevant agencies responsible for returns and reintegration from the Bali Process member countries, and experts from international organizations.
  - Member country participants were from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, France, Indonesia, Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nauru, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam.
  - Organizational member participants were from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO).
  - Observer participants included Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).
  - Apologies were received from New Zealand and the Philippines.

### **Proceedings**

3. The co-chairs reviewed the outcomes of the second meeting of the TEG-RR held in 12-13 February 2019 in Bangkok. They emphasized the importance of promoting a broader understanding of current trends on returns and reintegration at the regional and global level, and the sharing of good practices for the mutual benefits of Bali Process Member States.
4. The RSO presented the key features of the Bali Process policy guide on returns and reintegration, which was approved in July 2019 by the Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' meeting. The RSO highlighted the main challenges, including obtaining identity documents of the returnees, while implementing the procedures of returns and reintegration programmes. The co-chairs appreciated the work by the drafting committee and the RSO for finalizing the policy guide and reiterated that the guide is available for download from the Bali Process website. The co-chairs emphasized the importance of case studies illustrated in the policy guide which may help to promote good practices on returns and reintegration within the Member States. Recognising the guide remained a living document, the co-chairs requested participants to review the guide and provide their comments, and illustrations of good practice, to the RSO for further updates.

5. Attendees gave brief presentations on their current situation, policy framework, challenges, and good practices relating to return and reintegration. Some key elements extracted from the presentations include:

- The importance of developing a national policy framework and action plan for returnees. The framework may underscore the importance of involving different relevant stakeholders including NGOs, industry and Civil Society Organizations for ensuring the sustainable reintegration of returnees;
- The importance of specifying roles and responsibilities of sending and receiving countries to build levels of trust and incorporating those roles into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/agreement between them, with a view to encouraging assistance to organize identity documents and ensure the safety of the returnees in the country of origin.
- The role of technology, especially mobile Apps, for better consular services and to provide timely information to the migrants abroad, including promoting support services available for the returnees.
- The development of standard operating procedures (SOP) for return and reintegration in line with national priorities, regional and international practices.
- The importance of capacity building of relevant stakeholders responsible for implementing returns and reintegration programmes and to ensure proper coordination and collaboration among different service providing agencies.
- The importance of states working together on identity and the provision of travel documents to facilitate returns
- The importance of having a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms for the returns and reintegration programmes which are being implemented in different member States.
- Understanding the needs and priorities of some vulnerable cohorts of returnees, especially victims of trafficking, women and children, and tailoring assistance to the individual.

6. The IOM presented on Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes, including how this programme benefits returnees and the challenges they face for successful reintegration. It informed that during 2012-2020 period 1192 returnees benefited from the AVRR programmes. The presentation emphasized that to make reintegration programmes successful, both the sending and receiving countries need to cooperate with each other and ensure coordination among different service providing agencies. Another IOM presentation highlighted various aspect of in-cash and in-kind assistance in reintegration programmes and provided detailed accounts of current challenges for an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism for reintegration programmes. It elaborated on the different economic, social and psychosocial indicators widely used by IOM to evaluate reintegration programmes.

7. The UNHCR delivered an update on their work, focusing on various circumstances and procedures required to facilitate returns, including ensuring the safety (physical, legal and material) and dignity of refugee returnees. It also emphasized the voluntariness of returns. UNHCR mentioned that for smooth

returns to occur, issues such as identity documents, access to livelihoods and training of returnees need to be addressed.

8. The ICMPD provided an update on experiences from the Budapest Process return and reintegration programmes. It emphasized the necessity of evidence-based research on the outcome of reintegration programmes, capacity building of relevant service providers, and having a transnational referral mechanism on return and reintegration.

### ***Next steps***

9. Continued engagement between various international and regional fora, including the Bali Process, Budapest Process and Colombo Process on returns and reintegration will provide opportunities for the sharing of information and building common understanding.

10. The Co-chairs suggested that the RSO undertake additional capacity building initiatives for the relevant officials of the Member States on understanding the complex issues and procedures of returns and reintegration in line with the Policy Guide, and consideration of future areas of interest under the Annual Work Plan.

11. The meeting envisaged that the TEG-RR would next meet in early 2021 to receive updates from the Member States and to share illustrations of good government-to-government practices in relation to returns and reintegration.

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