

**BALI PROCESS ON PEOPLE SMUGGLING, TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
AND RELATED TRANSNATIONAL CRIME
TASK FORCE ON PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS**

BANGKOK, THAILAND, 27 JANUARY 2017

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

1. The inaugural meeting of the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) was held in Bangkok on 27 January 2017.
2. The Meeting recalled the outcomes of the Sixth Regional Ministerial Conference in Bali (23 March 2016), at which Ministers decided to have a Consultation Mechanism, enabling the Co-Chairs to convene discussions in response to urgent irregular migration events in the region; and to conduct a Review of the irregular migration events of 2015 in the Andaman Sea.
3. The Meeting noted that in implementing Ministers' decisions, the Co-Chairs undertook significant consultations with members, observers and other interested partners. Arising from these consultations and deliberations, the Concept Note for implementation of the Consultation Mechanism, and the Andaman Sea Review, were presented to and endorsed by senior officials at the 11th Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting in Colombo (16 November 2016).
4. Recalling the recommendations of the Bali Process Andaman Sea Review, including the establishment of a new Bali Process Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP), the Meeting welcomed the Co-Chairs' convening of the inaugural meeting of the TFPP as an important step in maintaining momentum in the Bali Process on improving the region's preparedness for irregular migration events.
5. The Meeting welcomed a presentation from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), on behalf of IOM, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), highlighting lessons learnt from the Mediterranean (2016) and the Andaman Sea (2015) irregular migration events. The Meeting encouraged members to draw on these lessons in planning or strengthening national operational procedures in responding to regional irregular migration events.
6. The Meeting also welcomed a presentation by Thailand outlining its own approach to early warning/detection, focusing on the role of the Royal Thai Navy and the operation of lines of defence across the continuum of irregular migration. Thailand also stressed the importance of strategic communications campaigns in deterring irregular migration. In this context, Thailand updated members on its current regional information campaign (implemented by IOM). The Co-Chairs welcomed this advice, noting it complements the Bali Process information campaign currently under way in partnership with Bangladesh. The Meeting thanked Thailand for its willingness to share its experiences.
7. The Meeting further welcomed UNHCR's presentation, which was made also on behalf of IOM, on regional approaches to rescue coordination, which reaffirmed the importance of the *Bali Declaration* and other outcomes from the Ministerial Conference, in

enshrining useful principles for regional cooperation. The Meeting recognised that despite the recent slowdown in maritime irregular migrants in this region, especially in the Andaman Sea, there remains a continuing need to address the root causes leading people to attempt to migrate through irregular means. The Meeting further discussed UNHCR and IOM's recommendations for enhancing regional coordination, which include, among others: development of regional standard operating procedures; establishment of rescue coordination centres; shared training; and direct contact lines between regional coordination centres or relevant national focal points. The Meeting also noted the challenges around search and rescue of this particular group of people, and the need to consider their specific vulnerabilities.

8. The Meeting recalled previous work, including that conducted by the Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO), such as the workshop *Comprehensive Approaches for Addressing Irregular Movements by Sea: International Obligations, Standards and Good Practices*, (Bangkok January 2015), which aimed to help build capacity of Bali Process member states to address challenges arising from irregular maritime migration. In that regard, the Meeting welcomed an update from the RSO on its new *Training Foundation for Operational Officials*, a framework which has been developed under oversight of IOM and UNHCR. While noting that this work was initially in response to earlier maritime events in the region, the Meeting considered it gives a useful foundation for assisting states to identify their training and capability needs.

9. The Meeting agreed on operating modalities (attached) to enable operationalisation of the TFPP. The Co-Chairs thanked members for their contributions and inputs to the modalities, and noted that the modalities are non-binding and voluntary, and can be modified if required.

10. The Meeting also agreed for its second meeting to encompass a scenario-based 'table-top' exercise. Details of the exercise will be advised by the Co-Chairs in due course.

Participants

11. The Meeting was attended by representatives of Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and Thailand; as well as representatives from UNHCR, and IOM. A representative of the Asia Dialogue for Forced Migration attended as an observer. The RSO also participated in the meeting.