

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

Sixth Task Force on Planning and Preparedness 22 and 24 June 2021 Co-Chairs' Statement

The sixth meeting of the Bali Process Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) convened virtually on 22 and 24 June 2021. The meeting was co-convened at the Senior Official level by Indonesia and Australia. The meeting brought together participants from the Bali Process Ad Hoc Group, including a range of policy and operational representatives, as well as observers.

The meeting was held across two sessions. The first session focused on the importance of safety of the life at sea, prevention of, and operational responses to irregular maritime ventures. The second session built upon the discussions of the first day by considering the changing global and regional context and challenges, and how the TFPP could maintain its relevancy and remain agile and responsive as irregular migration challenges evolved, particularly with respect to the upcoming 20th anniversary of the Bali Process.

In the first session, an expert presentation provided a contextual overview and perspectives on the technical considerations and available Regional Support Office (RSO) resources on safety of life at sea matters. Following this presentation, members shared their perspectives under three topics:

- **Importance of prevention** to saving lives at sea, including practices aimed at reducing the circumstances in which organised crime can operate.
- **Operational responses**, including best practice examples during COVID-19, and case studies and lessons learned, including on disembarkation.
- The role of **coordinated approaches**, including National Action Plans, in response to current and future challenges.

During the first session, members outlined regional and country specific perspectives and shared examples of activities designed to address irregular maritime migration issues. Many members spoke to the importance of law enforcement tackling the involvement of organised crime; the importance of coordinated policy between relevant agencies; and the value of prevention, including through the promotion of regular pathways to migration and information campaigns directed at those likely to be targeted for irregular migration.

Members agreed that it was important to focus country-level and regional efforts on prevention of irregular maritime ventures as the best way to save lives at sea. Members identified the value of the Bali Process continuing to facilitate closer regional cooperation,

particularly in information sharing. Several members raised concerns over the high numbers of women and girls involved in irregular maritime migration in the region, and that operational responses needed to recognise that unaccompanied children were particularly vulnerable during such journeys. Members also noted the increased risk of exploitation by organised crime in light of the economic impacts of COVID-19 as well as the need to mainstream the public health dimensions when planning irregular migration interventions.

The second session focused on regional context and emerging drivers for irregular migration and Co-Chairs led a discussion on areas for possible future focus of the TFPP. Members agreed that while the profound effects of COVID-19 need to be considered across all aspects of interventions in irregular migration, the pandemic's impacts will be long-lasting and so need to be considered alongside other regional dynamics that are driving irregular migration.

The Co-Chairs reiterated the importance of the Bali Process as the premier regional forum to exchange perspectives between origin, transit and destination countries to enable members in the region to identify best practice and areas for capacity development, and to coordinate policy frameworks and foster bilateral information sharing. Three areas for future focus for the TFPP emerged from the discussions across the two sessions. Members highlighted the opportunity for strengthening the TFPP's focus on prevention. Members also identified opportunities for greater connection between the work of the different Bali Process working groups to strengthen ongoing coordinated dialogue. Members expressed interest in a program of roundtables.

The Co-Chairs took note of the views, recommendations, and ideas expressed by members, and will consider how best to implement these within the existing framework and mandate of the Bali Process in the short or long term.

Members welcomed the participation of observers to the meeting, including the government of Canada and representatives from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Labour Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration.