

Modalities of the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness to support the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism

Background

Ministers at the Sixth Bali Process Ministerial Conference recognised the need in the region for more agile and timely regional responses for sudden and large influxes of irregular migrants. Ministers decided to establish a Consultation Mechanism, led by the Co-Chairs, to enable discussions on emergency irregular migration events; and to conduct a review of the regional response to the Andaman Sea Situation of May 2015. Following this Review, the Bali Process Ad-Hoc Group Senior Officials Meeting (AHG SOM) endorsed the idea that the consultation mechanism needs to be supported with an improved system of regional planning and preparedness. This is also in line with the recommendation of the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM).

The 11th Bali Process AHG SOM in Sri Lanka, on 15-16 November 2016, decided to establish the Task Force on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP), comprising operational level governmental officials who are responsible at national level for dealing with trans-border large movements of migrants and refugees. The task force will support and operate under the framework of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism and the direction of the Co-chairs.

Purpose

TFPP supports the coordination among members of action at an operational level in the event of a large influx of irregular migrants. It will also recommend, among others, measures to harmonize detection, search and rescue, disembarkation and shelter management of irregular migrants through the sharing of best practices of national, bilateral and regional experience in dealing with a large influx of irregular migrants.

Roles of TFPP

The TFPP complements, and promotes greater coordination among, existing national-level and regional emergency response mechanisms. The following highlight key priorities, subject to ongoing review.

- Encourage the development of early warning capabilities and capacity to coordinate action at an operational level, in the event of a large influx of irregular migrants;
- Oversee maintenance of registers of national contact points of operational officials involved in responding to irregular migrants and refugees; and relevant international agency and civil society contact points;
- Support development (where required) of operating procedures at national and bilateral levels with a view to harmonizing these arrangements at sub-regional and regional levels to ensure predictable and functional responses in the event of another mass displacement;
- Recommend measures to harmonize detection, search and rescue, disembarkation and shelter management, such as by formulating, among others, a protocol for joint registration and

identification of irregular migrants at the earliest point of interception and where displacement occurs;

- Support the alignment of existing regional and national mechanisms with TFPP objectives;
- Enhance early warning capabilities at national level and coordination at operational level by collating available reports on irregular movements;
- Develop a capability inventory in the region that can be used by states to assist in planning appropriate responses in the event of a large influx of irregular migrants and refugees.

Arrangements

TFPP will be co-chaired on a rotational basis by two members of the Bali Process Ad Hoc Group. The maximum term for a co-chair will be two years, unless otherwise agreed by TFPP members. One of the co-chairs will rotate annually to ensure continuity. The co-chair positions will be voluntary. Ad Hoc Group members will be invited to nominate for the position of co-chair as needed. Co-chairs of the TFPP will be decided by TFPP members and endorsed at an AHG SOM.

For its first term (two years), it is proposed that TFPP be co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia.

The co-chairs will:

- Identify meeting dates and locations.
- Identify meeting objectives, prepare agendas, arrange speakers and identify operational issues/initiatives for consideration by TFPP.
- Consult with the Co-Chairs of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism on matters related to the fulfillment of the roles of TFPP.
- Convene special meetings as directed by the Co-Chairs of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism and invite other relevant members and/or international organizations.
- Consult with the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO) on any initiative or capacity building activity that will be considered by the task force for suggested inclusion in the RSO work plan.
- Keep TFPP members informed on key developments.
- Take forward and monitor implementation of action arising from meetings of the task force and, through the Co-Chairs of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism, report meetings and activities of TFPP to the Bali Process AHG SOM and the Bali Process Steering Group.

Individual TFPP members may nominate to lead specific activities or work items under the TFPP, with the agreement of the TFPP.

Building on the Bali Process Andaman Sea Review, the TFPP will undertake an initial mapping exercise to identify existing regional or multilateral initiatives and coordination mechanisms, to identify gaps and in coordination and opportunities for cooperation. This exercise will assist planning and prioritizing TFPP activities.

Membership

TFPP membership is voluntary and non-binding. Participation at TFPP meetings will be determined by the Co-Chairs, depending on the focus of each meeting, and may include the Steering Group, AHG SOM members, RSO, and other interested Bali Process members. The TFPP Co-Chairs may invite other partners such as the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration or the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management. The TFPP will comprise operational-level governmental officials who are responsible at a national level in dealing with large movements of irregular migrants and refugees.

Meeting arrangements and reporting

TFPP will meet at least once a year, or as deemed necessary, and at a time and location determined by the Co-Chairs of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism. Meetings of TFPP may be held on a standalone basis, or back-to-back with an AHG SOM or meetings of members in response to emergency irregular migration involving Bali Process members, under the framework of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism. Additional meetings of TFPP will be held as required and Meetings of TFPP will be arranged by the co-chairs in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism.

Meetings of TFPP will be conducted under the *Chatham House Rule*, which provide that ‘participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.’

Meetings of TFPP will involve substantive discussion of issues related to the roles of TFPP; or table-top exercises aimed to develop officials’ capacity in preparing and planning response for potential emergency situations involving large movements of irregular migrants and refugees; or may include both. The TFPP will aim for every alternate meeting to partly or solely involve a table-top exercise.

TFPP may report its activities through public statements or updates, which will be developed by the TFPP co-chairs and made available on the Bali Process website.

Each year, the TFPP co-chairs will report its initiatives to:

- The Bali Process Steering Group through the Bali Process co-chairs, in writing; and
- AHG SOM, through oral updates.

These reports will be an opportunity for the TFPP co-chairs to seek the Steering Group’s direction on any issues or disputes that may need to be resolved.

Budget

The co-chairs will determine arrangements for funding of TFPP meetings, which will be held once or twice a year, or as determined by the Co-Chairs of the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism.

Duration

TFPP will be established for an initial period of two years from its inaugural meeting, during which time AHG SOM, through the Bali Process Steering Group, will assess progress of the work of TFPP in supporting the Bali Process Consultation Mechanism to date, and consider TFPP's future roles. The work of TFPP can also be extended based upon the request of the TFPP co-chairs and endorsement from AHG SOM.