



The Bali Process

on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE BALI PROCESS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON RETURNS AND REINTEGRATION

Phnom Penh, Cambodia – 3 - 5 December 2024

Co-chairs Statement

1. The Seventh Meeting of the Bali Process Technical Working Group on Returns and Reintegration (TEG-RR) was held at the Hyatt Regency in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from 3 – 5 December 2024 and co-chaired by Australia and the Philippines.
2. The TEG-RR was co-chaired by Minister-Counsellor Jodie Bjerregaard from the Australian Department of Home Affairs and Assistant Secretary for Reintegration Services Francis De Guzman from the Philippines Department of Migrant Workers.
3. Co-chairs and participants were grateful for the Cambodian Government's hospitality and support to host the Seventh TEG-RR Meeting.
4. The meeting focused on the role of international cooperation to support safe and dignified returns and reintegration and the importance of full-cycle and whole-of-society approaches to reintegration.
5. The Seventh TEG-RR meeting achieved:
 - Progress on the TEG-RR's Forward Work Plan (FWP) and endorsement of its activities throughout 2025
 - Acknowledgement of the role of effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation to address increasingly complex returns and reintegration challenges across the Middle East, the Pacific, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.
 - Commitment to explore whole-of-society approaches to support the long-term and sustainable reintegration of victims of trafficking
 - Discussions on the role of technology to address returns and reintegration challenges, with a particular focus on biometrics and identity verification programs.
6. Technical experts on returns and reintegration from Bali Process member states and organisations attended the meeting with support from officers of respective foreign ministries and relevant government agencies.



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- The following TEG-RR Ad Hoc Group members were present: Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the International Organisation for Migration, New Zealand, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the United States of America with the exceptions of Afghanistan, India, Myanmar, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- The following Bali Process member states and member organisations attended as observers: Cambodia, Canada, Fiji, Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC), Iraq, Japan, Laos, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, and Türkiye.
- The following countries and organisations attended as observers: the Association of Southeast Asian States and Australia Counter Trafficking (ASEAN-ACT), the Colombo Process, Lebanon, and the Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC).
- Representatives from the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO), the Bali Process Working Group on Disruption of Criminal Networks involved in People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons (DWG), and the Taskforce on Preparedness and Planning (TFPP) were also in attendance.

Site visit – Best practices on returns and reintegration

7. Co-chairs and participants were grateful to the Hagar Institute and the Preah Kossamak Polytechnic Institute for showcasing best practices on returns and reintegration and recognised the importance of their work in context of the TEG-RR.
 - Participants explored full-cycle and whole-of-society approaches to returns and reintegration to support victims of transnational crime and reduce irregular migration.
 - Co-chairs noted the importance of involving non-government actors, such as civil society organisations, to support the return of migrant workers and their reintegration at a familial and societal level.
 - Participants also discussed the importance of recognising vocational skills developed abroad to support the reintegration of returnees.



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On current trends and challenges

8. Participants exchanged information on their existing returns and reintegration priorities, programs and challenges.
 - Participants noted challenges to the long-term sustainable reintegration of returnees, with stigmatisation, need for further government resources and the impact of economic factors contributing to the exploitation and re-victimisation of returnees.
 - Participants emphasised the importance of effective intergovernmental cooperation to regularise migration channels, address transnational crime and ensure the safe and dignified return of migrant workers across regions.
 - Participants identified opportunities to collaborate more closely with domestic actors, such as civil society organisations, to address gaps within existing returns and reintegration frameworks.
 - Participants noted the importance of technology in the identification of returnees to ensure their safe return and to monitor their long-term reintegration following migration to reduce remigration through illegal channels.
 - Co-chairs suggested further research into best practice action plan models from related fields to support TEG-RR members to develop robust returns and reintegration frameworks.

On best practices for returns and reintegration

9. Participants exchanged best practices for victim-centric approaches to reintegration, with a particular focus on psychosocial, gender and disability sensitive approaches to reintegration.
10. Participants discussed best practices that ensure the safe return of migrants following trafficking experiences and irregular migration. Members committed to exploring ways of improving bilateral agreements, such as MoUs, to better protect migrants upon return and reintegration.

On practical action to improve returns and reintegration

11. Members and observers emphasised the importance of cooperation and alignment with other regional forums on returns and reintegration to address shared challenges.



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- Delegates from the Colombo Process, the IGC, and the PIDC shared opportunities for closer collaboration with the TEG-RR to progress mutual priorities.
- 12. Participants identified areas for closer collaboration to support the efficacy of their programs. Participants committed to exploring formal government-to-government arrangements to support returns and reintegration outcomes.
- 13. Participants acknowledged the importance of exchanging 'lessons learned' and agreed to explore concrete options to improve monitoring and evaluation of returns and reintegration programs across Bali Process regions.
- 14. Participants engaged in technical discussions on how to improve the identification of returnees using biometrics and other identify verification tools. Participants committed to exploring mechanisms for developing returns and reintegration data sets and sharing data among participants under the TEG-RR.

On the TEG-RR Forward Work Plan (FWP)

- 15. Participants supported the implementation of the Returns and Reintegration Register to support members regularly exchanging information and best practices on returns and reintegration.
 - Co-chairs and participants agreed to the Returns and Reintegration Register being updated annually by the TEG-RR Secretariat and completed by delegates prior to the commencement of subsequent TEG-RR meetings.
 - Participants agreed to using responses from the Returns and Reintegration Register to inform the agenda of subsequent TEG-RR meetings.
- 16. Countries leading FWP activities showcased the progress made following the Sixth Meeting of the TEG-RR. Members and observers committed to working with the TEG-RR Secretariat to explore activities that they would like to participate in or lead.
 - Participants co-designed the sub-deliverables for FWP activities that have yet to be implemented and committed to exploring the drafting of concept notes to support the implementation of these activities.
- 17. No changes were made to the FWP. Participants reaffirmed the direction of the FWP for 2025.

On next meetings

- 18. Co-chairs agreed to consider hosting an online intersessional meeting to update the TEG-RR on the delivery and implementation of the FWP in 2025.



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19. Co-chairs noted that the Eighth Meeting of the TEG-RR will be hosted in 2025, pending dates for the Bali Process Ministerial Conference.
20. Co-chairs encouraged Bali Process member and observer states to nominate locations and practical activities for the Eight Meeting of the TEG-RR.



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