



# The Bali Process

on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

## 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Bali Process Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials' Meeting

### Co-Chairs Report on the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

Tuesday, 6 December 2022, Bali, Indonesia

#### Implementation of Work Plan and priorities

- Since the last Senior Officials' Meeting in October 2020, the Working Group has endorsed and made significant progress against its new **Forward Work Plan 2021-23**.
- The Working Group has already delivered a number of priorities articulated in this Forward Work Plan during its annual meetings and regional webinars in 2021 and 2022.
- At the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Working Group in September last year, Working Group Co-Chairs launched the **Compendium of Good Practice Examples to Combat Criminal Exploitation in Supply Chains**.
  - The Compendium brings together a series of good practice examples from Ad Hoc Group member countries on initiatives to address criminal forms of exploitation in supply chains.
  - Its delivery was an agreed priority by the Working Group at its Fifth Annual Meeting, and also contributes to priorities of the Bali Process Government and Business Forum set out in its Acknowledge, Act, Advance (AAA) Recommendations.
  - Since the launch, the Compendium has been translated into 14 regional languages, and these translations are now available on the Bali Process website.
  - Co-Chairs encourage all Ad Hoc Group members to share and promote the Compendium with policy officials in your countries.
- Meanwhile, the Forward Work Plan sets the strategic direction for how the Working Group will promote more effective and coordinated law and justice responses to combat trafficking in person in the Asia-Pacific region over the next two years.
- The Plan identifies five priority issues and commits to 11 Action Items.
- Co-Chairs highlight Priority 4 of our Forward Work Plan that urges the Working Group to consider new and emerging priorities, which have guided the themes of our recent Regional Webinars.
- In September 2021, the Working Group held a **Regional Webinar** on *Combatting trafficking in persons in the COVID-19 recovery phase*.
  - Members discussed the challenges anticipated to arise or be exacerbated as international borders reopened, and how the Working Group could collaborate to meet these shared challenges.
- In August this year, the Working Group hosted a **Regional Webinar** on *the role of technology in facilitating and combating trafficking in persons*.
  - The event brought together 16 Working Group members, additional Bali Process members from the Pacific region (Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa) and Timor-Leste, representatives from private sector and civil society, and the RSO to:

- promote understanding of the role of technology in negatively facilitating trafficking in persons;
  - highlight good practice examples of utilising technology to combat trafficking in persons from governments, the private sector and civil society; and
  - identify opportunities for further collaborative action.
- At this Regional Webinar, Co-Chairs also invited all Regional Webinar participants to make a voluntary commitment to delivering a social media post or campaign related to trafficking in persons over the next year.

### **Recommendations for programs and activities**

#### ***Stakeholder engagement: Collaboration with ASEAN-SOMTC***

- Looking forward, the Working Group is exploring ways to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN's Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Organised Crime Trafficking in Persons Working Group (SOMTC TIP-WG).
  - Colleagues from the SOMTC TIP-WG shared their update on their work at our annual meetings. TIP Co-Chairs are seeking to deliver a reciprocal update on the Bali Process TIPWG's work at the SOMTC TIP-WG's open session to build on the connections between our agendas, exchange information on trends of mutual interest, and identify areas that would benefit from joint action.
  - Co-Chairs are working closely with the Lead Shepherd of the SOMTC TIP-WG to identify further opportunities for collaboration on shared priorities.

#### ***Technology: Collaboration with digital industry***

- Building on the recent Regional Webinar on *the role of technology in facilitating and combating trafficking in persons*, we are taking steps towards enhancing practical cooperation with digital industry.
  - Match Group presented at the Regional Webinar on their policies and practices to respond to the risk of trafficking in persons on its platforms.
  - There is potential for collaborating with digital industry in promoting information about how to avoid the dangers of trafficking online and how to seek support and protection.
  - Together, we also hope to explore the development of trafficking indicators specific to the online context, supporting law enforcement efforts to detect and investigate online offending.

#### ***Returns and reintegration: Joint activities***

- The online recruitment and exploitation of victims of trafficking – including the growing trend of trafficking for forced criminality in 'scam factories' – is an issue of key concern and priority not only for our Working Group on Trafficking in Persons.
  - This was also raised as a key concern at the recent 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Bali Process Technical Experts Group on Returns and Reintegration.
- The Working Group is considering how we can best promote effective and coordinated responses to this emerging trend and the challenges it presents, including through consultation and collaboration with other Bali Process work streams like the Technical Experts Group and our law enforcement colleagues from the Working Group on Disruption.

#### ***Irregular Migration: enhancing dialogue on emerging issues and reviewing membership to remain responsive to regional trends***

- Another key priority for our Working Group is raising regional awareness of forced marriage as it relates to trafficking in persons.

- As guided by our Forward Work Plan, the Working Group is commissioning a piece of research to build our understanding of the links between marriage and trafficking within our region.
- At the invitation of Co-Chairs at this year’s Annual Meeting, members chose ‘Different legislative approaches to the links between forced marriage and trafficking in persons used across the region’ as the topic for this research.
- The Co-Chairs expect the research will be completed next year, and presented to members at the 2023 Annual Meeting (dates TBC).
- The Co-Chairs have also proposed that the Working Group review its membership to ensure that it remains responsive to regional trafficking trends, and continues to enable us to promote effective and coordinated law and justice responses in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Finally, other upcoming activities of the Working Group include:
  - A forthcoming virtual seminar (convened by Malaysia and the RSO) on criminalising, investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons (date TBC).
  - And the dissemination of a Vietnam/IOM-led survey on the impacts of COVID-19 on victim support measures around the region.
- The Co-Chairs encourage Ad Hoc Group members to partake in these activities, and thank Malaysia, Vietnam and the RSO for their work in facilitating these initiatives.
- The Co-Chairs extend our thanks to all Working Group members for your continued support of our collective efforts to combat trafficking in persons.
- The Co-Chairs will continue to progress our Forward Work Plan and its key priorities, guided by the updated *Strategy for Cooperation*, and look forward to continuing this important work with you in the coming year.

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