



mediaRELEASE

ADFM supports deepening regional cooperation in response to forced migration and human trafficking in Jakarta.

Role with Bali Process strengthened and relationship with ASEAN encouraged.

The Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) expanded its membership, deepened its policy contributions to the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (Bali Process) and developed its connection to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) at its meeting in Jakarta from 5-7 March 2017.

“The Jakarta meeting was the ADFM’s fourth, and its first in Indonesia, the birthplace of the Bali Process”, said Travers McLeod, CEO of the Centre for Policy Development.

“It is vital to bring together experts from across the region regularly to take stock, share information and compare ideas, particularly when ‘fake news’ and distrust are dominating the forced migration conversation. ADFM members were firm in their resolve to continue to improve policy responses in this region, a process emboldened by the review of the 2015 Andaman Sea crisis.”

“Fittingly, at this meeting the ADFM accepted the Bali Process’s request to provide ongoing policy advice, offering to focus in the first instance on developing the emergency response mechanism for mass displacement.”

“Our central theme in Jakarta was trafficking in persons, forced labour and slavery, which continue to be a major challenge for the region and acutely relevant to the movement of vulnerable people. We looked closely at a case in the fishing industry, which was pertinent to many ASEAN countries”, said Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti, of the Research Centre for Politics, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, which hosted the meeting as one of the four convening organisations for the ADFM.

Meeting days before the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) entered into force, the ADFM agreed recommendations to the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, which will hold its inaugural meeting in August 2017. Officials from both institutions participated in the ADFM meeting, but in a personal capacity. New ADFM members joined from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Thailand and the Philippines, and Former Foreign Ministers Hassan Wirajuda and Stephen Smith advised the group on the strategic questions facing the region and the importance of second track diplomacy.

“ADFM members focused on the development of a credible mechanism to oversee ACTIP implementation, together with recruitment practices for workers, victim identification and whistleblower protection”, continued Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti.

“Despite significant gains in the national and regional policy and legal frameworks on human trafficking, only a small number of victims are identified and assisted, and that needs to change”, said Sriprapha Petcharamesree, from the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies at Mahidol University, Thailand, and the ADFM Secretariat.

“The new Bali Process Government and Business Forum can accelerate business action, and the SOMTC can help with enforcement and cross-sectoral collaboration against trafficking, forced labour and slavery. The ADFM are ready to work with ASEAN to strengthen the implementation mechanism, cross-sectoral collaboration and the sharing of good practices.”

“The importance of the Bali Process forging closer links in the future with ASEAN cannot be overstated”, said Steve Wong, from the Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia and the ADFM Secretariat. “These institutions and the countries within them are critical to more dignified, durable and effective responses to forced migration.”

For further information please contact Annabel Brown on +61417997360.