

Points of Intervention  
7th Session of the Working Group on Smuggling of Migrants of the Conference of the Parties  
to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime  
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Agenda Item 2

Impact of natural disasters, conflicts and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on trends in organized criminal groups and on routes for the smuggling of migrants, as well as good practices to support effective law enforcement cooperation during such crises to detect, investigate and prosecute such cases

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as the Chair of this meeting. I believe that under your guidance, we will have a fruitful discussion under this agenda item.

Mr. Chair,

Covid-19 has brought the world to a standstill. It has disrupted the migration patterns in a matter of days, with many countries limit migration access to stop the spread of the pandemic. On the other side, according to the UNODC thematic brief, lockdown policy and economic contraction caused by Covid-19 have further increased the vulnerability of certain groups to trafficking in persons and people smuggling while at the same time shifted the priority of first responders.

Mr. Chair,

While stressing that the responsibility to provide protection for migrants being smuggled, lies on country of origin, transit, and destination, allow me to share my delegation's point of views on this particular issue.

**First, the migration policy should consider public health priorities, security concerns, and human rights aspects for the victims of people smuggling in a balanced manner.** In this regard, we are of the view that the priority is to integrate health screening programs with a broader approach to border management and migration across the migration route. By doing so, my delegation believes that we could prevent the migrants from falling into victims of people smugglers and traffickers.

**Second, it is essential to enhance cooperation between countries, including by strengthening border cooperation and improving coordination at the regional and sub-regional level.**

As the co-chair of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime, Indonesia is currently working with Australia to tackle the issue of people smuggling with the new challenges arising from Covid-19.

Bali Process recently convened a policy expert gathering of the Taskforce on Planning and Preparedness (TFPP) in July 2020. The meeting was aimed to discuss the challenges faced by the Bali Process member countries in handling the irregular migration during the pandemic, including in addressing the intersection between health and border security.

The gathering was useful as a platform for sharing best practices and information amongst countries in the region to understand the situation better. More Bali Process meetings are in

the pipeline to give more attention to the challenges, including the meeting of the Bali Process Working Group on Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Network, co-chaired by New Zealand and Fiji. This meeting will focus on enhancing coordination to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks involved in people smuggling in the region, within the context of the pandemic.

**Third**, while exchanging information and increasing the capacity of law enforcement officers is essential, it is even more vital to detect, investigate, disrupt, and prosecute the criminal groups from profiting out of crises. In this regard, **we support a joint effort to track, investigate, and prosecute the traffickers and smugglers.**

Mr. Chair,

Transnational crimes keep evolving in terms of forms, types, and methods of work to fit into the current challenges, and we must keep up if not being one step ahead of the game. And for that, the key is to strengthen international cooperation.

I thank you.