



**Statement by Malaysia
Working Group on the Smuggling of Migrants
Vienna, 11 – 12 July 2024**

Agenda Item 2: Preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants through international cooperation while addressing its root causes, in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto

Madam and Mr. Co-Chairs,

1. Transnational crimes, including the smuggling of migrants (SOM), impinge upon the fundamental human rights and the sovereignty and security of a State. Malaysia's strategic geographical location has put it in a unique position where it is, to a certain extent, a transit as well as a destination country for SOM.
2. At the regional level, Malaysia is the ASEAN Voluntary Lead Shepherd for People Smuggling since 2015. Malaysia has conducted the Regional Meeting on Progress and Challenges in the Implementation of the ASEAN SOMTC Work Programme to Combat People Smuggling 2019-2021 on 10–11 December 2019 in Kuala Lumpur to seek updates from the ASEAN Member States on the work programme implementation.
3. Subsequently, Malaysia conducted the Regional Consultation on ASEAN SOMTC Work Programme on People Smuggling: 2019-2021 and 2022-2024 on 7 December 2021 to review the Work Programme on People Smuggling 2019-2021, as well as to discuss and finalize the Work Programme for the period 2022-2024, which was also attended by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We have finalized the draft people smuggling component of the SOMTC Work Programme 2022-2024 to support its effective implementation.
4. With regard to the implementation of the SOMTC Work Programme to Combat People Smuggling (2022-2024), Malaysia commits to execute the following programmes, namely:
 - i. Promote and facilitate information exchange and intelligence sharing between law enforcement and other relevant agencies within and between ASEAN Member States;

- ii. Coordinate the responses of ASEAN Member States to support a consistent approach to the prevention, deterrence and prosecution of people smuggling;
 - iii. Strengthen the capacity of officials and institutions to enhance existing capabilities in the investigation, intelligence, prevention and prosecution of people smuggling;
 - iv. Increase awareness on the crime of people smuggling; and
 - v. Enhance and explore cooperation with dialogue partners and external parties.
5. Malaysia reiterated its dedication to leading the priority area of combating people smuggling during the First ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime Working Group on General Transnational Crime Matters (1st SOMTC WG on GTCM) in 2023, and expressed its intention to establish a Working Group on People Smuggling to enhance regional capacity in fighting the crime.
 6. Recently, in June 2024, Malaysia presented a proposal to establish SOMTC Working Group on People Smuggling during the Twenty-Fourth ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (24th SOMTC) held in Lao PDR. The working group aims to enhance regional cooperation, share information, strategies and protect migrant rights.
 7. Moreover and as part of the Work Programme, Malaysia, in collaboration with the UNODC, has developed a compendium of best practices in combating people smuggling. This compendium will be shared with all ASEAN Member States for their consideration and reference.
 8. Malaysia continuously engages with foreign governments to collaborate on issues related to the SOM. For instance, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and the Australia Border Force (ABF) conducted a joint operation, nicknamed ‘Operation Redback’, against maritime criminal activities in the Straits of Malacca since 2013. The key objective of this bilateral initiative is to build capabilities and interoperability to combat cross-border crimes, including SOM, focusing on detecting, deterring and disrupting such crimes. The implementation of this operation specifically involved intelligence gathering and information sharing aimed at combatting maritime crimes, including SOM, in the country's waters. Since its installation in 2013-2023, the cooperation has conducted 18 operations in Malaysia.

Thank you, Madam and Mr. Co-Chairs.