

## **MEDIA RELEASE**



### **MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

### **MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION**

The Hon Peter Dutton MP

23 March 2016

## **REGIONAL AGREEMENT TO COMBAT PEOPLE SMUGGLING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Australia and our regional partners have secured an ambitious agreement to combat irregular migration, people smuggling and human trafficking.

Agreed today at the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, this landmark Ministerial Declaration strengthens regional cooperation and determination to combat these shared challenges.

Co-chaired by Minister Julie Bishop and Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, the Conference agreed all countries will work together to find long-term solutions for refugees and irregular migrants. States were also encouraged to criminalise people smuggling and human trafficking activities.

The Conference agreed Australia and Indonesia, as Bali Process co-chairs, can now convene regional meetings on urgent irregular migration issues to ensure more agile and timely responses.

To improve our preparedness for any future large influxes of irregular migrants, it was also agreed to review the region's response to the tragic Andaman Sea event in May 2015.

Australia's delegation, led by Minister Dutton, played a key role in facilitating agreement on the Bali Process priorities for the next two years. Three areas of focus were determined: expanding safe and legal migration pathways; returns and reintegration; and cross-border operations to tackle criminal syndicates.

The Declaration complements Australia's new *International Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery*, launched by Minister Bishop today. The strategy outlines the Government's agenda to strengthen Australia's role as a regional leader in combatting trafficking and slavery.

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