



# The Regional Cooperation Framework and the Bali Process - an overview

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# Asia – Pacific: Region of Diversity



# The “Bali Process”

- Recognition of regional issues (esp large numbers of illegal boat arrivals run by people smuggling operations) & need for cooperation to find regional solutions.
- Feb 02 : 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Bali, Indonesia.
- Involved source, transit and destination countries + agencies concerned
- “What is your problem is also my problem”

# The Bali Process - Structure

- **State-led**
- **Work on practical measures** to help combat people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crimes in Asia-Pacific & beyond.
- **44 member countries/territories + 18 observer countries + other organisations**
- **Co-chairs: Australia + Indonesia**
- **Steering Group:** Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand, UNHCR, IOM
- **Ad Hoc Group (AHG)**

# The Bali Process - Activities

- Information and intelligence-sharing
- **Networking e.g. RILONs (irreg movements by air)**
- Capacity building; exchange of best practices
- **Pooling of common technical resources**
- **Technical Workshops**
  - Immigration Aspects of Airport Security
  - MLAT and Law Enforcement
  - Irregular Movement by Air
  - Repatriation and Reintegration
  - Immigration Aspects of Seaport Security
  - Information Campaigns to Combat People Smuggling

# Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF)

- Manila Discussion Paper, November 2010
- **Political Blessing: 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Bali, March 2011**

“an **inclusive but non-binding** RCF would provide a more effective way for **interested parties** to reduce irregular movement through the region”

# RCF - Core Principles

- Irregular movement facilitated by **people smuggling syndicates** should be **eliminated** and States should promote and support opportunity for **orderly migrations**
- Where appropriate and possible, asylum seekers should have access to **consistent assessment processes**, whether through a set of **harmonised arrangements** or through the **possible establishment of regional assessment arrangements**, which might include a centre or centres, taking into account any existing sub-regional arrangements

# RCF - Core Principles

- **Persons found to be refugees** under those assessment process should be provided with a durable solution, including **voluntary repatriation, resettlement within and outside the region** and where, appropriate, possible **“in country” solutions**.
- **Persons found not to be in need of protection** should be **returned**, preferably on a voluntary basis, to their countries of origin, in **safety and dignity**. **Returns should be sustainable** and States should look to maximise opportunities for greater cooperation.
- **People smuggling enterprises** should be targeted through **border security arrangements, law enforcement** activities and **disincentives** for human trafficking and smuggling



# RCF - Operationalisation

- **Developments:**

- UNHCR Discussion Note
- Steering Group Meeting, Brisbane, June 2011 – feedback
- Ad Hoc Group Senior Officials Meeting (AHG SOM), Sydney, October 2011

- **Next Steps:**

- Regional Support Office (RSO) - 25 Nov mtg in BKK co-chaired by Thailand and Australia
- Regional Support Functions
- Ad Hoc Working Groups

# RCF and Irregular Movements by Sea

- Recognition of the issues, including
  - Sri Lankans; MV Sun Sea
  - Muslim residents of North Rakhine State (NRS) and Cox's Bazaar
- **Global Meeting → Regional Roundtable**  
“To promote a **common understanding** of conceptual issues ... with a view to informing the development of **bilateral or multilateral** agreements among **interested states**”
- Pilot study on info exchange and data analysis of irregular movements by sea

# Challenges

- How to ensure full cooperation of all actors concerned?
- RCF - non-binding; interested states; need to remain relevant; effective tool; other tracks.
- Cross-cutting issues: agencies concerned.

Thank you.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Bali Regional Ministerial Conference in Bali,**

Agreed to an inclusive but non-binding Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF) to cooperate to reduce irregular movement through the region

## **Steering Group Meeting in Brisbane, Australia**

- UNHCR presented a *Discussion Note on the Operationalisation of Regional Cooperation Framework*
- Steering Committee Members provided comments to discussion note

## **Ad Hoc Group meeting in Sydney, Australia**

Presentation of the document entitled *The Operationalisation of the Regional Cooperation Framework in the Asia Pacific Region*