



**AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL STATEMENT
VIENNA FORUM TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**Statement delivered by H.E. Michael Potts,
Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues**

Mr Chair,

- I would like to thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates for its generous grant to launch the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking. The launch of UN.GIFT in March 2007 was a call to action, to all Governments of all nations, to end the egregious crime of trafficking in persons.
- This initiative has marshalled the resources of all of the specialist international organisations involved in the fight against human trafficking - the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Labour Organization (ILO); the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR); the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

- Australia hopes that this Forum will similarly mobilise the global community to break the back, once and for all, of this hideous crime.

Mr. Chair,

- Today I will speak about Australia's contribution. In 2004 the Australian Government launched a *National Action Plan to Eradicate Trafficking in Persons*. As part of this Action Plan,
 - a Transnational Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Team was established in the Australian Federal Police to investigate perpetrators,
 - a People Trafficking Visa Framework was put in place to give victims certainty about their status in Australia; and
 - a Victims of People Trafficking Program was established to provide support to victims.
- On 3 August 2005 the Australian Government introduced legislation to implement its obligations under the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, to criminalise trafficking, prosecute traffickers and provide for appropriate penalties for people convicted of trafficking.
- Since then, Australia's police and prosecuting services have actively pursued trafficking cases, demonstrating to trafficking networks the Government's determination to track them down and hold them to account for their vicious crimes.

- The Australian Government has also indicated it is considering further legislative reforms in the areas of victims' rights, including a Federal Charter of Victims Rights.

Mr. Chair,

- Domestic action alone cannot eradicate people trafficking. Preventive measures, criminal investigations and prosecutions require cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination. Strong collaboration based on mutual trust and respect is needed, amongst neighbouring countries, and within and between regions.
- It was recognition of this reality that led to the creation of the Bali Process, a regional initiative in the fight against human trafficking and people smuggling, co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia now engaging over 50 participating countries. Indonesia and Australia will be presenting a side event at this Forum on the Bali Process on 14 February. I encourage delegates to attend this side event to learn more about the Bali Process' successes in combating trafficking, especially its practical, outcomes-based approach.

What the Bali Process has taught us is this: trafficking networks are incredibly sophisticated, truly multinational beasts; they insinuate themselves from country to country, from continent to continent. Committed regional approaches are required to effectively counter trafficking activities.

Mr. Chair,

- The aim of UNGIFT is to strengthen global cooperation in the fight against trafficking by building awareness; broadening the knowledge base of data, facts and statistics on the crime; and increasing technical assistance to build greater capacity to combat human trafficking.
- Australia is committed to sustained regional cooperation to end human trafficking. In addition to its leading role in the Bali Process, the Australian-funded Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project, ARTIP, is a \$21 million, 5-year initiative that gives practical effect to this commitment.
- ARTIP aims to facilitate a more effective and coordinated approach to people trafficking by criminal justice systems of governments in the Asia region
- Through ARTIP, and its predecessor project, Australia has assisted governments in Southeast Asia to strengthen regional cooperation and legal policy frameworks and improve front line law enforcement. There can be no doubt that an effective criminal justice response to trafficking is the single most important factor in ending impunity for traffickers and securing justice for victims.
- ARTIP also collaborates closely with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and, through ASEC, with the Senior Officials Meeting on Trans-national Organised Crime.

- In Australia's view regional responses such as ARTIP and the Bali Process are imperative, as the threat of people trafficking can only be effectively countered with a united response.

Mr. Chair,

- Australia is strongly committed to fighting human trafficking at all levels. We recognise the need for a united, global response to this problem. Australia looks forward to sharing ideas and experiences during the course of the Vienna Forum, and to generating consolidated support and momentum to achieve the goals of the Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking. Thank you.