

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 OCTOBER 2010

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(281) Program 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Cash asked:

- (1) Which departmental officers have travelled to East Timor to discuss the establishment of this facility?
- (2) When were these meetings held?
- (3) With whom did they meet?
- (4) Where were they held?
- (5) What agreements were reached?

Answer:

(1) Four departmental officers – the Secretary, a Deputy Secretary and two SES level advisors have travelled to East Timor to discuss the Regional Protection Framework and regional processing centre. Regular discussions are taking place between the post in Dili and the East Timorese Government.

(2) Departmental officials have travelled to East Timor on two occasions:

- Meeting: 12-13 July 2010

On 12-13 July 2010, a Deputy Secretary and the DFAT Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues travelled to East Timor to meet with East Timorese officials.

- Meeting: 12 October 2010

On 12 October 2010, the Secretary and two SES level advisors accompanied Minister Bowen to East Timor to hold further discussions on the Regional Protection Framework and the regional processing centre.

(3) Meeting: 12-13 July 2010

A departmental Deputy Secretary and the DFAT Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues, met with senior officials from the Office of the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meeting: 12 October 2010

The Secretary and two SES level advisors accompanied the Minister to meetings with President Ramos-Horta, the Secretary of State for Security, the Secretary of State for Council of Ministers, the Secretary-General of Fretilin and other senior government officials.

(4) Meetings on both dates were held in Dili.

(5) Meeting: 12-13 July 2010

The purpose of this meeting was to provide East Timorese officials with further information on the proposed Regional Protection Framework and associated regional processing centre.

Meeting: 12 October 2010

East Timorese President Ramos-Horta and Minister Bowen agreed to establish a high-level working group comprising senior officials from the two countries to consider the regional processing centre and address a range of issues. The working group is expected to meet in the near future and will report to ministers on the outcomes of the discussions.

(6) In addition, the Secretary and two SES level advisors met with the East Timorese Ambassador in Canberra on 8 October and 8 November 2010.