Joint Agency Coordination Centre

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Live press conference regarding search for MH370.

Hishammuddin Hussein: I think it's so important for everybody to be on the same page. I am also very happy to see Jean-Paul Troadec who is here with me and they have all started to engage and discuss with the three Minister of Committees that I have set up. I would like to take this opportunity also to announce that Sunday I will be going to Canberra and there, there will be a tripartite or a trilateral discussion with China in which case we hope the approach forward with regards to deployment of assets, engagement with the families and the expert and technical advice that comes from all over the world will be looked at, in which case, we will be in a better position to announce to the media of the world what we discuss in Canberra.

So today's meeting is something that I was looking forward to. I am quietly confident that we are on the right track but the challenges ahead is huge. And with more friends coming on board and getting more experts to make sure that we remain focussed on what we are doing, I believe that we will find MH370 sooner or later.

Would you like to add something to that?

Angus Houston: Minister, thank you very much. And first of all, thank you very much for your very warm welcome and your generous hospitality. I am here to do some preliminary consultations to enable the trilateral Ministers' meeting in Canberra on Monday. That's a very important meeting because it will formalise the way ahead to ensure that the search continues with urgency and doesn't stop at any stage.

We've been discussing some of the challenges involved with deep water search and of course, as Prime Minister Abbott mentioned in his announcement last Monday, the search will take probably something in the order of eight months, maybe eight to 12 months if we have bad weather or other issues. But we are totally committed, as three nations, I believe, to find MH370. And I am confident that with an effective search we will eventually find the aircraft. Thank you very much, Minister, and thanks for your hospitality.

Hishammuddin Hussein: Thank you. Thank you so much. Jean-Paul, do you need... you want to say something?

Jean-Paul Troadec: Yes, I am here today to share my experience with the Australian and Malaysian authorities in charge of searching the MH370. It's a big challenge because the area to explore is very, very big and the water in the sea is very deep. But I think that

deploying the right assets and taking the necessary time, it will be our hope—there is hope to find the wreckage and to know this mystery.

Hishammuddin Hussein: Thank you. I will be having a PC later today after prayers. So if there are any questions at all for the three of us, limit it to this looking forward and the arrangement that we hope to navigate.

Question: Mr Angus Houston, Ismail from *Bernama*. Regarding Australia business, it was reported earlier that Australia dismissed reports by Australian company—exploration company on the citing the possibility of the aircraft that might be in the [indistinct]. Do you think that is appropriate to dismiss that thought, at this kind of stage when Hishammuddin has always been stressing that no possibility will be ruled out?

Angus Houston: Well, I understand there are there are three ships from the Bangladesh Navy that are over the reported area at the moment. As yet, they have found nothing, and one of those ships has I think an echo sounder that will assist in ensuring that we have a thorough search of that particular area.

But I would say very quickly the heaviest weight I put on all the evidence that is before us is the great work that the world team here in Kuala Lumpur has done with the analysis of the manual—the handshakes between the aircraft and the satellite, and also the simulation work that has also been done to define the area in the Southern Ocean.

Angus Houston: I am confident that the area in the Southern Ocean is the right search area and I am sure that in the fullness of time we will find the aircraft in that area of the Indian Ocean.

Hishammuddin Hussein: Thank you, Angus. I can also confirm that I am looking at the possibility of support from China that has the ability to search that area. Because that lead can only be confirmed by getting physically vessels, appropriate vessels to search that area. But I just want to stress that, by doing that, we are distracting ourselves from the main search, and who—in the event that the result from the search is negative, who is going to be responsible for that loss of time? Secondly if we are irresponsible in our approach and going forward with that lead, we also have to understand the emotions of the family. Now, in the event that we do spend money which is going to be expensive getting more vessels out there, it's going to take time which is going to affect the operations of our present search in the area that we have identified.

And thirdly is going to impact on the emotional roller coaster of the families of those passengers. That is something that we take into consideration when deploying assets into confirming or disproving what has been announced by that particular company. So that must be mentioned and put straight.

Question: [Inaudible].

Hishammuddin Hussein: These sort of questions I will deal with this afternoon after prayers. I think to be fair to my guests, we need to concentrate on the relationship moving

forward. Those particular issues that relating to my statement yesterday and documents and information released I will deal with it in afternoon.

Question: [Inaudible].

Jean-Paul Troadec: Well, our recommendation addressed to the IKO(*) and to the different authorities. It is our duty to make this recommendation mandatory. I understand that, no, they have decided there should be mandatory to a certain date, I don't remember exactly the date but it is not mandatory today. But I know that some airlines have decided by their own to increase the duration of the battery. So my suggestion is that any airline does not wait for the requirement s from IKO or other safety authority to make to change the battery on their recorders.

Hishammuddin Hussein: Maybe one or two more questions maximum.

Question: In relation to the preliminary report released last night, how important that we don't concentrate too heavily at this moment on the mistakes of the past.

Angus Houston: Well, look, I've—the Minister is going to handle the preliminary report later. But let me just say our efforts at the moment should be focussed wholly and solely on the search. We need to continue the search, we owe it to the families and I think we owe it to the flying public around the world that we continue to search, so that we can get to the bottom of what happened to MH370. Thank you.

Hishammuddin Hussein: One more.

Question: The routine search has come up empty. Can you say we were wrong by narrowing it down to a small search area so that [indistinct] double-check those analysis [indistinct].

Hishammuddin Hussein: If I pass on to Angus, finally. First, it's not a small area. Secondly, we have done the checking and, thirdly, based on the template that we had, it's just based on one or two pingers. There are other area that we are discussing which is using the same approach. And that has been consistent, getting expert advice, getting verification, getting corroboration, getting all our international partners on board in deciding where we move forward and Prime Minister Abbott has said that we've gone into a new phase. Angus Houston is here with me together with Jean-Paul, as we on into this new phase. I think this is the way that we have been doing in the past and I think we will continue to do that. Not withstanding what other speculation comes out which we will follow but it doesn't mean that what we have done in the last month or weeks before this has been wrong.

Because it is a long challenging journey and we will determine to continue but let us focus on the actual challenges ahead. The increase in specific assets. The increase in new partners. The experts that have come forward. That I must say on behalf of the Malaysian Government, on behalf of the Malaysian people and also on behalf of the families of the passengers, that has been really unprecedented and it gives me an opportunity to thank

both of them today by saying that, you know, we are really grateful for your assistance up to now, but we still got a long journey ahead and the fact that they're standing by me left and right here shows that we are all on the same page. Do you want to say anything?

Angus Houston: Yeah, the Bluefin work, that was in response to transmissions that were picked up from the deep some weeks ago now. And at the time they looked like the most promising lead that we had. They were in the search area defined by the world team, indeed they were right under the seventh ping arc-line. And when we got the transmissions from the deep, it was obvious that we had to go down and have a look. We sent the Bluefin down in that area. Thus far it has found nothing and we have covered about 500 square kilometres thus far. That is just the way it is. I still am hopeful that the Bluefin work that we do between now and the end of May might still find something. But I must say the chances of finding it, I think probability is lower than it was when we started the search.

Hishammuddin Hussein: I will see you guys later. Thank you, Angus.

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