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**MH370 PRESS BRIEFING BY HISHAMMUDDIN HUSSEIN  
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**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

It has been 69 days since MH370 went missing. After more than nine weeks, the search has now entered a Transition Phase prioritising deep-sea search. Since the last time I held a press conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, along with China and Australia have met and agreed upon the next course of action which will be jointly undertaken. Reiterating what the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable Warren Truss said when we met in Canberra last week – we have entered a new difficult phase which brings with it new challenges which we will overcome together.

**TRIPARTITE MEETING**

With regards to the Tripartite Ministerial Meeting, I have briefed the Malaysian Cabinet yesterday on the outcomes of the meeting and it has been deliberated. I now have the mandate to announce that the details of the Transition Phase have been approved.

As previously mentioned, our three nations have agreed that the search operation has entered a Transition Phase prioritising deep-sea search. In this context, the air and surface search has been suspended. However, an Australian P3 Orion and naval ships from Malaysia, Australia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) remain on standby in Perth for any eventuality. In the meantime sub-surface search using the Bluefin - 21 will ensure the continuation of previous efforts.

During this transition phase, the 3 main priorities are:

1. To re-analyze all data to verify a more accurate search area. This analysis will be conducted by the group of experts together with INMARSAT.
2. To conduct a bathymetric survey involving an extensive mapping of the seabed.
3. To conduct the search operation by identifying and deploying the relevant towed and Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV) required for the terrain

It is important that the bathymetric survey and deep water search needs to be seamless.

In the meeting, we have also agreed to conduct weekly conferences via video teleconferencing between representatives of the three nations to discuss the latest developments regarding the search operation. This will commence next Monday 19 May.

## **ASSET DEPLOYMENT**

With regards to Asset Deployment, the Tripartite Meeting has agreed that specific assets would be required for the new phase of the search and we are jointly finalising the acquisition process.

Prior to that, a comprehensive bathymetric survey will be undertaken. This is so that experts can better understand the sea bed terrain to ensure the Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV) and Deep Water Towed Side Scan Sonars, which are very expensive and scarce, are safely deployed. The same knowledge of the ocean floor will be required for the operation of the Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV).

The meeting also confirmed that procurement arrangements for the use of commercial contractors will be undertaken by Australia, in consultation with Malaysia. This will reinforce our strong bilateral relationship and will enhance the coordination of activities for the overall search. The procurement process will be done through an open or limited tender process based on Commonwealth standards to facilitate cost-effectiveness and best value for money. Malaysia and China will be consulted and detailed briefings will be provided at each step of the process. The meeting also emphasised the requirement that these contracts be put in place as soon as possible to ensure that search operations are not interrupted.

Besides the commercial assets, Malaysia and China are also assigning specific assets for operations in this new phase. On that note, Malaysia

is in the process of acquiring related assets from Petronas, SapuraKencana, Boustead and Deftech. It should be noted that, any services that will or may be provided by government agencies of the 3 nations or other friendly nations will be complementary to the services and contribute to cost savings.

## **NEXT OF KIN**

Our three nations have also agreed to a proposed reception programme for any planned visit for the next of kin to Perth. In the event of confirmation of the final resting place of MH370, or identification of debris related to MH370, it was agreed that any visit will take place between two to four weeks upon confirmation.

Australia has agreed to provide necessary support and information to the next of kin in terms of entry requirements to ensure their travel into and out of Australia are well taken care of. The Western Australian Government will take a lead role in organising services according to their traditions and religions, and facilitate arrangements for basic needs of the next of kin during their stay in Australia.

Malaysia Airlines will be responsible for travel arrangements for the next of kin from Malaysia and all other countries. The airline will also retain broad responsibility for their support during the visit including flights, accommodation, transportation and family support. The Chinese government has also given their assurance that they will continue to actively facilitate and support matters relating to the Chinese next of kin.

We understand the anguish that the families are going through and I can assure you that their interests have always been paramount in all our considerations thus far.

## **TECHNICAL**

With regards to the Technical Committee, the establishment of the International Investigation Team has fared well with the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the international aviation community and the next of kins. The announcement of the establishment of the International Investigation Team have assured them that the investigation would be conducted by an independent, competent and credible team in accordance with Annex 13 - Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation , the Chicago Convention.

## **COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION AND MEDIA COMMITTEE**

In the Malaysian Cabinet meeting yesterday, the Malaysian Cabinet has agreed on establishing a specialised Communication, Coordination and Media committee which will be headed by Jailani Johari, the Deputy Minister for Communications and Multimedia. The Committee will be focusing on streamlining and strengthening effective communication between the three nations, families of those on board MH370 and other related stakeholders. This is to ensure the release of timely and transparent information which is consistent with our effort to improve communications related to this incident.

## **SPECIAL MALAYSIAN TEAM IN CANBERRA**

As the negotiation process about further details of the operation are expected to continue for the next 1 to 2 months, Malaysia is placing a special team in Canberra which include representatives from all the committees to represent Malaysia during the period. This special team will coordinate any aspects related to the operations between Malaysia and Australia.

This team will comprise of senior officials from the 4 respective ministerial committees.

First Admiral Hanafiah Bin Hassan and Colonel Hassan Bin Loman will represent the Asset Deployment Committee to discuss aspects of the acquisition of assets. Captain Meor Mohamad Nor Badrishah from the Civil Aviation Department will represent the Technical Committee to discuss data analysis and investigative matters and HE Dato' Zainal Abidin Ahmad, the Malaysian High Commissioner in Canberra will represent the Next of Kin Committee to discuss aspects relating to the Next of Kin management. 2 Officers from the newly established Communications, Coordination and Media Committee will also be placed along with the team for media affairs. To update you, a part of the team are already in Australia.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

I understand that the disappearance of MH370 has caused terrible anguish for the families. As pointed out by the Malaysian Prime Minister, the lack of definitive evidence combined with all the speculations that has been going around has made this all the more difficult to bear. The best we can offer at this point in time is our personal assurance that Malaysia will keep searching for the plane for as long as it takes.