

Closing Remarks by Marc Lucet

Deputy Representative, UNICEF Indonesia

Conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection

Jakarta, 11 September 2013

Greetings:

Ibu Deputy Minister for Human Resources and Culture, Ibu Nina Sardjunani;

Pak Director of SMERU, Pak Dr Asep Suryahadi;

Representatives from UN agencies representatives, donor agencies, embassies and NGOs;

Representatives from research institutes and universities;

All speakers and participants of this conference;

Ladies and gentlemen

First of all let me congratulate you for completing the two days conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection with success and insightful discussions. SELAMAT!

This conference has yet been another forum of exchange between knowledge producers, such as academicians and researchers, and knowledge users, namely policymakers and practitioners. This time around we have set our minds on the issue of child-sensitive social protection with a common interest to reduce poverty among children, the most vulnerable group in society.

We hope such collaboration between policy makers in the government, development partners like us UNICEF, as well as research institution like SMERU can continue effectively contribute to informing a policymaking process that it guided by sound evidence and data.



From Ibu Nina's words in the opening, we heard that social protection for children was seldom mentioned in the greater dialogue of poverty reduction. We are confident this is now changing and that child poverty is part of the policy analysis. I am very happy that we had both BAPPENAS and TNP2K both voicing their ideas on how poverty reduction and social protection systems could be improved to address children's vulnerabilities. This reflects government's commitment to include child poverty in its priority agenda. Although children are everyone's concern, the impact of macro level policies on children is sometimes overlooked.

In the last two days, we have shared thoughts, ideas, innovations and lessons learned from various regions on a range of issues concerning children and poverty. We have challenged each other on how we could better address child poverty in our own capacities, whether as researchers, practitioners or policymakers. We have collectively agreed on recommendations to take our work forward. Congratulations to all of us on this achievement!

I would like to briefly highlight some of the themes that have emerged during the conference:

- I. **Transformative social protection** – We need to go beyond addressing the just the symptoms of poverty, but the underlying causes, structural, socioeconomic factors that are causing deprivations (both monetary and non-monetary deprivations) among children.
- II. **Exclusion and inclusion, universality vs. targeting** – Some vulnerable groups are being completely missed by the social protection system. We need to build community-based mechanisms that take into consideration household and community dynamics, as well as sociocultural context, in targeting social protection interventions. At the same time there are deprivations also experienced by the non-poor.
- III. **Life-cycle approach** – We need to build a social protection system that can identify and address the different vulnerabilities experienced by children throughout the life cycle.



- IV. **Context, context, context** – It is so important that we understand the context in which poor children live, the context in which some children become marginalized, the context in which families and communities can respond to their needs in a timely and effective manner. Much more qualitative research must be done to understand these dynamics.
- V. **Integration & coordination** – between CP and SP, between sectors (health, education, social welfare), integrated services (one-stop services), between protection and promotion
- VI. **Political economy** – Building child-sensitive social protection systems entails trade-offs. We need to make hard decisions on how to spend public funds/taxes e.g. between universality vs. targeted approaches, between investing in building systems over the long-term or immediate social assistance? We must recognize that the answers to these tough questions require not just a mathematical equation or an econometric analysis, but there are political economy factors that influence these decisions.

This is only a start and I hope that the discussions and reflections you have had during these two days have sparked new ideas for your work. For our government counterparts, I am hopeful that this conference is timely for you as you prepare for the new Five Year Development Plan of Indonesia, the RPJMN, as well as other policies at national as well as subnational level.

For other NGOs and practitioners in development sector who are concerned with children issues, I hope that you also have had a positive learning experience during this conference. This certainly helped us as UNICEF to refocus our support to social protection for children. I am confident that our colleagues who joined us from other country offices and from HQs also can bring home enrich ideas they can share with others.

UNICEF in Indonesia is committed as a partner to the Government in building a child-sensitive social protection system. The discussion and deliberations these past



two days have spurred a process of learning, reflection and rethinking for me and my UNICEF colleagues on how we could be more effective in doing so. We have identified gaps and hope to improve our work on:

- a. **Improving our understanding on vulnerable and at-risk children.**
Who are they and, more importantly, why they are marginalized? This can be done through improving our data systems and research agenda, especially focusing on qualitative research to assess social, structural, institutional factors affecting the exclusion of some children.
- b. **Analyzing the impact of social protection system and interventions on children** in order to identify the gaps and improve the design for better impact on children. This also entails assessing on the ground how national social protection policies are translated at the local level, how they're implemented and are impacting on children and their families. This is important feedback to give to the policymakers at national level. Knowledge management and strengthening the interface between academia and government both nationally and internationally are key for facilitating inputs to policy decisionmaking.
- c. **Strengthening the participation of communities, families and children** in the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection measures. This is to answer the ultimate question of whether our efforts are effectively addressing the problems that children face. This is a way for us to answer the call to action from Prof Irwanto **to put a face on child poverty.**

Last but not least, for the academia and researchers, I am optimistic that the conference could enrich and stimulate more research in the respective areas. In the area of research, we always need a well-defined purpose, rigorous design, monitoring, safe-guards and quality control, and of course, relevance and recommendations for policies.



Let me thank all organizing committee who have put all of their time, thoughts and energy into this conference since the end of last year. Thank you very much for Bappenas for the leadership in preparing the conference since the very beginning. I also would like to thank SMERU for their effective cooperation and all their staff's dedication in making this conference possible. I thank my fellow UNICEF colleagues for their contribution and hard work. All of you have made this conference happen as smoothly as possible, benefitting all those who have attended.

Finally, I of course would like to thank all presenters and participants who have travelled from Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Lampung, Aceh, Papua, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, India, Tanzania, Georgia, the Netherlands, UK, Switzerland and many other parts of the world. I do hope you go back to your countries with new and innovative ideas for your work and for children in your parts of the world. I wish you have a safe trip home.

Sincere thanks to all of you for the attention, time, ideas, and energy that you have given during this conference.

Terima kasih banyak atas perhatian, waktu, pikiran dan tenaga yang sudah diberikan dalam dua hari ini.

Mohon maaf jika ada hal-hal yang kurang berkenan.

Jalan-jalan ke Pasar Baru

Mampir sejenak di dokter gigi

Sampai jumpa di lain waktu

Semoga kita bersua lagi

Selamat sore.

