

Press release

International Conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection takes off in Jakarta

JAKARTA, 10 September 2013 – More than 100 national and international experts have come together in Indonesia's capital Jakarta to discuss how to make social protection programmes for children living in poverty more effective. The two-day conference on *Child Poverty and Social Protection* is co-organized by the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS), UNICEF and the research institute SMERU.

Poverty reduction is the highest development priority of the Government of Indonesia, which aims to lower the poverty rate to 8 to 10 per cent by the end of 2014. Reaching this target will require social protection programmes that are more coordinated, and better targeted.

The participants which include representatives of the government, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, will develop evidence-based recommendations on how to strengthen the various social protection programmes that already exist in Indonesia by making them more child-sensitive. These recommendations will be based on research done in Indonesia as well as on experience that will be shared by participants from other countries. The inputs from this international conference will provide a basis for the Government of Indonesia when it designs and implements key poverty and social protection programmes in the context of the next Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015-2019.

"This conference helps us prepare the 2015-2019 RPJMN, providing information based on solid research about the problems of poverty, especially child poverty, something that is rarely discussed in the broader poverty eradication plan. I hope this conference can provide input for the upcoming RPJMN so that children can be prioritized in the agenda of poverty eradication and social protection," said Prof. Dr. Armida S. Alisjahbana, Minister for National Development Planning.

"Child poverty is not just about income. Children who grow up in poverty have less access to shelter, to clean water and sanitation, to health services, to education and to birth registration. Often they are also much more exposed to the risk of harm, abuse and exploitation. Reducing poverty is therefore absolutely critical to fulfilling children's rights," said UNICEF Indonesia Representative, Angela Kearney.

Social Affairs Minister Salim Al Jufri in his speech said that in tackling poverty and social protection especially for Indonesian children require an integrated child protection system, so that the child protection policies and programs in Indonesia can be synergistic and not an overlap between the various stakeholders.

Minister for Women Empowerment and Child Protection Linda Amalia Sari Gumelar said that in dealing with the issue of children, social policy require a holistic, integrative and child friendly to ensure the availability of basic services for children, including children with special needs, such as health, nutrition, education, early childhood education and clean water and sanitation.



This is the third conference on children held in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia and SMERU. The conferences aim to bring research and evidence to the core of policy making in Indonesia, especially in relation to children.

This year, delegates from 15 countries will discuss and share lessons learned on processes that led to policy change to accelerate the reduction of child poverty throughout the region and beyond.

Experience in other countries has shown that social protection interventions such as cash transfers are very effective in reducing the impact of child poverty, particularly if they are designed in a way that they reach the poorest and the most vulnerable children. Then, social protection can be a safeguard for reducing disparities and ensuring that no child is left behind in achieving the MDGs.

UNICEF in collaboration with the Indonesian Government and partner agencies focuses on social protection as an ideal strategy to tackle child poverty. Social protection has the potential to reach the poorest and most vulnerable children and to reduce inequalities in order to ensure that no child is left behind when it comes to achieving the MDGs.

Two keynote speakers, with extensive international experience in child poverty and social policy, Katja Hujo of Switzerland and Stephen Kidd from the UK will present key facts and figures in this field, along with policies and international best practices. They will also present a number of recommendations for the design of child-sensitive social protection programmes.

Representatives of government agencies including the National Development Planning Agency, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, the Ministry of Health, other government agencies such as TNP2K, BPS and research institutes under the Ministry of Social as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and international agencies participate as speakers at this conference.

Other participants include representatives of the governments of neighboring countries such as Laos, Vietnam and the Philippines as well as representatives of international organizations and research institutes from various countries such as India, Thailand, Myanmar, Georgia, Tanzania, the Netherlands, and the United States.

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