

UNICEF Representative Speech
At the Regional Conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection
10 September 2013

Her Excellency Minister of Planning, Ibu Armida Alisjahbana
Her Excellency Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection,
Ibu Linda Gumelar
His Excellency Minister of Social Affairs, Bapak Salim Segaf Al Jufri

Distinguished government representatives, UN officials, fellow representatives of international organizations

Distinguished presenters from all parts of Indonesia and from other regions

All conference participants

Dear colleagues from SMERU and UNICEF

Selamat Pagi dan Selamat datang di Konferensi Kemiskinan Anak dan Perlindungan Sosial

Saya sangat senang dan bersemangat dengan adanya konferensi yang penting ini. Terima kasih banyak atas kehadiran Anda semua pagi ini.

Selama dua hari ke depan kita akan berdiskusi tentang masalah kemiskinan anak dan perlindungan sosial. Suatu permasalahan yang sangat penting bagi kita semua.

Cukup sekian Bahasa Indonesianya. Mohon Maaf. Saya masih belajar.

We are all excited about this important international Conference on Child Poverty and Social Protection being held in Jakarta these two days and thanks so much to all of you for being here..

During my four years in Indonesia, as UNICEF Representative, I have seen again and again how committed the Government of Indonesia is to further reduce child poverty through one of the most advanced packages of targeted poverty reduction and social protection interventions and through collaboration with a wide range of development partners.

I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate and thank our partners in the Office of the Vice-President, in the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and the Ministry of Social Affairs for their collective efforts in further advancing such frameworks in Indonesia.

I'm looking forward to a fruitful discussion over the next two days where we will together learn a bit more and hopefully have some possible answers to at least some of our questions.

This is the third conference that we are organizing in collaboration with the Government of Indonesia, Bappenas, and with our friends from SMERU through which we aim to bring



research and evidence to the core of policy making in Indonesia, especially in relation to children.

I am especially proud that this year we have been able to expand the conference beyond Indonesia to allow for wider knowledge sharing and learning opportunities from other countries, in addition to our own experiences here in Indonesia.

As you know, poverty affects people of all ages, but the impact on children is particularly detrimental. Last year's Indonesia Child Poverty Study – the first ever - showed that 28% of all children in Indonesia live in households that belong to the poorest quintile.

Child poverty is not just about income. Poverty among children is multi-dimensional and it extends to non-material dimensions, such as access to shelter, clean water and sanitation, to health services education and to birth registration as well as other dimension. Poverty also exposes children much more to the risk of harm, abuse and exploitation, all of which contributes to the further deprivation of children's rights.

Reducing poverty is therefore critical to fulfilling children's rights. As we know, poverty is often handed down from one generation to the next. Effective and sustainable reductions in child poverty must be made to break the cycle of poverty and improve the human resource capacity of the current and the next generation.

Experience in recent years 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. Social protection is a safeguard for reducing disparities and ensuring that no child is left behind in achieving the MDGs.

The Indonesia Child Poverty Study shows that while more than 50% of poor children reside in Java and Bali, provincial poverty rates remain highest in Eastern Indonesia. In East Nusa Tenggara for instance the rate reaches more than 36%. Children living in a female-headed household are more at risk to experience extreme poverty than those living in male-headed households. Children in rural areas experience more extreme poverty than those in urban areas.

Indonesia has made great advances in building a social protection system that is sensitive to children's specific needs. The Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (BOS) and the Beasiswa Siswa Miskin (scholarship for students from poor families) improve the quality and access to basic education for poor children. The Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) provides cash to poor families so they can access better health care and education. The Program Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak (PKSA) aims to empower marginalized children. And the list goes on...

UNICEF is pleased to be working closely with the Government of Indonesia and partner institutions to strengthen the focus of the social protection system for children.



However, despite the progress towards the first MDG on poverty reduction, to which the existing Social Protection schemes have contributed a lot, we of course realize that there are still challenges ahead. We have to ask ourselves:

- Are there ways to better identify those children who are particularly vulnerable and at risk? Do we understand all the vulnerabilities that children face? What about children with disabilities, with HIV/AIDS? Children left behind by their migrant worker parents? Children in conflict areas? Children of indigenous communities? Children who are victims of trafficking and violence?
- How can we deliver more integrated and holistic social protection programmes, so that the most vulnerable children receive the full array of services that they need? How do we expand both the depth and the breadth of social protection for the most vulnerable children?
- And given the diversity of Indonesia, how do we ensure that the social protection measures are sensitive to the local and cultural context, as well as to different vulnerabilities that children face throughout their childhood.
- All of these questions tell us: We still have a “big” job to do, and this job requires strong leadership and coordination among all parties involved.

We are here to share our experiences, knowledge, and innovations to eliminate child poverty through social protection. Key pieces of research have been carefully selected for us to deliberate and discuss. I look forward to this conference and hope that our discussions can inspire new ideas and solutions toward an even more child-sensitive poverty reduction and social protection framework and system.

It is an all too rare opportunity for researchers to share their work on children’s issues with policy-makers and practitioners in such forums and for us all to foster stronger links between evidence-generation, dissemination and advocacy for improved policy making – especially to ensure all children are able to achieve their full potential and contribute to communities which are stable, just and equitable.

I need to especially thank Bappenas for their leadership in organizing this Conference – a first in our Region - and SMERU – as our partner in this endeavour. It has taken the commitment, hard work and persistence of many colleagues in Bappenas, SMERU and UNICEF, as well as other concerned Ministries, and partner agencies, to bring us together here today.

Good luck to all of you! I hope this conference can provide important evidence to enhance our collaborative work and policymaking for children. I look forward to learning from you and to the recommendations that result from the conference.

Let us seize this opportunity and make the most of this special occasion and together make it a milestone in deliberations on child poverty and social protection.

For our visitors from outside of Jakarta and Indonesia – I wish you also an opportunity to further explore in what little free time you might have – our dynamic and beautiful Jakarta!



Let me end with these two lines of a poem by Gabriel Mistral, the Chilean Nobel Prize winner about children!

My name is Today, Tomorrow is Too late for Me.

“Ia dijuluki Hari ini”

Oleh: Gabriela Mistral, Cile.

Kita Melakukan banyak ke-ke-li-ru-an dan ke-sa-la-han

Tapi Ke-la-lai-an k-ta yang utama adalah meng-a-bai-kan anak

Me-nye-pe-le-kan ma-ta a-ir ke-hi-du-pan

Ba-nyak ke-bu-tu-han ki-ta dapat di-tun-da

Tapi anak tak dapat me-nung-gu

Kini adalah sa-at tulang – tulang – nya sedang di-bentuk

Darah-nya sedang di-bu-at, dan na-lu-rinya sedang di-kem-bang-kan

Pada-nya kita tak dapat men-ja-wab BESOK

Sebab, ia di-ju-lu-ki HARI INI

Terima kasih banyak, Semoga Sukses.

