PRESS RELEASE

Education is a critical response to tackle child labour and youth employment

JAKARTA (Joint Press Release): A large share of young Indonesians is neither in the labour force nor in school, according to a new report released today by Understanding Children’s Work (UCW) – a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF and the World Bank. More than one-third of youth enters the labour market with primary education or less; meanwhile the decrease in young people’s involvement in employment has not been matched by progress in raising school attendance beyond primary level, says the report.

The new report, “Understanding Children’s Work and Youth Employment Outcomes in Indonesia”, will be officially launched by the Minister of Indonesian National Development Planning Agency, Prof. Dr. Armida S. Alisjahbana, SE, MA. The launch follows the commemoration of the World Day against Child Labour, which provided a spotlight on the right of all children to be protected from child labour and from other violations of fundamental human rights.

The report finds that as many as 2.3 million children aged 7 – 14 years old are engaged in employment in Indonesia; each being denied their fundamental rights to full education, physical safety, protection, leisure and recreation. Most working children do manage to participate in some amount of schooling; however, the amount of time they spend in classes is much less than for non-working children, undermining their learning potential and opportunities for the future.

For children out of school, child labour is a major contributing factor, with two-thirds of children who are not enrolled in school being engaged in some form of work, mostly to support low family incomes.

“Education is a critical response to child labour and youth employment issues in Indonesia,” said Angela Kearney, UNICEF Representative in Indonesia. “If the number of children in work is to be reduced and their prospects when they do enter the workforce in later years are to be improved, investment in education at every level – from pre-school programmes to vocational training – is essential.”

The UCW study also looked at the status of youth employment, finding that one in every five Indonesian youth is neither in education or working. One in three young people enter the labour market with only a primary education or less.

"We know that starting off on the right foot is one of the main determinants of future success in life. That is why preventing child labour is so important: it has lasting effects on children,” said Stefan Koeberle, World Bank Country Director for Indonesia. “Youth policies can revert some of these negative effects of child labour, so it is important that disadvantaged youth have access to good quality training and life skills programs.”

For further information please contact:
Edward Carwardine, Chief of Communication, UNICEF Indonesia, Mobile: +62812 123 7252, Email: ecarwardine@unicef.org
Gita Lingga, Communications Officer, ILO Jakarta Office, Mobile: +62815 884 5833, Email: gita@ilo.org
Randy Salim, Communications Officer, World Bank Office – Jakarta, +622152993259, Email: rsalim1@worldbank.org
The benefit of education for young people entering the job market is also underlined by the study’s findings – a young Indonesian who has received even just a primary level education can expect to earn 8 per cent more than a peer with no education at all, and the higher the level of education, the higher the expected income.

The report makes a number of key recommendations for policy makers:

- Investment in ensuring transition of students from primary to junior middle school level and higher is vital to increase young peoples’ employability and earning potential.

- Children should be able to follow their school education without the need to work, so they can obtain maximum benefit from their schooling. This requires investment in early childhood development programmes, which demonstrate the benefits of learning to families even before children reach primary school age.

- Social protection mechanisms must be strengthened to reduce the need for poorer families to secure income from their children’s work.

- Greater focus should be placed on second-chance learning opportunities for young people who have already dropped out of the formal school system and on supporting youth entrepreneurship.

- There must be renewed focus on skills development amongst young people – starting with basic education, and including second-chance learning and technical and vocational training. Special attention must be paid to the informal economy, which employs more than half of young working Indonesians.

- There must be a specific focus on the needs of girls and young women; while there is little difference between the number of girls and boys in education, three times as many girls than boys are inactive (i.e. neither in employment or education). Participation in the labour market amongst girls is 17 per cent less than that of boys. Amongst those young people who do work, young men with an education premium earn more than their female peers.

“The sustained growth of the Indonesian economy will rely on a well-educated generation of young people,” noted Peter van Rooij, Country Director of the ILO in Indonesia. “Today’s 40 million Indonesians aged between 15 and 24 represent a valuable resource for the nation; if we invest in that resource now, through a range of education and training initiatives, and if we prioritise quality education for all children from the earliest age, an essential contribution will be made to securing rights of all to have decent work and Indonesia’s future.”

During the launch, the report will be commented upon and examined by national experts including Ceppie K. Sumadilaga, Deputy for Poverty, Employment and SMEs, Hamid Muhammad, Director General of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education and Culture and Mudji Handaya, Director General of Labour Inspection, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Prof. Sri Moertiningsih Adiotomo, Head of Master Degree Programme in Population and Labour of the University of Indonesia.

The experts will provide their views on the report findings and review how its key recommendations link to the existing Government’s regulations and programmes and what further policy recommendations should be developed. As a follow-up to the national launch, a round table discussion will be held to further discuss relevant policy recommendations, involving relevant ministries and institutions.

For further information please contact:
Edward Carwardine, Chief of Communication, UNICEF Indonesia, Mobile: +62812 123 7252, Email: ecarwardine@unicef.org
Gita Lingga, Communications Officer, ILO Jakarta Office, Mobile: +62815 884 5833, Email: gita@ilo.org
Randy Salim, Communications Officer, World Bank Office – Jakarta, +622152993259, Email: rsalim1@worldbank.org