

Statement by Mr. Makmur Sunusi at the occasion of the Launch of Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children

Labouisse Hall at UNICEF Headquarters New York, April 11, 2013 at 3PM.

I would like to first of all thank the organizers of this important event, the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations, UNICEF, the Better Care Network and the NGO Committee on UNICEF's Working Group on Children without Parental Care, for inviting me and the Indonesian Government to this event to share our experience so far on implementing the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

The Indonesian Government **welcomes the launch of the Implementing Handbook “Moving Forward”** as it believes this is an important tool to assist governments in the implementation of the Guidelines at the country level. We also hope that Indonesia's experience in that context can highlight the efforts, learning and some of the challenges encountered in this process.

Since 2005 Indonesia has been implementing what we call **a paradigm shift**, moving from a child welfare system that **was based primarily on residential care towards a system that is centered on family based care**. Following the Tsunami, and as a follow up to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2004, the Government of Indonesia started a review of the situation of children in alternative care with support from Save the Children and UNICEF.

The research found that Indonesia had **an estimated 8000 childcare institutions across the country**, with up to **half a million children in these institutions**.

Institutional care was also found to be very much on the rise. The research also showed that the **vast majority of children in these institutions (90%) were not orphans but had parents**. Poverty and a lack of access to social services, in particular education, were the primary reasons for these children being separated from their families. Funding and support services were targeting institutions instead of children and their families.

The research recommended that **a paradigm shift towards family based care** should be initiated that would be implemented through policies, standards, programs and services, and budgets. Building on that recommendation, **the Government of Indonesia started to change policies on child protection and care to emphasize family based care**.

National Standards of Care for Child Welfare Institutions were drafted in 2009 and adopted in 2011 by the Ministry of Social Affairs. **The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children were a major reference document** for this work, and many of the principles of the Guidelines were incorporated into the National Standards.

A new Government Regulation on Alternative Care has also been developed since 2010. The regulation makes use of the Guidelines for its framework, providing mechanisms and procedures on family preservation, family support, kinship care, foster care, guardianship, adoption and residential care. In early 2013, the Government of Indonesia decided to increase the status of this regulation by transforming it into a draft law and it is hoped that it will soon be enacted.

Since 2007 the Government of Indonesia has also been developing **more comprehensive social protection programs for poor families**, with a number of Conditional Cash Transfer programs, including the *Family Hope Program* (*Program Keluarga Harapan*) that targets education and health outcomes, and since 2010 the *Social Welfare Program for Children* (*Program Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak*) that targets 150,000 children every year who are considered vulnerable, including children who are in institutional care. Through these schemes the Ministry has begun **to redirect its funding from support to the children within the institutions to supporting these children within their families**. Quotas were established for assistance to children in their families in order to prevent unnecessary separation from their families.

With support from Save the Children, the Government of Indonesia and the local government of West Java Province have been **piloting child and family support services** at the community level and outside of the institutional care setting since 2010. **This model, the Child and Family Support Centre, is included in the Moving Forward Handbook as a promising practice**. The Center provides professional, effective and direct support to children in need of care and protection and their families. Through a **comprehensive assessment of the child's needs** and **a gatekeeping system** established in the local Department of Social Affairs, the best course of action is determined to prevent placement in institutional care and provide appropriate and effective support to the child and his/her family.

The Government of Indonesia is very aware that the shift of paradigm in Indonesia has only begun. In the first eight years, we have succeeded in laying the foundation for evidence based research and policy change. However in the next phase, there are many efforts that still need be continued, including **developing**

more comprehensive services to strengthen families' capacity to care for their children, as well as provide family based alternative through foster care and domestic adoption. More work is needed to integrate child protection within social protection as well as to strengthen the education and competencies of social workers to support effectively this paradigm shift. The Guidelines and the Implementation Handbook will be there to support us as a **major reference for policy change, for the development of standards and services, and as monitoring tools** to measure our progress.

In addition, I am proud to refer to **the important contribution Indonesia is making to the establishment of the post 2015 development agenda**, with H.E. Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the President of Indonesia, as co-chair of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons, and the recently concluded meeting of the High Level Panel in Bali at the end of March 2013. The post 2015 Development Agenda provides us with a unique opportunity **to place family strengthening and child protection at the core of our commitments and targets.** As the panel highlighted in Monrovia earlier this year, this Agenda is first and last **about people**; the lives they are able to lead, the education they can benefit from, the health they can enjoy **and the families they can raise. Ensuring families are able to care appropriately and effectively for their children must be at the core of our development agenda.**