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PRESS RELEASE

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INDONESIA PLEDGES SAFETY OF OVER 3,000 SCHOOLS AND 100-PLUS HOSPITALS

Jakarta – Indonesia today committed to increase the safety of 3,156 schools and 105 hospitals as part of its engagement to the One Million Safe Schools and Hospitals Campaign, launched globally in Manila last April 2010.

“Hospitals and schools are critical infrastructures that are particularly at risk when disasters strike. Through the one Million Safe Schools and hospital initiative, we want to make sure that the school and hospital safety moves up the political agenda to become a priority for every country. No child must die because schools or hospitals are not safe when disaster happens,” said Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Hazard-prone Indonesia experienced several earthquakes in the past decade -- in Bengkulu (2000), Aceh (2004), Nias (2005), Yogyakarta (2006), Bengkulu (2007), West Java (2009) and Padang, West Sumatera (2009) -- amid other hazards such as volcanic eruptions, floods and drought, which killed more than 160,000 people and destroyed a great number of hospitals and schools.

The most recent Sumatra Earthquake, which struck Padang on September 2009, damaged a total of 270,000 buildings including more than 3500 classrooms and 85 hospitals and health facilities.

Top officials from three ministries – Coordinating Ministry for People's Welfare; Health; and National Education – alongside the Head of the National Agency for Disaster Management launched the national campaign on safe schools and hospitals, under the joint organization of the National Agency for Disaster Management and the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Minister of Health pledged 100 safe hospitals. She promised, as well, to instruct local departments of health at provincial and district level to aim at developing programmes to establish safe hospital and other health facilities, for which they must allocate funding. Both private and public hospitals would be urged to take measures to ensure disaster preparedness.

The Vice Minister for National Education pledged to ensure that thousands of schools would comply with school safety standards, adding he would urge the education departments at district and province level to participate in the campaign.

The National Agency for Disaster Management also pledge so socialize and promote safe school and hospital awareness in schools and hospitals, starting with a meeting involving five districts in Sumatera.

Dr. Agung Laksono, the Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, stressed the importance of safe hospitals, having witnessed sick people in Jogjakarta and Padang being evacuated from hospital. In times of disaster, hospitals are needed to care for the injured and sick, he noted, saying he would raise awareness about the campaign. In addition, he said he would encourage the heads of local government to allocate funding for programmes and activities that will support the establishment of safe schools and hospitals.

More than 200 participants from government institutions, NGOs and INGOs and representatives of schools and hospitals made pledges online at the campaign website (<http://www.safe-schools-hospitals.net/>) and committed to attend various activities to increase the resilience of schools and hospitals throughout Indonesia. The address of the Bahasa Indonesia pledging website is <http://safe-schools-hospitals.net/id/Beranda.aspx>.

The launch in Jakarta was organized by Perkumpulan Skala and supported by the Indonesian Red Cross, Perkumpulan Kerlip, UNESCO Office Jakarta, Australia-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction, Plan International, and UNILEVER Indonesia. At least 27 organizations (Government institutions, UN Agencies, NGOs, INGOs, Donor Agencies, and Private Sectors) will support various activities relating to the campaign until July 2011.

The One Million Safe Schools and Hospitals Campaign is a global initiative to make schools and hospitals safer from disasters as part of the 2010-2011 World Disaster Risk Reduction Campaign: "Building Resilient Cities - My city is getting ready!"

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