Address

by

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at

Launch of
Indonesia - Youth Employment Network

Jakarta, 12 August 2003

H.E. Dr. Dorodjatun Kuntjoro-Jakti, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs,
Mr. Widjanarko, Secretary to the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs and Chairman of
I-YEN,
Mr. Tjepy Aloewie, Secretary General of Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and Vice
Chairman of I-YEN,
Members of the I-YEN,
Representatives of the UNDP and World Bank,
Members of Youth Parliament,
Distinguished guests, and especially all the young Indonesians who have joined us for this event. I am very pleased that the launch is taking place mainly before an audience of young Indonesian women and men.

Selamat pagi. Saya merasa senang dapat bersama anda semua di sini.

Today is a special day for the young people of Indonesia, and indeed for the young people of the world. It is International Youth Day - and the special theme chosen by Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, for this year is Youth Employment.

Youth Employment is a serious problem in many countries. The International Labour Organization estimates that around the world there are some 74 million young people currently out of work. In the next ten years, more than one billion will enter the working age population. While this new generation is more educated than any previous one, these young people will continue to face many obstacles in their search for jobs.

In Indonesia, it is estimated that there were 6.1 million unemployed young women and men between 15-29 years (2001). The number of underemployed young people is estimated to be 3.2 million (2001).

Youth unemployment is one of the most serious issues facing Indonesia today. It is a tragedy for the young women and men concerned and for the nation. It is an enormous waste of the talents and skills of the new generation.

We need to find new opportunities for decent and productive work for the young people of Indonesia. Without such opportunities, many young people will not be able to realize their potential. This is the challenge that the I-YEN has been established to address.

The background to the establishment of the Indonesia Youth Employment Network includes the resolution of Heads of State and Government at the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations to:

“develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work” (UN Millennium Declaration, 18 September 2000).

Following the 2000 Millennium Summit, the UN Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Heads of the World Bank and the ILO, convened the Youth Employment Network with the task of exploring imaginative approaches to the challenge of youth employment. One recommendation is for Member States to draw up national action plans on youth employment as a matter of priority.

National action plans will need to address 4 priority areas (“the 4 E’s”):

- **Employability** – investing in education and vocational training.
- **Equal opportunities** – giving young women the same opportunities as young men.
- **Entrepreneurship** – making it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young people.
Employment creation – placing employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policy and generating more job opportunities for young people.

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the youth employment problem in Indonesia – both to provide decent work opportunities for young people and to allow Indonesia to get the full benefit in its economic and social development of the contribution of the new generation. It is also a crucial part of any effective national poverty reduction strategy for Indonesia and is needed in order to avoid the problems of exclusion, hopelessness and frustration which might lead to a range of social problems.

The UN, World Bank and ILO welcome the decision of the Government of Indonesia to take up the challenge of youth employment and to establish the I-YEN. We hope that Indonesia can develop a good action programme on youth employment.

We are encouraged by the work undertaken and support given so far by the Government. Of course, effective action on youth employment requires a strong partnership between government, the business community, employers and workers organisations, together with community organisations and others. These are the groups which the I-YEN seeks to bring together. It also involves the active support and involvement of young people – which is why a youth convention on employment issues is being planned for later this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the I-YEN, and all members of the Network, for their commitment to addressing the youth employment problem in Indonesia. On behalf of the ILO (and the World Bank and the UN), I would like to assure you of our support with the development and implementation of policies and action programmes.

Conclude by referring to Kofi Annan’s message on International Youth Day 2003

“I fully support the Network’s aim to mobilize financial resources for youth employment, to build bridges between school and work, and to invite youth organizations to play an active role in the design and implementation of national action plans.

Young people should never be seen as a burden on any society, but as its most precious asset.... On this International Youth Day, let us ensure that young people everywhere are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and the progress of their societies.”