



## NEWS RELEASE

### Child-friendly school initiative as prevention of child abuse in school

*Preliminary findings on in-depth assessment on violence against children in Central Java, South Sulawesi and North Sumatra reveal that violence in school take the form of physical, sexual and emotional*

Jakarta, 22 March 2006.

Today in Jakarta, the Ministry of Education together with United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF, Indonesian Commission on Child Protection – KPAI, and Save the Children UK, held a seminar on the development of a “**child friendly school - “the prevention of child abuse in school”**”. Provincial heads of the Department of Education and the Department of Religious Affairs from 11 provinces participated in this seminar and are committed to prevention of violence, including corporal punishment in school.

The seminar discussed child protection policy in public and religious schools, medium term program for child protection, as well as experiences from pilot projects in East Nusa Tenggara and Maluku on the implementation of “**child abuse prevention in school.**” Dr. Tjin Wiguna, a psychiatrist, presented the negative impact of the violence against children. Dr. Arief Rachman, an education expert, highlighted the role of school in the prevention of violence against children.

On this occasion, Atma Jaya University presented preliminary findings on in-depth assessment on violence against children in Central Java, South Sulawesi and North Sumatra, which reveals that violence in school take the form of physical, sexual and emotional. In Central Java, 80% of the teachers admitted to punish children by yelling or shouting them in front of their classmates or peer. 55% admitted to ask the student to stand in front of the class. In South Sulawesi, 90% of the teachers admitted to ask their students to stand in front of the class, followed by 73%, yelling to their students and 54% asking their students to clean the toilet or wiped them. Meanwhile in North Sumatra, more than 90% of the teachers admitted to ask their students to stand in front of the class, 80% yelling their students and more than 50% asked their students to repeatedly write something. Students in the three provinces admitted to have experienced sexual abuse from their teachers and peers. 19 out of 344 children in Central Java admitted to have been forcefully hugged by their teachers. In South Sulawesi, 11 out of 276 children had their genitals touched by their teachers, and 69 out of 413 children admitted to have been improperly touched by their teachers in North Sumatra.

The result of the above study reaffirmed results of earlier studies done in 2002 by the Lembaga Perlindungan Anak Nusa Tenggara Barat in West Nusa Tenggara and by Atma Jaya University in 2003 in East Nusa Tenggara, which showed alarming levels of child abuse at home and in school. To date, there is no accurate figure available on the extent of violence against children in Indonesia.

The Minister of National Education, Bambang Sudibyo, said, “culturally, violence is still conceived as an effective way to enforce discipline and to educate the child. It is therefore crucial that teachers should be trained on alternative ways of discipline.”

Mr. Willem Standaert, UNICEF Senior Programme Coordinator in Indonesia supported the Minister, saying, “while it is more difficult to prevent child abuse at home, the school is relatively easier to access and therefore, plays a strategic role in preventing violence and abuse against children. It is critical to train teachers on preventing and avoiding violence, including alternative ways of discipline, stress management and other measures that protect children.”

Article 54 of the Child Protection Law clearly stated that, “*children attending school must be protected against violence and abuse from teachers, school managers, and schoolmates both in the school and in other educational institutions.*”

Abuse of children can hamper their growth and development, and in some cases lead to the death of the child. It affects children's health, their ability to learn and even their willingness to go to school at all. It can lead children to run away from home, exposing them to further risks. It also destroys children's self-confidence and can undermine their ability to become good parents in the future. Many abusers were themselves abused as a child. Children suffering from abuse are at increased risk of depression and suicide.

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