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PRESS RELEASE

Manpower Minister to Launch Employment Service in Banda Aceh

BANDA ACEH (Joint Press Release): The Minister of Manpower and Transmigration, H.E. Fahmi Idris, will officially open the Employment Service for the People of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province (ESPNAD) on Monday, 21 March 2005, in Banda Aceh. Located at the Vocational Training Centre of Banda Aceh (BLK), the ESPNAD was jointly set up by the ILO and the Government of Indonesia and began operating on 7 February. The press conference with the Manpower Minister will be held at 14.00 at the BLK Banda Aceh.

More than 9,000 job seekers, including around 1,800 women, registered for job placement with the ESPNAD in the first six weeks of the service. It aims to help those who lost their livelihoods because of the earthquake and tsunami, find jobs. Already almost 400 people have secured either temporary or fixed term employment in the first weeks and job placement is now becoming a major focus of the programme.

Aceh, with a population of 4.2 million, had an estimated 250,000 unemployed people before the disaster. After the tsunami, it is estimated that around 600,000 people lost their jobs. The majority of job losses have occurred in the services sector, followed by agriculture, plantations, fishing and small businesses.

“We are pleased to be able to use our experience and facilities to provide employment services through the ESPNAD. The number of people being reached by the service will further increase in coming weeks as additional centers will be opened outside Banda Aceh to register job seekers,” according to Head of Provincial Manpower Office in Banda Aceh, HA Manan Ganto.

According to Manan, following the success of the ESPNAD in Banda Aceh, the Provincial Manpower Office working with ILO and district governments, is expanding the employment services to Meulaboh, where the centre began its operation on 16 March. Other locations are being prepared.

The ESPNAD Network is developing a database of skilled people that can be used by employers/contractors in the reconstruction work that is to take place in the coming months

and years in Banda Aceh. In the process, the Centers will be identifying the gaps in skills needed as a basis to provide appropriate skills training based on the identified needs, so that there will be Acehnese workers ready for the reconstruction work. This will ensure the participation of the Acehnese people in the reconstruction of the province, thus providing them with gainful employment and decent work opportunities.

Already initial short-cycle training is being organized at the Vocational Training Centre in Banda Aceh, including English language skills. In addition to traditional construction skills, a special series of trainings for children between the ages of 15-17 is being implemented, on furniture making, sewing/embroidery and basic computer skills. A total of 192 children will receive training, each for twelve days.

For those people that are interested in self-employment and in setting up a small enterprise, a series of short-cycle courses focuses on how to start and improve your business (SIYB Programme). Training of 50 trainers has been delivered and these trainers will now in turn train people in their various organisations and institutions, targeting young women and men up to the age of 28 years, women entrepreneurs, trade union members, and others. Subsequently, these people will be linked up to business development services and providers of microfinance.

To promote the employment services, advertisements have been placed in local newspapers, and all notices spread at camps as well as general gathering places. During the registration process, the level of proficiency of applicants is being tested to ensure that job-seekers recommended to potential employers have the required skills. Initially, people with construction skills were invited to register, including carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, glazers, tilers, painters. This was followed by the registration of the mechanical trades, secretarial staff, senior programme officers, translators, etc.

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