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PRESS RELEASE

Provincial Government of West Java and ILO Team Up to Tackle Worst Forms of Child Labour

BANDUNG (ILO News): The Provincial Manpower and Transmigration of West Java, in collaboration with the the ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC), under its Footwear Project in Bandung, will hold a Review and Planning Workshop for the ILO-IPEC Programme on the Informal Footwear Sector and Trafficking in West Java from 25-26 May 2004, at Embassy Room, Savoy Homann Hotel, Bandung, West Java. The workshop will be officially opened by the Country Director of the ILO in Indonesia, Alan Boulton.

Under the banner "They Cannot Wait", this two-day workshop will mark the official closing of the Footwear project established since 1999, and will also mark the official launching of the trafficking and footwear component of the ILO-IPEC's Project Support to the Indonesian National Action Plan (NAP) for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

The primary objectives of the workshop are to identify good practices and models which are applicable to the Support project and to generate commitment from key stakeholders for the Support project. In addition, the workshop will also provide a forum for joint planning of the trafficking and footwear components under the Support project, particularly in Tasikmalaya and Ciomas.

The workshop will be attended by around 60 participants from Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education at provincial and district levels, Regional Planning, employer's organization, trade unions, association of footwear employers in Cibaduyut, Ciomas and Tasikmalaya, universities, youth organizations, NGOs, community leaders, and so forth.

As part of the commitment to develop a future without child labour, West Java Provincial Government is going to establish the West Java Provincial Action Committee on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. This committee consists of representatives from government institutions, employer's organization, trade unions, academia, NGOs, and other related organizations.

The Support project is part of the ILO-IPEC technical assistance to support the NPA which was established under a Presidential Decree No. 59/2002 on 13 August 2003. The NPA identifies as its objective the need "to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour".

The NPA proposed priorities and strategies in eliminating the worst forms of child labour in a three-phase programme within a 20-year framework. The Plan identifies five forms of child labour as immediate targets: children involved in sale, production and trafficking of drugs; trafficking of children for prostitution; and child labour in offshore fishing, in mining, and in the footwear sector.

By ratifying ILO Convention 182, Indonesia has made a commitment to take immediate actions to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. As a follow-up action, a National Action Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (NACEWFCL) was set up under a Presidential Decree No. 12/2001 in January 2001. It was followed by the establishment of the NPA in 2002.

Previously, the ILO-IPEC monitoring team has found that the majority of children working in the informal footwear sector work under conditions hazardous to their safety, health and well-being. They are exposed to a number of safety and health hazards, in particular dangerous chemical hazards, such as solvent based glues and leather dust. The glues that are being used contain hazardous organic solvents such as toluene, methyl ethyl ketone and acetone, which can cause addiction and serious health problems.

Most workplaces are cramped and in poor sanitary conditions. Findings reveal that the majority of the workplaces do not have windows for ventilation, lack adequate illumination, have unsafe electrical wiring and equipment and lack fire extinguishers. Workers are often working in awkward postures, like squatting or sitting cross-legged on the floor, as well as not provided adequate personal protective equipments such as gloves or masks.