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PRESS RELEASE

Only Few Companies Have Written Policies on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Programme

JAKARTA (ILO News): HIV/AIDS epidemic has become a global crisis affecting all levels of society. It is also a major threat to the world of work. The epidemic cuts the supply of labour and threatens the livelihood of many workers and their families. The loss of skilled and trained workers also affects productivity and the operations of enterprises.

As the follow-up to the *Manpower Ministerial Decree No. 68 on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control at the Workplace* adopted in May 2004, the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the Indonesian Employer's Organization (APINDO), will hold an interactive discussion titled "Corporate Response on the Impact of HIV/AIDS in the Workplace", on Thursday, 29 July, at Sari Pan Pacific Hotel, Jakarta. The discussion will be opened by the ILO Country Director, Alan Boulton.

The Decree, which adopted the principles of the *ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work*, bans employers from discriminating against workers with HIV and obliges employers to take steps preventing and controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the workplace through the Occupational Safety and Health schemes.

According to Alan, companies play an important role in responding to HIV/AIDS as part of their social responsibility. "The workplace is an ideal medium for a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS," he said. "Work provides a venue – the workplace – where talking about HIV/AIDS is especially relevant, where prevention programmes skills can be conducted, and where issues of discrimination and stigmatization can be addressed."

The interactive discussion will examine the impact of HIV/AIDS in the workplace and business environment. It is to provide more information and better understanding among employers about the impact of HIV/AIDS to the business community. It is also to map problems relating to HIV/AIDS at the workplace that can be considered in the development of prevention programmes and training.

As part of the discussion, the ILO will release preliminary new findings regarding the Indonesian corporate response to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the business environment. The baseline survey was conducted by the ILO in collaboration with University of Indonesia, from April to June 2004. The survey covered around 191 companies in four provinces: DKI Jakarta, East Java, Riau Islands and Papua. These provinces were specifically targeted due to their high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

Findings show that the majority of company managers (72,6%) consider HIV/AIDS as a threat to the productivity of the enterprise. They also assume that both male and female workers have the same potential to be infected by HIV/AIDS. In terms of company policy on HIV/AIDS, only 20

companies (15.4%) already have a written company policy. The reason most companies do not formulate a policy on HIV/AIDS is because they do not have HIV-positive employees, do not see the urgency of the HIV/AIDS policy and have not ever received any socialization from the government about the issue.

The study also finds that more than half of the surveyed companies (55.4%) require applicants to be free from HIV/AIDS infection by conducting screening and HIV tests. Around half of the surveyed companies have required workers to be free from HIV/AIDS for job promotions and rotations. In addition, the finding shows that that around 50% of the surveyed companies raise the possibility of job termination for workers with HIV. Also, only a small number of companies (28.4%) provide health benefits covering HIV/AIDS medical treatment for workers with HIV/AIDS.

A new ILO report, released in Geneva earliest this month, "*HIV/AIDS and work: Global Estimates, Impact and Response*", estimates that, without increased access to treatment, HIV/AIDS will become the single biggest cause of mortality in the world of work; 48 million workers will be dead by 2010 and 74 million by 2015.

The study also argues that HIV/AIDS is expected to have a severe impact on the rate of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) and GDP per capita. In countries where the impact was measurable between 1992-2002, the rate of growth of GDP was lower by 0.2 per cent per year and the rate of growth of GDP per capita was lower by 0.1 per cent per year (equivalent to US\$5 per capita per annum).

In Indonesia, there were an estimated 90,000 to 130,000 people living with HIV/AIDS at the end 2003, of which 75% were male and 25% female. Due to factors such as a large mobile workforce, a large commercial sex industry (about 200,000 female sex workers with 7-9 million clients) and very low rates of condom usage, it is estimated that the number infected could double by end of 2004. The Department of Health furthermore estimates that between 17 and 20 million Indonesians are at direct risk of HIV infection because of these risk factors.

The panellists in the discussion include Faisal Basri (Economist from University of Indonesia), Sofjan Wanandi (Chairman of APINDO), Hari Nugroho (Researcher from University of Indonesia) and Richard Howard (Private Sector Specialist from ASA-USAID). The discussion will be aired live by SmartFM and its network stations in Jakarta, Semarang, Palembang, Balikpapan, Banjarmasin, Makassar and Manado.