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PRESS RELEASE

Bandung Private Sector Stage War on HIV/AIDS

BANDUNG (ILO News): HIV/AIDS epidemic has already become 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 nationwide, including in West Java.

Therefore, the International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the Indonesian Employer's Organization (APINDO) and Aksi Stop AIDS-USAID (ASA-USAID), will hold an interactive discussion titled "Regional Corporate Response on the Impact of HIV/AIDS in the Workplace", on Friday, 1 October, at Savoy Homann Hotel, Bandung, West Java. The discussion will be opened by the Chairman of APINDO West Java, Kaswarin, Secretary General of APINDO, Djimanto, and the ILO Country Director, Alan Boulton.

There are an estimated 14,000 people living with HIV in West Java in 2004, of which 80% are in their prime working years of 20 to 50 years old. The HIV prevalence among injecting drug users (IDU) in West Java has reached 42.9 percent in 2003. Due to factors such as a large commercial sex industry and very low rates of condom usage, it is estimated that around 500,000 people are at direct risk of HIV infection. Meanwhile, the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Indonesia is around 90,000-130,000 in 2004.

The interactive discussion will examine the impact of HIV/AIDS in the workplace and business environment in West Java. It is to provide more information and better understanding among local 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.

The panellists in the discussion include Tauvik Muhamad (ILO's National Programme Coordinator on HIV/AIDS), Yuzar Ibi (Chairman of Regional AIDS Commission), Sukarto Karnaen (Head of Provincial Manpower Office of East Java), Paula Proklamawati (PT Mega Sari), Ari Hendarmin (PT Putraco Indah), Ginanjar (HIV/AIDS Activist from Rumah Cemara) and Richard Howard (Private Sector Specialist from ASA-USAID).

According to Alan Boulton, 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 fight HIV/AIDS," he said. "Work provides a venue – the workplace – where talking about HIV/AIDS is especially relevant, where prevention programmes can be conducted, and where issues of discrimination and stigmatization can be addressed."

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 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 (*refer to the attachment*).

The Bandung workshop is marked the last workshop from a series of regional corporate responses held by the ILO, APINDO and ASA-USAID in 2004. The first two workshops were previously held in Jakarta on 29 July and in Surabaya on 30 August.

The workshop is also organized as the follow-up of the *Manpower Ministerial Decree No. 68 on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control at the Workplace* adopted in May 2004. 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 requires employers to take steps preventing and controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the workplace through the Occupational Safety and Health schemes.

Attachment

The ILO, in collaboration with University of Indonesia, conducted a baseline survey 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 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 in July 2004, "*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.