



Organisasi Perburuhan Internasional - Jakarta  
International Labour Organization – Jakarta

Thursday, 9 June 2005  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PRESS RELEASE

### World Day against Child Labour focuses on Children in Mining *East Kalimantan in spotlight*

SAMARINDA (ILO News): The plight of children who work in mines and quarries will be the focus of the fourth **World Day against Child Labour** on 12 June 2005. Traditional gold mining sites in East Kalimantan are known to make use of children in mining, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) is also drawing attention to their situation.

The ILO estimates that more than one million children worldwide are involved in mining. While all forms of child labour are harmful to children, those who work in the mining sector are in particular danger, labouring in conditions that can pose a serious risk to their health and well being, exposing them to serious injury or even death.

In East Kalimantan, many children continue to work in traditional gold mining areas, particularly in West Kutai and in Pasir District. In those two areas, according to the ILO, there are an estimated 520 mining children between the ages of 10 and 17 years. Some of them work long hours, carry heavy loads, sieve sand and dirt, crawl down narrow tunnels, breathe in harmful dusts and work in murky water, often in the presence of dangerous toxic.

The dangers of the sector were illustrated in July 2004 when an accident at one of the mining units in Pasir killed three adult workers. A major accident in the Kelian Dalam area of West Kutai in 1998 also claimed many lives.

Apart from mine collapses, the use of mercury in gold mining villages represents a serious danger to the immediate users, and also pollutes rivers. Diving is another hazardous occupation in some forms of mining units. The murky river water does not allow the divers to see the falling debris, even collapsing walls. Diving to a depth of 8-10 meters from the river surface can cause bleeding in the divers' noses and ears.

Problems with access to education increase the chances of children spending long hours at work. In the Kelian Dalam of West Kutai, once children complete elementary school, they must endure a very long journey or move away to live close to the nearest junior secondary school. This can be expensive, and for many families is not an option.

To try to tackle this problem the ILO, in collaboration with a Yayasan Pendidikan Sendawar Sakti, has worked with local Education Office to establish an Open Junior High School in

Kelian Dalam. Based in the elementary school, in the afternoons older children now have the opportunity to continue their education.

In Pasir, the ILO is also working with teachers, local government and NGOs to find ways of strengthening education, and improving the family economic situation so that families do not need to have children working.

“Providing better access to education is one of the best ways to tackle the problem of child labour in mining. Together with our partners, we aim to ensure that children have access to education, and that if family poverty is a reason for children working, then we also address that issue. Our strategy is aimed at finding models of “best practice” which can be used by government and other partners themselves on a longer term basis,” said the ILO-IPEC’s Mining Project Coordinator, Imelda Sibala.

Overall, the number of child labourers in East Kalimantan is alarming. According to the latest data released by the East Kalimantan Statistics Agency in 2001, some 23,283 out of 846,248 children below the age of 15 in the province were involved in economic activities. As many as 13,969 children worked in the agricultural sector, 6,658 in the trade and services sector, 1,257 in the industrial sector and the remaining children in informal sectors.

According to *the Jakarta Post*, of 638,498 school-age children in East Kalimantan in 2005, 106,948 are facing financial difficulties that threaten their education. This is partly the result of a drop in provincial revenue from Rp 3 trillion to Rp 2.6 trillion, which will in turn increase the number of working children.

The ILO launched the World Day in June 2002 as a means of raising the visibility of the problem and highlighting the global movement to eliminate child labour, particularly its worst forms. This year, the ILO efforts emphasize the need for the immediate removal of child workers from small scale mines and quarries.

The ILO and its partners will mark the World Day with a wide range of activities in East Kalimantan. Together with the East Kalimantan Provincial Action Committee on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the ILO will organize a press briefing on mining children on Friday, 10 June, at 04-05 pm, in Samarinda. East Kalimantan PKBI in joint collaboration with PADI Indonesia Foundation and PGRI of Pasir district will hold a Children Drawing Competition in Pasir, specifically in Batu Soppang and Muara Komam Sub-Districts, on Sunday, 12 June 2005, at 08 – 12 am, under the banner “Child Labour and Education”. The competition which will be located in the Batu Butok village hall will involve local children, including mining children.

***For further information contact the ILO-IPEC’s Mining Project Coordinator, Imelda Sibala, through mobile 0811 550523 or email: [sibala@ilo.org](mailto:sibala@ilo.org)***

Menara Thamrin, Level 22  
Jl. M.H. Thamrin Kav. 3, Jakarta 10250  
P.O. Box 1075, Jakarta 10010  
INDONESIA

Phone: (62 21) 391 3112  
Fax.: (62 21) 310 0766  
Email: [jakarta@ilo.org](mailto:jakarta@ilo.org)  
Website: [www.ilo.org/jakarta](http://www.ilo.org/jakarta)