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STATEMENT BY
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FIRST SECRETARY

BEFORE
THE FOURTH SESSION
OF THE PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES
ON AGENDA ITEM 3 B
GOAL 2 OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:
"ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION"

Please Check Against Delivery

New York, 20 May 2005

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Madam Chairperson,

Indonesia welcomes this opportunity to address an issue to which it attaches great significance. Our view is that in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, literacy is an absolute necessity. Without well-developed human capital, the goal of development becomes unattainable. That is the reason why the Government of Indonesia has been paying such close attention to the educational needs of its population. It recognizes that a healthy, educated population is a fundamental national asset.

Madam Chairperson,

Currently, the Government has allocated a percentage of its own resources (at least 20%) and injected substantial sums into local government budgets to ensure that access to education is available at the grassroots level. To this end, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System was formulated in accordance with human rights norms and standards and enacted to provide free education for the poor as part of the compulsory nine-year education programme.

Indonesia acknowledges that the task it has set itself, based on the Millennium Declaration, is huge and the budgetary implications of these initiatives are equally formidable. But we are mindful of the long-term benefits and we recognize that these are the prerequisites for the achievement of the first seven Millennium Development Goals. With this in mind, the Government has committed itself to improving existing social development systems in order to benefit the people of Indonesia.

Not only are the people to be the beneficiaries of improvements to these systems, but they are also to be active participants in helping the central government bring about these changes. That is the essence of the decentralization process that is being implemented in Indonesia. Decentralized governance requires building a high level of civic competence and that cannot come about with widespread illiteracy and lack of capacity at the individual and community levels. Therein lies the justification for universal education.

However, implicit in the notion of universal primary education and expanded post-primary and higher education is the necessity to bring every Indonesian within the scope of change so they too can benefit from improvements. It means every effort is being made to reach ethnic groups in every corner of the nation, no matter the size of the group or the remoteness of its location.

Madam Chairperson,

To ensure that the fruits of education are evenly distributed and placed within the reach of all groups, the Government of Indonesia has sought to decentralize education by implementing community based education management. In doing so, it is having an impact on remote communities and is improving equity for all. In particular, the Government is showing its awareness of regional aspirations by allowing local administrators to respond to community interests.

The process of decentralization is being taken further by ensuring that community identities are respected and preserved, as integral parts of the whole nation and its cultural identity. The strength and effectiveness of these efforts derive from a national movement - involving parents, community leaders, NGOs and the private sector - that has been created to encourage enrolment and completion of the Nine-Year Compulsory Basic Education Programme.

Under this programme, special attention is being given to the needs of remote and tribal communities. In addition to the use of local languages as teaching tools, the curriculums of schools in these areas are being adapted to enhance their relevance to the needs and interests of the communities being served and also to incorporate their folklore.

Against this backdrop, the Asian-African Ministers adopted in Jakarta on 20 April 2005 a Joint Ministerial Statement on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership Plan of Action. Paragraph 7 of the statement pointed out the commitment to maximize the benefits arising from the protection of intellectual property rights by inter alia advancing the protection of genetic resources, traditional knowledge and folklore, as well as from flexibilities provided by trade related intellectual property rights agreements.

Madam Chairperson,

Because progress is clearly taking place as a result of these changes, Indonesia is determined to continue building momentum to achieve a critical mass in education, knowing that that is the basis for continued progress and development. We therefore fully endorse Goal 2 of the Millennium Declaration, which stresses universal primary education, and will put into effect all the factors that will facilitate continued success in this area.

Thank you.