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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 A
GOAL 1 OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS:
"ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER"

Please Check Against Delivery

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations
New York, 18 May 2005

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Madam Chairperson,

Indonesia takes pride in the rich mosaic of ethnicities, languages, and cultures that combine and complement one another to form its national identity. This diversity is precisely reflected in the national philosophy of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" – meaning Unity in Diversity. Ethnically, Indonesia consists of more than 500 groups that are all equally indigenous and correspondingly it has 500 languages and dialects spoken in the archipelago, consisting of about 17.508 islands. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger in this context will impact on the many indigenous communities that unite to form the nation of Indonesia and therefore such an outcome must depend on the efforts of all of its indigenous peoples.

Madam Chairperson,

At a time when the entire international community is preoccupied with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, it is only fitting that the issue of poverty eradication should engage the attention of the 4th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Indonesia therefore welcomes this opportunity to share on the matter, especially as it relates to international efforts to engage and resolve the problem of poverty.

As a human rights and quality of life issue, the Government of Indonesia believes that unresolved poverty could block the full attainment of democracy, justice and unity of any society so affected. Under our democratically elected administration, a new strategy – National Strategy to Eradicate Poverty – has been adopted to deal with the problem of poverty. This strategy emphasizes a rights-based approach, involving the protection, promotion and fulfillment of the basic rights of the people. It is essentially people-centered and pro-poor. With this new strategy, participation of the people in the development process is of the utmost importance.

This new political dynamic has led to a steady decrease in the number of poor people living below the poverty line, even with the decision to adjust the benchmark upward from the international standard of US \$1 to US \$2 per day. The statistical evidence confirms Indonesia's success in eradicating extreme poverty as required by Millennium Development Goal 1. However, Indonesia still faces the challenge of moderate poverty which reveals itself in troubling contrasts. Not only does moderate poverty persist, but it presents itself in striking disparities between regions, provinces, districts and cities. At national level, a State Ministry of Development in Least Developed Regions has been established to address the challenges comprehensively.

In this context, allow me to refer to paragraph 25 of document no. E/C.19/2005/4/Add.13 on "Indigenous peoples and the Millennium Development Goals". The document presented a study by the Asian Development Bank in Indonesia's provinces of East Kalimantan and Irian Jaya. The study was conducted in 2000 during the preliminary stage of the decentralization process in Indonesia, intended to confront and overcome disparities between and within provinces, which had resulted from the highly centralized development approach of the past. Because of its comprehensive nature, the decentralization process is enabling local communities to develop and empower themselves economically, socially and culturally in a more autonomous fashion.

Madam Chairperson,

Indonesia's decentralization process is designed to make local governments share the responsibilities of freedom and to make them more responsive to the needs of local people. Towards this end, the central government has yielded considerable decision-making powers to local governments and transferred significant expenditures to these provincial authorities. This process has brought about better delivery of public services to local people and helped to create economic opportunities for entrepreneurs in local communities. For Indonesia, decentralization is not an end in itself but an on-going process.

With decentralization, emphasis has been placed on the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. This means that every individual in every community in Indonesia is legally guaranteed the right to actively participate in the formal policy-making process. To give practical effect to this provision, steps are being taken to mobilize local communities by enhancing public awareness and education in general about the process.

The practical value of this approach is clearly demonstrated in areas affected by the December 2004 tsunami, particularly in Aceh and Nias Island. In the recovery and reconstruction process, the Indonesian Government has mobilized the local population to ensure that their hopes and aspirations are well taken care. Such programme will not only concentrate on physical recovery and reconstructions but also on preservation of local tradition and values.

Madam Chairperson,

In the same way that the national environment has to be made conducive for individual progress in order to overcome the hardships of poverty, the international environment has also to be made conducive for the nation-State to overcome poverty.

Working together in global partnerships, developing and developed countries can cooperate to transform the international environment and make possible the attainment of the MDGs by developing countries. It is therefore important that concerted international efforts should be actively promoted in this area. Poorer countries should be able to look forward to reliable international support as a means to create employment and bring about economic growth in general, in response to the challenge of poverty.

Madam Chairperson,

The constructive collaboration of civil society, national, and international actors to eradicate extreme poverty is an indispensable element to combat this scourge. It is also equally important to acknowledge that development is a complex and long-term process entailing comprehensive step-by-step approaches that requires continued coordination, cooperation, and support of the United Nations and other organizations beyond 2015, including this important Forum.

Thank you.