

**Remarks of Ms. Anjali Sen, UNFPA Representative,
on the Commemoration of the 69th Anniversary of
the Indonesian Midwives Association**

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Acknowledgements

- Ibu Emi Nurjasmi, president of the Indonesian Midwives Association (IBI)
- Dr Hasto Wardoyo, chairperson of BKKBN
- Dr Erna Mulati, Director of Family Health, Ministry of Health
- Dr Marcia Soumokil, Director of Yayasan IPAS Indonesia

Assalamu Alaikum, Good morning, Selamat Pagi

It is indeed my pleasure to join this important webinar this morning, to celebrate the 69 Anniversary of Ikatan Bidan Indonesia (Indonesian Midwives Association). Sixty nine years is definitely not a short time, and in all these years IBI has existed and played a central role in delivering high-quality sexual and reproductive healthcare services, to enable women and newborns in Indonesia to lead productive and healthy lives. And for these noble services, Happy Anniversary and congratulations to you all!

This year coincides with the year of midwives when we recognize and celebrate their contributions in improving sexual, reproductive, maternal, and newborn health. As we all know, midwives are critical in ensuring that women can enjoy the fulfilment of these rights by providing a wide array of services: from counselling and family planning services, to quality antenatal-intrapartum-postpartum care, essential newborn care, HIV and STI counselling and testing, services for victims of gender-based violence, and

facilitate for abandonment of harmful practices, such as child marriages and female genital mutilation.

Indonesia, as we are all aware, is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, it frequently faces natural disasters – including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods, landslides, droughts and forest fires – and often with devastating effects. Indonesia’s vulnerability to disaster requires vigilance, or our preparedness, at all levels.

Disasters have horrendous potentials to impact on general health, including reproductive health. The need for Reproductive Health services remains and may increase during a disaster because of an increased risk of sexual violence and HIV transmission. Childbirth can occur during evacuation and displacement; and a lack of access to emergency obstetric care can heighten the risk of maternal death. A limited of access to family planning services can upsurge unwanted pregnancies during times of disaster; adolescents may become disconnected from their families or communities and may find themselves in risky situations that they are not prepared to handle.

Following the earthquakes in Lombok, and Palu, and the recurrent floods in greater Jakarta areas, we have witnessed how the Indonesian midwifery workforce respond to those humanitarian situations despite the limited settings and equipment. As a response to the earthquake, tsunami and liquefaction disaster in Palu in September 2018, UNFPA in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and IBI implemented comprehensive emergency response project that cover sexual and reproductive health, youth and prevention and response of gender-based violence in emergencies. During this endeavour, IBI provided crucial roles in delivering services to women in need. And for this, I again would

like to extend my appreciation to you for the great collaboration that has enabled us to provide the needed support.

Here we are, now, in an unprecedented and challenging time of Covid19 pandemic. As the world is combating the virus, women continue to need family planning services--some of these women getting pregnant while new babies still being born. Childbirth is a normal part of life and it does not stop because of a pandemic. Midwives have shown great resilience, and courage in facing humanitarian emergencies and those now impacted by the Covid-19. Midwives continue providing the essential healthcare and life saving services to pregnant women and their newborns. As the primary caregivers, midwives are working relentlessly in communities, health centres, hospital's wards and in women's homes under most trying circumstances.

During difficult times such as today, UNFPA at the global, regional, and national level, applauds and hails the work of all midwives and pledges to stand by them and to work with national governments to protect the midwives during COVID-19. Midwifery is high on UNFPA's agenda, thus in these difficult times UNFPA committed to: 1) Protecting the maternal health workforce; 2) Providing safe and effective maternity care to women and their babies; and 3) Maintaining and protecting the maternal health systems.

I am delighted to be able to share those commitments in collaboration with IBI; we have distributed personal protective equipment to midwives in affected areas in Jakarta Selatan, Depok and Tangerang. We are also planning to continue this effort and provide more PPEs to midwives in affected areas. We hope this effort can help in protecting our midwives in ensuring the continuity of reproductive health services. UNFPA is also committed to continuing our support IBI to strengthen the 3 pillars of midwifery, namely: *organization, regulation and education.*

Today's webinar has a very important topic for us participate: It's time for Midwives and Women in Indonesia to unite and collaborate to promote the health of women and child for the advancement of Indonesia. From UNFPA, we will share the experience and lessons learned in supporting midwives in providing reproductive health services during humanitarian situations. We know that our fellow midwives are always keen, very active in participating in sharing sessions through virtual platform, which shows how effective the use of technology for information sharing. We hope that our fellow midwives can learn valuable information from the session.

Finally to IBI, Ibu Emi, the board of directors of IBI, all the midwives and midwifery students participating in today's event: "Happy 69th Anniversary". Thank you for your valuable contribution as partners of women in Indonesia. Let us continue to work together to ensure that no women in this country are left behind. No women, including you, beloved midwives of Indonesia.

Thank you; terima kasih.