

Opening Remarks to Launch the 2017 World Refugee Day Events Co-organized by

Indonesia's Directorate General for Immigration and UNHCR:

**A Focus Group Discussion on Implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 125/2016 on
Refugees**

Jakarta, Indonesia 24 July 2017

Bapak Ronny Sompie, Director General for Immigration

Bapak Puja Laksana, Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs

Bapak Dicky Komar, Director for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign
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Bapak Masykur, National Alert Directorate, Ministry of Home Affairs

Colleagues from Partner Organizations here today,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is the launching of a two-day event the Directorate General of Immigration and UNHCR have organized to commemorate World Refugee Day 2017. We have several events planned over the course of these two days. Every year, World Refugee Day is marked by various activities around the world to raise awareness about refugees and to inspire people and communities to mobilize and come together to help them. This year, UNHCR Indonesia has collaborated with partners like all of you here today to organize numerous events, which began in early June.

This particular event is very special to UNHCR for two reasons:

First, because we are working together with the DGI to hold it jointly under the banner of “Celebrating the Diversity of Refugees.” I have had the pleasure and the honor to work in Indonesia for over two years now. In fact, in October, it will be three years. I am as much struck today as I was when I first arrived to take up my assignment here how expansive and diverse this country is — 17,000 islands, with over 360 ethnic groups who between them speak over 700 different languages. I am not sure there is any other country in the world that can say this. And you also have a long humanitarian tradition —over four decades— of welcoming refugees. Today there are just over 14,000 refugees from some 40 different countries who are all protected by the humanitarian spirit of this great and diverse nation.

Second, because our collaboration with the DGI is being launched by this morning’s panel discussion on a landmark piece of legislation: Presidential Regulation 125 of 2016 on the handling of refugees, as it is officially known. Along with the DGI, it is a pleasure to be joined by Representatives from other key agencies who all play important roles in implementing the Presidential Regulation.

Why is it such a significant accomplishment? It is the first time the Government has adopted a comprehensive law that reaffirms its long-standing commitment to provide safety to refugees. When President Joko Widodo put his signature on this law, he acknowledged to the rest of the world that the Indonesian people would stand by refugees. And that the Government, namely the Immigration authorities, would coordinate with UNHCR in the process.

This law indeed provides an example for many other countries in South East Asia and beyond on how important it is to take a humanitarian approach to help refugees — people who have been forced to flee their home countries because of war and persecution.

Provisions allowing access to asylum and rescue at sea of those in distress are just a few of the reasons the international community can look to Indonesia as a country that is doing right by refugees, and also migrants.

Shortly, we will be discussing the law more closely. For now, I would just reiterate how pleased we at UNHCR are to be part of this event with the DGI and all of you here today.

We proudly join you in celebrating the diversity of refugees - their diverse talents, their diverse skills, and the diverse gifts that each of them offer to this amazingly diverse country of Indonesia.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, terima kasih and enjoy the activities.
