

P R E S S R E L E A S E**Save the Children scales up aid delivery to communities devastated by tsunami-earthquake disaster**

7 October 2018 – Hundreds of desperate families in disaster-affected Sulawesi are today receiving life-saving relief from the local partner of aid agency Save the Children, who has distributed a new shipment of hygiene kits, fresh water kits and shelter kits. More than 500 hygiene and shelter kits have been provided to families, with an additional 270 being distributed today, and daily distributions planned over the coming weeks.

The aid agency, which operates through local partner Yayasan Sayangi Tunas Cilik (YSTC) in Indonesia, is also ramping up its vital child protection work by establishing three safe child-friendly spaces in Palu city where children can play and recover while their families receive information on how to access services to rebuild their lives.

Children also receive psychological first aid in the spaces. Many children are struggling to cope with the after-effects of the earthquake and tsunami, having seen their homes destroyed, losing their families, and their sense of normality ripped away.

Save the Children and YSTC have also set up a registration tent where parents and children who have been separated can lodge missing person reports, and from where children can be taken to a safe shelter while the agency searches for their family.

Selina Sumbung, Chairperson of Save the Children's partner, is at the epicenter of the disaster today in Palu city.

“Logistically this is an incredibly challenging humanitarian response, but the aid is getting through and it is making a huge difference. Our team on the ground is working around the clock to meet the enormous needs,” Ms Sumbung said.

“As an Indonesian I have seen a lot of natural disasters, but this is the worst I’ve witnessed in more than a decade. It’s hard to comprehend the devastation here in Palu, and the impact it must be having on children.

“Every building by the beach has been flattened. Boats are lying in the middle of the road. Cars are twisted around walls. People are living under tarpaulins, surrounded by rubble. It’s a horrific situation for children, many of whom are showing signs of distress and trauma.”

Ms Sumbung said she was particularly concerned about the level of homelessness, and the increased risks this posed to children.

“We are hearing more and more stories of people leaving Palu on boats to other parts Sulawesi, such as their desperation to find shelter. Our child protection team has identified numerous cases of children arriving on their own in port cities such as Poso and Makassar, where they are put at major risk of exploitation and abuse.”

Save the Children, through YSTC, has been working alongside the Indonesian government and other aid agencies in the massive recovery operation. YSTC is scaling up operations significantly to ensure that vulnerable children have their needs addressed and are protected from further harm as the recovery continues. Along with distributions, the agency is planning to build temporary latrines for people displaced by the disaster, and will soon deploy health specialists to provide further support to teams on the ground to contain the potential health crisis.

Save the Children has been working in Indonesia since 1976, and has a long history responding to humanitarian disasters in the country, including the recent earthquakes in Lombok and the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami.

Contact:

Save the Children Deutschland e.V.
Press office – Claudia Kepp
Tel.: +49 (30) 27 59 59 79 – 280
Mail: presse@savethechildren.de

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About Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. Around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.