

33 Percent of Indonesian Women Not Finishing Elementary School

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YOGYAKARTA - Presidential representative for MDGs Indonesia, Prof. Dr. Nila F. Moeloek, said that education is a factor that causes the high maternal mortality rate in Indonesia, in addition to limited access to health facilities. It appeared that as high as 33% of Indonesian women did not finish elementary school. "In average, they are not aware that they have to take care of their own health when pregnant. As high as 33% of women did not finish elementary school," said Nila in a scientific speech entitled Challenge and Barrier in MGDs Indonesia, given at Centre for Demography and Policy Studies on Monday (1/4).

Nila said the mortality is mostly caused by bleeding, eclampsia, infection and anaemia. "The highest prevalence is bleeding, in average 70 percent of haemoglobin is low," she explained.

The current maternal mortality rate is 228 per 100 thousand of live birth. Efforts to reduce the rate has been made by the government through birth guarantee programme. But what's more important is that mothers have to change their views on health care. "Women have to be smart in making a decision on their own lives, able to care for their own health to prevent malnutrition or infections such as TB, malaria, worms, etc," she said.

It is not sufficient to reduce the maternal mortality rate by depending on the government programme only. Responsibility should be shared by various sectors. She mentioned that National Education Ministry and Public Works Ministry should share the burden, too. "This should be dealt with between sectors with regard to health infrastructure and service facilities, particularly in marginal areas," she described.

Similarly, Professor of Psychology of UGM, Prof. Dr. Djamaludin Ancok, the achievement of MDGs can only be made through increase in society's intellectual habit. To increase the intellectuality,

society can not rely on formal education only. “The National Education Ministry has to handle this, too. Teachers also need personality, social and pedagogic competence,” he said.

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