

## Media Release

Date: 3/10/2018

SULAWESI CHILDREN AT RISK WARNS SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children is warning of the potential for an outbreak of disease or illness in communities ravaged by the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia's Sulawesi island.

Families now face growing health risks as the full scale of the crisis, which Disaster Response Officials believe to have killed over 1300 people, becomes known.

Clean water supplies are running low and thousands of families living in makeshift shelters and cramped evacuation centres.

"The situation right now is a recipe for disaster, with thousands of people suddenly made homeless and all their possessions destroyed. There is debris and rubbish everywhere, and it's difficult for families to maintain hygiene standards, not to mention having access to food and clean drinking water for children and babies," Save the Children's Program Implementation Director Tom Howells said.

"We're really concerned that we could start seeing a growing number of children getting sick with illnesses like diarrhoea, as is often the case in the aftermath of crises like this where the scale of damage is so high. Ensuring children and families have access to sufficient hygiene levels is critical in the humanitarian response, and will go a long way in helping prevent illness and disease, which is the last thing needed by those who have already lost so much."

A team of staff from Save the Children's partner in Indonesia Yayasan Sayangi Tunas Cilik (YSTC) are in Palu, the capital of central Sulawesi and the epicenter of the crisis. "The destruction and loss is absolutely heart-wrenching, and the suffering on a scale that's hard to fathom. It will be a long recovery process," Mr Howells said.

"Save the Children, through YSTC, will distribute hygiene items like soap, buckets and jerry cans in the coming days so families can keep clean and store water, as well as plastic sheets and rope for temporary shelter.

"We will also set up special playgroups to provide children with a safe place and respite from the panic of the rescue mission that's underway, as well as supporting children to go back to school, which is the best place for children to be."

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.

Save the Children New Zealand has launched an appeal to help the hundreds of children affected by Friday's magnitude 7.4 earthquake and tsunami.

Save the Children NZ Chief Executive Heidi Coetzee said, "This tragedy has affected many lives, and as always, children are the most vulnerable in disaster situations. Our international staff will be

working on the ground alongside our local partner. If the people of New Zealand would like to help those affected they can donate via following link [www.savethechildren.org.nz](http://www.savethechildren.org.nz).”

## **ENDS**

Save the Children has several spokespeople available, including a child protection advisor who is expected to arrive in Sulawesi shortly. Comms are difficult, but if you would like to arrange an interview in either Jakarta or Sulawesi, please don't hesitate to contact us using the details below:

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### **About Save the Children**

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In New Zealand and 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.