

Health care goals in Indonesia can be reached only if challenges are addressed – UN expert

4 April 2017 – Indonesia is on track to develop a sustainable and equitable healthcare system, but problems related to access and quality of services persist, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to health, Dainius Puras, said today.

“Despite commendable efforts, availability, access to and quality of health services remains a challenge in a country where population is spread throughout thousands of islands and remote areas,” he said.

Mr. Puras urged the Indonesian authorities to address such challenges “with the highest level of political commitment so that health system guarantees all core elements of the right to health.”

Concluding his [two-week visit](#) to the Southeast Asian country, Mr. Puras stressed: “Increased investments in healthcare only make sense if the system is efficient, transparent, accountable, and responsive to those who use it.” He urged the Government to increase investment in health.

He also pointed out barriers to the realization of sexual and reproductive health rights exist in the form of violence and discrimination against women and other key populations.

“I was discouraged to hear that planning and delivery of these services and sexuality education is being influenced by certain groups who continue to oppose policies, instruments and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health rights,” he said.

While Indonesia has a relatively low prevalence of HIV/AIDS, new infections are on the rise and those affected face stigma and discrimination, including in healthcare settings. Ethnic Papuans are twice as likely to contract HIV/AIDS as the rest of the population.

He added that improvements in drug policy need to be made, as current policy undermined public health efforts and the right to health of people who use drugs. “Criminalization of drug use only fuels discrimination, violence and exclusion driving people away from the health services they need and seriously undermining public health efforts.”

The Special Rapporteur will present a comprehensive report on his visit to Indonesia to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2018.

Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.