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**Opening Remarks by Thomas Vargas, UNHCR Representative in Indonesia
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Protection/ ECHO).**

Challenges and Opportunities for Urban Refugees

Jakarta, 10 July 2018

Your Excellencies from the Government of the Republic of Indonesia,

European Union Deputy Head of Delegation, Mr. Charles-Michel Geurts and other guests
from the Diplomatic Corps,

UN Colleagues,

Partners friends, and

Dear Refugees,

Good morning. I would like to thank you for being here today and showing solidarity with
refugees.

I would first like to give a very special thanks to the European Union for its generous support
to refugees and UNHCR’s work to help them. Without its support and that of other donors,
we would not be able to help refugees in need of assistance in Indonesia and around the
world.

We all have hopes and dreams. Refugees do too. Dreams perhaps to be an artist, a banker,
an astronaut, a humanitarian worker.

Think back to the dreams and hopes you have had and who helped you along the way. Your
parents, a special teacher, a coach, an older sister or brother. A mentor who guided you,
inspired you, urged you on when things got tough.

Watching this short documentary film we are about to present -- which was made possible
by the generous funding from the EU under a special regional project for Indonesia,
Malaysia and Thailand-- I ask you to think about those special people in your life, and the
help they have given you to get where you are today.

Now ask yourself: “How can I now help others?”

Why is this important? Why am I asking this today?

Because refugees also have skills, talents and knowledge to share with others – they are bright, eager and capable.

All they need are the opportunities – a mentor, perhaps-- to help them achieve their dreams and not give up their hopes.

As we commemorate World Refugee Day this year with a series of events, including this one today, we face a global refugee crisis in which over 67 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes around the world, because of war, violence, and massive human rights violations.

Until the wars and violence stop, we all must pitch in to help provide safe haven to refugees.

Indonesia is doing its part of sharing the responsibility by hosting some 13,900 refugees. In this regard, we are thankful to the Directorate General of Immigration, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other governmental partners under the coordination of the Coordinating Ministry of Political, Legal and Security Affairs, as well as to the people of Indonesia.

In addition, other partners, such as the International Organization for Migration, Church World Service, Dompot Dhuafa, the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), Tzu Chi Foundation, Yayasan Sayangi Tunas Cilik/ Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, are also doing amazing work.

You will shortly hear some examples from our panelists in the talk show forum following the showing of the film you are about to see.

So, as you hear the challenges and hopes of refugees in the film, remember how fortunate we all are to have had special people in our lives to help us.

Yes we all have hopes and dreams. Yes: now, today, and tomorrow, you can also help others fulfill their dreams.

No matter our skin color, our gender, our language, or our religion. By standing by each other, we stand by humanity. So let's all stand together with refugees.

Thank you.