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PRESS RELEASE

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Save the Children Philippines urges communities and parents to step up drive against dengue

Save the Children Philippines has raised concern against the drastic increase in the number of dengue cases, most of them children aged 6 to 9.

Lawyer Albert Muyot, Save the Children Philippines chief executive officer, called on local health authorities to intensify the information campaigns about dengue and lead regular cleanliness drives in schools, communities, and places where people congregate.

“We appeal to local governments to strengthen measures to prevent spread of dengue virus in their communities through clean-up drives and raising awareness of parents on early signs of dengue, particularly among children,” said Muyot.

Between January to June this year, the reported dengue cases increased by 85 percent year on year to 106,630, with a total of 456 deaths. Most affected were children aged 6 to 9.

The group raised concern on the increase of cases by more than 280 percent in Western Visayas or Region 6, as compared to last year, while provinces in Albay and Zamboanga City also reported drastic increases in the number of dengue cases.

Muyot said children are the most affected by the dengue virus because they are physically fragile and exposed to mosquitoes carrying dengue virus while in schools and at play in communities.

The group works with health officers in deprived communities in Caloocan, Navotas and Malabon to improve health and nutrition of children. Similar programs are also being implemented in conflict affected areas in Mindanao.

Dr. Amado Parawan, health and nutrition advisor of Save the Children Philippines advised mothers and parents not to ignore early signs of dengue including high fever.

“Any cases of fever should be reported,” said Dr. Parawan. He emphasized that “early consultation is the key to saving lives during a dengue outbreak.”

Dr. Parawan advised the public to follow **the 4-S campaign** of Department of Health to prevent dengue virus. These are: **S**earch and destroy mosquito-breeding sites, **S**ecure **S**elf-protection measures like wearing long pants and long sleeved shirts and daily use of mosquito repellent, **S**eek early consultation, and **S**upport

fogging/spraying only in hotspot areas where increase in cases is registered for two consecutive weeks to prevent an impending outbreak.

To prevent dengue virus from affecting children, Dr. Parawan gave health tips to mothers:

1. Bring your child who has a fever for two days to the nearest health center or clinic immediate consultation, management and referral.
2. Do not insist on home care or self-medication.
3. Avoid crowded places.
4. If you must visit a friend or relative in the hospitals, please do not bring your children
5. Children must wear long pants and long sleeves shirt including those in schools
6. Use mosquito repellent everyday
7. Support spraying/fogging in the community

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