



PRESS RELEASE

## **South East Asia Breast Cancer Symposium 2021: Strengthening Regional Collaboration to Achieve Better Outcome of Breast Cancer Control in SEA Countries**

**Jakarta, July 7, 2021** – The Indonesian Breast Cancer Foundation (IBCF) in partnership with The Global Focus on Cancer is hosting The 5<sup>th</sup> Southeast Asia Breast Cancer Symposium (SEABCS) 2021 on July 31 – August 01. The theme for this year is *“Putting Patients to the Hearts of Cancers Control”*. SEABCS is a global forum and is attended by medical professionals and experts in breast cancer, breast cancer communities, patients, survivors, midwives, and government officials. The symposium serves the objective of continuing dialog to improve breast cancer control and address its challenges in the region.

According to Global Cancer Observatory (Globocan) 2020, globally there are 44.2 breast cancer cases in every 100,000 women. Close to a quarter (24%) of all breast cancers were diagnosed within the Asia-Pacific region at a rate of 30 per 100,000, with the greatest number of those occurring in China (46%), Japan (14%) and Indonesia (12%).

“This is what drives us to host SEABCS 2021 that is to establish a concrete footstep as a collaborative effort to improve the situation in the region. As support groups, clinicians, survivors, government and industry, we all have unique roles to make a coherent continuum of interventions. Weakness in one part of breast cancer control can undermine efforts elsewhere,” explained **Chairperson of SEABCS 2021 who is also Chairperson of The Indonesian Breast Cancer Foundation Linda Agum Gumelar**.

It is worth noting that the rate of increase in breast cancer incidence higher in Asia than the west. Globally, 33% of women with breast cancer were estimated to be aged under 50 at the time of diagnosis, compared to 42% throughout the Asia-Pacific region and 47% within the sub-region of Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile in Indonesia, there are 65,800 breast cancer cases per annum among its 270 million population. Indonesian Association of Oncological Surgeons (PERABOI) found that around 70% of breast cancer from 10,000 cases are Stage III and Stage IV.

**Chairman of The Indonesian Society of Surgical Oncology (PERABOI) Walta Gautama consultant in oncology surgeon** said, “We need a comprehensive national policy in order to

diminish advanced breast cancer that encompasses prevention, early detection, access to care, and breast cancer management. When women with breast changes take the appropriate action timely, the better her prognosis will be. These courageous women who seek treatment have to be supported with health care system so they can obtain treatment promptly. Standard regulation for the referral flow for suspected breast cancer cases from primary health facility to secondary and tertiary facility is needed.”

Moreover, Dr. Walta emphasizes it is important that the entire chain of intervention should progress and work cohesively all together, from awareness, early detection, availability, access to care and affordability, and patient support.

The forum is hoped to address some social issues that hinder women to take appropriate actions in a timely manner after finding their lump or any breast changes. These issues include lack of awareness, having fear, stigma in the community, and the unwillingness to discuss breast cancer. Patients would generally take one to three months to gain courage to visit health facility after discovering breast changes. It nothing unordinary when women with breast cancer wait for another 9-15 months before they finally obtain treatment.

**Radiology consultant Dr. Kardinah from the Indonesian Women Imaging Society (IWIS)** encourages women to regularly perform breast self-exam to look for any changes. Dr. Kardinah also recommends women to obtain clinical breast exam by a-trained medical professionals whenever symptoms or any breast changes occur. They should be further examined using specific diagnostic tools such as ultrasound, mammography, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Positron Emission Tomography (PET), and undergo biopsy procedure if needed.

“The detection facilities already exist, the national program has been made since 2008, and the referral system has been strengthened. It is now the patients’ decision whether they want to check or not. As a clinician, I strongly recommend women who discovers breast changes to rule out breast cancer at first. Again, the sooner it is discovered and treated, the better the prognosis will be,” said Dr. Kardinah.

#### **Cross-Professional Collaboration in SEABCS**

Through SEABCS 2021, it is expected that the knots of breast cancer management problems in each country can be unravelled, by sharing experiences. Vice Chair of Indonesian Breast Cancer Foundation (IBCF) who is also Deputy Chief Organizer **Ning Anhar** explained that through SEABCS, the collaboration with various communities, experts, and policy makers is expected to be enhanced.

"A written recommendation focusing on patient needs is expected to be issued as a result of SEABCS2021 and we hope that it can be developed into a white paper or a common understanding document, among the regional coalition of breast cancer organizations and breast cancer medical professionals, that can be brought for discussions to the policy makers of the SEA Countries and create real impact to a better continuum of intervention," said Ning.

-END-

### **About SEABCS**

SEABCS was first held in Vietnam, in 2016. Indonesian Breast Cancer Foundation is active member since he 2<sup>nd</sup> SEABCS in 2017, and after that always present and actively participate every year.

SEABCS 2021 has three agendas: virtual symposium for layman that breast cancer patients, survivors, midwives, hospital representatives, and government representatives can participate in. second, special session for medical personnel initiated by **The Indonesian Society of Surgical Oncology (PERABOI)** and **Indonesian Women Imaging Society (IWIS)**.

In addition to Indonesian oncology and radiology experts, there will also be experts from abroad as speakers, such as: Ranjit Kaur, President of Breast Cancer Welfare Association, Malaysia; Kara Magsanoc Alikpala, Founder, ICANSERVE, Philippines; Sok Bouy, Head of Communication and Development, Sihanouk Hospital Center of HOPE, Cambodia; Cathy Hirsch, President, Reach to Recovery International, USA; Dr. Julie Gralow, Chief Medical Officer, ASCO, USA; Dr. Fatima Cardoso, President of ABC Global Alliance, Portugal; Prof. Tan Puay Hoon, Singapore General Hospital, Singapura; Prof. Dr. Gaurav Agarwal, Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, India; Dr. Farid Meybodi, University of Sidney, Australia; Dr. Takumi Yamamoto, National Center for Global Health and Medicine, Japan; Carolyn Taylor, CEO Global Focus on Cancer, USA; Anna Cabanes, Senior Advisor, Global Focus on Cancer, USA; Dr. Benjamin Anderson, WHO/Global Breast Cancer Initiative; Dr. Julie Torode, Board Member and Director of Strategic Partnerships, Community and Patient Engagement, Insitute of Cancer Policy/Kings College London; Mélanie Samson, UICC.

The Symposium is planned to be officially opened by the Minister of Health, Ir. Budi Gunadi Sadikin, CHFC, CLU. Anyone who wants to join the symposium can register directly on the website [www.seabcs2021.com](http://www.seabcs2021.com). Registration is free without any fees.

\*\*\*

For more information about SEABCS 2021, please visit the website [www.seabcs2021.com](http://www.seabcs2021.com), or write email to: [ykpi.sekretariat@gmail.com](mailto:ykpi.sekretariat@gmail.com)