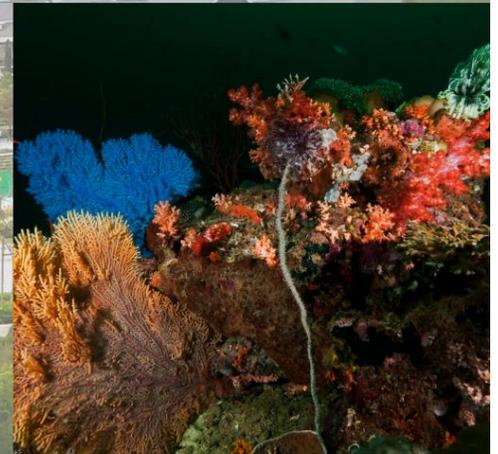
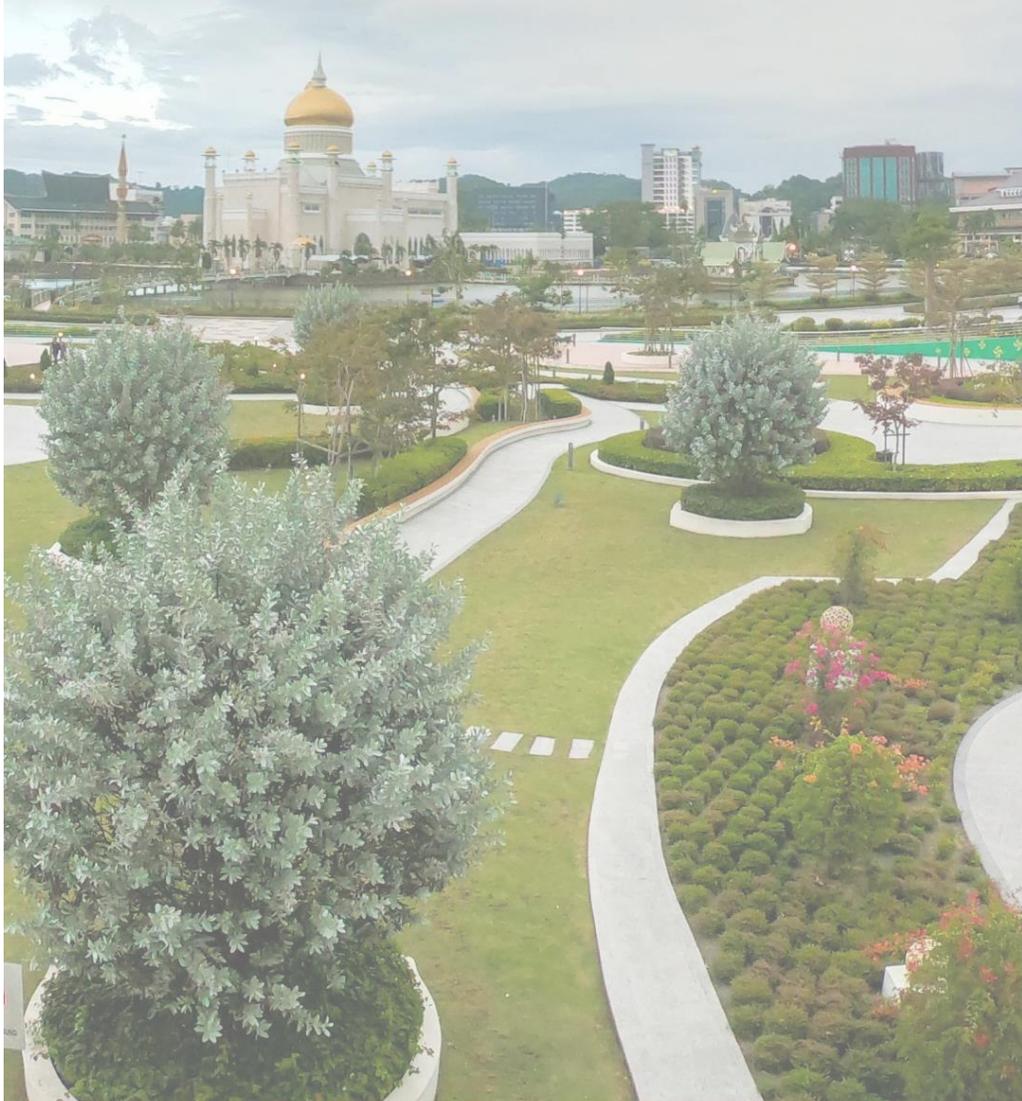


2020 UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL
FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



Published by:
Ministry of Finance and Economy
Commonwealth Drive, Bandar Seri Begawan BB3910
Brunei Darussalam
www.mofe.gov.bn

In collaboration with:
Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam
Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam
Brunei Intellectual Property Office
Employees Trust Fund
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Development
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Energy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Home Affairs
Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism
Ministry of Religious Affairs
Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications
Prime Minister's Office
Wawasan Brunei 2035 Standing Secretariat

Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam
Biodiversity and Natural History Society
Brunei Council on Social Welfare
Brunei Darussalam AIDS Council
Brunei Darussalam National Association of the Blind
Brunei Darussalam Youth Council
Brunei Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Brunei Darussalam
Council for the Welfare of Persons with Different Abilities
Down Syndrome Association
Green Brunei
Hand4Hand Brunei
La Vida Sdn Bhd
MyActionsforSDGs
National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Brunei Darussalam
Pusat Ehsan Al-Ameerah Al-Hajjah Maryam
Society for Community Outreach and Training
Society for the Management of Autism Related Issues in Training, Education and Resources
Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkuah Foundation
Universiti Brunei Darussalam
WeCare | *KamiPrihatin*

© Ministry of Finance and Economy, Government of Brunei Darussalam 2020.
All rights reserved. The contents may be freely reproduced for non-commercial purposes with attribution to the copyright holders.

First published June 2020.

Photos courtesy of the Information Department and other relevant ministries, agencies, non-governmental organisations and private individuals.

Contents

Foreword.....	1
Introduction	2
Sustainable Development Goal 1	4
Sustainable Development Goal 2.....	16
Sustainable Development Goal 3.....	20
Sustainable Development Goal 4.....	28
Sustainable Development Goal 5.....	37
Sustainable Development Goal 6.....	43
Sustainable Development Goal 7.....	46
Sustainable Development Goal 8.....	49
Sustainable Development Goal 9.....	59
Sustainable Development Goal 10.....	64
Sustainable Development Goal 11.....	75
Sustainable Development Goal 12.....	80
Sustainable Development Goal 13.....	83
Sustainable Development Goal 14.....	87
Sustainable Development Goal 15.....	91
Sustainable Development Goal 16.....	97
Sustainable Development Goal 17.....	104
Conclusion	109

Foreword

The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations and the 5th year since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On such an important milestone, Brunei Darussalam is therefore pleased to share its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development.



Brunei Darussalam's SDGs journey is guided by its national vision, *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, where the country aspires to be widely recognised for its educated, highly skilled and accomplished people, with a high quality of life and a dynamic and sustainable economy by 2035. Whilst preserving its unique social, cultural and traditional values, the Government of Brunei Darussalam aims to ensure that the country and its people will continue to thrive and prosper in the fast evolving modern world.

The country has made progress in accomplishing the SDGs by building upon its early achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Through the VNR process which brought together the whole nation, Brunei Darussalam was able to take stock of its SDGs accomplishments, identify opportunities and challenges as well as gain invaluable lessons and insights.

Since the beginning of this year, the world has been confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic, that has resulted in loss of lives, impacted the livelihood of the people, and affected socio-economic development. This unprecedented situation highlighted that our lives are increasingly interconnected and dependent, with challenges cutting across borders requiring global solidarity and concerted efforts. Therefore, and with a decade left to fulfil the 2030 Agenda, it is critical that we further strengthen regional and international cooperation and partnership, including capacity building and assistance, towards attainment of the SDGs.

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, in line with its *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, to ensure that no one is left behind.

**SULTAN HAJI HASSANAL BOLKIAH
OF BRUNEI**

Introduction

In 2008, Brunei Darussalam began its new journey towards *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, its national vision, in which by 2035, the country aspires to be recognised for its educated, highly skilled and accomplished people, with a high quality of life and a dynamic, sustainable economy. This Vision guides Brunei Darussalam's development strategies and policies, which have also incorporated sustainable development perspectives.

During the 70th Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2015, Brunei Darussalam joined other Member States in endorsing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As an early achiever of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Brunei Darussalam thereafter continues to leverage upon this success to achieve the SDGs, notably the Goals that are directly aligned with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. This report comprehensively sets out the country's achievements and ongoing collective efforts to implement the SDGs. It also acknowledges the challenges that lie ahead which the Government will strive to address through lessons learnt and, where relevant, based on international best practices.

The citizens of Brunei Darussalam continue to enjoy high quality of life in a safe, secure and prosperous environment as a result of the provision of essential services and high standard infrastructure including in health, education, clean water and sanitation, housing, legal institutions, telecommunications as well as decent employment.

Brunei Darussalam has no record of extreme poverty and is progressively implementing and improving on most of the SDGs. The Government has implemented national policies and plans of action that ensure inclusive economic participation, through the empowerment of women, youth, low income earners and the differently abled.

In Brunei Darussalam, the universal access to high standard education at all levels and nine years of formal compulsory education has resulted in high literacy rate of 97.2%.

Health indicators show that Brunei Darussalam's efforts have matched those of the developed nations. Significant measures have been taken to ensure that infectious diseases are well-controlled, as recently exemplified by the country's successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The protection of environment and natural resources has always been a priority to Brunei Darussalam whereby 72% of total land area is still covered with forests, of which 41% is gazetted as forest reserves.

Brunei Darussalam has actively participated in regional and international meetings as well as workshops aimed at enhancing understanding and promoting closer cooperation, capacity building, and sharing of best practices towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The country also continues to be a part of the global partnership for development and supports collaboration for mutual benefit for all.

NATIONAL MECHANISMS

To effectively implement the 2030 Agenda, Brunei Darussalam has taken an inclusive and whole of nation approach, collaborating and engaging with relevant stakeholders, namely the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), researchers and academia.

A multi-stakeholder 'Special Committee for the Implementation of the SDGs' comprising of senior officers from relevant ministries and agencies was established in 2016¹ to facilitate the inclusion of SDGs indicators in Brunei Darussalam's development plans as well as to ensure and monitor the implementation of the SDGs in line with national priorities.

In gearing up for the country's Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Brunei Darussalam has established another Special Committee, which is co-chaired at the ministerial level by the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). This Special Committee spearheads the preparation of Brunei Darussalam's VNR report and efforts in stock taking and reviewing the country's progress towards the achievement of the SDGs².

To promote inclusivity and generate beneficial dialogue, direct consultations were also conducted with relevant and diverse range of stakeholders including NGOs and academia.

A VNR Workshop was organised on 8-9 January 2020 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, to provide relevant stakeholders an in-depth understanding of the VNR process and to give them opportunity for meaningful participation in the preparation of the VNR.

Brunei Darussalam has also attended several workshops organised by the UN and ASEAN, which allowed for learning other countries' experiences and best practices in undertaking their VNRs.

These include, among others, the ASEAN Forum on SDGs with National Development Planning Agencies - Accelerating SDGs Implementation in ASEAN jointly organised by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Embassy of Switzerland in the Republic of Indonesia (July 2019); the 3rd South-East Asia Forum on Implementation of the SDGs organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) (October 2019); regional and international webinar workshops organised by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and UN ESCAP (March 2020); and the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (May 2020).

¹ Members are the Prime Minister's Office (PMO); Ministry of Finance and Economy; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Education (MOE); Ministry of Health (MOH); Ministry of Development (MOD); Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT); Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS); Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA); Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC); Ministry of Energy (ME); Employees Trust Fund; *Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam*; Authority for Infocommunications Technology Industry; and *Wawasan Brunei 2035* Standing Secretariat.

² Members are the PMO; MOFE; MFA; MOE; MOH; MOD; MPRT; MOHA; MCYS; MORA; MTIC; and ME.



Sustainable Development Goal 1

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Brunei Darussalam places great importance in caring for the well-being and welfare of its people, and continues to exert efforts towards eradicating poverty in all its forms.

Towards this, the National Council on Social Issues (MKIS), established in 2008, is mandated to address challenges arising from these efforts. This Council is chaired by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and its members include the Prime Minister's Office (PMO); Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE); Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA); Ministry of Education (MOE) and Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation (YSHHB), a non-governmental organisation (NGO).

The MKIS focuses on 12 social issues, which are poverty; social security; unemployment; housing for the poor; mentality; immoral behaviour; crime prevention; family institution; persons with different abilities (PWDs); elderly; women; and children. Under the MKIS, there are five Special Committees which review and monitor the implementation of their respective Plans of Action and policies or directives, as set by the Council.

AN INTEGRATED AND WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH TOWARDS POVERTY ERADICATION

Progressive economic growth is important to ensure that poverty is addressed through the

provision of employment and other economic opportunities that will also serve to meet *Wawasan Brunei 2035*.

This is in line with the vision of the Integrated Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication produced by the Special Committee on Poverty Issues³, which is to reduce dependency on welfare assistance towards a self-reliant and resilient community. Such vision is achieved by empowering greater self-reliance, and breaking the cycle of poverty through capacity building for employment and entrepreneurship.

This Plan of Action is currently being reviewed, in order to increase its effectiveness and to be more result-oriented, and is due to be implemented by July 2020. The revised Plan of Action for this Special Committee will focus on ten strategies, which are skills training; education; employment; entrepreneurship; finance; infrastructure (housing); infrastructure (transportation); mindset; childcare; as well as policy, legislation and guidelines.

A whole of nation approach, spearheaded through inter-ministerial engagement, is crucial in implementing this Plan of Action. The role of other stakeholders is also necessary, through the inclusion of various corporate social responsibility (CSR)-related programmes and volunteerism activities that target poverty eradication.

³ Members are Councils of State, PMO; MOFE; Ministry of Health; MOE; MORA; MOHA; Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism; Ministry of Development (MOD); MCYS, Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, MOFE; Manpower Planning and Employment Council, PMO; Housing Development Department, MOD; Land Transport Department, Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC); Jobcentre Brunei, Ministry of Energy; Brunei Darussalam Islamic Religious Council, MORA; YSHHB; Darussalam Enterprise (DARE); Council on Social Welfare; and Society for Community Outreach & Training Organisation.



Towards further improving the wellbeing and the welfare of the people, the Government is currently in the process of implementing a comprehensive and centralised national welfare system, *Sistem Kebajikan Negara* (SKN). The system, expected to be operational by July 2020, will provide direct access to those in need, making sure no one is left behind. At the same time, this will ensure an efficient, timely and effective welfare system, allowing a true picture to be depicted in the provision of benefits to recipients and their dependents.

SUPPORTING MECHANISMS

Brunei Darussalam has always emphasised the importance of providing a sustainable social security system for its people, especially those who are least able to cater for themselves. This includes initiatives that provide financial assistance and platforms to target groups to eradicate poverty:

Monthly Welfare Assistance (BKB)

BKB, provided through the MCYS, is designed to act as a supplement to protect these target groups from poverty, and ease their hardship until they receive a sufficient source of income and become economically independent.

In December 2019, the total number of BKB recipients were 5,812 heads of households. The average recipients per month of BKB in 2019 were about 5,700. From April 2019 to March 2020, B\$13,049,685.00 of BKB funds were disbursed. From July 2020, the eligibility criteria for BKB will be based on the Minimum Cost of Basic Needs.

Zakat

In Brunei Darussalam, giving *zakat* is a religious obligation, where muslims whose wealth sits above the minimum threshold are obligated to pay 2.5% on their collective assets.

Additionally, muslims also pay *zakat fitrah* during the holy month of Ramadhan, to be distributed to poor muslims.

Zakat is collected by the Zakat Collection and Distribution Section under the Brunei Darussalam Islamic Religious Council (MUIB) and distributed as assistance to those who are not able to fend for themselves and their families. *Zakat* is also used to fund enrichment programmes aimed at empowering *zakat* recipients. In 2018, *zakat* amounting to B\$5.2 million was distributed to 3,669 recipients. This includes through the purchasing of medical supplies and equipment that are needed by those incapable of work due to health problems.

MUIB Zakat distribution:

Monthly Distribution – 678 recipients, **B\$1.42 million** distributed (2018).



Basic Needs Financial Distribution – 2,409 recipients, **B\$1.9 million** distributed (2018).

Housing Rental Payment Distribution - 193 recipients, **B\$907,497.60** distributed (2018).

School Financial Distribution – 1,373 recipients, **B\$988,560.00** distributed (2018).

Old Age Pensions

Since 1955, in recognition and appreciation of the contribution made by the older generation and as part of Brunei Darussalam's social safety nets, Old Age Pensions are distributed to citizens and residents upon reaching 60 years old, as provided for under the Old Age and Disability Pensions Act. The pensions have

traditionally been disbursed by the Heads of Villages. However, an alternative option of receiving pension payments through banks was made available since March 2020.

In May 2020, the total number of Old Age Pensions recipients were 38,290. From April 2019 to March 2020, the total amount of Old Age Pension payments was B\$110,984,750.00.



Image: Photo dated 23 April 1955 showing 80-year-old Che Fatimah binte Alin receiving her first Old Age Pension payment.

Persons with Disabilities

In addition, disability pensions and allowances have been provided to Persons with Disabilities since 1955, for those aged 15 years and above, as provided for under the Old Age and Disability Pensions Act. This was reviewed to include disability allowances for those below 15 years, as of 1 January 2018.

In May 2020, the total number of recipients for disabilities pensions and allowances was 3,630. From April 2019 to March 2020, the total amount of disabilities pensions and allowances disbursed was B\$10,140,434.00.

Other Safety Nets

Other forms of assistance are also available to alleviate economic hardship. In addition to the monthly BKB, the MCYS also provides food rations and daily basic necessities as

well as shelters and grants to start a business to those in need. For the Financial Year (FY) 2019/2020, B\$25,330,000.00 was allocated for these provisions.

Additionally, through the micro grants under the Development Assistance Programme as well as the Youth Entrepreneurship Enhancement Programme, a total of B\$47,739.00 has been given to 32 entrepreneurs to run and/or expand their business. In view of the potential of this initiative, the MCYS has allocated B\$30,000.00 annually under the Development Assistance Programme to provide assistance to at least 10 entrepreneurs since FY 2019/2020.

EMPOWERING THE POOR

The Government has advocated the empowerment of the poor by enhancing their productivity through improving employability and encouraging entrepreneurship. The said objective has been achieved through the implementation of capacity building programmes, as well as provision of necessary training and skill sets. This is also in line with the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC)'s strategies for the vulnerable groups and the Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication under the MKIS.

More focus has been given to poverty eradication initiatives through empowerment tools that aim to break the poverty cycle and to ensure sustainable income. Target groups identified as able-bodied and able-to-work among the poor have continued to undergo trainings for entrepreneurship, self-development and positive mindset.

Since April 2016, the MCYS has developed the following five empowerment programmes:



i) Employment Plan Programme

Under this Programme, the MCYS, in partnership with various companies, assists BKB recipients to increase their employability and find employment. This includes the provision of digital literacy courses conducted by Jobcentre Brunei, as well as CV writing courses in collaboration with a private company, AVERTU.

In 2019, a total of 260 welfare recipients / beneficiaries has been employed under the Employment Plan Programme, whereby the total number of recipients employed under this Programme has increased yearly. The target is to ensure 300 recipients and dependents are employed annually. Under the Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication, the strategy target is to ensure 30% of all recipients and dependents are employed within five years.

ii) Community Empowerment Programme (PPK)

This Programme aims to empower BKB recipients by providing skills training that is tailored to their skills and interests. It is intended to help recipients find jobs or run a business, so that they can be financially independent without relying on government assistance. The Programme is run in collaboration with the Youth Development Centre (YDC) where participants undertake short courses such as those related to Cooking and Catering; Cake and Pastry; Beauty Therapy; Autocad; Basic Refrigeration; Air-conditioning and Basic Plumbing.

To date, from April 2019 to March 2020, more than 300 participants underwent various skills training, in which 18 have acquired jobs and 20 have started businesses. In addition, the MCYS is also working with the Capacity Building Centre to provide skills training to recipients.

iii) Micro-grant for Empowerment

The micro-grant provides vulnerable groups with small financial assistance to venture into entrepreneurship or self-employment. Target groups include PWDs, single mothers and low-income community groups as well as welfare recipients who have undergone entrepreneurship development training at the YDC and Darussalam Enterprise (DARE).

A B\$30,000 annual budget has been allocated for this micro-grant programme since FY 2019/2020.

iv) Business from Home (BDR)

The BDR programme is specifically targeted to help provide housewives with entrepreneurship opportunities. This programme includes product marketing, as well as entrepreneurial guidance through DARE's 'Institute Business Academy' and 'Micro Business Bootcamp'. To date, 41 out of 68 participants have successfully continued operating their home-based businesses under the BDR initiative.

Parallel to this, in October 2018, *Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam* (BIBD) has also introduced the 'Special Underprivileged Mothers Empowerment Entrepreneurship Development' programme (BIBD SEED) in collaboration with MORA and MCYS. This programme aspires to enhance the livelihood of underprivileged mothers in Brunei Darussalam by empowering and facilitating their development as competitive, resilient, and successful entrepreneurs.

The 15-month programme consists of four phases that provide continuous monitoring and coaching under close observation and mentoring from representatives in related industries and local training facilitators. In 2018 - 2019, 93 underprivileged mothers participated, with nine and ten participants in the 1st and 2nd cycle of BIBD SEED

respectively now owning their own food and beverage brands.

v) The Visionary Youth Innovation Programme (PIBB)

The PIBB was introduced to educate as well as promote resilience and a positive mindset among those aged between 16 to 21 years old, as an initiative to eradicate poverty through early empowerment of young family members of target groups, and guide them to thinking of different means of enhancing their family's economic sustainability.

Through this programme, participants are guided through three phases, beginning with the three-month National Service Programme, followed by basic skills training and education at *Politeknik Brunei*, and finally, a work attachment to provide exposure and increase marketability.

Out of 33 participants since 2016, 14 are currently employed, three have started their own businesses while one has continued to further studies.



Promote and Inculcate Entrepreneurship and Employment - MCYS

Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication (2020-2024) Targets

Provide meaningful employment for **30%** of unemployed welfare recipients who are able-bodied and able-to-work by building their capacities and access to employment opportunities.

5% of able-bodied and able-to-work welfare recipients are able to generate sustainable income from entrepreneurship activities.

TEKAD Pekerjaan

Programme targeted at welfare recipients who are able-bodied and able-to-work within the age group of 18 - 59 years old, and have been receiving monthly welfare benefits for more than four cycles. Started in July 2019, participants will receive additional financial assistance if remain employed for a period of six months.

As of May 2020, a total of **34** participants have remained working in private sector.

Pelan Pekerjaan

Programme implemented since 2018 to assist welfare recipients and dependents who are able to work but unemployed to find employment.

As of May 2020, **236** people have successfully secured employment under this programme.

Skills Development Programmes

Programme for skill training for PWDs, focusing on living and social skills, basic vocational and work skills at *Pusat Bahagia* and the YDC.

As of December 2019, **433** PWDs were registered at Pusat Bahagia with **20** registered at YDC.



Promote and Inculcate Entrepreneurship and Employment – MUIB

Asnaf Zakat Empowerment Programme (PROPAZ).

Provides knowledge and skills to assist underprivileged job seekers, with provision of allowances during courses, before they are employed by participating partners in the public and private sector. Also provides funds for capital injection and purchase of machinery and equipment.



Image: One of the PROPAZ recipients receiving assistance.

- **PROPAZ and the Baitulmal Skills Institute**

Since 2017, recipients are sent to undergo skills training programmes at the Baitulmal Skills Institute in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Courses include food services and catering, building construction and computer design.

- **PROPAZ Az-Ziraah:** Extension of the PROPAZ to farming.

In 2018, 6 trainees under mentorship were given plots of land, training and experience in planting, as well as marketing knowledge.

ENHANCING WELFARE (HOUSING)

Housing continues to be one of the key priorities of the Government aimed at improving the welfare of its citizens as well as contributing towards socio-economic stability in the country. The Government, through the MOD, strives to provide quality and affordable housing especially to low income earners through state subsidised housing under the National Housing Programme.



Image: One of the many residential areas under the National Housing Programme.

Housing Focus Group

A national committee called the Housing Focus Group (HFG), led by the MOD, was also established to provide an alignment of various housing assistance programmes for the underprivileged. Members of the HFG involve representatives from relevant ministries and agencies to review housing issues and formulate adaptive policies suited to the current situation.

In responding to the issue of providing housing assistance to the underprivileged under the MKIS led by the MCYS, the MOD is looking into developing a whole of nation approach in the provision of land for low cost housing equipped with an agricultural and commercial space. With assistance from relevant agencies, such initiative acts an enabler towards breaking the poverty cycle and building a self-reliant community.

The integrated Plan of Action to provide housing assistance for the underprivileged targets for 300 low cost houses to be built within five years.



Image: One of the houses built under the HFG for the underprivileged.

Additionally, for those in immediate need and for the underprivileged, the Government, through the MCYS, provides shelter in the form of temporary housing at five centres throughout the districts, which can accommodate 259 families.



Images: Two of the temporary housing shelters in Kampong Belimbing and Kampong Sungai Akar.

Victims of fire or natural disasters who have lost their homes are also provided these facilities. Where homes have been damaged or in need of repair, the Government provides financial assistance which aims to ease their burden and hardship. This assistance is in the form of a financial grant for home improvement, humanitarian aid, food rations, basic needs assistance and other essentials.

From April 2019 – March 2020, 354 families with a total amount of B\$284,367.00 were assisted for disaster relief and home improvements.



Ensuring Access to Housing

National Housing Programme

National subsidised housing programme (MOD)

- **30,044** houses built (1980-May 2019).

Projek Pembinaan Rumah Bantuan Golongan Daif, Fakir dan Miskin

(MUIB in collaboration with other ministries)

Total allocation of **B\$35 million** housing project in 2008:

- **182** houses distributed at cost of B\$7 million (2008-2019).
- **28** additional houses to be distributed in 2020 and **ten** planned to be built in 2021.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Brunei Darussalam is cognisant that poverty is a real issue that must be tackled sustainably and through a whole of nation approach. This includes involving many strategic partners such as NGOs, who have an important role in complementing government programmes, to provide support and assistance in various forms to vulnerable groups.

In addition, as a close-knit society, the community spirit remains strong in Brunei Darussalam. The sense of responsibility, empathy and caring for those in need is nurtured from an early age, and as such, volunteerism and community involvement,

led by the younger generation, is very much active in the country.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the month of Ramadhan this year, volunteers played an important role in assisting the

public and frontliners, including by producing Personal Protective Equipment, as well as helping to distribute food rations to families in need. Youth volunteers have also distributed food rations to nearly 3,000 households of families in need in April and May 2020.

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

There is a diverse range of NGOs and other stakeholders that frequently work collaboratively with the Government in addressing the varying welfare needs of the people.

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation (*Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah*)

In conjunction with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam's Silver Jubilee ascension to the throne on 5 October 1992, His Majesty consented to the establishment of the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation (*Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah – YSHHB*).

Since its establishment, the Foundation has implemented several projects and activities in line with its principles and five objectives, which include education and welfare. Strategic partners and volunteers are a few of the main contributors towards the growth of its social welfare activities. YSHHB has been active in undertaking projects/activities to enhance the welfare and livelihoods as well as socio-economic development of the people of Brunei Darussalam, with a particular focus to those in need.

Welfare:

The projects and activities organised by YSHHB under this objective are focused on enhancing the welfare and prosperity of life as well as improving the socio-cultural and socio-economic development of the people of Brunei Darussalam:

- Support to the less fortunate and the needy:
 - **Emergency and immediate support.** This support is given to ease the burden of victims of natural disasters, such as floods, hurricanes, landslides and fire. The support is given in the form of cash contribution (donation), as well as basic food supplies and other appropriate necessities. Workers support is also given through the YSHHB voluntary service. YSHHB also contributes to humanitarian funds established by the Government for disaster victims outside Brunei Darussalam.



Image: YSHHB representative delivering their contribution to a recipient.



- **Enhancing the socio-economic status** of the less fortunate and the needy. Various appropriate programmes have been continuously implemented by YSHHB, either individually or through the cooperation of its strategic partners, in order to assist in raising and expanding the income of the less fortunate and lower income groups so that they can be independent and free from poverty. These include entrepreneurship and small business programmes. Micro Financing Scheme Programmes are also offered to provide training for selected target groups and provision of financial assistance in the form of grants valued at B\$5,000.00.



Image: One of the YSHHB training programmes.

- **Supporting PWDs.** In sharing the responsibility of ensuring the welfare of PWDs, YSHHB continuously provides support and sponsors associations and relevant NGOs that operate development and rehabilitation programmes.
- **Medical and care support.** YSHHB provides assistance to those in need in the form of diapers, formula, medical supplies as well as financial support for healthcare treatment.
- **Youth Development Projects:** From time to time, YSHHB provides financial assistance and support as well as cooperates with other NGOs in handling youth development projects and programmes in order to enhance the involvement and participation of youth in the community and country's development.
- **Socio-Cultural Activities Support:** To foster and nurture the spirit of excellence in the socio-cultural field, YSHHB continuously gives support to relevant authorities so as to develop the fields of literature, writing, culture and sport. For example, the YSHHB 'Islamic Literature Awards' is intended to enrich and preserve the Islamic Literature heritage.
- **Housing Support:** Housing support is intended to provide a comfortable and safe home in order to create a secure family life and thus create a harmonious society. YSHHB has implemented two housing projects for the needy:
 - **YSHHB Housing Scheme.** A support project for the less fortunate (poor and differently abled) and those with unsafe houses to live in, it aims to provide comfortable and hygienic homes. Thus far, **184 houses** in all four districts have been constructed under this scheme since its introduction in 1996.



Image: One of the houses contributed by the YSHHB.



- **Kampong Bolkiah 'A' and Kampong Bolkiah 'B' YSHHB Housing Scheme.** Under this scheme, well-arranged housing in *Kampong Ayer* were constructed to provide accommodation for residents of the Water Village who were affected by the 1993 fire. **476 houses** were constructed, with 226 houses for the first phase at Kampong Bolkiah 'A' followed by 250 houses for the next phase at Kampong Bolkiah 'B'. Two types of houses were built, which are type 'A' (two bedrooms) and type 'B' (four bedrooms), with only 26 houses of type 'A'. Participants in this scheme are given a repayment period of 20 years.



Image: Kampong Bolkiah YSHHB Housing Scheme.

The Brunei Council on Social Welfare (*Majlis Kesejahteraan Masyarakat*)

The Brunei Council on Social Welfare or *Majlis Kesejahteraan Masyarakat* (MKM) aims to complement and supplement the programmes and initiatives by the Government with regards to social welfare and development, targeting the following main vulnerable groups: Children, PWDs, Elderly, Poor and the Needy.

MKM's past and on-going projects include:

- **Basic needs support for vulnerable families:** distribution of monthly food packages for vulnerable families, house repairs, and other necessities.
- **Educational support for children and young people from vulnerable families:** providing school supplies, scholarships, payment of school fees, and transportation allowance.
- **Economic Empowerment Programmes for Women:** social enterprise initiatives for single mothers.
- **MKM Legal Advice and Advisory Clinic:** free legal advice, promoting better protection for victims/survivors of unfair treatment and educating disadvantaged members of the community about their legal rights. To date, 100 families have been assisted in various cases ranging from domestic violence, divorce and settlement and property legal disputes.



Image: Members of the MKM with recipients.

Hand4Hand Brunei

Hand4Hand Brunei, a non-profit organisation founded in 2016, focuses on volunteerism to create awareness amongst the people of Brunei Darussalam (particularly the youth) and to instill the act of giving (time, love and money) to have a positive impact to the community, especially for the underprivileged families in the country.



Hand4Hand has collaborated with other NGOs, particularly youth organisations, in peer-to-peer volunteer mentoring, through effective knowledge transfer, classroom training and also 'hands-on' training; as well as the cultivation of volunteer talents, with trainees going to the ground to experience for themselves.



Image: Members of Hand4Hand with programme participants.

One example is Project Amal, a collaboration with nine youth organisations, with the objective of providing clothing for underprivileged families. It involved 200 volunteers as well as public donors. More than 33,000 pieces of clothing were donated.

Society for Community Outreach and Training (SCOT)

A local NGO established in 2011, SCOT aims to be a catalyst for sustainable eradication of poverty in Brunei Darussalam by coming up with more sustainable ways and strategies to help the underprivileged by providing them assistance in the form of resources, basic skills and support. The main goal of SCOT is to help underprivileged families in Brunei Darussalam move out of the vicious cycle of poverty through ongoing sustainable projects.

The youth in Brunei Darussalam acts as a key contributor to attaining a better and more sustainable future for the country. SCOT provides a platform to raise awareness and educate the youth on issues regarding poverty in Brunei Darussalam. It also provides volunteering opportunities, a space for youth engagement, and come up with projects that gravitate around the SDGs.



Image: A community outreach programme by SCOT.

SCOT's projects include:

SCOT Ummi Bags:

An initiative to raise funds by selling merchandise (a shopping tote bag) to support and empower single mothers through start-up capital for their entrepreneurial ideas. It is also an initiative to reduce plastic waste as these Ummi Bags are reusable. This initiative was in partnership with Hoco Agency, a local advertising company.

Ramadhan Charity Drive:

An annual event held during the festive season which visits 100 families across Brunei Darussalam and provides them basic necessities, to help ease the hardship of socio-economically challenged families. In 2019, more than 40 local youth volunteered to distribute these household necessities to the families.

Youth Against Poverty 4.0 (YAP)

Organised in conjunction with the Futuremakers initiative by Standard Chartered Bank, YAP brings together a total of ten local start-ups looking to initiate a social business to benefit underprivileged communities. YAP 4.0 consisted of a three-day workshop to further educate on the importance of alleviating poverty in Brunei Darussalam and encouraged participants to come up with their own projects that aim to help the underprivileged. The winner and runner up were awarded B\$10,000 and B\$5,000 respectively to run their project ideas.

Social Kitchen

A project that ran once a week during the holy month of Ramadhan in 2019, where single mothers were recruited to prepare food packets to be sold and donated to mosques for *sungkai* (the breaking of fast). The programme helped equip single mothers with business, technical and marketing skills in order to empower them to be more entrepreneurial while at the same time encouraging youth to volunteer their time and to assist the single mothers.



Images: SCOT's Social Kitchen programme.

Sustainable Development Goal 2

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Image: His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam reaping the first commercial harvest of Sembada 188 paddy at Wasan Agricultural Area, in February 2019.

Brunei Darussalam is committed to strengthening the country's food security, which will ensure its citizens' access to adequate supply of safe and nutritious food at affordable prices.

ENSURING FOOD SECURITY

Brunei Darussalam's sources of food are largely through imports whereby in 2019, the country imported food from over ninety countries. To minimise this heavy reliance on imports, various initiatives and programmes have been implemented to increase domestic production and capacity, in order to increase the country's self-sufficiency levels.

The Government, through the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), has strengthened efforts to develop its agricultural sector. In 2018, the gross output of agricultural production was B\$436.3 million, representing an increase of 6.6% from B\$409.3 million in 2017.

Of this, 56.1% (B\$244.6 million) was derived from the livestock industry; 14.6% (B\$63.7 million) was produced by the crop industry; whereas the remaining balance (29.3%) with an estimated value of B\$128 million was contributed by the agrifood industry. All of these agricultural industries have each

shown an increase of 6.6% in production value as compared to 2017.



Self Sufficiency Achievements

3.3% annual growth in agricultural and agrifood production between 2015 and 2018.

100% self-sufficiency level (SSL) reached for production of chicken eggs.

90% and 29% SSL for production of poultry meat and red meat.

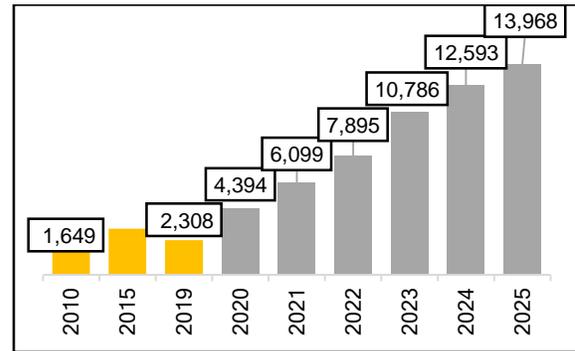
47% and 37% SSL for production of vegetables and fruits.

Rice is a staple food in Brunei Darussalam and as reiterated by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, attaining self-sufficiency in rice production will remain a national priority. The Department of Agriculture and Agrifood (DOAA) continues to put greater efforts to increase local production by employing hybrid and high yielding varieties, adopting modern farming and dual seasons cropping practices, encouraging domestic entrepreneurship, including among the youth, as well as introducing commercial-based rice production at a larger scale.

New planting areas have also been developed, such as the Agricultural Development Area of Kandol, which is an area of 500 hectares operated by PaddyCo, a newly established government-owned company. The first phase of the project has started since early 2019 and the second phase is expected to commence in the second half of 2020. The project is expected to contribute 6,000 to 8,000 Metric Tonnes of paddy, an equivalent of 3,600 to 4,800 Metric

Tonnes of milled rice, which will contribute 11% - 15% of the national rice requirement by 2025.

Figure 1: Local Paddy Yield (Metric Tonnes), Actual and Forecast



Other initiatives include field research and trials of different varieties of rice from Republic of Indonesia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar and People's Republic of China, to test their suitability to Brunei Darussalam's climate and soil conditions. All these efforts will enable the country to achieve its trajectory of rice self-sufficiency by three-folds over the next five to six years.

The Government has reassured that there is always an adequate supply of rice in the market sold at reasonable prices. Such commitment was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the general public was reassured of the sufficient rice stock of more than six-months supply.

In its efforts to ensure the standard and safety of its produce, the country has in place policies and legislations, in line with international practices, to cover elements of prevention against infection of diseases; public health; agricultural pests and noxious plants; and protection of plant varieties. These include the Wholesome Meat Order 2011, Quarantine and Prevention of Disease Act (Cap. 47) (1984 Ed), Brunei Good

Agricultural Practice which is equivalent to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Good Agricultural Practice, Good Animal Husbandry Practices and Good Manufacturing Practice. Such regulatory mechanisms together with various initiatives

for production are aimed towards sustainable agriculture. Brunei Darussalam also undertakes regional and bilateral cooperation, as part of its efforts to ensure adequate, affordable, safe and nutritious food supply.



Regional Initiatives

Food Security and Nutrition

ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Framework:

- Formation of ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework.
- Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Food Security 2015 -2020.

ASEAN Plus Three (People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea):

Strategic cooperation focused on agendas related to, among others, food security, sustainable forest management, adaptation and mitigation of climate change, animal health and prevention of crop and livestock diseases, and productivity improvement:

- Implementation of ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve Agreement.
- Implementation of ASEAN Plus Three Food Security Information System.

Bilateral arrangements

Selected Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/Protocol with:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kingdom of Thailand in the area of Technical Cooperation Programme on Rice Production Technology;
- Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on cooperation in livestock as well as on scientific and technical cooperation in agriculture;
- General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China on the Protocol on Inspection, Quarantine and Veterinary Sanitary Requirements for Wild Aquatic Products to be Exported from Brunei Darussalam to the PRC;
- Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on agricultural cooperation;
- Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 'The Use of Hotline for Information – Exchange to address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing' as well as on cooperation in agriculture and fisheries.
- Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute on cooperation in agricultural research and development.

CHILD NUTRITION

One of Brunei Darussalam's priority initiatives in the prevention and control of obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is to focus on optimal nutrition status from the early years. This strategic initiative, known as 'Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life', has adapted the World Health

Organization (WHO)'s global targets for identifying priority areas in maternal, infant and young child nutrition.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is committed to monitoring the progress of achieving targets, among others, in reducing stunting among



children under-five, reduction in low birth weight, controlling childhood obesity, increasing the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months, and reducing childhood wasting.

The Government continues to strengthen whole of nation actions under the 'National Strategy for Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) in Brunei Darussalam 2014-2020', which was the first national framework for MIYCN in the country.

Brunei Darussalam promotes exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and recently launched an initiative to provide free breastpumps for newly expecting mothers. Also provided are free breastfeeding classes for expecting mothers as well as a dedicated hotline for those who need breastfeeding advice. Additionally, the prices for milk formula for children are controlled through the Price Control Act (Cap. 142).

In 2017, as part of efforts to achieve the country's vision for a healthier nation, Brunei Darussalam introduced excise taxes on food products with high sugar and monosodium glutamate (MSG) contents. The amount of tax imposed is B\$4.00 per ten litres on drinks with sugar content of six grams or more per 100 ml and of 30% of the price for MSG. Healthier choices in schools are promoted through the 'School Canteen Guidelines' and the 'Drinking Water Policy'.

Meanwhile, for maintaining nutrition in child care centres, a 'National Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Child Care Centres' was developed in 2019, which represents a milestone in the development of an essential public health policy for children especially in ensuring their optimal nutrition and adequate physical activity.

These guidelines, developed by the MOH in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS), serve to guide all local child care centre providers when establishing their centres, to ensure optimum and supportive environments for infants' and young children's nutrition and activity needs.

These guidelines also serve as a useful resource and reference guide for policymakers and related stakeholders particularly those involved in the management, operations and regulations of child care centres.

The MOH has also implemented the Healthier Choice Logo since 2017, whereby food industries, particularly food manufacturers and food suppliers, either international or local, are encouraged to reformulate and produce healthier choice products in the market. Products that comply with the healthier choice criteria can be awarded a healthier choice logo to be affixed onto their packaging. This helps to create demand and supply of healthier choice products in Brunei Darussalam.

To meet nutritional goals, mitigate obesity and improve access to equal and equitable education, in order to achieve the fullest potential of all students, Brunei Darussalam, through the Ministry of Education, offers two forms of food programmes in schools:

- i) The 'Feeding Scheme', started in 1954, serves healthy meals and/or snacks to eligible students in primary schools and hostels nationwide. In 2019, 29,755 students were eligible; and
- ii) The '*Program Harapan dan Anak Harapan*', developed in June 2018, targets the most disadvantaged 41 primary schools (to supplement the Feeding Scheme) and 5 secondary schools to provide meal plans. In 2019, 11,695 students were eligible.

Sustainable Development Goal 3

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

As highlighted in its *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, Brunei Darussalam recognises the importance of health in determining the quality of life and wellbeing of the people as well as its contributing role to national development. The country also acknowledges that healthcare is one of its major public investments in human development and that healthy and productive citizens will positively contribute to socio-economic development.

TOGETHER TOWARDS A HEALTHY NATION

Universal health coverage is the cornerstone of Brunei Darussalam's health policy. As such, quality of life in the country is enhanced through the planning and implementation of a healthcare system framework towards universal health coverage for people at all levels.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) through their vision of 'Together Towards a Healthy Nation' ensures the country's continuous provision of a high quality and comprehensive health system that is effective, efficient, responsive, affordable, equitable and accessible. Its comprehensive health system covers all aspects of health promotion, prevention and control of illness, treatment and rehabilitation.

This vision is fully aligned with SDG3 which emphasises the importance of achieving universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

As a commitment to strengthen the national health system and service in the country, the MOH has formulated a Strategic Plan 2019-2023, which prioritises five key goals:

- i) Excellence in healthcare services;
- ii) Prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs);
- iii) Protection of public health through effective policies and regulations;
- iv) Sustainability through resource optimisation and innovation; and
- v) Transparent and proactive governance.

The Strategic Plan is aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO)'s recommendations on strategic health indicators and targets as a measure of the country's health status, risk factors, service coverage and health systems. Extending beyond healthcare in a clinical setting, the Strategic Plan includes prevention and control of diseases as well as protection of public health at large. Most importantly, this Plan aspires to consistently place people, and not merely the diseases, at the centre of the country's healthcare.



Image: Universal health coverage.

Brunei Darussalam has made remarkable achievements particularly in meeting most of the global health targets, including the attainment of universal health coverage and certification of free from infectious diseases namely polio, malaria, measles and rubella.

Quality and accessible medical, dental and healthcare continues to be provided at a nominal fee of B\$1 for citizens. This includes high quality maternal and child health services covering vaccination programmes and antenatal screenings, which have significantly contributed to the country's low

maternal and child mortality rates. In 2018, the country's life expectancy was about 77.5 years.

In addition to the provision of public health services, there are also specialised private healthcare centres, such as Jerudong Park Medical Centre (JPMC), Gleaneagles JPMC and Pantai Jerudong Specialist Centre, which itself consists of three centres, namely the Brunei Cancer Centre, Brunei Neuroscience Stroke and Rehabilitation Centre as well as the Maxillofacial, Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Centre.

Selected Health Achievements



High Quality maternal and child health services

>95% antenatal coverage
100% births attended by skilled health personnel



Universal health coverage

>80% coverage of essential services
80% customer satisfaction



High immunisation coverage

>95% immunisation coverage for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Influenza, Polio, Hepatitis (DTP-Hib-IPV-HepB 3), Mumps, Measles, Rubella and Hepatitis B (birth dose).
100% Treatment coverage for Tuberculosis (TB) and drug resistant TB.

PRIORITISING HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

As one of its priority agenda on health, Brunei Darussalam is continuously committed to improving the health of women and children. This has thus far resulted in the maintenance of low maternal mortality rates and the achievement of the target set under the SDGs for neonatal and child mortality. Such commitment is in line with the call by the global community, such as the United Nations (UN) and WHO, which recognises and strongly advocates the importance for the improvement of women and child health

as they are key to the progress on all development goals. Brunei Darussalam is in a good position to continue achieving the targets of reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births as well as reducing the neonatal mortality rate to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality rate to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services in Brunei Darussalam has expanded

throughout the country and there are currently 14 health centres, three health clinics, three travelling clinics and two flying medical services. In addition to providing high quality antenatal, postnatal and child healthcare, the MCH services also provide health screening and birth spacing service for women through the Well-Woman Clinic. Home nursing care for mothers and infants are also included in the first week following delivery as well as home visits for monitoring certain high-risk patients and for tracing patients who miss their appointments.



Image: Prioritising health of women and children.

The completion of the new Women and Children Centre in 2014 marked a significant milestone in the history of women and child healthcare in the country. The new Centre provides enhanced holistic care and integrated services for better quality, more efficient and effective healthcare system to the patients. The MOH has also developed a 'National Strategy for Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition' (MIYCN) with a mission to improve the health and nutritional status of mothers and mothers-to-be, infants and young children. It reflects global targets outlined by the WHO in the Comprehensive Implementation Plan on MIYCN to reduce incidences of childhood stunting, wasting and overweight, low birth weight infants and to increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Recognising that health encompasses mental health and well-being, the Government has undertaken efforts to improve the mental health and well-being of its people. The Mental Health Order 2014, which came into force on 1 November 2014 to replace the Lunacy Act 1929 (Cap. 48), aims to ensure equality, non-discrimination and shared responsibility of stakeholders when addressing the care and treatment of mentally disordered persons. It is also to ensure a patient-centred and holistic approach in the care and treatment of mentally disordered persons including their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community. Specific provisions were included for special categories of patients including those who lack the capacity to give consent for treatment. There are additional provisions for safeguarding the welfare of mentally disordered persons at risk of abuse or neglect, and those incapable of managing themselves and their affairs.

The country also stresses the importance of giving support and respect to individuals who are experiencing mental health issues. In this regard, the Government launched the 'Talian Harapan 145', a national mental health helpline, where qualified counsellors are available to provide advice or counselling in handling situations or pressure that can cause mental or emotional disruption.

Although mental health is a fundamental component of health, recognition of mental disorders and awareness about its importance is limited. In Brunei Darussalam, the social stigma and lack of understanding about mental disorders are major barriers to seeking help amongst the public. Therefore, increasing understanding and overcoming stigma through strategic communications and social mobilisation are crucial steps

towards strengthening mental health programmes locally.

Mental health promotion usually involves actions that improve psychological well-being. The MOH, through various departments and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, has gradually increased its mental health promotion activities in addition to the services currently provided. One such initiative is the anti-bully programme, 'Bully - Free Brunei' (*Brunei Bebas Buli*), which focuses on children, particularly in the school setting. So far, more than 40 out of 152 schools have participated in the workshops run by this programme since it was first launched in 2018. This campaign, which is a collaboration between the MOH and the Ministry of Education (MOE), is further complemented by other mental health promotion activities conducted in schools.

The MOH has also organised several mental health promotion programmes in workplaces. Dubbed the 'i-Mind Programme', this initiative focuses on the wellbeing and emotional resilience of the workforce apart from increasing their understanding of mental disorders. Mental health awareness campaigns have also been conducted in the community, through an initiative called 'Mind Your Mind' (*Jaga Minda Kita*). This effort, which aims to raise public awareness and understanding about mental disorders, has been carried out annually since 2014 in public places including major shopping malls, cafes and mosques.

Realising the multi-sectoral nature of the social determinants of and interventions for mental health, as well as its many associations with NCDs, mental health promotion has been elevated as a key initiative under the MOH's strategic goals on

the prevention and control of NCDs and also recently included under the purview of the Multi-Sectoral Taskforce on Health in 2019. It is hoped that these actions can help the country to achieve the vision of a mentally healthy and resilient nation.

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

Brunei Darussalam's focus is also to maintain its relatively low communicable disease burden, reduce the risk of importation of communicable diseases and maintain preparedness in responding to any outbreaks of infectious disease of public health concern. Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases remain as a significant public health threat regionally and globally as evidenced by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although Brunei Darussalam has made significant improvements in making the country safer, it needs to continue to enhance its capacities and preparedness level through a whole of nation approach linking all relevant sectors and players, including finance, health, agriculture, environment, emergency responders, security agencies and others, in working closely together to protect the public health.

In October 2019, Brunei Darussalam conducted the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) of International Health Regulations (IHR) Core Capacities, an assessment of Brunei Darussalam's capacity to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats (which may be biological, chemical or radiological in nature) and a joint review of the country's capacities to prepare for and respond to complex public health emergencies. A team of international health experts and their national counterparts met to evaluate Brunei Darussalam's capacities in 19 technical areas.

Together, these areas, including disease surveillance, national legislation, risk communication capacity, food safety, zoonotic disease and biosafety and biosecurity, span the capacities required under the International Health Regulations (2005) to respond to all known natural and man-made emergency health threats. The National Committee on the Implementation of the WHO IHR 2005, chaired by the Minister of Health, will review, consider and plan for the implementation of the various recommendations from the JEE, once the official report is finalised and released by the WHO. The official report is expected to be released in 2020.

PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING NCDs

Brunei Darussalam's 'National Multisectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs (BruMAP-NCD) 2013-2018' was developed to prevent and control NCDs through enabling healthier environments as well as reducing risk factors and better management. The goal is to achieve 18% relative reduction by 2018 in Brunei Darussalam to be fully aligned with the global target of a 25% relative reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by 2025. Evaluation on this goal has been done by two WHO consultants in November 2019, in which the report is currently being drafted.

There are two strategic themes to the Action Plan, namely improving health through enabling environment and healthy choices, and improving health through enhancing the continuum of care for NCDs, with five objectives, which are to:

- i) Reduce tobacco use;
- ii) Promote balanced and healthy diet;
- iii) Increase physical activity;
- iv) Identify people at risk for NCDs and manage effectively; and
- v) Improve the quality of care and outcome of NCDs management.

Brunei Darussalam is committed to the global targets for NCDs, whereby within the next five years, the country targets to curb obesity and diabetes; reduce the rate of tobacco use by 30%; reduce the rate of those suffering from high blood pressure by 25%; reduce the rate of high sugar drinks intake among children by 50%; and reduce the rate of tooth decay in children.

This whole of nation approach in tackling NCDs has been further strengthened with the establishment of the Multisectoral Taskforce on Health that currently oversees five main cross-functional issues, namely:

- i) Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life;
- ii) Reducing Smoking;
- iii) Improving Brunei Darussalam's Food Environment;
- iv) Supporting Active Communities; and
- v) Ensuring A Mentally Health and Resilient Nation.

The Task Force is chaired by the Minister of Health and members comprised of several Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments from relevant government agencies. Identified actions have been agreed on for each initiative and implemented by the MOH in collaboration with related government agencies, with quarterly reporting on the progress of the various initiatives and actions.



Image: Promoting healthy lifestyles at all ages.



Prevention and Control of NCDs:



Introduction of the **National Health Screening Programme** to detect and prevent NCDs which allows early and effective management of these diseases.



Amendments to the Customs Import Tax and Excise Duties which includes an **increase in excise duty** for food and beverages that contain high sugar and monosodium glutamate content.

No importation and sales of tobacco products since May 2014.



Healthier Choice Logo to encourage the reformulation and production of healthier choice products to help consumers make informed food choices.



Development of **School Canteen Guidelines** and **Drinking Water Policy**, for health promotion in schools.



Development of the **National Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Child Care Centres**.

Community engagement programmes such as through the **Mukim Sihat Programme** and **Health Ambassadors' Programme**.

Workplace and Health Programme (WAH), a collaborative programme between MOH and Gleneagles Jerudong Park Medical Centre, to provide workplace environment that support employees to eat healthy, be more active and tobacco-free, in addition to having good mental well-being.

EMPOWERING THE ELDERLY



Image: One of the regular Tai Chi sessions at Tasek Lama Recreational Park.

In 2019, senior citizens aged 65 years or above accounted for approximately 4.8% of

the total population. UN 2019 estimations showed that the elderly population in the country is expected to double by 2030⁴. In 2017, the National Council on Social Issues (MKIS) reviewed and approved the Senior Citizens Action Plan, which is in line with the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016-2020).

This Action Plan has three main objectives to ensure healthy and active citizens, namely develop productive and independent senior citizens, ensure the welfare and wellbeing of senior citizens and provide friendly support systems for senior citizens in ensuring a friendly environment and encourage them to be actively involved in the community.

⁴ UN World Population Prospects (2019).

In support of such Action Plan is the implementation of the senior citizens' health promotion programme which was first introduced at the Senior Citizen Activity Centre in Lambak Kanan, Brunei-Muara District in 2014.

This was followed by a similar programme conducted specifically for a local senior citizen association, PENYULUH, in the Belait District in 2015. The programme was reviewed and re-introduced at the Senior Citizen Activity Centres in the Tutong District in 2018 and in the Belait District in 2019. This revised programme is planned to be rolled out to the Brunei-Muara and Temburong Districts in 2020. The aim of the programme is to raise awareness of senior citizens on health-related issues, specific health services and issues related to ageing as well as to empower senior citizens so that they

can continue to live a healthy lifestyle and enjoy good quality of life.

Healthcare in Brunei Darussalam has evolved rapidly over the years to where it is now achieving universal health coverage and the provision of comprehensive services encompassing primary, secondary to tertiary care and also public health services that serve in protecting the health and safety of the general population.

Recognising the cross-cutting nature of health issues and the importance of engagement and partnership for health through a whole of nation approach, the MOH continues to actively engage other relevant stakeholders and together, the country intends to translate the strategic plan for health into integrated actions, to derive significant health outcomes and improve the wellbeing of the people.



Image: Supporting World Cancer Day 2019.



A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

Brunei Darussalam AIDS Council (BDAIDSCOUNCIL)

The BDAIDSCOUNCIL aims to educate the public about HIV and AIDS in order to be well informed and live a healthier life, with activities including:



- Establishment of the **Penyinar Club**, the youth division of the BDAIDSCOUNCIL:
 - To motivate the youth members and other youth to practise a healthy and positive way of living;
 - To reach out to as many youths as possible on HIV/AIDS related matters for HIV and AIDS prevention; and
 - To spread awareness on HIV, AIDS and related issues, especially among youth in Brunei Darussalam.
- **HIV Awareness Programme for Peers and Youth (HAPPY)**, which is a youth-led project that spreads awareness on HIV throughout the country, including knowledge on teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. It combines videos, audio, visuals, games, songs, jokes, debates as well as comic strips to pass the message to young people.
- **Life Skills Training (LESTARI)** is a programme to teach young people various life skills in an interactive and youth-friendly setting. While physically, mentally and emotionally challenging, the programme is expected to assist the participants in facing their future life.
- Organising **World AIDS Day programmes** with forums and engagements with stakeholders.
- **National Workshop on reproductive health** for school counsellors and school leaders.
- Anonymous HIV testing.
- Future plans include:
 - The formation and empowerment of Community Groups. Based on the success of the Penyinar Club, BDAIDSCOUNCIL plans to reach out to the grassroots level to further engage and educate society. In the long term, this includes various community groups whenever possible.
 - A wider range of HIV and AIDS related services e.g. anonymous testing, support groups etc.

Sustainable Development Goal 4

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

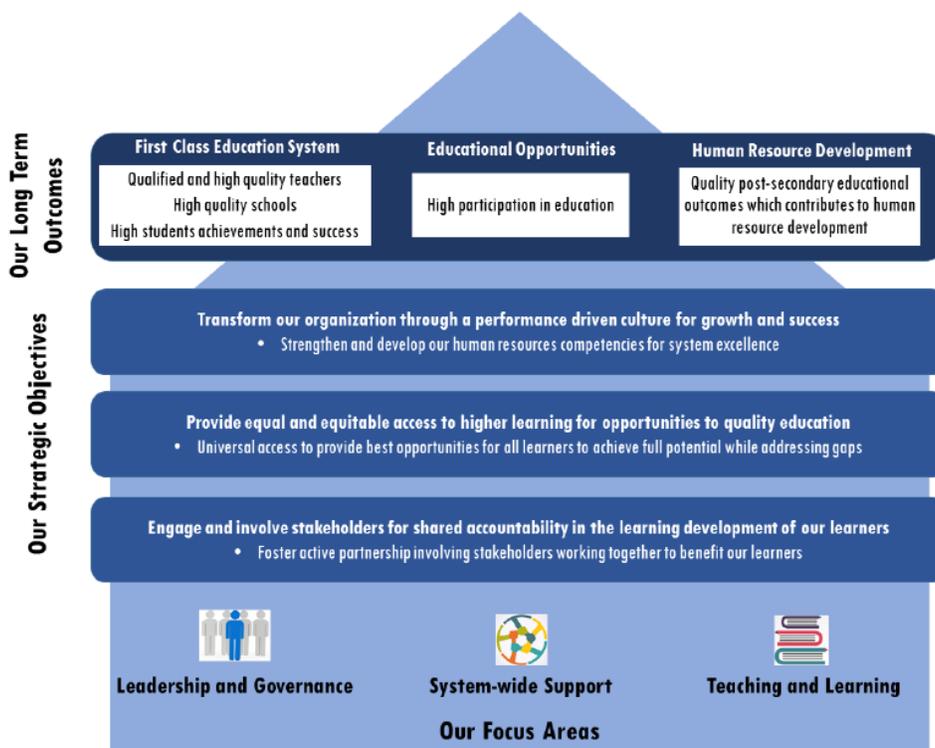
As a small nation with a population of less than half a million, education plays a critical role in Brunei Darussalam’s development. The country has always prioritised universal access to education for its citizens, emphasising on equity and equality for all. It recognises the crucial need for human resource development in order to meet its needs for an educated and marketable workforce, in which it has made significant progress.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is committed to providing an educational

system that prepares and equips the young generation for their present and future roles in the development of the country and as global citizens.

Through the ‘Strategic Plan for 2018-2022’, the MOE has set its mission to deliver holistic education to achieve the fullest potential for all in line with its vision of ‘Quality Education, Dynamic Nation’. The country’s education system aims to nurture each and every child, and to help students discover and maximise their talent, as well as to develop passion for lifelong learning.

Figure 2: Ministry of Education Strategic Plan for 2018-2022



FREE, BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

In ensuring inclusive and equal access to quality education, all children are provided free and compulsory basic education. In 2009, the MOE embarked on a new education system, the National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21), which implemented several changes to the education system, namely the education structure, curriculum and assessment as well as technical education. SPN21 allows for highly capable students to complete their secondary education in four years rather than five years. It caters to students' needs, by providing multiple pathways for students to choose programmes that suit their capabilities, interests, inclinations, growth and development.

The SPN21 ensures that within broad learning areas, learners will develop knowledge, understanding and essential skills, with the attitudes and values to ensure holistic development within the context of the 21st century. This provides the basis for lifelong learning and employability in a progressive and challenging world. Additionally, it seeks to inculcate sound moral values as a strong foundation in an era of rapid progress and change, and to empower educated and highly skilled people to be ready for the challenges to come.

Brunei Darussalam implements a policy of providing 12 years of education to all children. This consists of one year of pre-school education, six years of primary education, three years of lower secondary education and two years of upper secondary or vocational and technical education. Meanwhile, the Compulsory Education Act 2007 mandates for all children aged 6 to 14, irrespective of gender, race or abilities, to attend school regularly to ensure that children receive at least nine years of formal education. Private and international

education institutions also play key roles in and make significant contributions to the National Education System, from preschool and primary education up to higher education.

EARLY EDUCATION

In terms of improving access to quality early education, Brunei Darussalam has seen an increasing trend in the gross enrolment rate and net enrolment rate in pre-primary and primary education. The country has successfully achieved and maintained high pre-primary enrolment of five-year old children. School leaders actively engage parents at least eight months before the school year starts.



Image: Parents involvement in the SAFE programme in 2019.

Since 2014, the MOE has enhanced parenting education through the 'School and Family Engagement (SAFE) Programme' in all pre-schools, which enables parents to be deeply involved in their children's literacy development.

Brunei Darussalam also introduced the Assistant Teacher Volunteer Programme to enable volunteers to be placed in schools to assist pre-school teachers to ensure that all students are better able to access quality early childhood education.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In ensuring inclusive quality education for all, students with special needs are provided with special education programmes, at both primary and secondary mainstream government schools. The number of current students with special needs in these schools has reached to about 2,014 students. Modifications and/or adaptations are made to the curriculum, as well as in teaching and learning strategies to suit the needs of these students, so that they may achieve their fullest potential.



Image: Learning Daily Living Skill and ICT in a school under the Model Inclusive Schools Project.

In 2008, the Model Inclusive Schools Project was introduced and implemented in selected primary and secondary schools, with the aim of improving access and participation for students with special needs.



Image: Cooking and gardening projects in Centre of Excellence, Sultan Hassan Primary School, Temburong District.

In January 2019, the MOE embarked on a major centralisation initiative to set up two Centres of Excellence for students with special needs in the Temburong District. These Centres offer appropriate infrastructures and facilities, specialised resources and learning equipment, while providing Special Education Needs Assistance (SENA) teachers and teacher aides to meet student needs based on their diagnosis. The Centres aim to promote equal and equitable opportunities according to student needs and abilities in order to ensure access, engagement and active participation.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Since the formalisation of education in 1912, Brunei Darussalam has made remarkable progress in its literacy rate. The basic literacy rate has increased from 69.4% in 1971, to 96.9% in 2016 and 97.2% in 2019.

The Centralised Assessment Unit (CAU) at the MOE was formed to provide evidence-based data and comprehensive reports in improving teaching pedagogy and students' learning outcomes based on Student Assessment Trackers (SAT). The SAT is a standardised measure on Literacy and Numeracy that provides data which can be used to improve students' competency.

Brunei Darussalam also participated in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) for the first time in 2018 to measure its students' proficiency in Reading, Mathematics and Science, benchmarking against 79 other countries and economies. Among the participating ASEAN Member States, Brunei Darussalam was ranked 3rd in all domains of the PISA 2018. Overall results have placed Brunei Darussalam in the 60th place for

Reading, 51st for Mathematics and 50th for Science.

Since 2016, the country has implemented the Brunei Darussalam Literacy and Numeracy Standard which provides a national benchmark for all schools implementing the SPN21 curriculum which include instruction, assessment, and intervention. This is to ensure that students are able to achieve a high level of competency in literacy and numeracy by the end of each school year.

Brunei Darussalam also continues to undertake several initiatives to improve literacy levels and quality of teaching for children, such as the distribution of Early Literacy packs in joint collaboration with various ministries. The Language and Literature Bureau conducts an Early Literacy Programme, which includes educating expectant parents on the importance of reading and early literacy.

LIFELONG LEARNING

The MOE, through its Strategic Plan 2018-2022, is committed and dedicated in supporting *Wawasan Brunei 2035* to develop a knowledge-based society through increasing the opportunities to lifelong learning (LLL) and encouraging its people to embrace the concept of LLL throughout their life and work.

Realising the importance of such pursuit of knowledge in Brunei Darussalam, the MOE has established the Lifelong Learning Centre, known as the L³ Centre. This Centre oversees the LLL programmes and activities conducted by various LLL centres and providers, and acts as a 'one-stop information centre' for LLL programmes and activities in the country. The L³ Centre plays an important role in supporting the MOE to improve opportunities for LLL through

developing policy, framework and guideline to promote access to LLL, reviewing the provision of LLL, and promoting enrolment in LLL programmes and activities.

There are several other LLL centres under the MOE, which also support the Ministry's strategic initiatives through their LLL programmes and activities such as the Centre for Lifelong Learning at *Universiti Brunei Darussalam* (UBD), Leadership and Lifelong Learning Centre at *Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali* (UNISSA), Tri-CED at *Universiti Teknologi Brunei* (UTB), and Continuing Education and Training under the Institute of Brunei Technical Education (IBTE CET).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

Brunei Darussalam offers various alternative programmes for its post-secondary students to cater to their strengths and interests. Its local universities, UBD, UTB and UNISSA, offer numerous undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. As a reflection of their progress and development, both UBD and UTB are young universities that have recently been highly ranked in the QS World University Rankings and the QS Asian University Rankings.



Image: UBD.

On the other hand, *Politeknik Brunei* (PB) was established to cater to the needs of young Bruneians with Level 5 Diploma qualifications. Consecutively, Brunei Darussalam's Technical Education Transformation resulted in the establishment of the IBTE. Both of these Technical and Vocational Education Training institutions adhere to a demand-driven approach that follows the Brunei Darussalam Qualification Framework. This framework was developed together with stakeholders to ensure alignment with industry needs. The IBTE and PB offer technical education opportunities through a variety of diploma and certification programmes.

There are also opportunities to pursue further education at private higher education institutions such as Laksamana College of Business, Kemuda Institute, Micronet International College, International Graduate Studies College, Cosmopolitan College of Commerce and Technology, Mahakarya Institutes of the Arts Asia, HADtech College and BICPA-FTMS Accountancy Academy.



Image: UBD graduates.

Educational scholarships for further education in both local and overseas institutions are offered by the Government and private sectors. Additionally, an education loan facility is also made available to provide support for students who are keen to pursue higher education but do not meet

the minimum requirements to qualify for scholarships. In 2018, the Technical and Vocational Education Scholarship Scheme was introduced to provide additional academic opportunities to school leavers with 3 'O' levels and below to continue their studies.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF TEACHERS

Brunei Darussalam has taken several initiatives towards ensuring that teaching quality and standards can be improved and enhanced. The MOE has introduced the Brunei Teacher Standards, which is a set of teaching competencies designed to raise the quality of teaching, to improve the attainment of all students and the overall quality of education in Brunei Darussalam.

The Brunei Darussalam Teachers Academy (BDTA) aims to provide continuous and quality professional development programmes that develop and build teachers' capacity. This programme is designed to develop the expertise of teachers in their respective fields towards effective teaching and learning, thereby promoting students' excellence.

To evaluate its progress in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, Teacher Performance Appraisal is applied as performance descriptors for teaching competencies, with SAT used to measure students' achievements and learning in literacy and numeracy.

The MOE has newly established the Department of Educators Management to ensure the Ministry is supplied with highly skilled and successful human resource (teachers, school leaders and specialists) through a comprehensive and robust human resource management that focuses on four domains:

- i) Development and implementation of rigorous and comprehensive selection and recruitment process of teachers;
- ii) Strategic deployment and redeployment of teachers and school leaders according to needs and priority;
- iii) Career progression pathway for both teachers and school leaders; and
- iv) Succession planning projection and provision of pre-retirement programmes to educators who are going to retire.

The MOE has also embarked on the Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Programme towards realising SPN21 policy objectives on improving student learning outcomes in line with National Literacy and Numeracy Standards. The strategic objectives of this programme are to achieve high quality English Language and Mathematics teaching; produce highly literate and numerate students; and a system empowered to deliver sustained improvements in literacy and numeracy.

In July 2019, 149 English Language and Mathematics teachers, 24% beyond the targeted number, were accredited as Coaches, thus ensuring the sustainability of the programme. These coaches comprised of a pool of selected teachers of the English Language and Mathematics who have completed a Coaching Integrated Professional Development for three phases (Accredited, Specialist and Expert) for up to 12-15 months and are supported via one-on-one in-school coaching based on specialisation (English Language or Mathematics) and pedagogical approach using Teaching for Mastery Framework in English Language and Mathematics.

SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

In progressing towards the acquisition of 4th Industrial Revolution skills, the Ministry's Science, Technology and Environmental

Partnership (STEP) Centre provides a value-added platform for schools and assists teachers in encouraging and increasing the involvement of students in quality STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) activities and programmes. One of their initiatives was the Green School Gardening (GSG).

Other initiatives include empowerment of students in digital literacy via programming and coding competitions. Such competitions have been co-organised by STEP Centre and the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry as early as in primary schools and with full support from the Curriculum Development Department and BDTA in providing educational materials and training respectively.



Image: Students harvesting lettuce and planting Pak Choi during the GSG programme.

Since the introduction of SPN21, the MOE has incorporated topics on Global Citizenship Education in formal curriculum at different levels of education, both in classroom settings and through extra-curricular activities, to educate students about global matters in different levels of education.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

To enhance the global partnership for development, the Government offers scholarships for international students to

pursue higher level education in various academic institutions in Brunei Darussalam. The UBD Graduate Research Scholarship is awarded to outstanding scholars, students and professionals to undertake graduate study and advanced research in UBD. The scholarship provides Bruneian and non-Bruneian candidates with the unique opportunity to pursue their academic and research goals and network extensively with international researchers.

Brunei Darussalam also continues to collaborate through policy discussions, sharing of best practices, and technical cooperation with its regional and international partners such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and Asia-Europe Education Ministers Meeting to ensure a quality education system and highly skilled workforce that are benchmarked against global standards.

In progressing towards *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, the Government will continue to invest in its people by providing equal and equitable access to education that will not only meet the needs of individuals, but also develop younger generations equipped with 21st century skills and Malay Islamic Monarchy driven values that are required for them to be future ready.



A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

La Vida

La Vida, a local non-profit organisation, focuses on providing emotional, financial and social support to families in need. In addition, La Vida provides educational support for underprivileged students through provision of programmes such as:



Homework Club:

This is a pilot programme to provide supplementary teaching by staff and volunteer teachers to underprivileged primary level students from selected schools. With the aim of raising the academic levels of underprivileged students based on school assessment tests and scores, the programme focuses on Mathematics and English Language skills. Snacks are also provided during the programme. Future plans include extending the programme into more schools and increasing the involvement of the private sector and individuals through volunteering or sponsorship of resources or meals.



Image: La Vida's Homework Club Programme.

Study Pack donation:

Annually, an average of 300-400 study packs that consist of school bags and stationery, are given out to underprivileged students.

The La Vida thrift shop also provides a free Book Library for underprivileged and special needs children/youth.



Image: LA VIDA's Study Pack donation programme

Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Brunei Darussalam

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Brunei Darussalam, a non-profit Chinese business association established in 1946, comprises of businesses which represent a wide range of industries in the country, including manufacturing, professional services, insurance, law, wholesale and retail trade.

Aside from its business activities, the Chamber provides assistance to less fortunate students through its **Education Fund**, which has helped many students complete their tertiary education, among others, in Law, Medicine & Business.

Moving forward, the Chamber aims to strengthen this fund and provide further opportunities to potential students.

Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD) ALAF Programme

The BIBD ALAF Programme was launched in May 2013 by Her Royal Highness Paduka Seri Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah. Currently supporting 240 students (as of January 2020), this unique programme supports the life-long learning aspirations of its students.

One of the objectives of the BIBD ALAF Programme is to ensure that talented, underprivileged students are not limited by their financial circumstances. Students are selected based on the family's monthly household income. In order to be selected for the programme, students must achieve excellent examination results (scoring 85% and above) for 3 consecutive years.

In addition to comprehensive financial and academic support, the BIBD ALAF Programme provides opportunities for students to take part in events such as workshops, motivational talks, career counselling as well as recreational activities. Students who are deemed to need more support are also provided with Educational Intervention Programmes such as tuition, personal coaching and study groups.

The programme is kept sustainable by the collaborative efforts of both the private and public sector, which includes BIBD's own charity expeditions, generous contributions from corporate agencies as well as the general public.

Sustainable Development Goal 5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Women in Brunei Darussalam play an important role in the development of the country, and contribute openly and equally to society. In recognition of their involvement and impact, the country is fully committed to the advancement of all women and girls.

Significant progress has been made towards women empowerment and gender equality in Brunei Darussalam. Women and girls are given equal opportunities in education, training, healthcare, employment, ownership of assets, benefits as well as citizenship. Women's equal economic participation is further ensured through non-discriminatory access to incentives and entrepreneurial support such as financial assistance schemes, Infocommunications Technology (ICT), business counselling, and training.

Brunei Darussalam reaffirms that women are given high priority in the national agenda. In line with the position of women as the heart of a family, and to support the country's development, the Government, through the Special Committee on Family Institutions, Women and Children⁵ under the National Council on Social Issues (MKIS), has devised a specific Plan of Action for issues related to women in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The Plan of Action is implemented through a whole of nation approach including at the grassroots level and with the involvement of

non-governmental organisations (NGOs) towards ensuring unified action from all stakeholders involved in women's affairs. This Plan of Action, which is currently being revised, has the strategic objective to develop women's optimum potential through gender equity, capacity building and self-development. It has eight priority areas, including the promotion and protection of rights, healthcare, economic empowerment, employment and work life balance. Currently, a study on Women Development in the country is being considered, with the outcomes to be incorporated into the revised Plan of Action.

The Government has maintained a long-standing policy of providing universal access to quality education. Indeed, the importance of female education was emphasised well before the country's independence in 1984, as reflected in its First National Development Plan 1953-1958 which stated that "*educating a boy means educating one person but educating a girl means educating the whole family*"⁶.

The 2018 United Nations Gender Inequality Index ranked Brunei Darussalam, with a value of 0.234, 51st out of 162 countries. The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index 2020 ranked Brunei Darussalam 95th out of 189 countries globally, whereas for the East Asia and Pacific region, Brunei Darussalam was ranked 11th out of 20 countries. Brunei Darussalam ranked 28th in

⁵ Members are Prime Minister's Office; Ministry of Finance and Economics; Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Religious Affairs; Attorney General's Chamber, Prime Minister's Office; Royal Brunei Police Force, Prime Minister's Office; Syariah Court, Ministry of Religious Affairs; Public Services Department, Prime Minister's Office; and Women's Council of Brunei Darussalam

⁶ 1st Brunei Darussalam National Development Plan (1953-1958), page 100

terms of economic participation and opportunity, and maintained its rank of 1st place globally in terms of girls' enrolment in secondary as well as tertiary education.

Eligibility and selection criteria for educational scholarships are based on merit, not on gender. Applications on the Technical and Vocational Education Centralised Admission System as well as the Higher Education Centralised Admission System objectively take account of prerequisite academic qualifications, which avoids gender-based bias. In 2018, the number of female students were almost equal to the male students at all levels of education, with the exception of Pre-University and Tertiary levels where the number of female students exceeded male students. Females accounted for almost 60% of students in tertiary education.

There is no gender discrimination with regards to ownership of land, businesses or other form of assets. In terms of land ownership, Section 23 of Brunei Land Code (Cap. 40) provisions that any person (within the parameters of rules and regulations set by the Government from time to time) are entitled for transfer, charge, lease and sub-lease of land. There is also equal access to agricultural land, such as the Agricultural Development Area and the Rural Agricultural Area.

Brunei Darussalam has several legislations which serve to protect women and girls including the Penal Code (Cap. 22) and Women and Girls Protection Act (Cap. 120). The Islamic Family Law Act (Cap. 217) and the Married Women Act (Cap. 190), amended in 2010, include provisions dealing with '*dharar syarie*' (domestic violence).

GENDER EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ICT

ICT provides opportunities for gender equality by enabling everyone to have access to the same online resources and opportunities. It enables women to gain a stronger voice in their communities, the Government and at the global level. Brunei Darussalam promotes an environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the growing field of ICT, enabling both girls and technology companies to reap the benefits of greater female participation in the ICT sector.

The Authority for Info-Communications Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam (AITI) has implemented several programmes to nurture an interest in ICT in early stages, which can lead to the pursuit of ICT studies at the secondary and post-secondary levels and ultimately lead to greater workforce participation by women.

The private sector has also implemented initiatives to encourage women's development. To create and champion change for communities by technology, Dynamik Technologies, a leading ICT company in Brunei Darussalam, has initiated several programmes such as *eBunda*.

eBunda is a portal for women that provides access to e-learning opportunities to build awareness on issues such as health, environment, business and finance. The portal largely aims to target women who have taken a break from their careers to have children in support of their continued learning.

In May 2020, AITI, Women Techmakers Brunei and Google Developers Group Brunei collaborated to host a free online seminar in conjunction with 'International Girls in ICT Day'. The seminar featured women data scientists and software developers, both

local and international, as speakers. Amongst the topics covered were machine learning and data analytics.

In May 2020, AITI, Women Techmakers Brunei and Google Developers Group Brunei collaborated to host a free online seminar in conjunction with ‘International Girls in ICT Day’. The seminar featured women data scientists and software developers, both local and international, as speakers. Amongst the topics covered were machine learning and data analytics. ‘Girls in ICT Day’, which is an International Telecommunication Union backed initiative, aims to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in ICT.



ICT Programmes and Activities for Youth in Brunei Darussalam

Techkids Camp

- Organised since 2012 in collaboration with the Science, Technology and Environment Partnership (STEP) Centre.
- In 2019: 23 schools, both government and private, participated with total of 93 students, of which 44 were girls.

Hackathon for Teens

- Capacity building initiative to introduce students to the fundamentals of coding and computational thinking in collaboration with Grominda, a local ICT start-up.

ASEAN Cyberkids Camp

- Initiated by Malaysia in 2008 to enhance students’ adaptability, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork and ability to use ICT creatively.
- Hosted by Brunei Darussalam for the first time in 2018.

Teens in AI – Brunei Edition

- Darussalam Enterprise (DARe) introduced a capacity building programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to local schools, the first in Southeast Asia, with UK-based Acorn Aspirations as a global partner.
- The programme is delivered by a local startup, in partnership with the Government and private companies.
- It aims to support digital and leadership skills in Brunei Darussalam’s youth, and support future growth by driving innovation and productivity.
- The programme has been endorsed by the United Nations and worked closely with Microsoft Education as well as other notable tech companies.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS

In Brunei Darussalam, three parliamentary seats are currently being held by women who have been elected based on their merits and outstanding achievements and contributions to the society and country. Women are also well represented at all levels of civil service, especially at the managerial level and above.



Image: Women account for more than 60% of the top 2 divisions in civil service.

The country has recorded progress of women in positions of power and decision making in various fields, which include legal, political, financial and managerial professions, such as Ambassador-at-Large, Ambassadors, Legislative Council members,

Deputy Ministers, Attorney General, High Court Judges, Permanent Secretaries, Solicitor Generals, and Chief Executive Officers in the public and private sector. Women also serve in senior positions in higher education institutions, law enforcement agencies and as prosecutors in both Syariah and Civil courts.



Image: Brunei Darussalam Legislative Council Members.

Based on the Labour Force Survey in 2019, women accounted for 39.3% of the labour force, while the employment rate for women aged 25 to 64 years increased from 87.1% in 2014, to 88.6% in 2018 and 89.0% in 2019⁷. In the civil service, as of November 2019, women accounted for approximately 55% of the 50,768 civil service employees and accounted for more than 60% of the top two divisions.

To further promote the involvement of women in the workforce, the Government has introduced policies, legislation and regulations to promote gender equity in employment such as the Employment Order 2009, the Workplace Safety and Health Order 2009 and the Maternity Leave Regulation 2011. The Maternity Leave Regulation is a measure towards the coordination of the pre- and post-natal needs as well as the health interests of working mothers. With the said regulation, women

enjoy 105 days of paid maternity leave, an increase of 87.5% from 56 days previously.

More women are now employed in traditionally male-dominated fields including aviation, engineering and maritime. In November 2012, the national airline of Brunei Darussalam, Royal Brunei Airlines (RB), became the first national flag carrier in Southeast Asia to appoint a female airline captain. This was followed by the inaugural RB flight operated by an all-female crew in December 2013.

Since the beginning of Brunei Darussalam's involvement in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeeping operations in 2008, six female members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces have participated in the operations.

Women's active economic participation is ensured through equal access to entrepreneurial support, as can be seen in the rising number of women entrepreneurs in the country. Between 1 January 2015 to 8 June 2020, there were 2,333 female directors and 10,089 female owners/partners of companies registered under the Registry of Company and Business Names.

As such, in view of their active role in Brunei Darussalam's business community, women have been elected as part of the country's representatives at regional business councils such as the ASEAN Business Advisory Council and the APEC Business Advisory Council.

The Government has also collaborated through different regional and international platforms to support women economic empowerment. For instance, Brunei Darussalam, through DARE, co-organised the 4th ASEAN Japan Women

⁷ Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, Labour Force Survey

Entrepreneurs' Linkage Programme with the ASEAN-Japan Centre in February 2020 as a way to support start-up women entrepreneurs locally, as well as in ASEAN and Japan.

The event featured local women mentors and participants including Tarbiyyah Global, Brunei's first Islamic based scientific enrichment programme for children. Since its establishment in 2015, the company provides a hands-on, experiential way of learning and utilising Islamic spiritual attributes.



Image: The 4th ASEAN - Japan Women Entrepreneurs' Linkage Programme.

In 2018, the country also co-hosted the APEC SME Online-to-Offline Forum in 2018, which provided exposure and networks for startups and investors and sharing of best practices on digital transformation through expert panels, including local women entrepreneurs.

Initiatives undertaken by the private sector and NGOs such as Brunei Darussalam Women's Business Council (WBC) and the Brunei Womenpreneur Network also complement the Government's efforts to encourage participation of women entrepreneurs in the economy.

In recognition of its contribution to women empowerment, *Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam's* 'Special Underprivileged Mothers Empowerment Entrepreneurship programme' (BIBD SEED) was awarded the '3G Women Empowerment Programme' Award at the 4th Global Good Governance Awards in 2019.

Women also actively participate in sports and are well represented in regional and international events. The year 2012 marked an important milestone, whereby female athletes from Brunei Darussalam were represented at all levels in regional and international games, including the 2012 Olympic Games. The country takes pride in acknowledging that female athletes are an integral and significant part of Brunei Darussalam's national sporting contingents, for regional and international events.



Image: Brunei Darussalam's first female athlete at the 2012 Olympic Games for 400m.



Image: Brunei Darussalam's Silver and Bronze medalist at the 30th Southeast Asian Games in 2019.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN PROMOTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Brunei Darussalam's ratification of the CEDAW represents its commitment to protecting the rights and providing equal opportunities to women. The Government submitted its combined initial and second periodic report to the CEDAW Committee on 1 November 2013 which was considered by the Committee on 29 November 2014. The recommendations of the CEDAW Committee are currently being considered into the draft Plan of Action dedicated to women issues, demonstrating the country's commitment to formulating and implementing focused strategies and interventions on improving the rights of women.

At the ASEAN level, Brunei Darussalam participates in the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). Since 2010, the Government has appointed three ACWC Representatives on Women. As an active member, Brunei Darussalam led the formulation of the 'Gender Sensitive Guideline for Handling Women Victims of Trafficking in Persons' when it hosted a workshop in 2014. This Guideline was then adopted at the 10th ACWC Meeting in 2015. Additionally, the Government participates in ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and ASEAN Committee on Women. It chaired the ACW for 2019-2020.

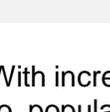
At the international level, Brunei Darussalam also participates in the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement Institute for the Empowerment of Women. The Government also works with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women under the ASEAN framework to access technical assistance on innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Through these participations, Brunei Darussalam has benefitted from the sharing of knowledge, experience, capacity building and best practices which further strengthen the Government's continuous efforts in the promotion and protection of women in the country.

Sustainable Development Goal 6

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Brunei Darussalam has an abundant natural supply of fresh water. The Government places great importance on an effective water supply system, to ensure that the population has access to clean, safe and affordable drinking water that conforms to the World Health Organization’s standards, while at the same time ensuring that it is sustainable. The country’s target is to sustainably use its water resources so that the future generations are able to enjoy the same benefits.

Access to clean water and sanitation:

-  **100%** of the population has access to clean and safe drinking water since 2000.
-  **93%** of the population has access to sanitation.
-  Wastewater treatment service is **provided at no cost** to the public.

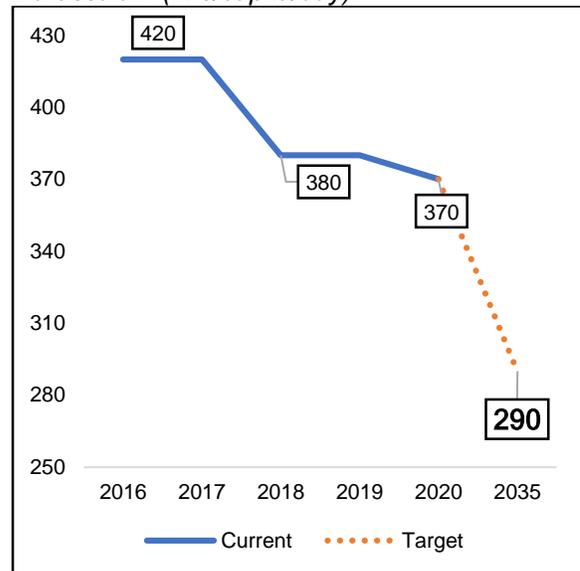
Currently **35 catchments** (18 major and 17 subsidiary rivers) throughout the country.

With increasing demands and pressures due to population growth and business needs, the Government is concurrently addressing the challenges of wastewater, river water quality, as well as water security and water resource management to support and sustain the quality of life and economic productivity.

WATER CONSUMPTION

Despite its progress in recent years, Brunei Darussalam has one of the highest daily water consumption rates per capita in the region.

Figure 3: Water Consumption in Brunei Darussalam (litre/capita/day).



This necessitates the Government to balance water supply and demand, such that the consumption of water does not adversely impact its water resources.

To address this issue, the country’s key approach for an effective water supply system and sustainable water resources includes:

- Integrated planning and development with the aims to create a data sharing platform, knowledge sharing through feasibility studies and masterplan as

- well as to streamline policies pertaining to water resource management;
- ii) Adopting alternative funding mechanism to reduce dependency on government funds and increase financial robustness for effective implementation of water projects; and
 - iii) Water balance that include addressing non-revenue water (NRW), reviewing water tariff, strengthening water conservation awareness and enforcement.

In order to enhance water security for the future, the Government plans to update the forecasted water demand through a feasibility study in the supply of transboundary water from the Temburong District, the least populated of all the four districts, to Brunei-Muara District, the most heavily populated district.

EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF WATER

To efficiently manage water, the Government intends to undertake a comprehensive study and management of NRW, which covers water lost in the water network through pipe leaks, tanks overflow, metering inaccuracies and illegal tapping of water. Currently, NRW accounts for 40% of the total water supply.

This study is expected to be able to increase the reliability of the pipe systems, reduce water disruptions as well as improve supply of water, through minimisation of pipe leaks and identification of quick repair areas.

The Government is also in the process of implementing a new water tariff system and a new Unified Smart Metering System, in which the new rates are based on a tiered structure for residential, commercial and raw water. This progressive tariff system better reflects the costs of water production as well as encourages more efficient use of water. This will ensure sustainability of the water

supply by addressing the substantial discrepancy between revenue collection and production expenditure.

It is also in the process of producing the Brunei Darussalam Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme, which aims to determine the terms and conditions, requirements and guidelines for water fittings, appliances, apparatuses and products to be labelled for water efficiency. This will enable consumers to make informed choices in purchasing more water efficient products and consequently inculcate water saving practices.

The Government also acknowledges the importance of saving water through the promotion of more sustainable consumption behaviour by the general public.

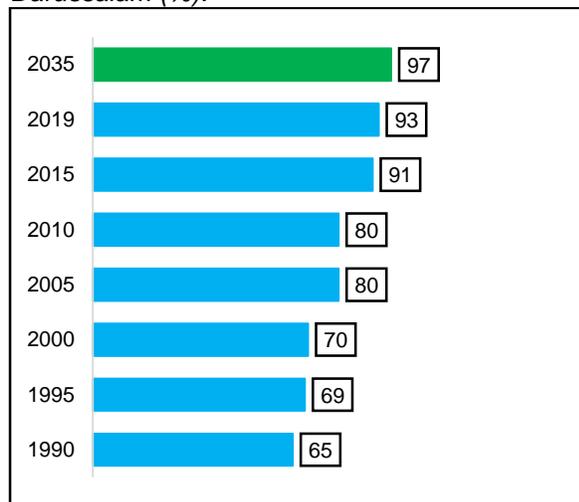
ROBUST SANITATION MANAGEMENT

In Brunei Darussalam, wastewater treatment service is provided at no cost to the public. The Government places a high priority to ensure the robustness and continuity of sanitation facilities and services in the country.

Currently, there are 35 catchments (18 major and 17 subsidiary rivers) throughout the country, to effectively manage and maintain sewerage infrastructure and assets. Through ministerial projects as well as projects under the National Development Plans, 93% of the population has access to sanitation.

The remaining 7% of the population without access to sanitation are old water village settlements as well as a small proportion of the population living in very remote areas. The Government's target is to increase access to sanitation from 93% to 97% by 2035.

Figure 4: Access to Sanitation in Brunei Darussalam (%).



Achieving this will require the adoption of sound engineering solutions that are able to be applied to the complex arrangements of the old water settlements, vacuum systems for the remaining new water village settlements as well as septic systems strategised for the sparsely populated and remote residential areas. Further, the Government aims to not only provide access to sanitation for all but also to ensure that the river ecosystems are healthy.

Towards the 2030 Agenda, the Government will continue in maintaining 100% access to clean and safe drinking water as well as improving access to sanitation, while also intensifying efforts to ensure that these are achieved in a sustainable manner.

Sustainable Development Goal 7

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Ensuring the provision of reliable, efficient, affordable and safe electricity supply in the country remains a priority for the Government. Residents in Brunei Darussalam benefit from a well-developed, reliable and low-priced utilities system. It has among the highest electrification rates in ASEAN with 99.9% of the population connected to the grid.

Power grids in the country are operated by two providers, namely the Department of Electrical Services under the Ministry of Energy and Berakas Power Company, which provides reliable power to approximately 60% and 40% of the national power demand respectively.

Access to electricity:

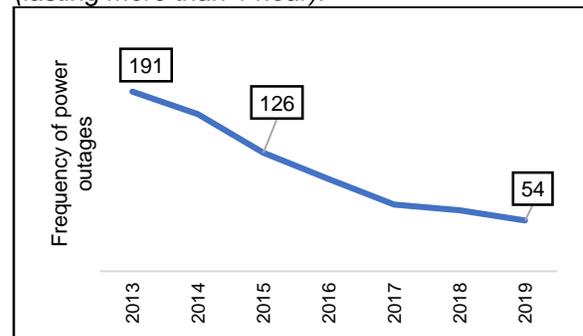


99.9% of the population is connected to the grid.

Generation Capacity ▲ from 777.70 MW (2015) to **877 MW** (2019).

Electricity demand expected to grow **3-4%** to **5,900 GWh** between now and 2029.

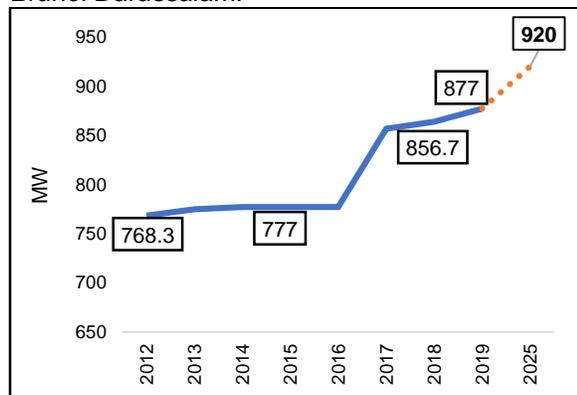
Figure 6: Trend of Frequency of Power Outages (lasting more than 1 hour).



Brunei Darussalam’s electricity generation capacity has increased in recent years, as seen from the figure below.

Brunei Darussalam’s electricity demand is expected to grow by 3-4% between now and 2029, driven by increased industrial and economic activities, transportation needs and population growth. In an increasingly electronic and electrified age with the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution, the International Energy Agency reported that global electricity demand rose by 4% in 2018, nearly twice as fast as overall energy demand, and is rising at its fastest pace since 2010. Within ASEAN alone, electricity demand is expected to grow twice the rate of the overall energy demand by 2040.

Figure 5: Electricity Generation Capacity in Brunei Darussalam.



Recognising the significance of inclusive development, Brunei Darussalam facilitates access to the social benefits of electricity, in



support of national objectives to eliminate poverty and leave no one behind.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

It is important to balance this demand growth with sustainability, affordability and reliability of supply in the long-term. Industries are increasingly looking for smarter and more sustainable ways to produce and use electricity. There will be an increased reliance on innovations in technology; business models; and trans-border connectivity and integration to meet electrification needs in a manner that addresses the trilemma of affordability, reliability and sustainability. Sustainable and inclusive electrification for socio-economic development is one of the pressing energy developments and issues. It will be a key opportunity as well as challenge in the future.

To sustainably meet this demand, Brunei Darussalam is conscious of the need to further diversify its energy mix and incorporate alternative and renewable energy sources into the grid. It has traditionally met such demand with fossil fuels, namely through natural gas. However, more alternative and renewable energy sources are coming into play to fuel this demand.

Brunei Darussalam aims to strengthen national sustainable energy efforts through the implementation of renewable and alternative energy, as well as energy efficiency initiatives, to support the country's energy security, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Brunei Darussalam seeks to prioritise the development of legislative measures in order to accelerate Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC), and Renewable Energy (RE) Projects. The Government aims to

reduce energy intensity to 45% by 2035 (using 2005 as the base year) through EEC legislative measures and initiatives; power efficiency improvement; and increase RE capacity to at least 30% in the total power generation mix. To raise general awareness at all levels and sectors of the community, the Ministry of Energy (ME) continues to conduct nationwide promotion of plans and programmes related to EEC and RE. In order to achieve these targets, among the initiatives are the implementation of relevant Standards and Labelling Orders as well as EEC Building Guidelines for various sectors; appointment of Energy Managers; RE Deployment, in particular solar; and the deployment of Green Transportation.

SOLAR PV SYSTEM

The first solar trial carried out in Brunei Darussalam in 2011 was Tenaga Surya Brunei with 1.2 MW capacity for power generation. Six different types of solar PV panels were tested⁸. This project provided valuable information for the country on the most applicable and high performance PV technologies suitable to the local meteorological conditions.

In the next three years, in boosting RE power generation capacity, the ME is looking to build a 30 MW solar farm to be located at Sungai Akar in the Brunei-Muara District. Subsequently, through various solar farm projects and rooftop solar installations, Brunei Darussalam aims to have total installed capacity of solar power generation of at least 300 MW by 2035. This is to support its goal to increase RE capacity to at least 30% in the total power generation mix.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

The ME has ensured a 99.9% electrification rate for the country. With an abundance of land in relation to its small population of less

⁸Mono-crystalline, Poly-crystalline, Tandem, Amorphous, Copper-Indium-Selenium and Heterojunction with Intrinsic Thin-layer



than half a million, a small portion of Brunei Darussalam's population resides in remote areas, particularly in the rural areas of the Belait and Temburong Districts.

In these areas, distance and terrain pose challenges to connectivity to the grid. A key part of ensuring complete electricity access for the population, especially in these rural areas, where provision of transmission cables is challenging, is through small-scale RE projects, specifically solar power. The small-scale roll out of solar panels in rural areas has had significant effects on the lives of residents.

As a supplement to the generators in place, it has allowed them to enjoy greater stability in electricity supply, while being decentralised from the main grid. It also reduces emissions from generators powered by fossil fuels. In the long term, Brunei Darussalam aims to power these rural areas with permanent supply using cables, and therefore via integration to the main grid. In ensuring a fully integrated national grid, a project to connect the Temburong District, a district which mostly relies on diesel power generation, to the main power system via a 66kV line is also underway, with a target completion date within the next five years.

BILATERAL POWER INTERCONNECTION

Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia are currently looking into undertaking electricity trade through a bilateral power interconnection project. The completion of this interconnection line will integrate Sarawak, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam to the ASEAN Power Grid's Eastern System. This power exchange would be a commitment to support the use of RE including hydropower sources, in the region for further energy security and to mitigate climate change effects.

REGIONAL COOPERATION ON RENEWABLE AND ALTERNATIVE POWER GENERATION

In supporting regional efforts towards ensuring sustainable energy, Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Korea co-chair the Renewable and Alternative Power Generation (RAPG) Work Stream under the auspices of the East Asia Summit (EAS) Energy Cooperation. This Work Stream was established as a result of a meeting between His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and President Barack Obama of the United States of America in March 2013 in Washington D.C. The Work Stream's main aims are to spur new RE collaboration and cooperation in the EAS region. Projects under the Work Stream will co-exist and complement the current RE activities within ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners.

It also aims to elevate the role of RE in the region by capacity building and exchange of knowledge and skills. Since its establishment, the RAPG Work Stream has focused its activities for EAS members to strengthen RE promoting policy through scaling up investments into the region. The Work Stream has also carried out Renewable Technology Demonstration and Renewable Energy Resource Mapping for the region.

Brunei Darussalam continues to actively implement EEC measures in its effort to diversify energy sources for sustainable development, as well as introducing the RE policy to encourage investment in renewable energy systems. Innovation, technology and collaboration will be key to meet current and future electricity demands. Brunei Darussalam supports global and regional calls for collaboration and welcome opportunities to explore joint research and innovation towards a more sustainable energy future.



Sustainable Development Goal 8

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Echoing the SDGs principle of leaving no one behind and the call for collaboration amongst the global community, Brunei Darussalam's economic policies are aimed at ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth that creates employment and improves living standards for all.

HUMAN CAPITAL

Brunei Darussalam recognises that people are one of the country's greatest assets. Therefore, it remains committed to invest in them for the country's future by maintaining inclusive policies on access to quality education, healthcare and financial inclusion, and enhancing labour productivity.

Based on the 2019 Labour Force Survey, in line with an increase in the working age population by approximately 32,000 persons (defined as aged 15 years and over), there was also an increase of more than 19,000 in the number employed.

Brunei Darussalam recorded a decline in the unemployment rate from 9.3% in 2017 to 6.8% in 2019. The unemployment rate for youth (defined as those aged 15 to 24 years) also continued to decrease from 48.5% in 2014, to 44.2% in 2017 and 39.8% in 2019.

On 1 January 2020, the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) was established under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), replacing the previous Manpower Planning Council, to manage unemployment issues in an efficient, effective and transparent manner. The MPEC will foster cooperation with education institutions and domestic industries, as well as ensure

employability of local university and technical education graduates. The MPEC will continue to work together with companies to learn more about projected human resources needs.

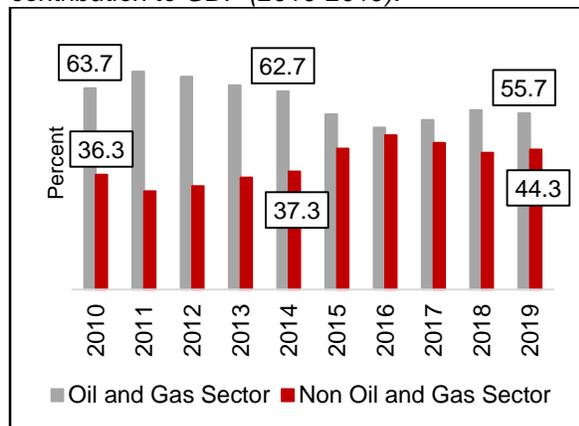
The Government is actively implementing initiatives and programmes to reduce the unemployment rate, particularly for the youth. One such initiative is the I-Ready Apprenticeship Programme, which is a three-year programme to help equip unemployed graduates with skills for the industry as well as to elevate their employability and marketability. Previously only available for those with Bachelor Degrees or higher, the programme has recently been extended to include Diploma Level 5 (HND or Advanced Diploma) and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET).

Another effort is driving the growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which has been the backbone of Brunei Darussalam's economy. MSMEs play an important role not just for economic development but also in job creation, thus providing income and reducing unemployment.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

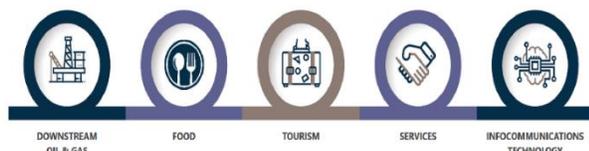
The Oil and Gas Sector remains as the main contributor to Brunei Darussalam's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Nonetheless, between 2010 and 2019, the country has seen increasing contribution of the Non-Oil and Gas Sector to the economy.

Figure 7: Oil and Gas & Non-Oil and Gas Sector contribution to GDP (2010-2019).



For long term economic sustainability, Brunei Darussalam continues to intensify its economic diversification efforts in five main priority sectors, namely (i) Downstream Oil and Gas; (ii) Food; (iii) Tourism; (iv) Services; and (v) Infocommunications Technology (ICT).

5 INVESTMENT PRIORITY CLUSTERS



Increasing activities in these sectors are expected to boost the growth of industries and spin-offs, create employment, increase exports and accelerate the country's economic growth.

To do so, the Government actively promotes attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Brunei Darussalam to stimulate private sector activities and to encourage local entrepreneurs, especially MSMEs, to reap the benefits of FDI by participating in the spin-off activities.

As a result of these efforts, as of 2018, the value of FDI which is currently operating in the country is B\$4.7 billion, whereas the value of the FDI currently being implemented is B\$1.5 billion. FDI itself has generated more than 1,000 jobs for the local workforce and has also contributed towards increasing the country's exports.

The 11th National Development Plan (NDP) (2018 – 2023) is geared towards supporting the Government's efforts to diversify by strengthening the private sector. With the theme 'Increase Non-Oil and Gas Sector Output as Catalyst for Economic Growth', projects under the 11th NDP are focused on spurring growth in the private sector, including the provision of infrastructure and utilities and ensuring that the workforce needs of future industries are met.

Brunei Darussalam also actively promotes tourism as one of its priority sectors, which includes sustainable or eco-tourism. Efforts so far have been implemented based on the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT)'s Strategic Plan (2016-2020).

The tourism industry has shown a gradual increase in the number of visitors between 2014 and 2018 especially those travelling by air. In 2018, the number of tourist arrivals by air increased by 7.4% with a total of 278,136 visitors compared to 258,955 visitors recorded in 2017.

To date, the Tourism Development Department has launched promotional packages highlighting places of interests and distinctive niche activities that are offered in a sustainable manner in Brunei Darussalam.

MPRT Strategic Plan (2016-2020)



The MPRT envisions a sustainable growth and increase in the number of tourists and tourism activities through:

- Strengthening and ensuring the **sustainability** of existing tourism products.
- Producing more **quality tourism offerings** with focus on:
 - Primary tourism products.
 - Emerging products with potential, such as beaches and recreational parks.
 - Activity based products such as bird watching, diving, and sports.
 - Adventure tourism.
 - Culture and community-based tourism.



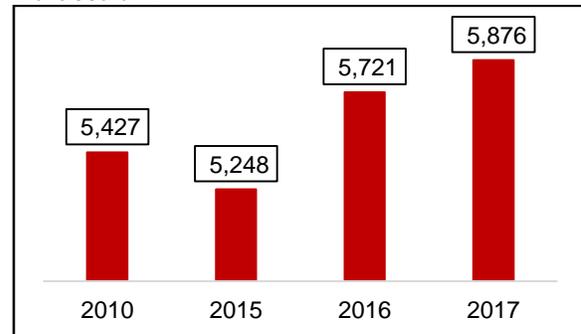
Image: Belalong Canopy Walkway, Temburong District.

MSMES DEVELOPMENT

As of 2017, MSMEs accounted for 57.3% of employment in the country. The number of MSMEs also increased from 5,427 in 2010 to 5,876 in 2017.

Brunei Darussalam embraces a whole of nation approach to drive the entrepreneurship agenda in the country. In 2016, Darussalam Enterprise (DARE) was set up with the primary goal of supporting the growth of MSMEs in Brunei Darussalam.

Figure 8: Number of MSMEs in Brunei Darussalam.



Entrepreneurship initiatives implemented by DARE include 'Industry Business Academy', 'Accelerate Bootcamp Programme', 'Micro Bootcamp Programme' and 'Brunei Mentors for Entrepreneurs Network'. These programmes target all groups of entrepreneurs including start-ups and those who are expanding their businesses beyond Brunei Darussalam. DARE also organises a MSMEs fair annually to give local entrepreneurs a platform to promote their locally made products.

To complement these efforts, other ministries have also introduced initiatives that provide assistance and support for Bruneians who are keen to become entrepreneurs. For example, in the area of agriculture and tourism, the MPRT is giving opportunities for local companies to participate and invest in the primary sector's economic activities. To date, a total of 5,635 active entrepreneurs have engaged in agriculture and agrifood sectors, of which 78% (4,407 entrepreneurs) were involved in the crop industry. A total of 2,093

entrepreneurs have engaged in the fisheries sector and a total of 3,219 jobs were created in the tourism sector. Altogether, employment for 7,981 locals have been created.

The *Universiti Brunei Darussalam* (UBD) set up the Entrepreneurship Village, in support of the Ministry of Education's National Entrepreneurship Agenda, which aims to create and support high growth in entrepreneurship, drive job creation and economic growth in the country, in line with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. Since the introduction of this Entrepreneurship Village in 2014 at the university campus, about 16% of graduates from UBD have successfully become entrepreneurs, with 300 start-ups founded by UBD graduates.

Complementing the Village is the UBD Startup Centre (USC) which provides a space for UBD alumni and graduating students to explore entrepreneurial ideas. This centre provides a platform and the ecosystem for startup growth within the university that includes facilities, co-working space, mentoring and network support.

CONDUCTIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Government reaffirms its commitment in maintaining a conducive business ecosystem to promote private sector development, vis-à-vis FDI and MSMEs.

Such efforts have been successful thus far, as reflected in the high scores received in several indicators under the World Bank Doing Business, with laudable improvements in streamlining process for starting a business, paying taxes, and getting electricity. For the 2020 edition, Brunei Darussalam was ranked 1st, with New Zealand, for ease of 'Getting Credit'; 16th for 'The Easiest to start a Business' in the region; and 66th worldwide for efforts in

'Enforcing Contracts' and 'Resolving Insolvency'.

Brunei Darussalam also recognises the importance of fostering healthy competition in the domestic market to contribute in enhancing efficiency and consumer welfare. As such, with the implementation of the Competition Order 2015 and the establishment of the Competition Commission of Brunei Darussalam, the country is expected to reinforce a pro-business and pro-investment climate, in line with the Government's long term goal to achieve a dynamic and sustainable economy.

The country's network of free trade agreements as well as regional and international trade initiatives that it is a part of have opened up opportunities for local businesses to explore and become an integral part of the global value chains.

Related to this, trade facilitation remains an area of focus to spur more economic activities in the country. This is achieved, among others, through simplified and streamlined customs processes, including through the online Brunei Darussalam National Single Window and information readily available through the Brunei Darussalam National Trade Repository.

To further promote industrial development, the Government has also established industrial sites, some of which cater to specific industries such as Pulau Muara Besar for oil and gas downstream industries; and Digital Junction for ICT and high-tech industries. All of these sites are in close proximity to the main sea port and the international airport.



FINANCIAL ACCESS AND LITERACY

Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam (AMBD) has collaborated with relevant agencies and financial institutions in facilitating access to financial products and services available in the country. In terms of access to banking and financial services for all, there were 14.3 bank branches and 64.4 ATMs per 100,000 adults in 2018.

In 2018, the Government established the *Bank Usahawan* with the objective of providing accessible financing for MSMEs in Brunei Darussalam. With flexibility offered in terms of bank collaterals, the Bank is able to take into consideration the unique character of each entrepreneur and provide a landscape of solutions that serve their best interests. Other private banks have also implemented financing programmes specifically for MSMEs, such as SME360 by *Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam* (BIBD) and SME Financing Scheme by Baiduri Bank.

Along with ensuring access to financing, AMBD has also undertaken efforts to encourage financial literacy and inclusion through courses, talks, roadshows and events to various target audiences and age groups.

Further, several notices and guidelines, as part of AMBD's regulatory measures, were issued to improve the market conduct of the financial service providers and enhance the financial consumer protection framework in the country.

Brunei Darussalam has also established a National Financial Literacy Council, which aims to ensure that all citizens are able to achieve their highest financial well-being, given their resources and commitments, through access to well-suited financial products, independent information and advice.

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Government recognises the important role of supporting infrastructure for economic development particularly in telecommunications and transportation.

The Maritime and Port Authority Brunei Darussalam was established in 2017 with a vision to form a 'Conducive and Dynamic Maritime and Port Environment' which will help to fulfil the needs of import and export activities.

Additionally, the Muara Port Company was formed in 2017 through a joint venture to operate the Muara Port Container and Conventional Terminals. The company is expected to further improve the efficiency and throughput of Muara Port.

A robust infrastructure is crucial in order for the digital economy to flourish. Brunei Darussalam has restructured its ICT sector with the consolidation of its telecommunications infrastructure under one company, namely Unified National Networks Pte Ltd.

The infrastructural improvement is anticipated to widen the platform for innovation and competition at the retail level. On 24 January 2020, three service providers have relaunched themselves, providing users with more choices of innovative services at competitive prices. Through such efforts, residents of the country can expect substantial improvements in the availability and quality of telecommunication services at more affordable prices. This would result in wider access to mobile networks and internet connectivity for everyone in the entire country, especially for those living in the rural areas, as well as to reduce the cost of doing business for local entrepreneurs.

Brunei Darussalam is also well on its way to prepare for and embrace the potentials of the digital economy. This includes the formation of the Digital Economy Council to provide national steer and direction on digital economy initiatives for Brunei Darussalam.

DECENT WORK

In ensuring decent work for all, Brunei Darussalam has ratified two fundamental conventions under the International Labour Organization, namely on minimum age and the worst forms of child labour (The Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)). Accordingly, the rights of children continue to be legally enforced through various relevant legislations. Section 103 of the Employment Order 2009 was amended in 2015 to prohibit the employment of children in any industrial undertaking⁹.

Brunei Darussalam is also taking concrete steps towards ratifying an additional fundamental convention, namely on forced labour.

The Department of Labour (DoL) works closely with other ministries and enforcement agencies on any suspected labour and

trafficking cases, as and when they arise. The DoL continues to enforce the minimum terms and conditions of employment as provided in the Employment Order 2009, which applies to all workers in the private sector and provides for the payment of wages, rest days, medical leave, maternity leave and other such rights that are in line with national conditions and practices.

The Safety, Health and Environment National Authority (SHENA), which is a statutory body, was established in 2017 to regulate and enforce all matters pertaining to workplace safety and health, environment and radiation in the country. Its mission is to ensure Brunei Darussalam remains as a safe place to work and live.

SHENA has actively engaged stakeholders in the general industry and non-industry sectors as well as the public through open Health, Safety and Environment forums. In 2019, two fatalities were recorded – a decrease from eight in 2018 and the lowest since 2016. There were zero major accidents recorded and 92% safety case certificates were issued out of 65 safety case reviewed.

⁹ "In an industrial undertaking or in an undertaking which is an industrial undertaking"

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Brunei Darussalam (NCCIBD)

The NCCIBD is comprised of the Brunei Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Brunei Darussalam. Established in April 1985, mooted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to represent Brunei Darussalam's business community in the local and international arena, the Association connects international businesses with local businesses and also serves to guide and assist enterprises in the country. The NCCIBD's members are MSMEs which are mainly based in the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade as well as the agriculture, tourism, food and beverage, and services sectors. Among the services offered by the NCCIBD include:

- i) business matching services among members domestically and internationally;
- ii) training programs (upon request with a small fee);
- iii) integrity check of businesses both locally and internationally;
- iv) engaging with the Government's policy makers on issues/matters related to the business community; and
- v) advisory and networking services both nationally and internationally.

As a focal point for international businesses to collaborate with and disseminate business opportunities to members, the Association also signs Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with other international Chambers of Commerce and Industries worldwide. The NCCIBD also monitors enterprises for 6 months to find viable business models and targets fresh university graduates.

The Brunei Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, founded in 1964, aims to support the interests of as well as provide leadership, guidance and development support to businesses. The Association is working closely with the Government in promoting trade and economic development, localisation, and is planning to launch an incubation program for the younger generation in 2020/2021, which will:

- offer business planning support;
- advisory services;
- organise workshops (3-month and 6-month training programs);
- offer office workspace for 2–3 groups of enterprises;
- connect young people to financial institutions; and
- provide mentoring services.

In addition to general business services, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Brunei Darussalam, a non-profit Chinese business association established in 1946, also provides business and industry information exchange opportunities and promotes communication between the international business community. This Association is committed to cooperate on the promotion of national economic and trade development, such as in the tourism industry. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce offers its Young Entrepreneur Council memberships to youth who are interested to engage in entrepreneurship, through which they are given opportunities and a platform to network with experienced members, as well as learn entrepreneurship skills.



WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had adverse effects on businesses and individuals in Brunei Darussalam. To mitigate these impacts, and to enable swift economic recovery, the Government has taken several interim measures:



To assist the private sector, particularly MSMEs, and ensure their operational viability:

- A six-month **deferral on employers' contributions to Employees Trust Fund (TAP) and Supplemental Contributory Pensions (SCP)** for private sector employees earning B\$1,500 per month and below in all sectors under the MSMEs category. Contributions by companies will be paid in advance by the Government to ensure that the annual dividend payments to employees in the private sector will not be affected.
- The Government will **finance the SCP contributions** for those registered as self-employed within the stated period, to ensure that they will have ongoing Survivorship Fund protection.
- Provision of:
 - **30% discount** for six months on **rental rates of government buildings** for MSMEs in the targeted sectors such as tourism, hospitality (including hotels and lodging houses), restaurants and cafes, as well as air passenger and water passenger transportation.
 - **15% discount** for six months on **electricity and water bills** for businesses in the targeted sectors.
 - **50% tax discount** for six months on corporate income tax for the year of assessment 2020 for the targeted sectors.
 - **25% salary subsidy to local employees** of MSMEs for a period of three months, for local employees who are receiving a monthly salary of B\$1,500 and below, and who contribute to the TAP.
- **Temporary exemption of custom and excise duties** on Personal Hygiene products, to assist businesses and consumers with the increasing demand related to health products.
- **Removal of rental charges** for wet and dry markets that are provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs for a period of six months.
- Help for **MSMEs through participation on e-platforms** for more effective business matching to help merchants market their goods online through the platform *www.ekadaibrunei.bn*. This measure is intended to assist and provide opportunities and incentives for traders to use e-platforms to operate and maintain their business more efficiently and competitively.
- **'Community for Brunei'** – a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative by BIBD, a virtual marketplace designed to help small businesses, whilst highlighting different social and charitable causes important to the heart of Brunei Darussalam.
- **'Buy Local Produce Campaign'** – following the temporary closure of a number of markets in the Tutong and Belait Districts as part of measures to





curb the spread of COVID-19 in the country, this initiative is to ensure the income of local market vendors and farmers continue to be secure and unaffected by the temporary closure. It will also help to ensure price stability for agricultural produce and encourage planting of agricultural produce in a continuous manner.

- DARE will also increase the grant amount to further expand the **Co-Matching Grants initiative**, which will assist businesses to improve and better prepare for current and future situations.
- To ensure that there are no disruptions to the supply and goods required, Brunei Darussalam is cooperating with Sarawak, Malaysia to allow companies to enter the country through land checkpoints for the purpose of trade or delivery of products. This also applies to companies from Sarawak, Malaysia that have to cross Brunei Darussalam's borders.

To ensure job security for locals and protect welfare of local employees in the private sector:

- A **six-month extension of current contracts under the I-Ready Apprenticeship Programme** by the MPEC in the public and private sectors.
- **Extension of the I-Ready Apprenticeship Programme** to Diploma Level 5 (HND or Advanced Diploma) and TVET. During the course of the programme, the Government will finance the apprentices' allowances for a period of 18 months at the prescribed rate of B\$800 per month for Bachelor's degree and higher (the same amount paid currently), B\$600 per month for Diploma (Level 5) and B\$400 per month for TVET. In addition, the Government will also contribute for TAP and SCP on behalf of the companies.



To ensure continuous job creation:

- In support of life-long learning initiatives, especially in the **upskilling and reskilling of the local workforce** in supporting private sector growth, MPEC has provided **training opportunities**, such as online and hands-on training, to build capacity for current and future needs. MPEC will also provide training for local tour guides registered with the MPRT, and also for those interested in the food and beverages sector.
- MPEC will cooperate with IT companies to **provide programmes in the areas of programming, data analytics and others** that will assist in efforts towards the **4th Industrial Revolution**.
- Additionally, DARE has provided **fully sponsored online Industry Business Academy trainings** through Coursera for business-related courses.
- **Upgrade of Job Centre Brunei (JCB) Portal** to improve the effectiveness of advertised job vacancies.





Monetary interim measures to assist all the business sectors including individuals working with the private sector and self-employed:

- Deferment on principal payments of financing/loans to all sectors.
- Restructuring of up to ten years on personal loans/financing and hire purchase facilities limited to motor vehicle loans/financing.
- The deferment of individual principal loan repayment on personal loans/financing, property loans/financing (for home ownership and property investment) and hire purchase facilities limited to motor vehicle loans/financing;
- Converting of any outstanding credit cards balances into a term loan of not exceeding three years to assist all business sectors and individuals including those who are self-employed.
- Waiver of related fees and charges including processing fees on deferment, restructuring or conversion of credit card facilities excluding third party fees and charges.





Sustainable Development Goal 9

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 9 encompasses three main aspects of sustainable development: infrastructure, industrialisation, and innovation. Infrastructure provides the basic physical systems and structures essential to the operation of a society or an enterprise. Industrialisation drives economic growth, creates job opportunities, and thereby reduces poverty. Innovation, particularly sustainability-driven innovation, advances the technological capabilities of industrial sectors and at the same time supports the environmental aspect of the 2030 Agenda.

The Government provides the public infrastructure and utilities required for the community to function. These include affordable housing, health systems, schools, road connectivity and bridges, drainage systems, protection of coastal areas, parks and recreations as well as public utilities such as water supply, electricity and sanitation.

These are essential to stimulate socio-economic activities in the country. Within the Ministry of Development (MOD), the Department of Town and Country Planning is responsible for the planning of the physical infrastructure development through the establishment of the National Land Use Master Plan.

ENHANCING CONNECTIVITY

Through its National Development Plans (NDPs), Brunei Darussalam has made progress on the quality and connectivity of its infrastructure. 97.6% of the country is connected by roads with 198 out of 203 rural

villages connected. The Department of Roads is responsible to plan, design, construct and maintain the road infrastructure network, bridges and related services to ensure safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Construction for the Brunei Muara - Temburong Bridge began in 2014. It is Southeast Asia's longest overseas bridge with a length of 26.3 kilometres and acts as a direct link to Temburong District, which is geographically separated from the rest of the country. Upon its opening on 19 March 2020, a previously lengthy journey that required a boat or passing by car through Malaysia became a short direct drive.



Image: The Brunei Muara - Temburong Bridge.

This bridge is expected to contribute greatly towards the socio-economic development of the country and to the overall well-being of the residents of the Temburong District.

The modernisation project of Brunei International Airport (BIA) was completed in 2015. Other projects are also being carried out to upgrade BIA such as Airfield

Pavement Rehabilitation Works to cater for bigger and wide body aircrafts.

Currently, BIA serves six airlines flying to 30 cities on scheduled flights in 16 countries, with an average of 58 aircraft movements per day. According to 2019 air traffic records, a total of 2.15 million passengers and 24,876 tonnes of cargo moved through BIA from a total of 17,947 commercial aircraft movements. The current capacity of the existing airport passenger terminal is 3 million passengers and 50,000 tonnes of cargo. Meanwhile, the declared capacity of air navigation services/runway is 30 movements per hour.

In 2019, air freight (cargo) traffic and commercial aircraft movements grew by 1.78% and 23.5% respectively in comparison to 2018. Passenger traffic also increased by 15.3% compared to the previous year.

Between 2010 and 2018, arrival of visitors by air has grown by 3.3% annually (Compound Annual Growth Rate). In 2017, 33.8% of the total number of arrivals were tourists. This proportion increased by 0.5% in 2018, where 278,136 passengers from 810,985 of the arrivals were tourists (34.3%).

STRENGTHENING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Government emphasises the importance of ICT as one of the enablers for socio-economic development, that will enrich the quality of life and propel the country forward.

Since 2012, based on the number of mobile subscribers, mobile penetration in Brunei Darussalam has consistently exceeded 100%. In 2019, 95% of households used the

internet¹⁰. Fixed Broadband Penetration for households and businesses in the country increased significantly from 20.1% in 2012 to 51.6% in 2019. Meanwhile, Mobile Broadband Penetration per 100 inhabitants grew from 94.7% in 2012 to 131.0% in 2019. Currently, 90% of businesses have access to the internet while most have implemented ICT systems and continually improve them to stay competitive in their respective industries¹¹.

The importance of ICT was underlined during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw an increased usage of online services, notably in the education and business sectors. All learning institutions were able to incorporate online learning whereas most of the public and private organisations offered their services online.

In Brunei Darussalam, the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry (AITI) is responsible for providing a conducive environment that will promote an innovative and vibrant ICT industry. AITI also ensures that telecommunications services are accessible to all and are supplied as efficiently and economically practicable, at performance standards that meet the social, industrial and commercial needs of the country.

In 2019, the Digital Economy Council was established to provide national steer and direction on digital economy initiatives to elevate Brunei Darussalam to the status of a smart nation. Coordination involving ministries, private sector and non-governmental organisations was undertaken to review the purpose of the ICT policy for the country in the areas of E-government, ICT and telecommunications industries.

¹⁰ Brunei Darussalam ICT Household Report 2019

¹¹ Brunei Darussalam ICT Business Report 2019



In April 2020, the Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications (MTIC) launched its new five-year strategic plan, MTIC 2025, with its vision 'Connected Smart Nation' towards ensuring its direction for sustainable national development in the fields of transportation and infocommunications. In furthering its digital agenda, a 5G Taskforce was established to increase the country's readiness in the implementation of 5G technology.

The Government's recent modernisation of its telecommunication infrastructure is also intended to ensure the provision of competitive and efficient telecommunications and internet services.

Brunei Darussalam aspires to improve its position in international rankings, including being top three within ASEAN in the Global Cybersecurity Index, top 40 in the International Telecommunications Union ICT Development Index and top 40 in the UN E-Government Survey.

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION AND INDUSTRIALISATION

Innovation advances the technological capabilities of industrial sectors and prompts the development of new skills. The establishment of the Brunei Research Council aimed to further promote sustainable development and investment in scientific research and innovation.

The Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) has earlier this year developed a facility for a Genetic Development and Selective Fish Breeding Programme, which is expected to increase aquaculture industry productivity.



Image: Food Technology Lab, Universiti Teknologi Brunei.

Private sector collaboration in research has also intensified. *Universiti Teknologi Brunei* (UTB) and Gropoint Pte Ltd have signed an MoU to enhance the research and development of premium muskmelon in Brunei Darussalam. Under the MoU, training programmes for university students and staff will be provided. For example, two UTB postgraduate students under the Food Science and Technology programme of the School of Applied Sciences and Mathematics have initiated research activities in collaboration with Gropoint Pte Ltd and the MPRT. These activities include studying and gathering data on morphological and physiological characteristics of locally grown Japanese muskmelon and conducting scientific research on packaging technology for exports of this premium fruit.

Future collaborative plans between the two partners will also include research and development in the areas of marketing, post-harvest studies, disease and pest management, and food product development. These efforts are part of the Centre for Research on Agri-Food Science and Technology's strategic plans to translate research outcomes into products and

process in on-going efforts to link academia with the industries.

The Government and education institutions also celebrate creativity and innovation, which in turn inculcate innovation mindsets in the country. Inaugurated in 2005, UTB holds the 'Creative, Innovative Product and Technological Advancement (CIPTA) Competition' which covers all areas of Science, Technology and Engineering, and is opened to all schools, technical and tertiary academic institutions, government and private organisations and the general public.

In 2019, the Government introduced the 'Innovation Premier Award' with the aim of promoting and encouraging innovation in good governance while further enhancing the quality of service delivery in the civil service. An example of a project that was awarded was an initiative by the Royal Customs and Excise Department to digitise vehicle passes in order to ease cross-border movement of vehicles.

As a joint initiative by the MTIC, AITI and Infocom Federation Brunei, the 'Brunei ICT Awards' (BICTA) is held to spur innovation among the local ICT players. With the categories of School, Tertiary and ICT Industry, BICTA is a platform to stimulate innovation and creativity amongst students, ICT companies and individuals. BICTA also serves as a benchmark for local ICT development, as winners will represent Brunei Darussalam at the 'Asia Pacific ICT Alliance Awards' (APICTA Awards), a competition amongst 16 member economies of APICTA from the Asia-Pacific region. Brunei Darussalam's participation in APICTA since 2008 has resulted in two winner awards and 27 merit awards to date.

To further develop its industry by encouraging creativity and innovation, Brunei Darussalam continues to promote and develop an 'Intellectual Property (IP) Culture', which is backed by various IP legislations and rules. The Brunei Intellectual Property Office (BrulPO) was established on 1 June 2013, with a mission to increase an effective IP awareness, promote IP management and commercialisation, deliver an efficient IT infrastructure and to improve IP services.

BrulPO is also responsible for the administration of laws and policies related to Intellectual Property such as Trademarks Act (Cap 98), Patent Order 2011, Industrial Designs Order 1999, Copyright Order 1999, Layout Designs Order 1999, and Plant Varieties Order 2015.

Brunei Darussalam is a party to several international IP agreements such as the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property, the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Designs, the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO) Copyright Treaty, the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, and the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks.

BrulPO continues to work closely with regional and international organisations such as ASEAN, the WIPO, European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), European Patent Office, Japan Patent Office, Korean Intellectual Property Office, and other ASEAN IP Offices in order to strengthen the country's IPR implementation. BrulPO continues to



undertake awareness programmes by collaborating with external partners such as the ARISE+ IPR Seminar on Geographical Indications in collaboration with the EUIPO and a two-day 'Train the Trainee' IP Workshop in 2019 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Through Darussalam Enterprise, 25 readily prepared industrial sites with good access to roads, with utilities provided at competitive rates. Two parks are being set aside for the development of the technology and creative industry, namely the Anggerek Desa

Technology Park, a 16-hectare site, and the Digital Junction, a 15-hectare site with two overlapping independent power grids.

To take advantage of its increasing connectivity, trade linkages and placement in the region, Brunei Darussalam continues to attract FDI in its five priority sectors, including ICT and Services. The expected transfer of technology and knowledge from these FDI, coupled with the growing number of innovative, young local entrepreneurs, is expected to further drive innovation and growth in the country.

Sustainable Development Goal 10

Reduce inequality within and among countries

QUALITY OF LIFE

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to ensure high quality of life by providing quality education, accessible and affordable healthcare, housing and public utilities and services, as well as strengthening the protection of the rights of family institutions, women, children, youth, elderly and Persons with Different Abilities (PWDs).

To improve the socio-economic standing of its citizens, Brunei Darussalam implements national policies and plans of action that empower the low income earners as well as promote the economic inclusion of all strata of its people.

The Government provides quality and comprehensive healthcare and services for its citizens for a nominal fee. The National Housing Programme aims to ensure citizens are able to own homes, whereby as of 2019, the home ownership rate is 66.0%. To achieve the target of 85% home ownership by 2035, the Ministry of Development (MOD) is working to ensure the long term financial viability of the National Housing Programme.

SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

Welfare assistance programmes by government and non-governmental agencies provide benefits and assistance, both financial and non-financial, for those in need, including families, the elderly and PWDs.

The Government seeks to empower those in need by providing them with skills and knowledge that will enable these individuals to be economically independent, while also removing any potential structural barriers.

Priority is placed on encouraging entrepreneurship and increasing skill sets. For instance, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) makes available programmes and opportunities for PWDs, women and youth, that will enable them to find employment or become entrepreneurs. Similar initiatives are also conducted by the Brunei Darussalam Islamic Religious Council, in addition to their disbursement of *zakat*.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education (MOE) carries out several programmes to support disadvantaged students. Through the *Miftahun Najaah* Scheme (since 2011), the *Riayah Wa Mahabbah* Programme (since 2014) and the *Harapan* Programme (since 2018), the MOE has provided basic school materials for these students in Year 1 to Year 13, such as school stationaries, workbooks, uniforms, night classes, school fees exemptions, breakfast, hostel accommodation and transportation. Education subsidies provided for tertiary and technical education act as additional support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

RETIREMENT ADEQUACY

The Government introduced the Employees Trust Fund (TAP) in 1993 and the Supplemental Contributory Pensions (SCP) in 2009 to provide for financial security in retirement and to accommodate the retirement needs of citizens and permanent residents of Brunei Darussalam, through mandatory savings.

Under the TAP and SCP, employees' contributions of 5% and 3.5% respectively are matched by employers. The Government also matches the voluntary contributions for those who are self-employed¹². With the SCP, members will receive a monthly payment upon attaining the age of 60 for a period of 20 years. In addition, Old Age Pensions are provided to citizens and residents upon reaching 60 years of age.

ENSURING INCLUSIVITY OF PWDs

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to ensuring that PWDs are afforded equal rights and opportunities, able to live their lives, be recognised and able to participate fully in society. Following its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 11 April 2016, proposals are in the pipeline to integrate components of the CRPD into the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*.

A whole of nation approach is practiced in ensuring the involvement and progress of the PWDs in the country. The National Council on Social Issues (MKIS) is implementing the Plan of Action under the Special Committee on the Elderly and PWDs¹³, which outlines several strategies on the development, well-being, welfare and support system for PWDs.

The Government will continue to work closely with other non-governmental bodies and strategic partners, such as the Council for the Welfare of PWDs (MKOKU), to advocate and empower the differently-abled in Brunei Darussalam.

The MKOKU is an umbrella organisation for nine non-governmental organisations (NGOs) representing differently-abled people, namely the Centre for Children with Special Needs; the Paraplegic and Physically Disabled Association; Pusat Ehsan Al-Ameerah Al-Hajjah Maryam; the Brunei Down Syndrome Association; the Special Olympics Brunei Darussalam; the Society for Management of Autism Related issues in Training, Education and Resources; Learning Ladders; the Brunei Darussalam National Association of the Blind (BDNAB); and the National Association of the Hearing Impaired.

To promote greater awareness and public empathy on the challenges faced by PWDs, including those with visual and hearing impairment, more effort is made to organise braille and sign language courses. In 2019, nine workshops on 'Braille, Orientation and Mobility' were conducted and attended by 450 participants including PWDs, their parents, government agencies, non-governmental bodies, the private sector and also individuals. The workshops were jointly organised by the BDNAB; Community Rehabilitation Unit under the Department of Community Development, MCYS; Special Education Unit (SEU), MOE; Religious Special Education Unit, Islamic Studies Department, Ministry of Religious Affairs; and Ophthalmology Department, Ministry of Health.

To ensure that all new buildings provide facilities and access for PWDs, the MOD has issued the Different Abilities Design Guidelines under the Building Control Order in 2018.

¹² Those not formally employed by a company nor has any employees.

¹³ Members are Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Info-Communication, Ministry of Development, Council for the Welfare of Persons with Different Abilities, Council on Social Welfare, and Women's Council of Brunei Darussalam.

Inclusivity of the PWDs - Economy

Following a rise in public awareness of PWDs over the years, there is a corresponding increase in recognition of their ability to participate in the community and contribute to the economic development of the country. Brunei Darussalam also recognises the rights of PWDs to work and to gain a living by participating in the labour market and an open work environment.

Through the multi agency approach in empowering PWDs, the Government provides opportunities for them to achieve their full potential and learn various independent living, social and work skills. Presently, while there is no employment quota in the country for PWDs, more public and private employers are employing PWDs, where such encouraging examples can be observed in several government departments and private institutions. Based on a survey by the MCYS in 2019, a total of 75 PWDs were employed in the government sector, whilst 25 were employed in the private sector.

Pusat Bahagia, under the Department of Community Development, MCYS is a skill training (job coaching) centre for PWDs, focusing on living, social, work and basic vocational skills. Each of the 4 districts in Brunei Darussalam has an established *Pusat Bahagia* to assist PWDs, whereby in 2019, 433 PWDs were registered in these centres. Additionally, *Pusat Bahagia*, through its network of strategic partnership, works to raise awareness to prevent harassment of PWDs in the workplace and to ensure that access to the general labour market are monitored and addressed.

In addition, in 2019, the Youth Development Centre (YDC) organised a programme, '*Program Pendedahan Kemahiran OKU*', for differently-abled youth to partake in short

term skills training courses. This programme aimed to provide equal opportunities as well as develop marketable and employable skills to PWDs such as in tailoring, baking, pastry-making, and beauty courses with assistance and guidance from professional instructors in those respective areas.



Images: PWDs in different classes at Pusat Bahagia (top and bottom).

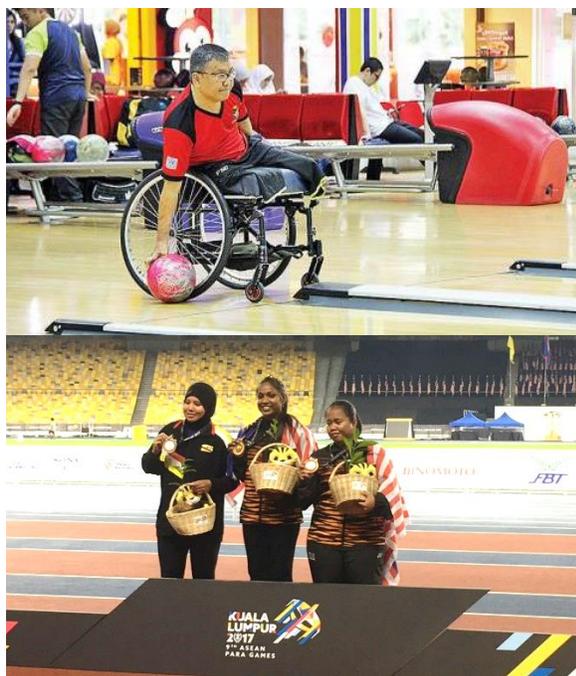
In an effort to ensure an effective transition for PWDs in the labour market, the Community Based Rehabilitation Unit under the MCYS also works with strategic partners to provide work placements for three months and job matching for PWDs, whereby in 2019, five PWDs were successfully employed.

The SEU, MOE and government secondary schools collaborate with employers from various industries to provide differently abled

students in their final years of the Pre-Vocational Programme, with work attachments that provide them with appropriate work related skills at various placements according to their abilities and skills. The Government also assists in promoting and marketing products made by PWDs, and provide entrepreneurial spaces for such products in public premises including government buildings. More recently, several PWD NGOs were granted space in government buildings, which contributed towards significantly reducing their operating costs.

Inclusivity of the PWDs – Sports

The universality of sports has provided PWDs excellent platforms to highlight greater awareness and inclusion as well as provide opportunities to also contribute in bolstering the country's own international reputation in sports.



Images: PWDs are given equal opportunities to participate in sporting events (top and bottom).

The achievements of Brunei Darussalam's para athletes in various regional and international competitions have indeed boosted their self-confidence and dedication, as reflected by their continuous outstanding performances in winning many medals, recently exemplified at the 2019 World Para Bowling Tour Championship in the Philippines and 2019 Arafura Sports Games in Australia.

Inclusivity of the PWDs - Education

As part of the MOE's mission to deliver holistic education to achieve fullest potential for all, it adopts an inclusive education policy where there is no segregation of schools for those with special needs. These students are provided with special education programmes, at both primary and secondary mainstream government schools.

The National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21), which commenced in 2009, provides students, including PWDs, with multiple pathways according to their individual capabilities, interests, inclinations, growth and development, thereby catering to their needs.

Education services for PWDs are provided by Special Education Needs Assistance (SENA) teachers and aides available in many schools. The Government introduced the Model Inclusive Schools (MIS) project in 2008 and embarked on a major centralisation initiative in 2019 to set up two Centres of Excellence for students with special needs in the Temburong District.

Introduced and implemented in selected primary and secondary schools, the MIS project is a significant initiative undertaken in order to meet the needs of students with different abilities including those with Autism. Through this project, nine purposely built

buildings (five at primary level and four at secondary level) are equipped with specialised learning equipments and teaching resources built within the vicinity of the mainstream school compounds. These selected schools provide students with different abilities with relevant learning and adaptive skills as preparation to actively participate alongside their same age peers in the regular classroom.

Meanwhile, the two Centres of Excellence in the Temburong District are essentially local schools that are equipped with the appropriate infrastructure and facilities, specialised resources and learning equipments as well as the provision of SENA teachers and teacher aides to meet the needs of students based on their diagnosis.

Selected primary and secondary schools have also been allocated additional funding and support to ensure they have the necessary school facilities, special learning equipments or resources, specialist support services, and teacher training programs to provide quality inclusive education for a wide range of students with diverse learning needs.

Under the purview of the Religious Special Education Unit, Religious Schools Division, MORA, several programmes for PWDs are provided, namely:

- Intervention Programme by Pull-Out System: provides individual learning through a method of structured learning approach using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) system and also study while playing.

- Religious Internship Programme: students with different abilities are assisted and aided by their special religious education teachers.
- Cued Speech Programme: a visual system of communication used with and among those with hearing impairment. It is one of the initiatives to approach and teach students not only with hearing and speech impairments but also students with Autism, Down Syndrome, selective mutism and multiple learning disabilities. It is phonemic-based and systemises traditionally spoken languages accessible by using a small number of handshapes, known as cues (representing consonants), in different locations near the mouth (representing vowels) to convey spoken language in a visual format.
- Modifications and adaptations, such as using sign language or cued speech, for Religious Education Primary Schools Certificate Examinations for registered special candidates.

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

NGOs partner with the Government to advocate for the inclusion and empowerment of PWDs.

Pusat Ehsan Al-Ameerah Al-Hajjah Maryam (Pusat Ehsan)

Pusat Ehsan is a non-governmental and non-profit charitable organisation committed to providing quality education, rehabilitation and vocational training programmes for PWDs. It serves individuals with Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, as well as individuals with Global Developmental Delays and Intellectual Disabilities. Established in 2000, Pusat Ehsan has two centres, serving more than 300 PWDs. It recognises the need for PWDs to be independent in society and the provision of appropriate activities to achieve this, and involves a network of families, caregivers, volunteers and the general community in providing services for them.



Image: Pusat Ehsan.



Images: PWDs enjoying activities at Pusat Ehsan.

The Pusat Ehsan curriculum framework covers Functional Academic Learning; Physical, Personal and Social Learning; and Career and Vocational Learning. There are three stages of learning for students, namely the Foundation Years (Years 1 to 6), Consolidation Years (Years 7 to 10) and Transition Years (Years 11 to 15). Currently, Pusat Ehsan's programmes are provided free of charge, with parents encouraged to contribute in whatever way they can to help ease the operating costs. Their programmes include:

The Educational Programme: Individuals are placed in classes according to their chronological age, so that they are able to participate in age appropriate educational programmes:

- **Early Development Programme:** In partnership with the Ministry of Health, this programme is designed for children from ages two to five years old. It is a transition programme for those assessed to be delayed in their development milestones to prepare them with the skills necessary for school.

- **Early, Middle and Upper Class:** Catering for students from ages two to 15 years old, this programme helps them prepare for school by providing language, social-emotional, physical and cognitive development.

The classes also provide the students different learning opportunities, such as educational trips, which enables them to make sense of the world around them.



Image: An activity of Pusat Ehsan.



Image: One of the activities at Pusat Ehsan.

- **Vocational Programme:** As part of the Transition Years, this programme aims to help students gradually assimilate into the different stages of adulthood (home, community, leisure, and work) through home-based and community-based instruction. At this stage of learning, students will focus more clearly on their areas of interest as well as establish their intended pathways beyond school and into the communities in which they live. 'My Ability Counts' is a public awareness campaign designed to encourage support from the public and private sectors in providing job opportunities for Pusat Ehsan trainees.

The Rehabilitation Programme:

This programme aims to help every client with different abilities achieve their maximum functional ability with regards to their daily living activities, and includes Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Language and Communication, and Psychology.

With a small number of dedicated staff, the rehabilitation programme has grown to provide more than 3,000 treatment sessions annually.

The primary aim of the rehabilitation unit is to supplement rehabilitation services for PWDs in Brunei Darussalam. It assists clients to maintain or attain their maximum potential by using treatment concepts to ease pain, improve mobility, and facilitate activity and participation in accordance with the World Health Organization's International Classification of Function.



Image: A rehabilitation facility at Pusat Ehsan.

The Society for Management of Autism Related Issues in Training, Education and Resources (SMARTER)

SMARTER Brunei is a family support organisation run by parents and family members for persons with Autism, from childhood to old age in a seamless journey to interdependent. Its mission is to provide close collaboration and closely work together with parents, families, therapists and other professionals, to help children develop their fullest potential. It provides lifelong services, with their own pre-vocational, vocational and employment programme that caters towards each person's individualistic needs through their centres, in support of the Ministry of Education's Special Education Unit. It launched its Brunei Autism Centre for Adults in 2008.

SMARTER Brunei seeks sponsors for families unable to afford SMARTER Brunei's services well as relays them to relevant agencies. SMARTER Brunei's current employment programme, launched in 2017 for individuals with Autism, can help their families financially and ease any financial burden through the provision of training and employment for these individuals at its centres.

SMARTER Brunei's programmes are catered towards preparing all individuals for a mainstream education environment. It aids them to be more prepared in what to expect and how to cope and manage with school life. It actively does awareness programmes and fundraisers to strengthen community ties and is one of the **founding members** of the ASEAN Autism Network. SMARTER Brunei also chaired and hosted the ASEAN Autism Network congress in 2013. Additionally, it has also been a part of the Flinders University Attachment programme, where students from the University attend SMARTER Brunei under a three-week attachment, supported and funded by the New Colombo Plan, Australia.

Currently SMARTER Brunei is working towards having better representation from its individuals with Autism as well as developing, empowering and ensuring that individuals with Autism are able to be their own voice, within their capabilities. The organisation continues to support its members however they need.

The Down Syndrome Association

The Down Syndrome Association (ABLE) was officially established on 18 July 2012 based on the realisation of the need to create a united voice to stress on the rights of persons with Down Syndrome such as public awareness and understanding, government support, and providing support to families of individuals with Down Syndrome. With the motto 'Ability Built through Learning and Experience', ABLE strives to build the ability of individuals with Down Syndrome through the processes of learning, training and experience sharing amongst the family members and professionals who are involved with helping persons with Down Syndrome.

Its main objectives include:

- To support persons with Down Syndrome and family members through efforts and activities related to social, training, education, and psychological development of individuals with Down Syndrome;
- To create awareness and acceptance among members of the public about individuals with Down Syndrome;

- To advocate for the rights of persons with Down syndrome to assessment and development programmes, inclusive education and employment;
- To protect the rights of all individuals with Down Syndrome against all forms of persecution (physical and mental);
- To provide a platform to empower those with Down Syndrome and their family members by providing opportunities to develop their abilities towards making them competent, independent, able to work and contribute to the society and country; and
- To raise funds to be used for the welfare of each member.

ABLE is located in a flat unit provided by the MCYS. Besides being a support hub to its Honorary Members (their parents and family members), the centre aims to also be an information resource centre on issues related to Down Syndrome.

ABLE's initiatives and programmes include:

- **Parent's Enrichment Programme** which improve parent's awareness and increase their capacity by providing training on how to take care of children with Down Syndrome, including language, speaking and communication;
- **'Pertagasi'** which is an agricultural entrepreneurship project that educates and trains those with Down Syndrome and their parents in modern agricultural practices, such as planting, maintenance, harvest and marketing. This project aims to provide them a way to have income and be independent; and
- Further plans include physical and sensorial activities, sports, educational programmes, music and culture activities, social skills and life skills programmes. All these are aimed to develop ABLE's Honorary Members to become competent individuals who will be able to contribute to the society and economy.

Brunei Darussalam National Association of the Blind

Established in 2001, the Brunei Darussalam National Association of the Blind (BDNAB) aims to **empower the blind and partially sighted** by striving to **promote equality and full participation in society**. Its objectives include to:

- promote the prevention and treatment of blindness and visual impairment;
- spread objective information on the situation of the blind and partially sighted in order to win friends and allies in the struggle for equality and full participation in society by the visually disabled in Brunei Darussalam;
- keep the blind and partially sighted informed about their rights to existing possibilities for assistance;
- plan, establish and run different kinds of activities and services for the blind and partially sighted in the country;
- improve the situation of the blind and partially sighted in the fields of education, employment and culture; and
- represent the blind and partially sighted nationally and internationally.

To achieve its objectives, the BDNAB has undertaken several activities and initiatives as below:

Skills Classes:

- Conduct braille classes to its members and to those visually impaired.
- Conduct ICT training with programmes that are accessible to blind/visually impaired.
- Conduct braille and embosser maintenance stream.
- Give opportunities to its members to organise events and activities.
- Teach skills to BDNAB members such as operator skill, office work and etc.
- Produce academic braille books for visually impaired students so that they are not left behind. The Special Education Unit at the MOE will distribute the academic braille books to these students.
- Ensure developers produce applications and websites that are accessible to the blind/visually impaired user, including for online taxis.
- Buildings audit - to make sure the environment is different ability friendly and follows the Different Abilities Design Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Development.
- Advocate for the inclusion of the differently abled in the formation of Plans of Action as well as activities/programmes nationally and internationally.

Braillethon Service:

- Invite the community to volunteer in making braille books for the blind/visually impaired. This will help accelerate the production of reading materials, to promote higher literacy rates among the blind/visually impaired.

Khatam Al-Quran Ceremony using Braille:

- Promote public awareness on the use of the Jawi braille chord among the blind/visually impaired.

Braille, Orientation and Mobility Workshop:

- Demonstrate a whole of nation approach through close cooperation with government agencies in addressing issues affecting PWDs.
- Raise public awareness on the importance of braille chord, such as among others academic braille books and braille notes.
- Train the community on the right way to guide the blind/visually impaired, based on orientation and mobility.

White Cane Day Charity Run:

- Create public awareness regarding the usage of white canes and the safety of its users, including on the installation of tactile walkways and voice announcements at pedestrian crossings and traffic lights.

La Vida

La Vida, a non-profit organisation, promotes the inclusion of PWDs and the underprivileged within families, in the school, community, sport and workplace through the following initiatives, among others:

- **Beam Initiative:** Empowering youths with different abilities with life skills to address employment obstacles as well as aiding in building support networks for their products/services, including collaboration with local businesses for internship opportunities.

The internship programme allows youth with different abilities to develop understanding of working habits and responsibilities, create opportunities for self-discovery and potential, and provide skills and training that will propel them further into independent living. Thus far, La Vida has collaborated with seven companies.



Image: One of La Vida's Internship Programmes.

- In addition, La Vida runs the **Beam Arts Programme**, under its Beam Initiative, which aims to produce quality art and art products for sale as a means of earning income for youth with different abilities.

This allows them to achieve independence through sales of their artwork or royalties from art products. Future plans include providing greater assistance and support to market their products.



Image: La Vida's Beam Arts programme.



Images: Artworks of the Beam Arts programme (left and right).

Sustainable Development Goal 11

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The Ministry of Development (MOD), through the Department of Town and Country Planning, is responsible for planning the country's infrastructure development, given the limited proportion of developable land in Brunei Darussalam. The MOD continuously aims to safeguard sufficient land for various uses, protect amenity, and preserve a high quality of living as the population expands.

INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING

Land is a vital asset that acts as an impetus for the country's development and progress. The Government therefore strives to adopt a sustainable approach in land use, which places equal emphasis on the economic, social and environmental aspects.

Developable land is 34.0% of the total land area of Brunei Darussalam, where 5.5% of this is categorised as easily developable land. The target is to optimise land use within the development plans, and address the challenge of sustainability of land for development.

Action plans to optimise land use include reviewing land density, plot ratio and plot coverage for development, and promotion of compact development, such as higher density, vertical development to meet sustainable development objectives.

The guidelines for land use are prepared through the National Land Use Master Plan, District Plans, Local Plans and Planning Schemes whereby lands are zoned in accordance to the educational, residential,

agricultural, commercial, industrial and health sectors.

The National Land Use Planning Council (NLUPC) was also established to address competing demands on land use to accommodate the country's present and future needs.

HOUSE OWNERSHIP

Brunei Darussalam prioritises home ownership for its citizens, as evidenced by the introduction of the National Housing Programme (RPN) in 1976 which assist citizens, especially those in the lower income groups, to be able to own homes at rates subsidised by the Government.

As of 2019, the home ownership rate was 66.0% with a target of 85% by 2035. To achieve this target, the MOD is working to ensure long-term financial viability of the RPN, in order to deliver a more cost-effective and sustainable financial model.



Image: Presentation of house key plaques to new house owners under the RPN (2019).



Image: Presentation of house key plaques to new house owners under the RPN (2019).

BUILDING SAFETY

The Authority for Building Control and Construction Industry (ABCI) is a governing body that regulates the development of the construction industry by ensuring all construction work abides by the requirements for development control under the Building Control Order 2014, which aims to ensure the safety and health of the public.

The ABCI launched the ‘*Piawaian Brunei Darussalam 12:2017 - Building Guidelines and Requirements*’ in 2017 as an amendment to the 2014 edition. The new edition streamlines the requirements for development control, as part of efforts to further ease the processes.

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE CITY

Effective management of Brunei Darussalam’s environment requires collective responsibility and shared commitment of multiple government agencies. The Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe) is tasked to develop a planned approach to sustainable environmental management and protection, allowing for synergistic coordination of relevant agencies in tandem with the

departments’ goals to become an effective regulator of environmental management.

In terms of legislation, the country has gazetted two laws pertaining to the management and protection of the environment, namely the Environmental Protection and Management Order (EPMO) 2016 and the Hazardous Waste (Control of Export, Import and Transit) Order (HWO) 2013. Under the EPMO 2016, activities deemed to have environmental impacts and identified as Prescribed Activities are required to submit Written Notification, together with Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and/or Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP), to JASTRe for approval prior to the commencement of such activities. The HWO 2013 serves to regulate the export, import and transit of hazardous and other waste, in line with the country’s commitment as a party to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

JASTRe has also issued, among others, the following documents related to pollution:

- i) Environmental Acts and Guidelines;
- ii) Pollution Control Guidelines for Industrial Development;
- iii) EIA; and
- iv) Recycle 123 Handbook.

To achieve sustainable environmental management, JASTRe targets to reduce waste generation per capita, currently at 1.15 kilogram per capita per day. In this regard, the Solid Waste Management Strategy set out by JASTRe aims to address and manage waste issues in Brunei Darussalam in an effective and sound manner through the following:

- i) Waste minimisation through 3R;

- ii) Provision of efficient, cost effective and sustainable waste collection;
- iii) Youth empowerment to champion and partake in various environmental initiatives and activities; and
- iv) Enhancement of enforcement to curb littering and illegal dumping.

Continuous efforts are also underway to harmonise and improve the present waste collection system for Brunei Darussalam towards an integrated waste management system by 2025. This includes instilling a sense of responsibility among individuals and the community for their own waste management. To reduce reliance on the Government for the overall waste collection and management, privatised waste collection services from home to home have been effectively carried out in many areas in the country.

The JASTRe is also targeting to ensure good air quality in the country throughout the year, well within the standards of the World Health Organization and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Action plans include environmental protection and management for industries and construction activities to take proper air quality preventive and mitigation measures under the EIA; strengthen regulations and enforcement against illegal activities that pollute air quality and address air pollution from vehicular emissions.

In light of increasing bush and forest fires in the country, due to hotter and drier weather conditions, Brunei Darussalam is actively undertaking preventive measures. These include tackling rampant open burning and mitigating bush and forest fires, which are being strengthened through the current amendments to the EPMO 2016.

Brunei Darussalam is also working closely in addressing transboundary haze pollution in the region with its ASEAN counterparts through the ASEAN Ministers responsible for the environment, land, forest fires and haze track.

At present, river water quality monitoring is being carried out for all major rivers in Brunei Darussalam's four districts. The various parameters measured and recorded are currently being compiled to develop and eventually determine the state of the river water quality. The river water quality is targeted to increase from medium quality to high quality (80-90 based on the river water quality index) by 2035.

Through the Sewerage Laboratory, sewage treatment plant performance and treated water (effluent) discharged into rivers are monitored in order to meet the required water quality standard and treatment performance. Monitoring of receiving water is also carried out to ensure there is no pollution and river ecology is not affected by the effluent. Under the EPMO 2016, industries are listed under Prescribed Activities, which requires them to monitor their environmental discharges and ensures that they comply with the permissible standards and limits set by JASTRe.

In addition, Brunei Darussalam supports international efforts to manage the environment in a sustainable manner as reflected in the country being signatory to a number of multilateral agreements to tackle environmental challenges including ozone depletion, climate change and transboundary movement of hazardous waste.



As part of the country's capital city rejuvenation efforts, the *Taman Mahkota Jubli Emas* was officiated by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam on 22 October 2017 for recreational activities. The said park has become a landmark in the capital that signifies the importance of healthy living.

The closure of selected roads in the capital Bandar Seri Begawan to traffic from 6 am until 10 am every Sunday for the weekly *Bandarku Ceria* allows the public to engage in leisure sports, other recreational activities and business activities, to further promote healthy lifestyles and to strengthen family institutions.

The *Taman Mahkota Jubli Emas*, in combination with the weekly closure of the roads for *Bandarku Ceria*, contributes greatly to the target of promoting open universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces.



Image: *Taman Mahkota Jubli Emas*.

Brunei Darussalam is also participating in the ASEAN Smart City Network initiative, whereby cities from all ASEAN Member States work together towards the common goal of smart and sustainable urban development. Bandar Seri Begawan has been selected as the country's Pilot City in this project.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Due to its size and geographical location, Brunei Darussalam is not a disaster-prone country. A number of people, albeit limited, are affected by disasters, mostly from low-level hazards such as flash floods, forest fires and landslides.

In addressing flash floods, the Government has invested in an extensive drainage system which aims to address flood mitigation issues and to ensure public assets are secured.

It targets to reduce flood prone areas through an effective integrated flood risk reduction approach which include the following initiatives:

- i) Adoption of a real time early warning flood detection system that will send alerts to the public;
- ii) Formulation of the Drainage Act to provide the Department of Drainage and Sewerage with authority to carry out enforcement duties against non-compliance;
- iii) Flood mitigation projects through National Development Plans; and
- iv) Proactive drainage maintenance.

As a result of these efforts, flood prone areas in the country have been reduced by 28.6% based on the baseline in 1997. The MOD aims to achieve a percentage reduction target of 49.5% by 2035.

Flood Prone Areas in Brunei Darussalam:



The Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction is an example of Brunei Darussalam's measures related to disaster risk reduction. It was drafted in consultation with government agencies, the private sector and civil society, to address the needs of all Bruneians during the occurrence of a disaster.

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) implements domestic programmes, such as Tabletop Exercises and Community Based Disaster Risk Management, to ensure awareness and knowledge of disaster response are mainstreamed to communities effectively without discrimination.

The NDMC has introduced a Disaster Preparedness Coordinator programme, which looks to train community and grassroots leaders with the abilities and competencies to assist authorities during disaster preparedness activities or disaster response operations.

Brunei Darussalam is also currently finalising its Disaster Management Strategic Policy Framework this year. This framework is an integrated policy that aims to build the country's resilience to disasters and develop holistic disaster risk management at all levels, and is in line with the Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

In addition, the NDMC is working closely with the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) that consists of multiple government agencies and is chaired by the District Office. The DDMC has connections with grassroots leaders who assist in monitoring the well-being and ensuring the needs of communities are taken care of, particularly at flood-prone areas and villages.

Several regional initiatives are being used as models in this country for disaster management plans and initiatives. Brunei Darussalam has hosted the 11th ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team Induction Course, together with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management in April 2018. At least 25 local experts have been recognised to have the competency in assessing and coordinating large scale disaster relief.

Sustainable Development Goal 12

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Brunei Darussalam recognises the need to use its resources sustainably in all aspects of life. Tackling waste is an important issue for the country, with current waste generation standing at 1.15 kilogram per capita per day. The Government aims to reduce this to 1 kilogram per capita per day by 2035.

The Department of Environment, Parks and Recreation (JASTRe) continues to engage stakeholders such as youth, academic institutions, private companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in combating plastic pollution in the country through provision of guidance on good practices and a variety of regulatory measures. These include the introduction of the 'No Plastic Bag Everyday', 'Plastic Bottle Free' and 'Reduce The Use of Styrofoam' initiatives. One of Brunei Darussalam's efforts to reduce waste is through the introduction of the 3R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) concept. The country has exceeded its initial target of 20% recycling rate by 2020, with the current rate to-date at 25%. The target is to achieve a recycling rate of 30% by 2035.

In its move to combat plastic pollution, particularly on single-use plastics, JASTRe introduced the 'No Plastic Bag Weekend' initiative in 2011, covering Saturdays and Sundays. Carrying the slogan 'It Takes a Nation to End Plastic Pollution', it has resulted in major department stores reporting a steady decrease of a 12% monthly average, with a reduction difference of 77% in plastic bag use between January and December 2018. This initiative was gradually expanded into the 'No Plastic Bag

Everyday' initiative starting 1 January 2019, with over 60 participating stores.

Excise duties on plastic products were increased in 2017 in support of efforts to reduce the amount of plastic waste to be disposed of, encourage the use of recycled materials and to help minimise pollution. Future developments in addressing plastic pollution include rolling out the 'No Plastic Bag Everyday' initiative nationwide to other users of plastic bags such as small shops or convenience stores, restaurants and food stalls; expanding the 'Plastic Bottle Free' initiative beyond the government sector; as well as exploring the possibility of halting styrofoam importation and prospect of increasing excise tax for single-use plastics.

The Municipal Department is also strictly enforcing proper disposal of waste particularly in public areas, whereby it imposes heavy penalties for those found to be illegally dumping their waste in these areas.

SUSTAINABLE USE OF PRIMARY RESOURCES

Brunei Darussalam is conscious of the need to use its primary resources, such as its seas and forests, in a sustainable manner. The Primary sector, that includes agriculture, fisheries and forestry, is bound by various interrelated government policies and regulations. Any sectoral project being implemented has to be sustainable in nature with elements of conservation well in place, by considering its impact to the environment as a whole. Each sector has specific initiatives, programmes or regulatory measures in place to ensure sustainability,

such as the Brunei Good Agricultural Practice, Good Animal Husbandry Practices, Good Aquaculture Practices, Control and Prevention of Overfishing, Brunei Selection Felling System, and quota system in forestry production.

To control and prevent overfishing, there are regulatory measures that determine zoning systems for fishing which are divided according to sizes and scale of operations. Commercial fishing vessels are only allowed in Zone 2 (3.1 – 20 nautical miles), Zone 3 (20.1 – 45 nautical miles) and Zone 4 (45.1 – 200 nautical miles). Further, the fisheries Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) has been set at 21,300 Metric Tonnes per year, where the total annual harvest to date is well below the MSY. Additional regulatory measures include allocation of fishing licenses according to available quota for both commercial and small scale fishing in the respective zones; specific allowable types of fishing gears; and the banning of trawlers that will take effect by 1 January 2021.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism is one of the priority areas that has significant impacts to the country's economic growth, due to the spin-offs generated to economic activities, local employment, and entrepreneurship.

Amongst the strategies to promote a sustainable tourism sector are to strengthen and ensure the sustainability of current tourism products while introducing more niche tourism that are activity based, such as bird watching, diving, sports, adventure tourism as well as culture and community-based tourism. To date, there has been an increase in community-based tourism particularly those that provide authentic cultural immersion experiences and green destinations such as *Eco Ponies Garden* in the Tutong District, *Sumbiling Eco Village* in

the Temburong District and *Kampung Sungai Bunga* in the *Kampung Ayer* (Water Village), Bandar Seri Begawan.

In recognition of stakeholders' joint actions to decrease the negative environmental or social impact brought on by rapid tourism expansion, Brunei Darussalam's *Kampung Ayer* was recently awarded with the 'ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award' (ASTA) in the Urban ASEAN sustainable tourism category whereas Bangar Town in the Temburong District was recognised with the 'ASEAN Clean City Award'. Meanwhile, the private sector has also demonstrated their commitment to sustainable tourism, where the Radisson Hotel and Ulu Ulu Resort were presented with the 'ASEAN Green Hotel Award' in January 2020, for their initiatives in energy-saving, use of green products and community involvement.

The community based One Village One Product (OVOP) initiative provides opportunities for villagers to promote their handicrafts and their ethnic cultural show performances to tourists, thus contributing to the socio-economic development of the community. Such community-based tourism activities are jointly coordinated by the Department of Tourism Development and the District Office and promoted as part of tourism packages for both local and foreign tourists to experience the uniqueness and cultural diversity of local communities.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A collective responsibility and shared commitment by government and non-governmental agencies as well as the public on environmental awareness is essential. Raising environmental awareness is made through activities and programmes for various audiences or target groups including the education sector. A variety of mediums used include talks and hands-on activities;

educational trips; and dissemination of environment-related information via social media, mass media and radio. Environmental awareness has also been

actively advocated by non-governmental and non-profit organisations as well as social enterprises.

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

Green Brunei

Green Brunei, a social enterprise established in 2012, aims to promote environmental sustainability through youth-led initiatives in the fields of education, conservation and advocacy. Their initiatives to ensure responsible consumption in Brunei Darussalam include:

- Organising recycling competitions and regular recycling drives;
- Setting up a Green Depot in Kuala Belait, as a 'waste bank' that enables local communities to recycle and collect points, which can then be converted to cash. This Green Depot concept will be extended to a second location; and
- Organising regular talks and workshops related to waste management.

La Vida

In addition to its other activities, La Vida, a non-profit organisation, operates the La Vida Thrift Shop, with the following aims:

- Promote concepts of reduce and reuse by accepting secondhand or unused goods from community donors and selling them at low prices;
- Encourage a culture of waste reduction and buying second hand to save cost and the environment through social media channels and sustaining a physical shop front; and
- Support underprivileged mothers through paid internships at the store. Its future plans include providing part or full time employment for these mothers, with travel, training and day care support.

The shop enforces the 'Go Green' initiative and charges for plastic bag use. Proceeds go to fund La Vida's various programmes and initiatives aimed at poverty eradication, inclusive education and character building.

La Vida also hopes to provide a platform for sales of artisan products made by local artists/entrepreneurs using recycled/upcycled items, upcycling workshops, educational platform for the general public as well as students.



Image: La Vida Thrift Shop donation activities.



Image: Children recipients at the La Vida Thrift Shop.



Sustainable Development Goal 13

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

The environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are in line with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, whereby Brunei Darussalam aims to develop and maintain a high quality of life while ensuring the preservation of its natural environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Globally, the country only contributed about 0.025% of the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2018. At the same time, with 72% forest coverage, the country still has one of the highest carbon sinks relative to its size.

Brunei Darussalam may be one of the least to contribute to global warming, yet it is impacted by heavy downpours, floods, heatwave and wildfires that are already affecting the people, landscapes, wildlife and livelihoods in general. The country's mean temperature has shown an increasing trend of 0.25 degree celsius per decade with rainfall amount increasing at a rate of 100mm per decade.

As part of the global community, Brunei Darussalam is fully committed to international efforts to address climate change and contribute to the implementation of the SDGs by 2030, the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and goals of the Paris Agreement.

Brunei Darussalam became Party to the UNFCCC on 7 August 2007 and submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution on 1 December 2015. Brunei Darussalam is also among the 130 countries that have ratified the Doha Amendment to

the Kyoto Protocol and one of the first ASEAN Member States to ratify the Paris Agreement on 21 September 2016 which led to its early entry into force.

These commitments mean shifting development priorities towards sustainable inclusive transition to low-carbon and resilient green growth.

As such, Brunei Darussalam has implemented several national measures and strategies to combat the potential risks of climate change to the country. These include reviewing the usage and consumption of energy among the public and private sector; developing new guidelines, regulations and policies to reduce GHG emissions; promoting the sustainable use of energy; renewable energy deployment; forest plantation programme; and raising awareness on the potential impacts of climate change through continuous promotional and educational programmes.

WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

Climate change is under the purview of the Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS), a government authority mandated to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate Brunei Darussalam's climate change policies, strategies and actions.

In an effort to ensure a whole of nation approach in addressing the adverse effects of climate change, the Government has strengthened its climate governance to ensure an effective cross-sectoral climate action could be coordinated at a national level.



The governance structure includes a Brunei National Council on Climate Change, an Executive Committee on Climate Change and three working groups on Climate Mitigation, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, and Support Framework.

The Brunei National Council on Climate Change consists of key ministers to provide the highest level of strategic direction in addressing climate change. The Executive Committee on Climate Change includes Permanent Secretaries, CEOs, Managing Directors and Chairmans from relevant public, private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The working group members include directors and officers from government, non-government and academic bodies. These varying levels ensure a multi-sectoral approach to climate change mitigation, adaptation and support.

The climate governance continues to work in a whole of nation approach which resulted in the development of the Brunei National Climate Policy (BNCP) to pave for Brunei Darussalam's low carbon and climate resilient pathways for a sustainable nation, with 2035 as the target year. The policy will underpin the principles, values and strategies to reduce carbon emissions, increase carbon sink, strengthen climate resilience nationwide as well as outline the national adaptation plan.

A total of 39 agencies, consisting of government bodies, private sector agencies, research and academic institutions, and NGOs were appointed as members of the BNCP drafting committee. To provide insights from youth's perspective, a group of 51 youth representatives from different sectors of Brunei Darussalam were invited to participate in the review of the BNCP draft.

Upon completion of the BNCP, there are plans for the BCCS to work with the Ministry of Education to frame opportunities to inculcate climate education.

Brunei Darussalam stands committed to reaffirming and fulfilling its international commitment under the Paris Agreement. This year, the Government will be communicating its enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution that demonstrates the country's increased climate ambition. Brunei Darussalam has submitted its first and second National Communications to the UNFCCC. The Biennial Update Report is planned to be submitted once there is capacity to develop the report.

There are plans to establish a National Designated Authority to operationalise Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on carbon market mechanisms and open up prospects for industries to offset their GHG emissions through international carbon markets in the future.

CARBON EMISSIONS

In 2018, Brunei Darussalam's GHG emissions were approximately 10.1 million tonnes. As 99% of electricity is generated from natural gas, power generation is the largest contributor to GHG emissions in the country.

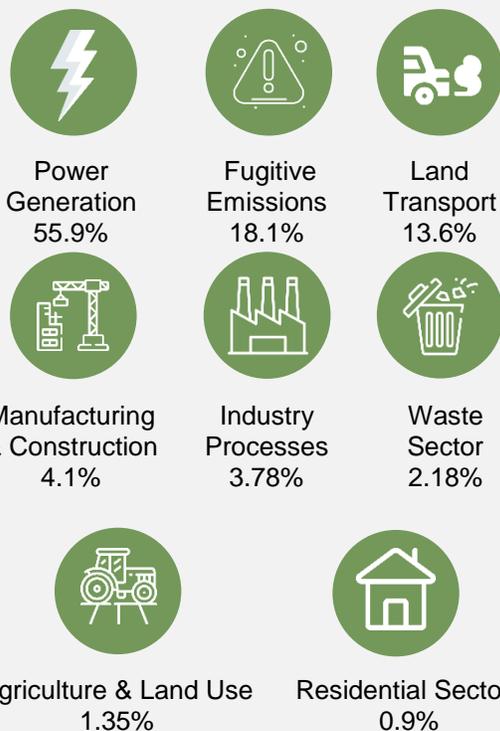
As such, the Government has introduced a number of measures to rectify this, namely:

- i) Promoting efficient energy consumption behaviour through the implementation of a smart tariff system and smart meters;
- ii) Energy management in government and commercial sectors;
- iii) New tariffs for commercial and industry sectors;



- iv) Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC) Building Guidelines for Non-Residential sectors; and
- v) Increasing shares of new and renewable energy (NRE).

Preliminary GHG emissions (2018) - 10.1 million tonnes



In achieving Brunei Darussalam's climate action aspiration goals towards carbon neutrality, among others, the Ministry of Energy's strategic actions include rejuvenation projects within the oil and gas industry facilities for GHG emissions abatement, both onshore and offshore mainly from venting and flaring activities.

The rejuvenation projects have attributed in reducing the shares of fugitive emissions of total GHG emissions from 38% in 2015 to 18.1% in 2018.

CARBON FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR

The BCCS has developed an online carbon footprint calculator whereby the public is able to calculate their own individual carbon footprint and learn to offset their carbon emissions by adopting trees. This initiative is supported by Green Brunei, a local NGO.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

As a small, coastal area with a tropical climate, Brunei Darussalam has medium to high climate change exposure. The country's coastal areas are low-lying (up to 12 metres below sea level) which increases its susceptibility to the impact of rising sea level.

Although the country has been fortunate enough to not have experienced major natural disasters, it is still susceptible to flash floods, forest fires, strong wind, and landslides. Even though the number of people affected is relatively low, the Government still recognises the need to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to protect and safeguard the country's people, landscapes, wildlife and livelihoods against climate-related hazards and disasters.

Brunei Darussalam's climate resilience and adaptive capacity go hand-in-hand with disaster risk reduction efforts in reducing the population's exposure to disasters, especially the vulnerable. These include carrying out structural prevention and mitigation measures through flood mitigation, slope protection and coastal protection projects whilst also building community resilience across all levels.

CLIMATE FINANCE

At the regional level, Brunei Darussalam is co-leading a project with the Philippines in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat



and the UNFCCC-Regional Collaboration Center, on ASEAN Climate Finance Strategy Project under the ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change Action Plan.

This project aims to facilitate the development of climate finance strategy in order to enhance access to and mobilisation of finance as well as to catalyse climate finance and investment for the implementation of priority climate mitigation and adaptation actions.

An ASEAN Climate Finance Strategy seeks to bring policy cohesiveness across government ministries, central banks,

financial players and regulators, and take climate change into macroeconomic policy, fiscal planning/budgeting, public investment management and procurement.

The desired outcome of the ASEAN Climate Finance Strategy focuses on delivering on the needs identified by ASEAN Member States in their pursuit of sustainable development, in accordance with goals outlined in their NDCs, national adaptation plans, roadmaps for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant policies or strategies providing clarity to donors and providers of climate finance.

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

Green Brunei

Green Brunei is a local social enterprise whose initiatives includes:

- Conduct **education programmes** on topics related to climate change and sustainable development such as:
 - Green Leaders Camp, which engages local operators, such as Eco Ponies, Kunyi7Lodge, Sunshine Travel and mangrove tour boat operators, as a partner or resource person.
 - Climate Camp, partnered with Sumbiling Eco Village.
 - Organise various educational field trips for students to widen their knowledge on local tourism, specifically on the use of local resources and promotion of culture.
- Collaborated with the BCCS to **develop an online carbon calculator** (<http://carbon.green-brunei.com>) that enables Bruneians to calculate their own carbon footprint and to adopt trees to offset their carbon footprint.
- Regularly organise beach, river and community clean-ups, recycling drives and tree planting initiatives.
- Enable a platform for youth to voice out their environmental concerns directly to the relevant stakeholders, including the ministers.



Sustainable Development Goal 14

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Located on the north coast of Borneo Island, with 161 kilometres of coastline, Brunei Darussalam is endowed with rich tropical marine biodiversity occurring in mangrove, mudflats, open seas and coral reef ecosystems. As such, the Government places importance on the proper and sustainable management of these ecosystems.

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

To ensure the sustainability of its rich marine biodiversity for the current and future generations, Brunei Darussalam regulates the management of fisheries activities and fishing areas as well as protects both coastal and sea water environments through several laws and regulations.

The Government has taken several measures and initiatives in controlling and significantly addressing marine pollution. The Fisheries Order 2009 governs the protection and management of marine biodiversity in the country, in which one of the provisions is the establishment and management of the marine reserves and parks.

In January 2015, the Government established the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to protect and conserve the biodiversity of its fragile coral reef, marine plants and animals. Brunei Darussalam's MPA, a coral reef of 1,208 sq. kilometres in size or about 20% of its Total Marine Area, is significantly higher than the SDGs target of 10%. This showcases Brunei Darussalam's

commitment towards the conservation of its marine areas.

In addition, as part of the country's efforts to sustainably maintain its marine resources, its fisheries policies include:

- i) Enforcement of zoning systems with license quotas for both commercial and small scale fishing;
- ii) Enforcement of allowable types of fishing gears;
- iii) Banning of trawlers that is expected to take effect by 1 January 2021; and
- iv) The imposition of a moratorium on fishing activities in Zone 1, which is within three nautical miles from the coastline.



Image: Brunei Darussalam established the MPAs to protect and conserve the biodiversity of its seas.

Other conservation efforts include banning any catching and landing of endangered species, such as all shark species, from Brunei Darussalam's waters and their sale in domestic markets, as well as on importation and trade of shark products.

In combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in Brunei Darussalam's waters, the 'National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing' was launched in 2011.

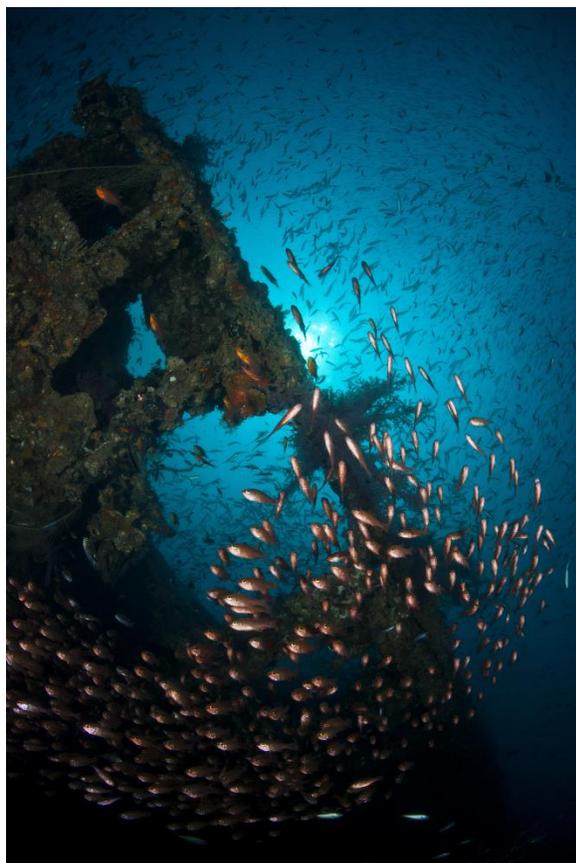


Image: Regulating management of fisheries activities and fishing areas to protect both coastal and sea water environments.

Its main objectives include enhancing and strengthening the overall level of fisheries management in the country's waters; to sustain fisheries resources and the marine environment; and to optimise the benefits of adopting responsible fishing practices. Further, there are regulatory measures such as the Fishery Limits Act (Cap. 130) and

other administrative policies carried out to regulate fishing in the country's waters.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

Brunei Darussalam continues to support regional and global cooperation efforts towards conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, such as the Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region Towards 2020 as adopted by ASEAN Member States and her counterparts, under a joint ASEAN - Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) Declaration on Regional Cooperation for Combating IUU Fishing and Enhancing the Competitiveness of ASEAN Fish and Fishery Products signed on 3 August 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand.

In 2015, Brunei Darussalam joined other ASEAN Member States as well as Australia, the People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States of America in the East Asia Summit on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in declaring and committing to enhance cooperation in sustainable marine economic development in accordance with relevant international instruments, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

MAXIMUM SUSTAINABLE YIELD (MSY)

Fish and fish products remain prominent in local diets. In this regard and taking into account its limited sea area, Brunei Darussalam places an importance on the sustainability of its marine ecosystems, and encourages the development of alternatives for marine food production. Other means of increasing seafood production in the country

include encouraging increased investment in the aquaculture industry especially in offshore cage fish farming to increase the gross output from the sector. In 2018, the aquaculture industry has contributed 13% towards the overall fisheries industry production.

In addition, the Government enforces the limit of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in the fisheries capture industry at 21,300 Metric Tonnes (MT) per year, where in 2018, total harvest of the capture industry was well below the MSY at only 13,566 MT.

All these efforts are to ensure that there are no overfishing activities; coral reefs and mangroves are well preserved; and responsible fishing and environmentally friendly technology or non-hazardous fishing

practices are also well promoted to industry players.

Brunei Darussalam remains committed towards conservation and sustainable use and management of its marine resources, in line with national and international standards and obligations, including through international conservation platforms such as the Convention of Biological Diversity.

Further to these, the Government will continue to review and update, where relevant, policies, rules and regulations as part of the country's efforts toward the sustainable use of its marine resources.

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

BruWILD

Established in April 2014, the Biodiversity and Natural History Society (BruWILD) is an NGO that consists mainly of trained biologists and conservationists with differing fields of interests and expertise. BruWILD members dedicate their time and efforts to share knowledge and interests on biodiversity conservation and environmental protection in Brunei Darussalam as well as abroad.

Based on their experience and local knowledge, they strive to provide the best educational support to local schools, institutions, nature groups and wildlife enthusiasts. They also work closely with local authorities in biodiversity conservation, wildlife rescue and sustainable development. One of their three key projects is ‘**Saving Our Ocean**’, which was expanded from their *#indamauplastik* (*#don’twantplastic*) initiative.

The *#indamauplastik* initiative aimed to prevent marine pollution, especially plastics, in which they partnered with few local food and beverage companies for a week of awareness on plastic pollution and collaborated with Seastainable.co, a social enterprise based in Singapore, who provided reusable straws for the initiative.



Image: BruWILD outreach programme.

‘**Saving Our Ocean**’ undertakes to prevent marine pollution through education and action, such as through Brunei Darussalam’s first micro-documentary titled ‘Tiny Heroes of Our Sea’. Made in partnership with Our Sea Our Legacy, a Singapore based documentary collective, the video has reached thousands of viewers with the key message of protecting marine life and ending pollution. This year, BruWILD is working with Reef Stakes Malaysia, in creating an educational card game that not only celebrates natural heritage but also to learn and appreciate the complexities in balancing development and conservation of intertidal ecosystem.



Images: BruWILD outreach programmes.

Sustainable Development Goal 15

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Brunei Darussalam’s ongoing journey in conserving its forests began 50 years before its independence, with the enactment of the Forest Act in 1934. Among others, this Act provided for the administration of the forests and reservation of forest lands. In response to challenges and opportunities, the Forest Act (Cap. 46) was revised in 2013 to give an emphasis on the importance of protection and conservation of forest ecosystem.

The country has two major legal instruments to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of its terrestrial ecosystems, namely the National Forestry Policy 1989 and the Forest Act (Revised Edition 2013). Meanwhile, legislations such as the Wild Life Protection Act 1978 and the Wild Fauna and Flora Order 2007 allow authorities to effectively manage and administer forest resources, such as preservation and conservation of endangered and threatened species. Other legal instruments, including the Land Code; Land Acquisition Act; Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act; Fishery Limit Act (Cap. 130); Fisheries Order 2009, the Town and Country Planning Act and Environmental Protection and Management Order 2016, are also in place to provide the legal basis for the administration and management of the country’s forest estate and its biodiversity.

PROTECTION OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Together with the aforementioned laws, policies and legislations as well as strong governance, the country is able to maintain

its forest cover and to protect and conserve its forest ecosystem. Despite its size, Brunei Darussalam shelters an estimated 15,000 species of vascular plants and 2,000 species of trees. 72% of total land area is covered with forests, of which 41% is gazetted as forest reserves. The Government is currently undertaking efforts to increase the areas gazetted as forests reserves to 55%.



Image: Promoting the sustainable use of its terrestrial ecosystems.

As part of the initiatives in protecting and conserving the forest ecosystem, the country has also dedicated three separate forest reserves, namely Pulau Selirong Forest Reserve, Ulu Temburong National Park and Berakas Forest Reserve, to the Queen’s Commonwealth Canopy.

Peat swamp forests (PSF) are the second most dominant forest type in the country, covering 16% (around 90,000 hectares) of Brunei Darussalam’s total land area, 80% of which is still estimated to be relatively intact and covered with good quality PSF. These

PSF are dominated with endemic species of *Shorea albida*, locally known as Alan, which is listed in The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species.

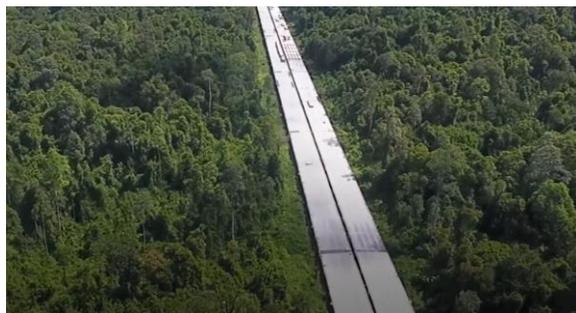


Image: The land viaduct of the Brunei Muara - Temburong Bridge traverses the mangrove swamps of Labu Forest Reserve and was designed to have minimal environmental impact.

With effective cooperation between government agencies, the private sector and local communities, Brunei Darussalam has also made progress in the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands including the total ceasing of logging operations in PSF from October 2017; improved coordination mechanisms and approaches to control peatland fires; as well as rehabilitation and restoration of peatland in the Badas PSF.

Besides flora, faunal diversity in the country is composed of an estimated 121 mammal species; 474 bird species; 182 amphibians and reptiles; and 500 species of marine fish and invertebrates¹⁴.

Meanwhile in protecting against the harms of alien invasive species, the academic sector is continuously doing research and studies while the Government is strengthening its quarantine service by regulating the entry of potential invasive species into the country.



Images: Faunal diversity in Brunei Darussalam.

SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES

One of Brunei Darussalam's initiatives towards achieving sustainable use of forest resources is the Brunei Selection Felling System (BSFS), adopted since 1986, that is aimed at enhancing the overall timber productivity of the forest.

An important component of BSFS is the application of enrichment planting of which to date has a cumulative acreage of more than 14,000 hectares, a decade after its introduction.

In addition, public awareness programmes are also being actively organised through Community Outreach Programmes, by encouraging participation from the government sector and the general public such as the local communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector as well as students. Such programmes include tree planting activities and forest-related research projects.

Additionally, the proposed Biodiversity Order will facilitate the implementation of biodiversity conservation and management in the country. The proposed Order emphasises on the importance of biodiversity conservation, bio-prospecting as well as access and benefit sharing that will

¹⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/bn/bn-nr-05-en.pdf>

help Brunei Darussalam to sustainably manage its biological resources.

PROMOTION OF RESEARCH

The Government will continue to collaborate with academic and research institutions in the conduct of flora and faunal research to determine and identify new and unknown species within the natural ecosystems of Brunei Darussalam.

The Institute for Biodiversity and Environmental Research (IBER) at the *Universiti Brunei Darussalam* (UBD) aims to become a centre of excellence for biodiversity and environmental research, through undertaking innovative research, education and outreach activities in tropical biodiversity and environmental studies. There are two research centres under IBER, namely the Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre (KBFSC) in Ulu Temburong National Park, and the Botanical Research Centre in the UBD campus.

The KBFSC is a well-known biodiversity hotspot. Various species new to science have been discovered there including the tree frog, *Leptomantis belalongensis*, three mycotroterotrophic plants from the genus *Thismia*, and a new caenogastropod species, *Craspedotropis gretathunbergae*. International research collaborations, field courses and citizen science projects are regularly held at KBFSC, thus increasing opportunities for scientific discoveries.

A well-maintained permanent plot network at KBFSC ensures the long-term monitoring of growth and dynamics of the forest, enabling the effects of climate change to be studied.

The new species discoveries highlight the value of untouched wildernesses like the Ulu Temburong National Park and KBFSC as high conservation value areas, where there

are still so many species yet to be discovered.



Images (Clockwise from left): *Craspedotropis gretathunbergae*, *Leptomantis belalongensis* and *Thismia inconspicua*.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

7,800 hectare *Tasek Merimbun* Heritage Park, a declared ASEAN Heritage Park in 1984 in Brunei Darussalam, is considered both a natural and cultural heritage. The park, which includes catchments of small rivers feeding into Brunei Darussalam's largest lake, is not only a wildlife sanctuary but also a recreational centre, and a venue for research and education. This ASEAN Heritage Park is also one of the biggest wildlife sanctuaries in the country and therefore serves as nesting grounds to several rare and endangered species. It is one of Brunei Darussalam's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) as listed by BirdLife International.

To further strengthen the country's efforts in the protection and conservation of forest resources, Brunei Darussalam has pledged 58% of its total land area for the Heart of Borneo (HoB) Initiative. The HoB Initiative is a voluntary transboundary cooperation initiative between the Government of Brunei Darussalam, Republic of Indonesia (Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Sabah and

Sarawak), to conserve the biodiversity that lies within the HoB for the benefit of the people who rely upon it.



Image: Tasek Merimbun Heritage Park.

This is done through the effective management of forest resources and the conservation of a network of protected forest areas, productive forests and other sustainable land uses.

In addition, taking the lead within ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam was the first to contribute to the ASEAN Biodiversity Fund, which provides a sustainable financing mechanism

to the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, and ratified the Centre's Establishment Agreement in 2008.

Brunei Darussalam has ratified the Convention of Biological Diversity in 2008, becoming its 191st party, through which the Government could further strengthen ongoing conservation efforts and strategies on sustainable uses of biological and natural resources in accordance with national and international standards and commitments.

The country has also recently become a party to the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) in 2018. AFoCO aims to strengthen regional forest cooperation, undertake projects and translate sound forest policies and proven technologies into action with a mission to rehabilitate degraded forest land and to prevent deforestation and forest degradation in the context of Sustainable Forest Management as well as under the broader scope of addressing the impact of climate change.

A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

BruWILD

In addition to its ‘Saving Our Ocean’ project, BruWILD undertakes two other key projects, namely their educational outreach **Eco-Pahlawan programme** and wildlife **Report & Rescue** project.

BruWILD’s Eco-Pahlawan programme engages students, teachers and members of the public in ensuring that the correct principles of biodiversity conservation are communicated and practiced. To date, BruWILD has engaged hundreds of students around the country through various educational roadshows, conferences, and youth group/activities. They hope to extend their work by collaborating with regional partners for greater impact.



Image: BruWILD’s Eco-Pahlawan programme.



Images: BruWILD outreach programme and Eco-Pahlawan programme.

Meanwhile, BruWILD’s **Report & Rescue Programme** enables its trained members to carry rescue and rehabilitation work on injured wildlife, many of which are threatened species (such as slow loris and pangolin). BruWILD is hoping to operationalise the Sinaut Wildlife Rescue Centre with the support of the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism in the next five years.

Since the inception of BruWILD's Report and Rescue programme in 2014, BruWILD has been working with the Wildlife Division to end wildlife poaching in Brunei Darussalam. While they do not have authority to apprehend any law breakers, they are able to mediate any reports of wildlife poaching activities reported by members of the public through their hotline. BruWILD will continue to support the Wildlife Division through its Report & Rescue programme.



Images: BruWILD Report and Rescue programme.

Sustainable Development Goal 16

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Brunei Darussalam, the ‘Abode of Peace’, is a country with a small population, strong religious values and a rich heritage of tradition and culture. It is well-known as a peaceful country with its people of different races and religions living side-by-side in harmony, under the national philosophy of ‘Malay Islamic Monarchy’.

The Government continues to preserve harmony and prosperity among its people, including by protecting their basic rights and securing access to basic needs. The Government also practises transparent, fair and non-discriminatory policies. In Brunei Darussalam, social harmony is due to strong social values emanating from the importance placed upon family institutions, community support and mutual respect, as well as strong foundation of faith and religion.

Social inclusiveness is inherent in Brunei Darussalam’s society. Participation of all walks of life can be seen in various national events and festivities, for instance *Bandarku Ceria* and the tradition of ‘Open House’ visits during cultural celebrations. The celebration of the National Family Day since its inception in 2012 has also focused on the pivotal role of family institutions in maintaining social harmony and integration. Inter-marriages between people of different races are historically common in Brunei Darussalam dating as far back as the 14th century¹⁵. Moreover, high respect for the elders and

teachers irrespective of race and religion has always been part of Brunei Darussalam’s culture. Elders are always given preferential treatment in public services and Teacher’s Day is celebrated yearly with acknowledgement given to teachers for their service and contribution to the society. These traditions and norms strengthen social harmony, promote friendship and foster understanding amongst communities in the country.

PROTECTION FROM HARM AND INJUSTICE

Brunei Darussalam strongly upholds the fundamental principles of human rights. The Government continues to promote and protect human rights in the country, through an inter-agency consultative mechanism in cooperation with various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as partners.

The laws of Brunei Darussalam follow a dual¹⁶ legal system where all persons are viewed and treated as equals. The laws are enacted to protect the society against all forms of harm and injustice. Several legislative measures have also been taken to promote and further strengthen the protection of human rights in the country.

In addition to the dual penal codes, several laws and legislations have been established towards protecting the vulnerable, preventing violence as well as addressing

¹⁵ The earliest record of inter-racial marriage in Brunei Darussalam was between Princess Ratna Dewi, daughter of Sultan Muhammad Shah of Brunei Darussalam and Ong Sum Ping from China.

¹⁶ The Civil Court and the Syariah Court.

human trafficking and smuggling, such as the Women and Girls Protection Act (Cap. 120); Islamic Family Law Act (Cap. 217); Married Women Act (Cap. 190); Children and Young Persons Act (Cap. 219); Prevention of People Smuggling Order 2019; and Anti-Trafficking in Persons Order 2019.

Government initiatives to prevent violence, especially domestic violence, are supported by a number of charitable and welfare NGOs, whereas protection and support for victims of violence are provided primarily by the Government through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS).

Despite being one of many countries with laws on the death penalty, there has been a de facto moratorium on its execution in Brunei Darussalam. The Government strongly believes that every individual should be given the opportunity to repent and the criminal justice system works to ensure that criminals are afforded a chance to rehabilitate through a comprehensive in-care and after care system.

Law enforcement measures have continued to be strengthened, notwithstanding the low crime rate in the country. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a decrease of 17.1% from 4,128 to 3,424 criminal cases handled by the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF). The tradition of upholding strong family institutions and a holistic education system provides important early interventions in mitigating crimes in Brunei Darussalam.

The ability to access justice is a crucial component of securing peaceful, just and inclusive societies where effective and accountable institutions govern at all levels.

The Syariah Court in May 2018 commenced the implementation of the *Sulh* or reconciliation process for family cases as a form of alternative dispute resolution that is private, less formal and speedier than court litigation. The implementation of the *Sulh* has shown positive results, with 61% of cases settled through the *Majlis Sulh* in 2018.

While the mediation process remains voluntary in Brunei Darussalam, the civil courts have seen an increase in the number of cases being mediated before accredited mediators where in 2019, a total of 14 cases have been referred for mediation in the High Court, with two out of three cases having been successfully mediated.

ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Brunei Darussalam recognises children as a valuable asset to the country and their vulnerability to manifestations of socio-economic problems and violence. As such, the Special Committee on Family Institutions, Women and Children has approved the National Plan of Action on Children which has two strategic focus:

- i) To ensure policies and legislations that meet the needs of the children are in place; and
- ii) To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social services for children.

This demonstrates the country's commitment to formulating and implementing focused strategies and interventions on improving the rights of the child. The rights of the child are enforced through various legislations applicable to all citizens and residents of the country. The amendment to Section 103 of the Employment Order 2009 prohibits children from being employed in any industrial undertaking¹⁷.

¹⁷ "In an industrial undertaking or in an undertaking which is an industrial undertaking"

Meanwhile, the Penal Code (Cap. 22) provides protection for children against any sexual exploitations and was further amended in 2017 to broaden the definition of rape, and to enhance penalties and punishments for various offences against a woman or children under 14 years of age.

As the lead agency on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the MCYS works closely with other government agencies, including the RBPF, Ministry of Health (MOH), and Ministry of Education (MOE), to ensure all complaints received, including of child abuse, are addressed immediately and effectively. The Government has also set up hotlines as a form of direct communication with the public, specifically children.

Since 2006, the Government has put in place ‘*Talian Kebajikan 141*’, a public hotline to provide information and receive complaints about social issues as well as provide immediate advice by trained officials. The calls are registered in accordance with the requirements of Child Helpline International. In 2019, the MCYS, together with telecommunications provider TelBru (now known as Imagine), launched another hotline intended specifically for children called ‘*Talian ANAK 121*’, with the tagline ‘*Kami Mendengar*’ (‘We are listening’). ‘*Talian ANAK 121*’ aims to provide a safe platform for children to speak, express their feelings and report issues anonymously and without fear. Through this system, urgent cases will be immediately forwarded to and urgently handled by specific parties. Since its launch in October 2019, the hotline has received approximately 9,867 calls (as of March 2020).

In late 2019, to further strengthen national inter-agency collaboration on child protection, Brunei Darussalam began formulating a National Framework on Child

Protection (NFCP), which is expected to be completed in July 2020. Activities and progress under the NFCP will be presented to the Special Committee on Family Institutions, Women and Children under the National Council on Social Issues.

Key outputs under the NFCP are expected to be:

- i) The production of evidence-based assessment tools, which include sector-specific screening guidelines and a child abuse reporting guideline, that can be used by relevant agencies involved in child protection; and
- ii) A national database or Register of Children and Young Persons in Need of Protection, which will maintain the records of those who need or may need protection. This register will facilitate inter-agency monitoring of such individuals and ensure the timely administration of necessary interventions.

PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Trafficking in Persons (TIPs) is a grave violation of human rights, in which women and children are the most vulnerable victims.

The Government has enacted various legislations such as the Prevention of People Smuggling Order 2019, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Order 2019 as well as the Women and Girls Protection Act (Cap. 120) to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights, especially women and children. To finance the cost of repatriation of smuggled persons and trafficked persons or such other purposes, Brunei Darussalam has also established the ‘Anti-Trafficking in Persons Fund’.

In recent years, the Government has made progress in its anti-trafficking law

enforcement efforts by enhancing the capacity of prosecutors and law enforcement agencies through inter-agency coordination, regional and international training programmes and workshops, including those organised by ASEAN, as well as technical assistance.

The Human Trafficking Investigation Unit (HTU) of the RBPF has increased its efforts by screening for human trafficking indicators in cases involving prostitution, unpaid wages, runaway workers, or labour abuse. The HTU also receives referral cases from other agencies on potential cases of TIPs. Prosecutions for non-trafficking offences, such as human smuggling or labour violations and offences under the Women and Girls Protection Act (Cap. 120), came as a result of HTU investigations.

To protect victims of TIPs, Brunei Darussalam has expanded victim protection measures during judicial proceedings and carried out victim screening procedures as well as strengthened investigations into alleged labour abuses that amount to trafficking.

In 2016, the country introduced a legislative amendment to Section 236B of the Criminal Procedure Code which allows victims to provide evidence through live video or live television link in any inquiry, trial, appeal or proceedings if the court is satisfied that it is expedient in the interest of justice. Five Technology Courts were set up at a cost of B\$4.5 million that are equipped with a computer system as well as audio-visual equipment, including a computer based recording facility which allows oral testimony to be digitally recorded. Such facilities afford due protection to trafficking victims whilst also encouraging them to testify against traffickers. Standardised interview guidelines

are also used to screen and identify potential human trafficking victims in operations with suspected TIPs elements.

Brunei Darussalam has continued its prevention efforts through training programmes for labour and immigration officials as well as NGOs. Awareness campaigns have been conducted on offences and penalties under immigration, passports, labour trafficking and smuggling of persons related laws.

The MCYS continues its role in the promotion and protection of women and children rights by providing shelter and care to victims of TIPs. Plans are underway for the development of a new shelter, a place of safety, due to be completed in 2021. This shelter will emphasise a home environment and aim to provide victims of abuse and those in need of protection with a greater feeling of safety, security and home comfort.

Given the gravity of TIPs' issues, Brunei Darussalam has been actively engaged in international efforts in addressing this global concern. Brunei Darussalam has been collaborating with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and participated in various regional as well as international meetings relating to issues concerning people smuggling, TIPs and transnational crime.

Brunei Darussalam has ratified the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which came into force for Brunei Darussalam on 24 April 2020. On 14 November 2017, Brunei Darussalam signed the ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. In 2020, Brunei Darussalam has acceded to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially

Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

In promoting human rights within the regional context, Brunei Darussalam provides annual contributions to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Fund and contributes to the development of AICHR Thematic Studies including on legal aid. Brunei Darussalam is currently working with other ASEAN Member States on Thematic Studies on the Right to Education, Right to Peace, the Right to Life and Juvenile Justice.

PROVISION OF LEGAL IDENTITY

Brunei Darussalam has a policy of single nationality and does not recognise dual nationality. It also does not permit cessation of Bruneian nationality if the person has no other national status. The Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap. 79) and the National Registration Act (Cap. 19), which require the registration of all persons within a predetermined period, provide the necessary measures for the Government in the provision of legal identity.

The Brunei Nationality Act (Cap. 15) provides the acquisition for either a Bruneian father or mother to obtain nationality for their children. The said Act outlines that non-nationals, including stateless people, who are permanent residents, can be naturalised subject to the fulfilment of certain criteria, including period of domiciliation, fluency in Malay Language and knowledge of Bruneian culture and tradition. Between 2015 and 2019, 1,926 persons were granted citizenship.

The Government issues its stateless residents, including those with permanent resident status, with a Certificate of Identity

to assist them to travel abroad and return to the country. The Government ensures inclusive application of the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap. 79), which provides that all children, including stateless children, who are born in the territory should have their births registered and that relevant statistics are kept.

Relevant authorities in Brunei Darussalam are further committed to carry out country-wide awareness campaigns relating to birth and death registration, as well as immigration and nationality matters. Awareness programmes on the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap. 79) and its Regulations to the Heads of *Mukims* and Chiefs of Villages were recently implemented in 2018 and early 2020.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Brunei Darussalam recognises the importance of effective, accountable and transparent institutions towards its development as well as achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Service delivery, both in the public and private sector, is one of the key focus areas in its *Wawasan Brunei 2035*.

In strengthening its efforts towards combating corruption and bribery, the Prevention of Corruption Act was revised in 2019. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), established back in 1982, enforces the said enactment. The ACB has taken steps to continuously improve skills and capacity building of its officers in the areas of prevention and investigation of corruption cases and offences which fall under the said Act. The trainings also include cross-border corruption investigations using the latest methods and best practices on effective methodologies in eradicating corruption and prevention strategies. The Penal Code was amended in October 2018 to introduce higher penalties for criminal breach of trust.

Brunei Darussalam became a State Party when it signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003 and ratified the Convention in December 2008. The provision of laws, such as Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Order 2005 and Criminal Asset Recovery Order 2012, enhances and facilitates the cooperation of investigations undertaken with the assistance of foreign countries to track offenders and the procurement of bribes brought and concealed abroad. The Bureau is also taking steps to strengthen bilateral relations with anti-corruption agencies in neighbouring countries through exchange of information and assistance in relation to corruption including money laundering and proceeds of crimes of corruption.

These efforts, among others, have led to an improvement in Brunei Darussalam's rankings in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in 2019, whereby it jumped from the 41st rank in 2016 to the 35th rank in 2019 and was the 2nd least corrupt nation in ASEAN.

Government expenditure for ministries and departments are published annually, whereby budget proposals are deliberated publicly in the annual Legislative Council meetings. National policies and development plans are also discussed during those meetings.

Towards fulfilling the public needs for its services, the Government implements the Client's Charter (*Tekad Pemedulian Orang Ramai* - TPOR), which is one of the main strategies intended to facilitate ministries and departments to improve the quality of their service delivery. Monitored by the Management Services Department (MSD) of the Prime Minister's Office, TPOR is a statement or a written commitment by a department of the service/product standard

to be delivered, allowing the public to know clearly and accurately the service quality rendered by that particular department.

Additionally, the Public Sector Performance Grading Programme is an instrument to assess and measure a Civil Service Organisation's performance level as one of the efforts towards improvement, efficiency, performance efficacy, productivity and quality of service delivery.

The Government has also introduced a platform for the public to provide feedback on the quality of service delivery. The Customer Satisfaction Survey in the Public Sector (*Kajian Selidik Tumpuan Pelanggan - KSTP*) acts as a check and balance in order to ensure that the public perspectives on the effectiveness of service delivery are consistent with that of government agencies.



Image: The KSTP done electronically at one of the government service counters.

The 34 government agencies which have been selected for the purposes of carrying out the KSTP are mainly agencies which frequently provide services to the general public. Continuous biannual monitoring is carried out two-fold by the identified agencies and by the MSD.

The Government through the MSD provides the public with several platforms to submit their complaints and grievances with regards

to the provision of public services by all government agencies, which will be addressed professionally by the said division.

Efficient provision of services to the public is also further enhanced through the implementation of '*Talian Darussalam 123*' (TD123) by the E-Government National Centre. TD123 functions as an all-purpose national call centre facility which centralises and directs public complaints, inquiries and requests for information onto one main platform, which enables such complaints and concerns to be efficiently addressed to the appropriate source. Enabling the public to interact directly or otherwise with government agencies ensures effective information dissemination and guarantees that citizens are receiving credible information.

In 2015, the Online Public Service Commission Recruitment System (PSCR) was introduced, which replaced the civil service information system used since 1999. The PSCR allows the Public Service Commission to conduct recruitment of jobseekers from the initial stage to the final process and facilitates the collection, consolidation and evaluation of data obtained for processing. For jobseekers, the PSCR facilitates searching and filtering of advertised vacancies and enables users to conduct various actions online, such as updating profiles, submitting job applications, tracking and checking application status, and receiving alerts about tests, interviews and results of job applications.



Sustainable Development Goal 17

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Brunei Darussalam recognises the complexity of the 2030 Agenda and the need for heightened commitment to collaboration and partnership towards achieving the SDGs, building upon its existing cooperation both bilaterally and multilaterally.

It also recognises that governments alone cannot ensure the successful achievement of the SDGs and that a multi-stakeholder approach will be required. Thus, while Government has led the journey towards 2030, this has been complemented by the active involvement by non-governmental stakeholders.

COLLABORATION FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT

The Government implements bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the basis of friendship, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence, by establishing diplomatic relations with all friendly nations. It continues to promote and strengthen these cooperations in various fields through the country's participation in sub-regional, regional and international organisations.

Examples of these regional and international platforms include the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), The Commonwealth, Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (OIC COMCEC), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, all of which have extensively

covered collaboration that contributed towards SDGs.

For instance, following identification of complementarities between ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2017, ASEAN has produced the Complementarities Roadmap, which will serve as the guideline for further advancing the Complementarities Initiative between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 including enhancing its cooperation with its Dialogue Partners and external parties. The establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand will further contribute to ASEAN's efforts to promote sustainable studies and cooperation, and will provide institutional support for the coordination of the implementation of the Complementarities Roadmap through project collaboration with various centres and institutions around the region.

Brunei Darussalam held the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2013, with the theme 'Our People, Our Future Together'. During this chairmanship, the country promoted the collective commitment of the people, bound together through the spirit of unity and diversity, to bring forward an ASEAN community that is politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible. In that year, Brunei Darussalam issued the 2013 Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on Youth Volunteerism and



Entrepreneurship, which called for the active involvement of the youth and young professionals in volunteerism and entrepreneurship programmes.

During its chairmanship of ASEAN in 2021, Brunei Darussalam will place emphasis on improving the well-being and livelihoods of the ASEAN peoples and equip them with the ability to effectively face current and future challenges, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, Brunei Darussalam will continue to work with other ASEAN Member States and its external partners in advancing cooperation in areas of mutual interests that are aimed at ensuring peace, security and prosperity in the region.

In the context of OIC-COMCEC, Brunei Darussalam has been country partners for various capacity building projects such as with Malaysia for its project to enhance the capacity of community-based tourism workforce with other partners, namely the Republic of The Gambia, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Mali, Republic of Tunisia and Republic of Yemen, and the project entitled 'Improving Income of Small and Medium Scale Farmers in the OIC Member States Through Reducing Losses of Livestock Production' implemented by Republic of Indonesia in partnership with Brunei Darussalam, Arab Republic of Egypt, Malaysia and Republic of Sudan.

The Government further actively extends technical assistance overseas in collaboration with international agencies, such as with the Commonwealth Secretariat on the Brunei Darussalam Third Country Training Programme (BDTCTP). Through the BDTCTP, it has extended technical assistance to developing countries of the Commonwealth since 2015 which covers multiple projects such as 'Performance Management for Effective Implementation of

SDGs' and 'Environmental Sustainability and Management'. The invitation was extended to several countries such as Cook Islands, Republic of Fiji, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of Maldives, Niue, Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and Republic of Vanuatu.

COMMITMENT TO OPEN TRADE

Brunei Darussalam subscribes to pursuing free trade policies aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth. This is reflected in the country's commitment to strengthening the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open, and inclusive multilateral trading system as enshrined in the principles and values of the World Trade Organization.

The country is an active participant in regional economic forums to advance multilateral trade. Within the framework of ASEAN, Brunei Darussalam continues to work closely with ASEAN Member States to promote regional trade liberalisation and facilitation, including through ASEAN Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with its Dialogue Partners. In total, Brunei Darussalam is a signatory to nine FTAs which include one bilateral FTA, two plurilaterals and six regional FTAs.

One FTA that is aimed for signing at the end of 2020 is the ASEAN-driven Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. With the first round of negotiations launched in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, in 2013, the FTA, finalised in 2019, is a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement, which would build upon existing economic linkages amongst participating countries.



Another plurilateral agreement that Brunei Darussalam is working to ratify is the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. This agreement is a comprehensive and ambitious 21st century free trade agreement that aims to facilitate trade and strengthen trading regimes in the Asia Pacific region.

Under the APEC forum, Brunei Darussalam, as a member economy, is also supporting efforts that will ensure greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration. Such support includes the work to achieve the Bogor Goals through trade and investment liberalisation, business facilitation and sectoral activities, underpinned by policy dialogues and economic and technical cooperation.

FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

In providing assistance to other countries in their development journey, Brunei Darussalam contributes to, among others, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Brunei Darussalam, as a member of the International Monetary Fund, has also agreed to a financing plan to mobilise resources for the Fund's share of debt relief for the Federal Republic of Somalia in 2019.

The Government offers scholarships to students from various Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States

and African countries, such as the 'Brunei Darussalam Government Scholarship for Foreign Students tenable in Brunei Darussalam', 'Master in Public Policy and Management Scholarship', and 'Brunei Darussalam Scholarship on Enhancing Professional Communication Skills'.

WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

Brunei Darussalam welcomes and supports the efforts of other stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations and the private sector, not just towards achieving the SDGs, but also for the development and prosperity of the country.



Image: Techstars Startup Weekend Brunei on the SDGs (2018).

These stakeholders, especially the youth, have been active in advocating and addressing issues directly relevant to the SDGs, such as sustainable development, poverty, inclusivity and the important role of volunteerism spirit and youth.



A WHOLE OF NATION APPROACH

MyActionForSDGs

MyActionForSDGs, led by Nurul Hadina Haji Alias as the ASEAN MY World 2030 Advocate in Brunei Darussalam, is an awareness campaign that aims to inspire individuals, organisations and the local community to start taking action for the SDGs. It is supported by the UN SDGs Action Campaign, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub and UN Volunteers Asia-Pacific. The campaign aims to create a positive change in society towards the SDGs, through increasing awareness of its importance, localising and unifying community action supporting SDGs and connecting local supporters with the Global Day of Action.

Between June and September 2018, people living in Brunei Darussalam voted for six of the SDGs that they are most concerned about through the online and offline ASEAN MY World 2030 survey. The votes collected mostly reflected the youth's concerns as ages 16 – 30 made up 90.3% of the total 515 votes.



Image: Nurul Hadina Haji Alias, the ASEAN MY World 2030 Advocate for Brunei Darussalam.

From these results, it can be deduced that 75.1% chose Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being as their main priority, followed by 72.8% for Goal 4: Quality Education and 55.1% for Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. These three SDGs mirror the three goals of *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. The survey found that only 30% was concerned about Goal 13: Climate Action, 14.4% for Goal 14: Life Below Water and 15.7% for Goal 15: Life on Land despite many visible youth NGOs advocating for these global goals.



Image: Awareness programme by MyActionForSDGs.

MyActionForSDGs calls on the youth, civil society and NGOs to take up this active partnership with the aim of raising awareness on the importance of youth engagement with individuals, organisations and small businesses to accelerate action towards the achievement of the SDGs in Brunei Darussalam.

MyActionForSDGs will continue to raise awareness about the importance of the SDGs, increasing the scope of partnership to both businesses and government sector, using the ASEAN MY World 2030 survey as a basis for further quantitative and qualitative research to find out which goals should be prioritised for implementation by all stakeholders. It also plans



to leverage on youth organisations to be efficient intermediaries between policy-makers and young people.

Brunei Youth Council

One of the main aims and objectives of Brunei Youth Council (BYC) is to unite all youth and welfare bodies in Brunei Darussalam into one huge and solid council so that it can promote the economic, social, cultural, physical, mental and spiritual development of Bruneian youth and instill in them a sense of national identity and a spirit of dedicated, responsible and useful youth citizens.

To form a collective voice for the youth, the BYC in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS), organised the **National Youth Congress 2019**, which gathered youth from various organisations and sectors to discuss issues related to youth, such as climate change and employment. During the congress, youth engaged directly in dialogue with cabinet ministers and policymakers. A joint youth statement and resolution was produced, which forms the basis for an updated National Youth Policy aimed at shaping a brighter future for the nation. The BYC continues to actively engage with other stakeholders in the country, such as with the MCYS and the Ministry of Health (MOH) on programmes to address poverty and health issues.

WeCare | KamiPrihatin

Established in 2016, WeCare | *KamiPrihatin* is a non-governmental organisation that aims to provide humanitarian aid by responding to emergency crisis or appeals both locally and internationally and providing relief efforts and assistance to the victims of humanitarian issues.



Since its launch, WeCare | *KamiPrihatin* has successfully executed more than 25 projects ranging from fundraisers, donation drives, local emergency relief and international aid. In addition to local humanitarian projects, WeCare | *KamiPrihatin* has also carried out a number of fundraisers for international humanitarian crisis through collaboration with other NGO partners such as Hand4Hand, Shafaq Sham, Hayat Yolu of Turkey and Human Initiative of Indonesia:

- Rohingya (2017): 2600 food packs, 51 shelters, 60 water wells
- *Untukmu Syria* (2018): 2000 food packs, 1500 education packs, 120 pairs of shoes
- Iftar 4 Gaza (2018, 2019): 15860 Iftar packs
- Lombok, Indonesia (2018): 325 foodpacks, 180 hygiene kits, 44 temporary housing
- Syrian Warm Winter (2018, 2019): 1000 food packs, 200 winter bags
- Sulawesi, Indonesia (2018): 513 family food packs and hygiene kits, 42 temporary housing.



Image: Members of WeCare in Republic of Turkey.

Conclusion

Brunei Darussalam recognises that achieving sustainable development requires concerted efforts, both from the Government and non-government stakeholders. Underpinning such efforts is a requirement to have a dynamic and sustainable economic growth that is envisioned in its *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. Whilst the country's diversification initiatives have begun to bear fruit, there is a need to accelerate the growth of its Non-oil and Gas Sector. This necessitates further development of the country's private sector by encouraging more innovative entrepreneurs and continuing to attract FDI in its priority sectors.

The Government reaffirms its commitment to increase the economic empowerment and participation of all segments of the society including the youth, women, differently abled and the disadvantaged. Boosting modern infrastructures such as quality roads, electricity and telecommunication are necessary enablers to economic and social growth. In addition, accelerating initiatives to build a skilful workforce is very important, not only to match the industry needs, but also for the population to be future ready particularly in the context of the 4th Industrial Revolution and digital economy.

Brunei Darussalam continues to undertake efforts to enhance the health and welfare of its citizens, through the further strengthening of its national health system and service in a coordinated and cohesive manner as outlined in the Ministry of Health's Strategic Plan (2019-2023). At the same time, it will continue to seize opportunities to be innovative in the delivery of healthcare and protection of public health, optimising resources and leveraging on technology and smart partnership.

The *Sistem Kebajikan Negara*, expected to be operational by July this year, will create a

comprehensive and centralised national welfare system that will ensure assistance is given to those who are in need.

In order to have a complete understanding of the country's progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda, it will seek to further identify gaps in and availability of its SDGs data and strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and reporting progress for the SDGs. Brunei Darussalam looks forward to learning and benefiting from other countries' experiences in their implementation of the SDGs. The Government further welcomes continued collaboration, including technical assistance and capacity building programmes, that will allow the strengthening of its human resources and supporting infrastructures towards achieving the SDGs.

This VNR report reflects the country's efforts in improving the lives of its citizens as well as in contributing to global partnerships for mutual benefit. Building on its success thus far, Brunei Darussalam is committed to make further progress in the 17 SDGs over the next decade, in line with its efforts towards achieving *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. From a broader perspective, Brunei Darussalam recognises the SDGs as people-oriented, inclusive and comprehensive, which given their complexity and ambitiousness, require collective efforts and cooperation at the regional and international level.

There are common external factors that may impede the progress in achieving the SDGs, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have made such collaboration more important than ever. In this regard, the Government remains committed to be a part of the global partnership for development and supports cooperation for the benefit for all.



MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMY
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

