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Brunei Darussalam

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I. Introduction and methodology

1. Brunei Darussalam's (Brunei) second national report for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was discussed at the 19th session of the Working Group of the UPR on 2 May 2014. At the review, Brunei accepted 97 recommendations; did not accept 78 recommendations; and partially supported 14 recommendations. Brunei submitted its responses at the 27th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 19 September 2014, where the outcome of its review was adopted.
2. Since the last review, the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam (the Government) has made continuous efforts to fulfil its commitment to implement the 97 accepted recommendations, including by collaborating with all relevant stakeholders that actively promote the welfare and rights of the people, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
3. The Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG), formally known as Inter-Agency Expert Group (IAEG) in 2008, continued the mandate given to prepare the national report for the third cycle of the UPR, in accordance with the general guidelines for the UPR (A/HRC/DEC/17/119). This national report outlines actions taken by Brunei with regard to human rights development in the country and implementation of accepted recommendations.
4. The national report was compiled after a series of consultations amongst all relevant stakeholders, which included government agencies and NGOs. A dedicated email address – brunei.upr2019@mfa.gov.bn – was set up to facilitate this consultative process.

II. National development programme

Wawasan Brunei 2035¹

5. *Wawasan Brunei 2035* represents His Majesty's continued commitment and visionary approach towards placing Brunei on the best track for its future. His Majesty's dedication to see Brunei and its people progress has led to the establishment of the *Supreme Council of Wawasan Brunei 2035*² in 2014, that aims to realise the three goals set under *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, namely:
 - (a) **Goal 1:** Educated, highly skilled and accomplished people;
 - (b) **Goal 2:** High quality of life; and
 - (c) **Goal 3:** Dynamic and sustainable economy.
6. Further information appears as **ANNEX 1**.

Achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets³

7. Brunei was an early achiever of all the MDG goals. Even at the beginning of the MDGs in 2000, there was no extreme poverty in Brunei. The country is progressively improving on equity. The Government has implemented national policies that empower the lowest income earners as well as promote the economic inclusion of all strata of its citizens, regardless of gender, race or religion. Health indicators have shown that Brunei's efforts have matched those of the developed nations. Infectious diseases have been well controlled and to date, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has little impact on the country. Educational opportunities are available for girls and boys alike at all levels. Brunei has also managed to safeguard its environment and natural resources in a manner consistent with the ideals of sustainable development. In the international arena, Brunei continues to be a part of the global partnership for development and supports technical cooperation for the benefit of Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

III. Fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

8. Brunei remains highly committed to building on the successes that it has achieved with the MDGs in striving towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably the Goals that are aligned with the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, such as Goal 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

9. In 2016, the Government established the *Special Committee for National Coordination of the Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs)⁴, to facilitate the monitoring of achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the national level. To further advance the nation to achieve the SDGs, Brunei has actively participated in regional and international meetings and workshops aimed at enhancing understanding of as well as promoting closer cooperation towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

10. Further information appears as **ANNEX 2**.

Poverty⁵

11. There is no official national poverty line in Brunei. However, there are several agencies that have been mandated to address challenges faced by low-income families namely the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) through the Department of Community Development (DCD); Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) through Brunei Darussalam Islamic Religious Council (MUIB); Ministry of Education (MOE); and NGOs such as *Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah* and *Majlis Kesejahteraan Masyarakat* (MKM). Additionally, there is an increasing participation of corporate social responsibility (CSR)-related activities in poverty eradication programmes.

12. The Government has implemented various programmes to tackle social issues especially poverty. The Government has introduced the Employees Trust Fund (TAP) and the Supplemental Contributory Pensions (SCP) Schemes in January 1993 and January 2010 respectively which aim to ensure adequate savings for the retired. The Government contribution also extends to persons who are not in the formal employment of any company nor has any employees. These self-employed individuals are eligible to register and contribute voluntarily to SCP scheme provided they are not under the Government pension scheme.

13. Meanwhile, the role of the Zakat Collection and Distribution Section⁶ under MUIB is to provide assistance to those that have been classified as poor⁷ and destitute⁸ ensuring that individual basic necessities are met. This assistance allows for the survivability of those who are not able to fend for themselves and their families.⁹ Since 2007, MUIB has organised various enrichment programmes aimed at providing skills and tools to *zakat* recipients to alleviate them from poverty and dependency on the assistance.

14. Under the *Projek Pembinaan Rumah Bantuan Golongan Daif, Fakir dan Miskin*, a housing project funded by *zakat* collection, 97 houses have been provided to eligible low-income families between 2008–2018. From 2018 onwards, another 87 houses have so far been allocated, while another ten existing houses have been identified for repair.

15. The number of people receiving welfare assistance from MCYS fell from 6,516 heads of family in 2015 to 5,815 heads of family in October 2018. Also as of October 2018, the DCD gives welfare assistance to 134 elderly citizens who are receiving Old Age Pension as additional financial support to alleviate the effects of poverty.¹⁰

16. MKIS is currently reviewing relevant national policies and plans on poverty eradication through a “whole-of-government” and a “whole-of-nation” approach. A welfare pilot project to assess the feasibility of the policies and programmes known as *BKB100* has since April 2016 developed four programmes namely:

- (a) Employment Plan;¹¹
- (b) *Berniaga Dari Rumah* (BDR);¹²

- (c) Community Empowerment – Program Perkasa Komuniti (PPK);¹³ and
- (d) Innovative and Visionary Youth (PIBB).¹⁴

17. As of January 2019, a total of 89 welfare recipients/beneficiaries have been employed under the Employment Plan programme. Meanwhile, 41 out of 68 participants have successfully continued operating their home-based businesses under the BDR programme. Two out of 31 participants of the PPK programme have been employed while three of them started their own businesses. Out of 19 participants of the PIBB programme, 11 are currently in employment, three have started their own businesses while one has continued further studies.

18. Brunei is cognizant that poverty is a real issue that must be tackled sustainably. 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 the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* including food security and the drive towards self-sufficiency.

Adequate housing¹⁵

19. The Government remains committed to improve the quality of life in Brunei by providing sustainable and affordable housing for the citizens. This is to further contribute towards the political and social stability in the country as outlined in *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. The initiatives of the Government to provide decent livelihood to the people began as early as 1952 with a Bunut and Berakas resettlement scheme where identified families were given land to live and cultivate. A National Housing Programme (NHP) was further expanded in 1984 with the Landless Citizens' Scheme (STKRJ) and National Housing Scheme (RPN) providing affordable housing to citizens.

20. The NHP is an integrated community based housing scheme that has schools, health centres, community centres, mosques and shops within close proximity. Under the scheme, families are encouraged to live close to each other. As of August 2018, the NHP has built more than 30,000 housing units while 26,634 individuals have received houses under RPN and STKRJ. Under the same scheme, the Government has also provided a total of 1,976 land lots to citizens to build their own houses.

21. The Government also grants houses to those who lost their homes due to calamities. For example, in 1981 new houses were given to Kampung Ayer¹⁶ residents who lost their homes to a huge fire by first temporarily housing them in available shelters and subsequently relocating them to newly built houses on land in Kampung Perpindahan Mata-Mata Gadong. Other agencies such as MUIB and the *Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah* also award houses to those who cannot afford permanent home.

22. In addition to home financing schemes offered by private financial institutions such as banks, the Government continues to offer its own similar schemes to civil servants in order to ensure home ownership is more affordable and accessible.

Access to safe drinking water¹⁷

23. The Government places great importance on effective water supply system to ensure that the population have access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water that conforms to WHO standards to drinking water, and that water consumption does not adversely impact water resources.¹⁸ In Brunei, 100% of the population has access to clean drinking water and 92% to improved sanitation.¹⁹ Currently, wastewater treatment service is provided at no cost to the public and not generating any revenue. The sewerage infrastructure relies on state fund for its operation and maintenance activities.

Promoting cultural/religious understanding and social harmony²⁰

24. Brunei is well-known as a peaceful country and people of different races and religion living side-by-side in harmony, bound together under the national philosophy of

Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB).²¹ Incidence of racial disharmony or attacks are non-existent and unheard of in Brunei. Until today, there is no record of racial tension in the country. The right to practise one's religion is safeguarded by Article 3 (1) of the 1959 Constitution of Brunei Darussalam and Islamic principles.²² The Government practises transparent, fair and non-discriminatory policies.²³

25. In Brunei, social harmony is contributed by strong social values emanating from the importance placed upon family institution, community support and mutual respect, and strong foundation of faith and religion stemming from compulsory religious and civic lessons. Social inclusiveness is inherent in the Brunei society where participation of all walks of life can be seen in various national events and festivities for instance *Bandarku Ceria* (My Lively and Vibrant City)²⁴ and the tradition of open house visits during cultural celebrations. This tradition contributes towards the strengthening of social harmony and promotes friendship and understanding amongst communities in the country. Since its first inception in 2012, Brunei continues to celebrate the National Family Day by focusing on the pivotal role of family institution in maintaining social harmony and social integration and the celebration which lasts all year long involving all sectors of society.²⁵

26. Inter-marriages between people of different races are historically common in Brunei dating as far back as the 13th century.²⁶ Moreover, high respect for the elders and teachers irrespective of race and religion has always been part of the Brunei 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 in the Brunei education.

27. Brunei actively participates in global interfaith dialogues and conferences²⁷ to promote tolerance and understanding of the Islamic faith and proudly representing its unique model of coexistence.²⁸

28. The DCD collaborates with village heads and grassroot level community to provide necessary assistance to address adversities and other issues faced by the communities for people living in the villages and rural areas.

Peace, justice and strong institutions²⁹

29. The laws of Brunei follow a dual legal system where all persons are viewed and treated as equals.³⁰ The laws are enacted to protect the society against all forms of harm and injustice. Since Brunei's last UPR, several legislative measures have been taken to promote and further strengthen the protection of human rights in the country.

30. Brunei strongly upholds the fundamental principles of human rights. The syariah law is to strengthen them by providing better protection of the society particularly against serious criminal offences, through the mechanism of deterrence and at the same time adequate judicial protection of the accused, including through higher standards of proof. The objectives of syariah are to protect faith, life, lineage, intellect and property.

31. The Government has also established various steering committees and introduced a number of initiatives including roadshows and briefings through the media as well as training programmes to disseminate information and provide understanding on various legislations. These briefings were given to all citizens, residents, and interested parties in Brunei.

32. Although Brunei is one of those countries which implement the death penalty, there has been no execution since 1996. 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.

IV. Developments in the promotion and protection of human rights

33. Brunei continues to enjoy a high standard of living whereby in year 2017 the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was BND 39,752.40.³¹ Brunei's high income and small population of 421,300 enables the country to continue to adopt an income tax-free and generous welfare system. The Brunei people continue to enjoy free education, subsidised water, housing, electricity, petrol and various essential foods and high quality health care. The crime rate in the country is low and law enforcement measures have continued to be strengthened.

34. The Government aspires to ensure a better life is afforded to every man, woman, and child in the country. In its efforts to strengthen social welfare and development for its people, Brunei has developed several policies, community programmes, and social services focusing on the care for the vulnerable groups in the country namely children, women, the elderly, and differently-abled persons (persons with disabilities or PWDs).³²

35. Through the establishment of several committees, including the Special Committee on Immoral Activities and the Prevention of Crime³³ co-chaired by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and the MORA, has contributed towards reducing crime rate through ensuring effective and focused crime interventions and prevention. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a decrease of 17.05% of criminal cases from 4,128 to 3,424 handled by the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF). The Brunei tradition of strong family institution and a holistic education system both provide important early interventions in mitigating crimes among Brunei society.

36. The Government continues to promote and protect human rights in the country, through an inter-agency³⁴ consultative mechanism in cooperation with various NGOs as partners. This includes the formulation of legislation and implementation of relevant programmes.³⁵

Family institution³⁶

37. Recognising that family is an essential part of life and is at the forefront in supporting the community and nation, strengthening the institution with a family-friendly social environment has always been the focus in the development agenda of the Government through the establishment of various measures in areas including education, health, and housing for the welfare of the people.

38. The traditional Malay culture and Islamic values are an integral component of the way of life of the people which play a significant role in preserving positive values in society. Additionally, these values are instilled from an early age through school curriculum which includes Islamic Religious Knowledge and MIB.

39. The *Special Committee on Family Institution, Women and Children* has been established under the National Council on Social Issues (MKIS) to address specific issues of family institution, women and children with Plans of Action (POAs).³⁷ To date, the Special Committee has endorsed the POA on Strengthening Family Institution that focuses on two strategic issues mainly to ensure safety net and social support for family as well as enhance family protection system through the strengthening of family institution.³⁸

40. Brunei annually celebrates the first Sunday of May as the National Family Day to recognise the importance of the family unit as the backbone of society. In 2018, Brunei celebrated its 7th National Family Day on 6 May that carried the theme of *Keluargaku Penyayang, Negara Gemilang* (My Loving Family, Glorious Country) with nation-wide campaign and activities organised to raise awareness on the importance of love, care and attention in the family, the key foundation to a healthy and harmonious society, free from social illnesses including drugs abuse.

41. The Government underscores the importance of ensuring a drug-free society. Through the Preventive Drug Education Division of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), the

Government continues to increase its efforts in promoting awareness on the harm of narcotics drugs throughout the country via various initiatives including lectures and exhibitions as well as the use of social media platforms for the purpose of advocating and sharing of anti-drugs information on the abuse of illicit drugs and international drug syndicates. A nationwide educational programme – SINAR - which covers all Year 5 and 7 students, has been implemented, in collaboration with the MOE. As a member of ASEAN, Brunei has incorporated the *Anti-Drug Abuse Ribbon* into its national drug awareness campaigns. Brunei is also a member of the Colombo Plan and actively participates in its Drug Advisory Programme.

42. Since 2016, roads around the capital Bandar Seri Begawan³⁹ are closed every Sunday morning to allow the public to engage in sports, and leisure and business activities which includes cycling⁴⁰ and other recreational activities to promote healthy lifestyle and to strengthen family institutions. This *Bandarku Ceria* programme has since been extended nationwide.

43. The Government continues to develop policies and programmes that promote work family balance, empower individuals to better balance work and family commitments including option for early retirement to encourage active ageing with adequate support from family members. In Brunei, as part of its cultural and religious values, family members are obliged to care for the vulnerable, including the young and the elderly. Initiatives to increase nationwide awareness on strengthening family institutions include through Friday sermons.

44. Recognising the increased responsibility of childcare to working parents, the Government has also encouraged the establishment of childcare centres in the workplace. Additionally, several business entities have flourished in providing day care facilities to reduce the strain of finding alternative childcare services when parents are at work.

45. The development of separate POAs under the *Special Committee on Family Institution, Women and Children* is part of Brunei's commitment to implement the recommendations received from the *Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 2014; and the *Committee of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) in 2016.

Women⁴¹

46. Women in Brunei are given equal opportunities among others in education, training, healthcare, employment, ownership of assets, benefits and citizenship. Women's equal economic participation is ensured through access to incentives and entrepreneurial support such as financial assistance schemes, Information, Communication and Technologies (ICTs), business counselling, and training. Women also actively participate in sports and are well represented in regional and international events. In 2012, the Government sent its first female Olympian to London Olympics to participate in the 400 metre track event.

47. Brunei submitted its combined initial and second periodic report to the CEDAW Committee on 1 November 2013 and was considered by the Committee on 29 November 2014. The recommendations of the CEDAW are currently being considered into the draft national POA dedicated to women issues, demonstrating the country's commitment to formulating and implementing focused strategies and interventions on improving the rights of women.

48. At ASEAN level, Brunei participates in the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion on the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). Since 2010, the Government has appointed three ACWC Representatives on Women. Additionally, Brunei also participates in ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW). As an active member, Brunei led the formulation of the "*Gender Sensitive Guideline For Handling Women Victims Of Trafficking In Persons*" when it hosted a workshop in 2014 and this Guideline was then adopted at the 10th ACWC Meeting in 2015.

49. At the international level, participation includes in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Institute for the Empowerment of Women, the Commonwealth and other bodies. It also works with the UN Women through the ASEAN framework, in terms of accessing technical assistance on innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality.

50. Through these participations, Brunei 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.

51. Women are well represented at the Legislative Council (LegCo) and on 13 January 2017, three women were appointed, two of whom are youth. They serve as an important voice for the people. They actively engage the community especially the youth to understand grassroots issues, as well as frequently conduct dialogue with the Government. Brunei has seen an increase in the number of women leading youth NGOs looking into diverse issues in the community.

52. Brunei has a long-standing policy of providing universal access to education. According to the 2017 World Economic Forum (WEF) Gender Gap Report⁴², Brunei was ranked first in terms of girls' enrolment in secondary education as well as in tertiary education. Girls and women have equal opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, particularly in evolving areas such as (ICTs).⁴³ According to the same report, especially in literacy rate, female students are not far behind with 94.7% attainment compared to 97.4% for male students. However, female students outperformed their male counterparts in both secondary and tertiary levels of education.

53. According to the 2018 WEF Gender Gap Report, women's labour force participation in Brunei has narrowed down its gender gaps. Brunei was placed 12th in Asia in gender equality rating. Globally, it ranked 90th up by 12 spots from the previous year. Meanwhile, the country's reputation in education enrolment also showed a marked improvement with Brunei earning top marks being placed first in secondary and tertiary education enrolment. Brunei also showed improvements by being placed 16th in economic participation and opportunity with increased wage equality. It also recorded a high score at 19th place in other indicators including professionals like legislators, senior officials and managers.

54. Recognising the growing need for specialised healthcare for women and children, a dedicated Women and Children's Block in the state hospital complex costing BND 64,655,348.84, the Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) Hospital, was constructed and completed in December 2014 bringing the healthcare standards for women and children to the next level. The Government continues to implement the Maternity Leave Regulation, introduced in January 2011, as a measure towards coordination of the pre- and post-natal needs as well as the health interest of working mothers. Under the regulation, women continue to enjoy 105 days of maternity leave as opposed to 56 days pre-2011.

55. The Government has made significant strides in encouraging equal opportunities for women in the workforce as well as elevating the role of women in nation building. Women's labour force participation has increased from 56.4% in 2001 to 58.3% in 2014. More women are now employed in traditionally male-dominated fields including aviation, engineering and maritime. In November 2012, the national airline of Brunei, Royal Brunei Airlines (RB), became the first national flag carrier in Southeast Asia to appoint a female airline captain. This was followed by the first RB flight operated by all-female crew in December 2013. There are now six female pilots in Brunei. Throughout the ten years of Brunei's involvement in the UNIFIL peacekeeping operations, there has been six female members of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces participating in the operations.

56. In power and decision-making, Brunei has recorded progress in women's career development in various fields, including legal, political, financial and managerial professions. The highest posts attained include Ambassador-at-Large, Ambassadors, Legislative Council members, Deputy Minister, Attorney General, High Court Judge, Permanent Secretaries, Solicitor-General, and Chief Executive Officers in the public sector and private sector including banks. Women also serve in senior positions in institutes of higher education, law enforcement agencies and as prosecutors in both Syariah and Civil courts. The number of women entrepreneurs in the country is on the rise including in the

areas of agriculture, food and beverage industry, retail and professional services. According to the 2017 WEF Gender Gap Report, Brunei was ranked 58th in terms of employing women legislators, senior officials and managers in the country. Brunei was ranked 11th in terms of wage equality for similar work.

57. Brunei has a policy of single nationality and does not recognise dual nationality. *Brunei Nationality Act (Cap 15)* provides the acquisition for either a Bruneian father or Bruneian mother to obtain nationality for their children. A Bruneian woman married to a foreign national can transmit her nationality to her children in accordance to section 6 of the Act by way of registration. Additionally, although the Act does not specifically provide for a Bruneian woman to confer her nationality to her foreign husband, the latter may acquire nationality through an application in a prescribed manner as stated in Sections 5(1) and 8(1) of the Act.

58. Women's issues in Brunei are strongly supported by the Women's Council of Brunei Darussalam (CWBD), an umbrella NGO whose main objective is to improve the status of women in all areas especially in education, economy, welfare, culture and society.⁴⁴ This Council has been active in supporting the implementation of national priorities on women, through collaborations with the MCYS which provides financial assistance to the CWBD for implementing programmes such as ASEAN Women's Day.

59. The Government has put in place a number of mechanism to address the issue of domestic violence from prevention to protection. It is a requirement that every Muslim couple that intends to get married undergo pre-marital training programmes to adequately prepare them for marriage life and responsibilities. Counselling are also offered to couples with marital problems and to encourage reconciliation. In the event that a marriage becomes irreconcilable the parties are encouraged to reach a voluntary amicable divorce settlement and not to continue to impose any hardship on the woman. It is an offence to cause physical harm to anybody irrespective of marital status or religion. The frequent broadcasting on national television of educational video clips on the issue of domestic violence increases public awareness and brings to their attention this important issue.

Children⁴⁵

60. Children make up a significant portion of the population in Brunei. The national 2017 Mid-Year Population Review estimated that children below 15 years old comprised 21.8% of the country's population.

61. On 10 August 2015, Brunei withdrew its reservations on paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 20 of the *CRC* relating to the protection of a child without a family as well as paragraph (a) of Article 21 pertaining to the law on adoption. Additionally, Brunei presented its combined second and third periodic report to the *CRC* Committee on 13 July 2015 and was considered by the Committee on 21 January 2016.

62. *Royal Brunei Armed Forces Act (Cap 149)* prohibits the enlistment of persons below 18 years of age onto the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Reserve Regiment. In this regard, on 17 May 2016, Brunei acceded to the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OP-CRC-AC)*.

63. Brunei recognises children as a valuable asset to the country. Brunei also recognises that children can be vulnerable to manifestations of socio-economic problems, deviant behaviours, and violence. The *Special Committee on Family Institution, Women and Children* has approved the national POA on Children which has two strategic focus: to strengthen relevant policies and legislative framework; and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of social services for children.⁴⁶ This demonstrates the country's commitment to formulating and implementing focused strategies and interventions on improving the rights of the child.

64. The rights of the child are legally enforced through various legislations applicable to all citizens and residents of the country. In Brunei, the rights of the child are legally enforced through various legislations. Section 103 of the *Employment Order, 2009* was amended in 2015 to prohibit children from being employed in any industrial undertaking.⁴⁷

Brunei is currently working to formulate a list of hazardous work which children and young persons shall not be employed in. This list is planned for finalisation in 2019.

65. The *Penal Code (Cap 22)* provides protection for children against any sexual exploitations by criminalising acts that violate their vulnerabilities. The *Penal Code* was further amended in 2017 to broaden the definition of rape⁴⁸ and has enhanced punishments for various offences.⁴⁹

66. The Government has put in place since 2006 a public hotline (141) to receive complaints and provide immediate advice by trained officials. The calls are registered in accordance with the requirements of Child Helpline International. As the lead agency on the *CRC*, DCD works closely with other Government agencies, including the RBPF, Ministry of Health (MOH), and MOE to ensure all complaints received, including of child abuse, are addressed immediately and effectively. There is a further initiative to improve accessibility and confidentiality of this hotline.

67. MCYS is currently reviewing the following Acts and Regulations to improve the overall well-being of the people and the quality of life in the country:

- (a) Child Care Centre Act;
- (b) Child Care Centre Regulations; and
- (c) Old Age and Disability Pensions Act (Cap 18).

68. The Government, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including private sectors and NGOs, regularly organises programmes targeted at children to raise awareness and disseminate information on children's rights and understanding of the *CRC*. Brunei hosted its first biennial national Children's Forum in 2017 which provided a platform for children to share their ideas and opinions on issues that affect them. At the regional level, Brunei hosted the 5th ASEAN Children's Forum in 2018 that carried the theme *Our Children, Our Future, Our ASEAN*, with the support of UNICEF. Both forums were attended by the UNICEF Special Representative to Brunei.

69. Since 2010, the Government has appointed four ASEAN ACWC Representatives on Children. Currently, Brunei is implementing the *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Children (ASEAN RPA on EVAC)*, as a follow-up to the adoption of the *Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN* in Bandar Seri Begawan in October 2013.

70. Brunei is preparing to host the 19th ACWC Meeting, 6th ACW-ACWC Consultation, the 18th ACW, and the 11th ACW+3, in the third quarter of 2019 with the purpose to further advance the regional collaboration in the rights of the women and the rights of the child.

71. The MCYS with the cooperation of UNICEF is planning to conduct a three-part training project that includes a workshop on assessment tools and case management for professionals and officers working with children, including Child Protection Committee members.

Youth⁵⁰

72. Brunei recognises youth as partners to development and their important role in shaping the future of the country. In this regard, guided by the national philosophy of MIB, the Government continues to implement and strengthen the National Youth Policy set out in 2002 to develop Excellent Youth ready for future challenges. The policy has been used as a guideline to develop youth programmes in the country, focusing on six key strategies namely: personal development and education, employment and training, leadership, entrepreneurship, international understanding, and services to others and the nation.

73. Brunei celebrates The National Youth Day on 1st August yearly since 2006. It was officially recognised by His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, to give recognition and to showcase the progress of the youth achievements locally and abroad.

74. Brunei together with other ASEAN Member States adopted the *ASEAN Declaration on the Adoption of the ASEAN Youth Development Index* in 2017. This Declaration provides a springboard for initiatives on youth development in the region as reflected in the First ASEAN Youth Development Index (AYDI) namely education, health and well-being, employment and opportunity, participation and engagement, and ASEAN awareness, values, and identity. Brunei's overall YDI score in 2015 was 0.758 with increasing trend from 2011. The two domains of education, and health and wellbeing performed well above the regional average.

75. The Government continues to implement a three-month National Youth Service Programme (PKBN) since 2011. The Programme focuses on social services, education and community development, and aims towards awakening the potential and consciousness of youth as disciplined and productive members of the society. PKBN includes various programmes that aim to strengthen relation, youth networking, instil leadership skills, inculcate good moral values and nurture civic and social responsibility. As of 2017, there are a total of 2,149 PKBN alumni.

76. The Youth Development Centre continues to offer industry driven various courses certified under the City and Guilds Certification and Recognition Programme. The Centre aim to improve their employability skills through industrial and vocational courses.

77. Among the strategies of the MCYS in increasing opportunities and platforms for youth in entrepreneurship include programmes such as Youth Entrepreneurship Development Week conducted by Youth Development Centre and Youth Centre. In 2017, a national high level Youth Entrepreneurship Steering Committee was set up to improve monitoring and coordination of youth entrepreneurship initiatives in Brunei.

78. Darussalam Enterprise (DARE)⁵¹ has launched several programmes that target entrepreneurship.⁵²

79. The Government has invested in programmes that aim to equip youth with the necessary skills to be resilient and provide more opportunities for them to participate in voluntary community building activities to empower them to become leaders by creating suitable platforms. Currently there are a total of 37 out of 96 youth NGOs which have been active in community building activities.

80. Brunei continues to implement a Young Executives Programme (YEP), launched in 2017, aimed at developing potential leadership skills of civil servants who are in service below two years including through the utilisation of appropriate and effective management methods and also global best practices in the private and public sectors.

81. In 2017, the Government established a Capacity Building Centre – *Pusat Pembangunan Kapasiti* which serves as a multi-programme skills-training centre operated by the Ministry of Energy, Manpower and Industry (MEMI). The Centre aims to produce job-ready graduates by aligning training with industrial development and requirements in Brunei.⁵³

82. The i-Ready Apprenticeship Programme, launched in April 2017, is a three-year programme that serves as a platform to introduce unemployed graduates holding Bachelor's Degree and above to various industries in both the public and private sectors and further enhance their marketability. Throughout the programme, the apprentice will be monitored by the respective host organisation to ensure their development meets industry needs. The Government provides a monthly allowance for a maximum period of three years. As of December 2018, 1,990 graduates have enrolled in the programme with 361 participating host organisations. 82% of these apprentices are in the private sector, whereas the remaining 18% are in the public sector. Since the programme's commencement, 409 apprentices have shifted to full-time employment in the respective companies.

83. Brunei continuously participates amongst others in The Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Programme (SSEAYP), Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS), Brunei-Korea Youth Exchange Programme, ASEAN-China Youth Camp, Singapore-Brunei Youth Leadership Programme (SBYLEP), Commonwealth youth programmes, and United States' Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) to strengthen leadership development and networking of youth in

Southeast Asia. As of 2018, there are approximately 135 YSEALI alumni and 1,029 SSEAYP alumni. A number of Bruneian youth have also received international recognition for their voluntary activities.⁵⁴

Elderly⁵⁵

84. Brunei attaches great importance to the welfare, protection and promotion of the rights of the elderly. Protection of the elderly is not only an integral part of the social and cultural values of the Brunei people but it is also an important obligation of the Government implemented through well-coordinated inter-agency “whole-of-nation” approach. The elderly is considered as critical support system and experienced partners for the development of the nation towards realising the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. In 2017, senior citizens aged 65 years or above account for approximately 5.4% of the total population. UN estimations shows that the elderly population in the country is expected to double by 2035.⁵⁶

85. Family values are crucial to the moral fabric of the Bruneian society. The country upholds the importance of family institution and the significant role it plays for the well-being of each member of society. In Brunei, it is a norm for generations of family to live together under one roof. This extended family system is the foundation for a symbiotic, safe and conducive environment for the care of the elderly and young children.

86. At the regional level, Brunei works closely with other ASEAN Member States in promoting the well-being of the elderly, including the promotion of healthy and active ageing. Brunei is currently co-leading with Viet Nam to develop Information, Education and Communications (IEC) materials on healthy and active ageing (2017–2019). This is in line with the *Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing: Empowering Older Persons in ASEAN* adopted in 2015 and the *Project Research on Care for the Elderly in ASEAN + 3: The Role of Families and Local and National Support Systems* held in 2017.

87. MKIS has set up the *Special Committee on the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities* with a mandate to carry out various programmes and social services in caring for the vulnerable groups in areas such as housing, health, employment, transportation, recreation, and social participation.

88. In May 2017, MKIS reviewed and approved the *Senior Citizens Action Plan* that is in line with the *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)* and the *Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016–2020)*. This action plan is geared towards ensuring healthy and active citizens through three main objectives:

- (a) develop productive and independent senior citizens;
- (b) ensure the welfare and wellbeing of senior citizens; and
- (c) provide friendly support systems for senior citizens in ensuring a friendly environment and encourage them to be actively involved in the community.

89. On 11 October 2018, in conjunction with the *International Day of Older Persons*, a workshop was organised to discuss the plan of action and to ensure inclusion of recommendations from the elderly who also attended the session.

90. The Government continues to provide facilities managed by the MCYS for citizens and residents, especially the youth and senior citizens. Since the establishment of the first Senior Citizens Activity Centre (PKWEs) in March 2013 another centre was opened in 2017 to serve as community support centre, which allow the elderly to engage in various healthy lifestyle activities. Since 2018, the Bistari Community Centre was established to bring together the elderly and the youth by organising activities that promote learning and improve participation from all ages and will be established in all districts.

91. Following up to the *Brunei Darussalam National Multisectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases 2013-2018 (BruMAP-NCD 2013-2018)*, efforts have been made to improve the quality of care and management of Non-

Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Brunei. MOH continues to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach for care of older adults including:

- (a) To ensure optimum quality of life;
- (b) To increase awareness on the four giants of geriatric syndrome: falls, incontinence, dementia, and depression; and
- (c) To strengthen human resources for provision of services in all settings.

92. Progress in implementing the Action Plan with regards to elderly care:

(a) Geriatric Medical Services based in RIPAS Hospital provides outpatient and inpatient care at district hospitals; community services; and a palliative telephone help line;

(b) In May 2015, a community-based step-down care and rehabilitation centre named *Pusat Amal Cerah Sejahtera*, was established to provide comprehensive assessment services for elderly patients, stroke patients and patients with disabilities; and

(c) MOH conducts health education programmes and activities to raise awareness on related issues, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as the MCYS as well as PKWEs.

93. MOH, through the Health Promotion Centre (HPC) in collaboration with several stakeholders conducted the Healthy Lifestyle Programme for the elderly in Brunei-Muara, Belait, and Tutong districts.⁵⁷ The aim of the programme was to empower the elderly on sustaining healthy lifestyle practices. The components of the programme include health education talks, health screening, healthy grocery tours and dialogue sessions on health with the elderly.

94. To ensure the welfare and social security of elderly in the country, the Government provides a monthly Old Age Pension to citizens and permanent residents who have attained the age of 60. The number of recipients has increased from 32,850 recipients in 2017 to 35,138 recipients in December 2018.

Disabilities⁵⁸

95. As of July 2018, a total of 6,506 differently-abled persons in the country are registered with the MCYS. Brunei has been using the term “differently-abled” since 2015 when referring to PWDs in recognising that every person is gifted with different abilities. To this end, Brunei remains committed to ensuring these individuals are afforded equal rights and opportunities; able to live their lives, be recognised and participate fully in society. Following Brunei’s 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 Convention into the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*.

96. Brunei is committed to advancing the rights and welfare of differently-abled persons, and is currently working within ASEAN to develop a Regional Action Plan on Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community.

97. The *Special Committee on the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Issues* was tasked to review a POA on the differently-abled on development, well-being, welfare and support system. The revised POA outlines various initiatives to ensure equal rights, opportunities and access of the differently-abled in community and national development; access to quality health care and legal rights; social protection, habilitation and rehabilitation; as well as access to facilities, buildings and transportation. The provisions in the CRPD have been incorporated into the POA to ensure alignment with international obligations. The POA has been endorsed by MKIS as a living document, with some strategies already implemented.

98. In 2015, the *Building Control Order, 2014*, came into force, together with the *Building Control Regulations, 2014*, to ensure that public and private buildings provide facilities with barrier-free access to PWDs. Effective 1 November 2018, it was made

compulsory for all buildings to provide barrier-free accessibility to assist the differently-abled persons.

99. In December 2017, the Guidelines Review Committee was established to draft the first edition of the *Different Abilities Design Guidelines*.⁵⁹ The Committee, led by the Authority for Building Control and Construction Industry (ABCi), includes representatives from the public and private sectors as well as NGOs. The Guidelines, published and launched in November 2018, mainly focus on the additional needs of differently-abled persons. Several mandatory requirements were introduced to minimise restrictions on the environment to enable persons with different abilities to make full use of building premises and amenities. As Brunei prepares for a fast ageing population and towards a more inclusive society, the Guidelines also emphasise on universal design concepts and provisions that benefit a wider spectrum of people, including parents with infants, the young and the elderly. The Guidelines contain new requirements for more accessible routes, corridors and paths to cater for the growing number of the elderly with limited mobility, and wheelchair users. It also requires buildings frequented by families to provide family-friendly facilities including child-friendly toilets and lactation rooms for nursing mothers.

100. The Government provides monthly pensions and allowances to differently-abled persons and their dependents: Pensions for the Blind, Mental Disorder Allowance, and Disabled Pension and Allowance. In 2018, the Government made further progress in strengthening the welfare and well-being of differently-abled children under 15 years old by extending BND 150 monthly allowance to them. As of December 2018, a total of 610 received the monthly allowance.

101. Paralympic Council Brunei Darussalam (PCBD) being a patron and sports advocate for differently-abled national athletes.⁶⁰ PCBD works closely with MCYS in developing these athletes by providing training facilities, coaches, financial support for participating in tournaments and Sports Excellence Incentive Scheme. These athletes had participated in regional and international sporting events.⁶¹

102. Brunei is currently working on addressing unemployment amongst the differently-abled through initiatives of public and private sectors.⁶² A centralised database on the employment status of the differently-abled is currently being developed.

103. The Government recognises the role of the NGOs in complementing its programmes for differently-abled persons and in promoting public awareness on their needs and rights. The Council for the Welfare of Persons with Different Ability (MKOKU) was established with the cooperation of DCD in 2016. The Council focuses on the development and welfare of the differently-abled, whereby members are from various Disabled Peoples' Organisations (DPO).

104. There is a need to further develop the maximum potential abilities of differently-abled peoples and it is important for Brunei to continue building its capacity and expertise in this area.

Health⁶³

105. *Wawasan Brunei 2035* emphasises the importance of healthcare as one of the major public investments in human development. The enhancement of the quality of life is ensured through the planning and implementation of healthcare system framework towards universal health coverage for people at all levels throughout the country. This healthcare system comprehensively covers all aspects of health promotion, prevention and control of illness, treatment and rehabilitation. The Government has built four hospitals, fourteen health centres, three health clinics, four maternal and child health clinics, as well as established three travelling clinics and two flying medical services.

106. The *Mental Health Order, 2014*, came into force on 1 November 2014 to replace the *Lunacy Act 1929 (Cap 48)* which aims to ensure equality, non-discrimination, 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 people including their rehabilitation and re-integration 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.

107. Accessible medical, dental and healthcare continues to be provided whereby citizens are charged a nominal fee of BND 1. This includes high quality maternal and child health services covering vaccination programmes and antenatal screenings, which have significantly contributed to low maternal⁶⁴ and children mortality rates.⁶⁵ This achievement has enabled the country to fulfill health-related goals and targets of SDGs.

108. The *BruMAP-NCD 2013-2018* focuses on five objectives:

- (a) Reduction of tobacco use;
- (b) Promotion of balanced and healthy diet;
- (c) Increase of physical activity;
- (d) Identification of people at risk for NCDs; and
- (e) Improvement of the quality of care and outcome of NCDs management.

109. Various actions have been implemented and the *BruMAP-NCD 2013-2018* will be evaluated in early 2019 to assess effectiveness of various actions for the different objectives. The *Multisectoral Taskforce on Health* established in February 2017⁶⁶ has identified five cross-functional teams on health:

- (a) Ensuring that every child has the best start in life;
- (b) Improving Brunei's food environment;
- (c) Supporting active communities;
- (d) Reducing smoking; and
- (e) Mental health.

110. In November 2017, Brunei finalised the *Health System and Infrastructure Master Plan*, which focuses on seven key strategies and 90 initiatives encompassing both components of health and infrastructure in line with global health indicators as recommended by the WHO. The Master Plan serves as an important roadmap not only to the MOH but also relevant stakeholders in further strengthening the national health system and infrastructures. The Plan fully supports the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* goals of enhancing the quality of lives of the people.

111. Brunei is committed to delivering quality dementia care through consistent training and early exposure of caregivers and practitioners, including in collaboration between relevant ministries and as well as NGOs. In August 2017, Brunei co-organised *Dementia Care Skills (DCS) Course Train-the-Trainer Programme* with the *Alzheimer's Disease International's Asia Pacific Regional Office (ADI-APRO)* and *Alzheimer's Disease Foundation Malaysia (ADFM)*. The training programme was attended by officers from the MOH and the MCYS. An NGO, *demensia Brunei (dB)*⁶⁷, established in December 2017, organised a two-day Dementia Care Skills Training towards raising greater awareness on the relevant issues.

112. In January 2019, the MOH has set up a national mental health helpline whereby MOH officials underwent initial training in September 2018 to learn the policies and procedures.

113. In 2016 and 2017, Brunei chaired the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting (AHMM) and the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development (SOMHD), at which the ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda was fully developed. This sets the health priorities of the ASEAN region which complements the commitments under the SDGs.

114. Several projects under the WHO Programme Budget are currently underway in Brunei to upgrade the capacity building of health officials as well as to continuously

improve the nation's health care system. The MOH has sought technical assistance from the WHO which includes areas of prevention and control of NCDs, public health, pharmaceuticals and primary health care.

115. 2016–2017 completed projects under the WHO Programme Budget for Brunei:

- (a) Promotion of Healthy Diet in Brunei;
- (b) Study on Facilitating factors and Barriers to Healthy Lifestyle Programmes in the Workplace; and
- (c) Health Systems: National Health Policies, Strategies and Plans (Health Technology Assessment Workshop).

116. Two programmes are in the process of discussion with the WHO on the Programme Budget for 2018–2019:

- (a) Needs Assessment of Adolescent-Friendly Health Services and Programmes; and
- (b) Evaluation of *BruMAP-NCD 2013-2018* and Development of Brunei Darussalam Multisectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2020-2025.

117. Brunei recognises the need for skilled and adequate health professional workforce. The *Pengiran Anak Puteri Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Institute of Health Sciences*, established in 2000, supplies a good number of trained nurses in Brunei and the Government continues to provide scholarships to students to study medicine. However, there remains a shortage of qualified local health professionals in the country including doctors.

118. Other challenges compounded by escalating health care costs which the Government is subsidising include adapting to:

- (a) epidemiological disease changes whereby Brunei is experiencing an increasing prevalence of NCDs, emergence of new Communicable Diseases (CDs) and re-emergence of old CDs; and
- (b) shifting population demography, where Brunei is seeing an increase in the elderly population.

Education⁶⁸

119. Education and human capital development are two key priorities of the long-term development policy of Brunei as set out in *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. The literacy rate in the country is over 95%, and the gross enrolment rates both at primary and secondary levels are at 100%.

120. According to the Sustainable Trade Index 2018 released by the Hinrich Foundation, Brunei is one of the countries recording marked improvements in educational attainment. Brunei has seen a 2.83% increase in the attainment of A-C grades passes across all five subjects in Primary School Assessment (PSR) results in 2018, compared to 2017.⁶⁹

121. To strengthen international partnership, Brunei in 2018 received two visits from the representative of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Office in Jakarta.⁷⁰

122. Brunei has made remarkable achievement in equal accessibility and opportunity for female students. According to a report published by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in September 2017, Brunei was the leading nation in the number of female science graduates in the Asia-Pacific region, with about 67% in tertiary education.

123. To make education fully accessible for everyone, the Government since 2007 has continued to enforce the *Compulsory Education Act (Cap 211)*. The Act provides for nine years of compulsory education for all children regardless of social background, gender, and abilities. This is supplemented by a twelve-year education policy which encourages

students to complete at least their secondary education. The Government has also enforced the *Compulsory Religious Education Act (Cap 215)* for Muslim students since 2013 which provides seven years of compulsory Islamic education.

124. In 2018, the MOE formulated a new five-year education strategic plan with the objective of strengthening and developing human resource competencies. It aims to provide equal and equitable universal access to quality education as well as foster active partnerships among stakeholders to benefit the learners. The plan focuses on the needs of life-long learners including acquiring adequate skills responsive to global trends.

125. Brunei has put in place the Special Education Policy, which develops an education system to meet the needs of all children including differently-abled students. A number of support programmes has been undertaken such as the Learning Assistance Programme (LAP), the Pre-Vocational Programme (PVP) as well as seminars, workshops and sharing session relating to special and inclusive education for teachers, parents and the public. Special-needs students also receive learning assistance from Special Education Needs Assistance (SENA) and specialist support service from the Special Education Unit (SEU) from the MOE.

126. Brunei has put in place the Brunei Teacher Standard (BTS) in the effort to reach *Wawasan Brunei 2035* target of at least 90% teachers achieving a minimum Level 3 (with 5 being the highest). This standard is developed to ensure quality delivery of teachers. The main focus is on quality teaching through the provisions of professional development to ensure curriculum and pedagogy remain relevant and equip teachers with the required competency standard.

127. Since 2016, Brunei has embarked on the Brunei Darussalam Literacy and Numeracy Standard (BDLNS) which provides a national benchmark for all schools implementing the National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21) curriculum to ensure that students are able to achieve a high level of competency in literacy and numeracy by the end of each school year which include instruction, assessment, and intervention.

128. The Government is investing in measures that provide adequate training and professional development for educators. Following the transformation of technical and vocational education, there is a renewed focus on apprenticeship which is recognised as an integral part of skills development. The demand-driven SPN21 now incorporates innovative teaching and learning that correspond with various Government initiatives to produce skilled and competitive workforce.

129. Several initiatives have been undertaken to address the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.⁷¹ Additionally, the MOE has been actively engaging with the country's local bank namely Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD), the private sector and NGOs to provide support and assistance in various forms including financial to various vulnerable groups.⁷² The MOE has been working with a number of institutions and NGOs including the MOH and Brunei Darussalam AIDS Council (BDAC) to raise awareness for students on health education including HIV/AIDS.

130. A Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Convention has been established to serve as a platform for schools to engage parents on the welfare, development and progress of the students. This enables consultations between teachers and parents on ways to improve the students' education in general.⁷³

131. The Government offers programmes under the In-Service Training (LDP) for public sector employees to ensure improvements in the quality of its workforce. A five-year programme namely The Human Capacity Building Scheme in the Private Sector (PSTS) was also introduced in 2012 for employees in the private sector to upgrade their academic qualifications and improve their professional skills to be more capable and competitive in the labour market. In addition, through the Training and Employment Scheme (SLP), local secondary school leavers are trained to acquire skills in various fields to enable them to enter the labour market easily.

132. Brunei is continuously looking into improving its education system to ensure quality education and highly skilled workforce. This is done through the benchmarking of the system, sharing of best practices and technical cooperation with other countries. There is

also a need for a more robust cooperation with international organisations such as UNESCO, ASEAN, SEAMEO and ISESCO to achieve national, regional and global education agenda.

Stateless persons⁷⁴

133. In Brunei, the path to citizenship is outlined in the *Brunei Nationality Act (Cap 15)*, whereby 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. A total of 1,275 stateless persons were granted citizenship between 2013 and December 2018.

134. Due to favourable socio-economic conditions coupled with political stability, Brunei will naturally attract foreigners to stay for various purposes, including work and business. Brunei will continue to assess the impact of this situation with appropriate policy measures to ensure the interests of the country will be fully protected and safeguarded.

135. The *Brunei Nationality Act (Cap 15)* operates to mitigate and prevent statelessness:

(a) minors can be registered as nationals in any circumstances that His Majesty deems fit (Section 6);

(b) foreign women married or had been married to a Brunei national can acquire Brunei citizenship by registration (Section 5 (6));

(c) Permanent Resident (Stateless) can acquire Brunei Citizenship through application in a prescribed manner as stated in Sections 5(1) and 8(1) of the Act; and

(d) Brunei does not permit cease of Brunei nationality if the person have no other national status (Section 9 (3)).

136. Despite not being a signatory to the *1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, the Government issues its stateless permanent residents with a Certificate of Identity (CI) to assist them to travel abroad and return to the country.

137. To further the recognition of stateless permanent residents in 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 on the territory should have their births registered and that relevant statistics are kept.

138. Relevant authorities in Brunei are further committed to carry out awareness campaigns relating to birth and death registration, immigration and nationality matters throughout the country. Awareness programmes on the *Births and Deaths Registration Act (Cap 79)* and its Regulations to the Heads of *Mukim*⁷⁵ and village chiefs have been conducted in 2018.

Trafficking in Persons (TIPs)⁷⁶

139. Brunei has taken various measures to strengthen its legislation and enforcement to prevent crimes of Trafficking in Persons (TIPs). Brunei has put in place the *Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order, 2004* which prohibits the trafficking of person and children for the purpose of exploitation and criminalises such acts which carries a punishment of up to 30 years imprisonment.

140. In 2016, Brunei introduced a legislative amendment to Section 236A of the *Criminal Procedure Code* to allow 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. Standardised interview guidelines are also used to screen and identify potential human trafficking victims on operations with suspected TIPs elements.

141. The Government has made progress in its anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts in recent years by enhancing the capacity of prosecutors and law enforcement agencies

through inter-agency coordination, regional training programmes and workshops organised by ASEAN, as well as technical assistance.

142. 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 Unit 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 *Women and Girls Protection Act (Cap 120)*, came as a result of HTU investigations.⁷⁷

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

144. In terms of prevention, Brunei has continued its efforts through training programmes for labour and immigration officials and NGOs. Awareness campaigns on related matters have been conducted which include offences under immigration, passports, trafficking and smuggling of persons related laws and the penalties of violating workers' rights in accordance to national labour laws.

145. The MCYS continues its role in the promotion and protection of women and children rights including victims of trafficking by providing shelter for victims of TIPs. In cases that have been referred to the DCD for protection, victims are provided shelter and care.

146. Brunei views issues of TIPs seriously and has been actively engaged in international efforts in addressing this global concern. Brunei 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.

147. On 22 November 2015, Brunei signed the *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP)*. On 14 November 2017, Brunei signed the *ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*.

Collaboration with international bodies related to human rights⁷⁸

148. Brunei regularly attends AICHR meetings and activities. The Commission holds annual dialogue with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, discussions with ASEAN Dialogue partners such as the United States and the European Union (EU) as well as engaging the UN and its respective agencies.⁷⁹

149. In promoting human rights within the regional context, Brunei provides annual contributions to the AICHR Fund as well as contributing to the development of AICHR Thematic Studies including on legal aid. Brunei 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.

150. The MCYS maintains regular constructive and cooperative consultations and dialogue with regional and international organisations relating to human rights. This includes UNICEF, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the ASEAN Secretariat. Most notably, Brunei has been actively engaged with UNICEF since 2017, to discuss potential collaborations and training programmes. In addition, Brunei has collaborated with the offices of UNDP and UNICEF based in Kuala Lumpur for projects under the BDCTCTP in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

151. To build expertise and capacities,⁸⁰ Brunei has been actively participating in various regional and international events relating to human rights. Further information appears as **ANNEX 3**.

152. Brunei looks forward to sharing experiences and best practices with other countries, while at the same time, working with relevant UN bodies in getting technical support and

capacity building to promote further our efforts in promoting and protecting human rights in the country. In terms of its obligations to the international Conventions that Brunei is party to, there is a need for expertise which can contribute towards gaining a better understanding of its obligations in ensuring effective implementation of the Conventions.

V. Conclusion

153. Brunei is a small country, with a small population. Strong religious values with rich heritage of tradition and culture, form the very foundation of the unique Bruneian identity – loving, peaceful and respectful community – which are important to be preserved, and hence the country is well-known as the *Abode of Peace*.

154. One must appreciate that the diversities in cultural, traditional and religious values in the world means that there is no one standard that fits all, thus necessitates the giving of policy space and international respect and understanding, especially for small countries who strive to preserve their own religious and cultural values as well as traditions in the midst of strong international desire for conformity.

155. It is evident that Brunei has comparatively done well in ensuring harmony and prosperity for its people. In realising the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, the Government will continue to protect and enhance the basic rights of its people as well as provide access to basic needs including healthcare, education, food, and shelter. Brunei will also continue to enhance its efforts to strengthen its national capacities, including in collaboration with local NGOs, other governments, regional and international inter-governmental organisations.

Notes

- ¹ Recommendation 84, 108 and 166.
- ² The main role of the Council is to provide intensive and systematic support towards implementing initiatives by government agencies to realise the outcome of the *Wawasan Brunei 2035*.
- ³ Recommendation 181.
- ⁴ Members of the Special Committee consists of officers from Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Finance and Economy; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism; Ministry of Development; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; Ministry of Religious Affairs; Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications; Employees Trust Fund (TAP); Authority for Info-Communications Technology Industry (AiTi); Authority Monetary Brunei Darussalam (AMBD); and the *Supreme Council of Wawasan Brunei 2035*.
- ⁵ Recommendation 108 and 159.
- ⁶ The Monthly Zakat Distribution is given for a period of two years and distributed once the applicants met all of the required criteria.
- ⁷ The Government categorises the poor as those who are unable to provide for more than half what is needed for themselves and their whole family.
- ⁸ The Government categorises the destitute as those who are unable to provide for less than half what is needed for themselves and their whole family.
- ⁹ This includes the Monthly Financial Distribution, Basic Needs Financial Distribution, School Financial Distribution and the Housing Rental Payment Distribution.
- ¹⁰ Refer to paragraph 94.
- ¹¹ To assist participants in seeking employment including preparing a resume and job application letters.
- ¹² Designed by the DCD in collaboration with DARE to help beneficiaries market their products through social media and provide business skills training.
- ¹³ Offered to beneficiaries to provide them with skills training.
- ¹⁴ Targeted for children of the beneficiaries by providing guidance and training to develop their mind-set and produce skilled youth.
- ¹⁵ Recommendations 162 and 165.
- ¹⁶ Kampung Ayer or Water Village is where houses are built on stilts along the Brunei River situated in the country's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan.
- ¹⁷ Recommendation 174.
- ¹⁸ The current water tariff in Brunei is the lowest in the region (BND0.11 per m³ for the first 54.54m³ of permanent housing and BND0.44 per m³ thereafter the first 54.54m³).
- ¹⁹ 58% of centralised sewer system and 34% using septic tank. The remaining 8% without access to sanitation is for Kampung Ayer and very small residential proportion in remote area.

- ²⁰ Recommendations 111, 121 and 123.
- ²¹ The concept of the national philosophy of MIB is enshrined in the Brunei way of life, culture and traditions as well as in the Brunei centuries old system of administration. The 1959 Constitution of Brunei Darussalam provides that the Malay language is the official language; Islam as the official religion and the monarchy as the supreme executive authority to rule over the country.
- ²² The tolerance of Islam towards other religion is illustrated in the Holy Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Holy Quran stated in Surah Al-Kafirun verse 6, “*For you is your religion and for me is my religion*”. Moreover, the Holy Quran stated in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 256: “*There is no compulsion in religion*”. This indicates that everyone is free to practice his religion according to his own beliefs. The teachings are laid down in the Medina Charter enacted by Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) to ensure harmony and stability in a plural society.
- ²³ As an Islamic country, Brunei adheres to Islamic principles as stated in the Holy Quran which emphasises racial harmony such as in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13: “*O Mankind, We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other.*”
- ²⁴ Refer to paragraph 42.
- ²⁵ Refer to paragraph 40.
- ²⁶ The earliest record of inter-racial marriage in Brunei was between Princess Ratna Dewi, daughter of Sultan Muhammad Shah (1363–1402) of Brunei and Ong Sum Ping from China.
- ²⁷ In June 2012, Brunei became a member of the UNAOC Group of Friends, in support of its efforts to promote better understanding among different faiths and civilisations. Brunei underlines the importance of harmonious relations among different races and faiths to ensure continued peace and stability in the country. The country also continues to participate in meetings related to interfaith dialogue and encourages government officers and leaders of religious communities to attend international interfaith meetings.
- ²⁸ This includes the 2014 ASEM High-Level International Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith in St. Petersburg, Russia; the 2014 Global Forum in Bali, Indonesia; the 2016 UN Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) Focal Points Meeting in Doha, Qatar; the 2016 Global Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan; the 2018 UNOAC in New York, US; and ASEAN Youth Interfaith Camp 2017 and 2018. On 13 November 2017, Brunei signed the *ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention (CoP) for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society*.
- ²⁹ Recommendations 59, 62, 92 and 122.
- ³⁰ The Civil Court and the Syariah Court.
- ³¹ BND 1 = USD 0.73.
- ³² Recommendations 84, 96, 100, 107 and 168.
- ³³ Refer to Annex 1.
- ³⁴ The Inter-agencies consist of the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO); Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA); Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); Ministry of Education (MOE); Ministry of Development (MOD); Ministry of Health (MOH); Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA); Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports (MCYS); Attorney General’s Chambers (AGC); Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF); Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB); Department of Immigration and National Registration; Department of Labour; and Department of Economic Planning and Development.
- ³⁵ Such as educational preventive programmes; road shows; awareness campaigns; fund-raising activities; and talks to the community and institutions. Outreach programmes are conducted in conjunction with women, youth groups, uniformed personnel, and government officers.
- ³⁶ Recommendations 91, 96, 101, 108, 135 and 175.
- ³⁷ The MKIS has five Special Committees: the Special Committee on Poverty; Special Committee on Community’s Mentality; the Special Committee on Immoral Activities and the Prevention of Crime; the Special Committee on Family Institution, Women and Children; and the Special Committee on Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly. Each Special Committee has its own dedicated POA.
- ³⁸ Refer to Annex 1.
- ³⁹ Roads stretching to approximately 12 kilometres is closed for *Bandarku Ceria*.
- ⁴⁰ Cycling has been declared as a national hobby.
- ⁴¹ Recommendations 39, 42, 54, 79, 84, 96, 99, 100, 101, 103, 104, 116, 124, 133, 135, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, and 168.
- ⁴² The Global Gender Gap Index ranks countries on health, education, economic and political indicators, including wage equality, educational attainment and representation in national government.
- ⁴³ Brunei has risen 24 places to rank 59th among 193 countries in the UN E-Government Survey 2018. Brunei scored high in the Online Service Index (OSI) and high E-Participation Index (EPI) improving from 0.50 to 0.75 points. Brunei ranked 5th within ASEAN.
- ⁴⁴ The Council is an umbrella NGO under which 13 women associations are affiliated including Women’s Graduate Association (PSW) and the Girl Guides Association.

- ⁴⁵ Recommendations 28, 39, 40, 82, 84, 90, 93, 96, 99, 100, 103, 104, 116, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 168, 183 and 184.
- ⁴⁶ Refer to Annex 1.
- ⁴⁷ Accordingly, no person of the age 15 and below may enter into a contract of employment. Persons above the age of 16 years but whom have not attained 18 years may enter into a contract of employment approved by the Commissioner as not being injurious to the moral and physical development of youths.
- ⁴⁸ The broadened definition to include situations where a woman consents to sexual intercourse with a man in a position of trust or authority or whom she is in a relationship of dependency with.
- ⁴⁹ The Order also provides an increased minimum penalty for offenders who in order to commit rape or facilitate the commission of an offence of rape against a woman, causes hurt to her, puts her in fear of death or hurt, commits a rape against a woman under 14 years of age or abuses a position of authority or trust. Further to this, punishments are also further enhanced in circumstances involving the aggravated rape of females under 14 years of age where the offenders who in order to commit rape or facilitate the commission of an offence of rape against a woman, causes hurt to her, puts her in fear of death or hurt or abuses a position of authority or trust. The amendment also provides an enhanced sentence for offenders who commit sodomy against children under 14 years of age.
- ⁵⁰ Recommendations 84, 96, 100, 102 and 160.
- ⁵¹ DARE is the national SME body with the main goal is to support local businesses in Brunei.
- ⁵² (i) **The Industry Business Academy (IBA)**: Six-month programme launched in July 2016 covering fundamental knowledge on marketing, human resource management, book-keeping, accounting and relevant government processes; (ii) **Micro Business Bootcamp (MBB)**: Developed in 2018 to assist budding entrepreneurs through a two-week entrepreneurship course to equip them with business know-how as well as a one-week physical bootcamp. Then over a six month period, businesses will be monitored by their business coaches during which they will be guided to produce a comprehensive business plan which will allow them to strategically navigate their operations as well as open up opportunities for financing; through grants and loans. The pilot cycle took 69 businesses from ideation to execution and raised BND 40,000 collectively in investment; and (iii) **Accelerate Programme**: Formerly known as Startup Bootcamp, the programme will train participants in product development, business plan creation, securing financing and making sales. At the very end, participants will have the opportunity to take centre stage to pitch their business to a panel of regional investors. The first four cycles saw 254 participants raising BND 929,935 collectively in investment and creating 312 jobs.
- ⁵³ As of December 2018, 1,425 trainees have completed their training, of which 1,041 have started their employment in various industries such as construction, textile, and plant refinery.
- ⁵⁴ For example, Ms. Khairunnisa Ash'ari received the Queen's Young Leaders Award in 2015; and Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Fakhri bin Haji Damit was awarded the Commonwealth Point of Light Award in 2018.
- ⁵⁵ Recommendations 84, 100, 108, 109, 110 and 168.
- ⁵⁶ UN World Population Prospects (2017 revised).
- ⁵⁷ The stakeholders included several PKWEs and Penyuluh, an NGO for the elderly in Kuala Belait.
- ⁵⁸ Recommendations 30, 31, 32, 84, 90, 100, 108, 161, 168 and 189.
- ⁵⁹ With reference to Part IV: Disability and Other Performance Requirements for Buildings of the Building Control Order, 2014 and Sub Section D under the Fifth Schedule: Objectives and Performance Requirements for Design and Construction of Buildings of the Building Control Regulations, 2014, the first edition of the Different Abilities Design Guidelines.
- ⁶⁰ PCBD was registered to Registrar of Societies-ROS Negara Brunei Darussalam on 4th September 2009 and became a member to International Paralympic Committee (IPC) on 19th November 2009.
- ⁶¹ Events included Paralympic Games, Asian Para Games, ASEAN Para Games, Arafura Game as well as several invitation championship such as World Championships, APC Regional Championship and Multi Disability Championship. As of 2018, there are 58 para athletes actively participating in ten-pin bowling, swimming, athletics and badminton.
- ⁶² As of December 2018, out 509 registered with DCD, 53 are employed. For example the *UnikLearn* vocational programme developed in 2018 by *An-Nur Harapan*, a social enterprise. Through the programme, five trainees have secured internships in the Food and Beverage industry after undergoing a six-month of training.
- ⁶³ Recommendations 81, 84, 162, 163, 164, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173 and 178.
- ⁶⁴ Maternal mortality ratio was 0.6 per 1,000 live births in 2017 and has been maintained at a low rate over the last 50 years, which is comparable to other developed countries.
- ⁶⁵ Infant mortality rate was 9.5 per 1,000 live births in 2017, a significant reduction from 17.5 per 1,000 live births in 1980.
- ⁶⁶ The Taskforce is chaired by the Minister of Health and comprising of Permanent Secretaries and

designated heads of departments.

- ⁶⁷ The demensia Brunei (dB), which is also a member of Alzheimer's Disease International is an organisation that promotes awareness of dementia, advocates for people with dementia and their families and caregivers, as well as lends support and a voice for people with dementia and caregivers. Their strategies include organising dementia awareness programme and conducting educational sessions on dementia. Since its establishment, they have conducted several Dementia Care Skills Training workshops, awareness programmes and in September 2018, they have organised several activities in conjunction with World Dementia Month.
- ⁶⁸ Recommendations 84, 97, 162, 163, 164, 167, 170, 176, 177, 178, 182, 184, 185, 186 and 188.
- ⁶⁹ 73.58% in 2017 versus 70.75% in 2018.
- ⁷⁰ (i) 16–19 January 2018: to strengthen existing and future partnership between the UNESCO Office in Jakarta and the Government including on possible areas of collaboration on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to promote SDG4 on quality education; and (ii) 9–11 May 2018: to further strengthen education collaboration between Brunei and the Office including on ESD, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Inclusive Education and Global Citizenship Education (GCED).
- ⁷¹ (i) **Miftahun Najaah Scheme:** School materials including textbooks and school uniforms, as well as meals, transportation, and hostel accommodation are provided to disadvantaged students enrolled in preschools, primary and secondary schools; (ii) **Riayah Wa Mahabbah Programme:** Year 6 Primary students facing challenges to go to school are given support in terms of hostel accommodation, night classes, learning materials, and transportation; (iii) **Program Harapan:** Identified secondary schools and their respective feeder schools (primary schools) were selected based primarily on low Economic Social Cultural Standard (ESCS) and low academic performance. In addition to the Miftahun Najaah Scheme, the Government provides supports such as free breakfast and lunch to the students in those schools. Students on lower academic performance band with potential in technical competencies are given an alternative study path to further develop their potential and marketability for employment. Other initiatives include redeployment of teachers, teachers' training and collaboration with different stakeholders to support disadvantaged schools; and (iv) **Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah:** Provides financial assistance and in-kind donations to less fortunate students across the country.
- ⁷² Brunei Council on Social Welfare (MKM); Hear Better Services (HBS); Pusat Ehsan; Society for Management of Autism Related Issues in Training, Education and Resources (Research) (SMARTER); and An-Nur Harapan Sdn Bhd and Progresif Cellular Sdn Bhd.
- ⁷³ In 2018, the MOE held its first PTA Convention which aims to further strengthen engagement between the Ministry and parents. The main objective of this Convention is to convey the MOE Primary Education Initiative and Secondary Education Initiative to parents and communities to enable parents assist the Ministry to improve the national education system. Under the PTA, a number of programmes and activities has been conducted including briefings, workshops and socialisation of educational initiatives with the Student Welfare Section of the Department of Schools and the parents.
- ⁷⁴ Recommendations 79, 80 and 84.
- ⁷⁵ A *Mukim* is the second-level administrative division of Brunei, and the primary subdivision of a district. It is headed by a *penghulu*. There are 38 *Mukims* in Brunei. A *Mukim* is further divided into *kampung* (villages).
- ⁷⁶ Recommendations 52, 84, 90, 94, 134, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148 and 149.
- ⁷⁷ Between 2014 and 2017, nine cases were investigated and 19 arrests made.
- ⁷⁸ Recommendations 83, 90, 98, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116 and 117.
- ⁷⁹ Brunei also participates in a number of AICHR activities including (i) ASEAN Forum on Women's Economic Empowerment; (ii) AICHR Youth Debate on Human Rights; and (iii) ASEAN-EU Policy Dialogue on Human Rights.
- ⁸⁰ Recommendations 59, 62, 83, 84, 90, 92, 95 and 175.