COUNTRY STATEMENT
SENIOR OFFICIALS SEGMENT

AGENDA ITEM: 3

HIGH LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING
ON THE MIDPOINT REVIEW OF THE ASIAN AND THE PACIFIC
DECADE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, 2013-2022

27th NOVEMBER 2017 – 01st DECEMBER 2017, BEIJING
Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate UNESCAP and the Government of People’s Republic of China for successfully organizing this meeting. I would also like to thank you for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us since our arrival.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to share with you the progress and ongoing efforts so far by Brunei Darussalam in promoting disability-inclusive development and on the implementation of the Incheon Strategy.

The building and enhancement of a caring society remains a top priority for the Government of Brunei Darussalam. One of the long-term objectives outlined in the current National Development Plan is to foster a more disciplined, self reliant and caring society. In view of this, our government continues to initiate policies and programmes to foster the spirit of caring society among Bruneian in all sectors of society, be it Government, private sectors or non-government, voluntary and private organizations. Of special concern to us are the vulnerable, which include persons with disabilities.

The promotion and the protection of the rights of PWDs has become one of the priority areas in our development programmes. The Special Committee on the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities which was established in 2008 reflects our commitment in promoting and enabling environment and strengthening effective mechanisms for policy formulation and implementation. Brunei Darussalam has
ratified the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on the 11th April 2016. Brunei Darussalam is also in the process of drafting our Disability Order and is in the pipeline for adoption. This will reinforce the right-based approach to disability issues. The implementation of the Plan of Action of the persons with disabilities is designed to compliment CRPD.

In our endeavor to protect the rights of PWDs, the Government of Brunei Darussalam has lots of supports from non-governmental organizations and over the years Brunei Darussalam has seen the establishment of more associations for the disabled in the country. These associations are voluntary and non-profit making and are active in looking after their members’ interest in promoting public awareness about the needs and rights’ of persons with disabilities. An independent Council for the Welfare of Persons with Different Ability (Majlis Kesejahteraan Orang Kelainan Upaya) was established on 14th May 2016 to cooperate and collaborate with the Government to promote the development and empowerment of PWDs in the nation. The members of the council are assembled from representatives of DPOs and advisory board from experts and advocates from Brunei Darussalam.

To enhance the works of these NGOs, the government has introduced a scheme whereby civil servants can contribute financially to any PWDs associations of their choice by having their monthly salaries deducted voluntarily. In addition, the Government has allocated land specials for building premises of PWDs associations.
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Programs for the PWDs including women with disabilities are currently in place under three separate agencies namely the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.

Early detection and intervention are under the responsibility of Ministry of Health in which priorities are given to the young population in particular the prevention of disabilities by optimising prenatal and postnatal care. Special efforts towards the prevention of disability are also made through High Risk Clinics for the follow up of infants and children who are at high risk of developing disabilities, and Early Intervention Clinics and Programs for children identified as already having developmental problems in which therapy is provided early in order to minimize the progression of the disability and improve prognosis.

In terms of education, our Education policy has always been focused on equal access of facilities for all. Brunei Darussalam has an inclusive education policy whereby there is no segregation of schools for those with special needs. Education services for them are provided by special needs teachers available in many schools. The Government has established Centres of Excellence for special needs students who excel in their studies through Model Inclusive Schools providing excellent services for children.

Skills training and job attachments programmes are also provided for PWDs. Job attachment programmes have increased job opportunities for PWDs and more and more PWDs are employed either in public and private sectors.
In term of access to build environments and public transport, a provision to provide a disabled friendly environment is included under the Building Control Order, under the purview of Ministry of Development. Under the Town Municipal Board, Ministry of Home Affairs, relevant agencies and building owners are encouraged to install accessibility support for elders and PWDs. The Ministry of Communication has also included provisions for a disabled-friendly public transport in their planning.

In term of access of information and communications, the Ministry of Communications is also considering a disabled friendly approach in access to information and technologies which focus towards visual, hearing and intellectual impaired.

To ensure the welfare and well being of PWDs, the government provides disability allowance to PWDs and their dependents as stipulated under the Old Age and Disability Pension Act. This is non-means tested benefit. The government has also provide financial assistance in a form of micro credit to embark on income generating projects. Other welfare assistance includes provision of disability aids such as wheel chairs, walking aids, braille, prosthetic limbs and visual aids.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Brunei Darussalam has always placed great importance in the promotion and protection of the rights of PWDs. The challenges includes the need to provide capacity building of our caregivers and those entrusted to empower the PWDs.

The government is moving forward with the right based approach and encouraging more NGOs, private sectors and community in promoting an enabling environment for PWDs so that they can contribute to the economic and social development of the country.

Thank You.