COUNTRY STATEMENT

BY

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AGENDA ITEM: 9

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

30th NOVEMBER 2017 – 01st DECEMBER 2017, BEIJING
Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am very honoured and happy to participate in this High Level Conference. On behalf of the Government of Brunei Darussalam, I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Chinese Government for hosting this conference.

2. Disability rights are universal rights to be recognized and promoted around the world. We join you here today to reaffirm our commitment to ensure that the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are realised in the local, national, regional and global levels.

3. In Brunei Darussalam, we firmly believe the prime mover for the development of persons with disabilities lies with the government, while acknowledging the good work done by NGOs, society and the individuals. According to the national register of PWDs kept by the Department of Community Development, the number of PWDs stood at 6,833 as of June 2017. However, we still need to strengthen the capacity of national statistical agencies to collect reliable data for Persons with Disabilities to implement the effectiveness of disability related policies.

4. Brunei Darussalam is strongly committed to ensure that the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities are realized and given high priority in the national agenda. The National Council on Social Issues has identified the rights of PWDs as one of the issues which need to be addressed and has established a Special Committee on Persons with disabilities and the Elderly in 2008. This committee


has formulated a national plan of action on PWDs to promote the rights and full participation of the PWDs in the society. The Plan of Action has been revised to complement the CRPD and Incheon Strategy.

5. In terms of the welfare and quality of life of persons with disabilities, I would like to highlight the following provisions of Brunei Darussalam.

- Health services are free for all citizens. For PWDs, early detection programmes are conducted by the Child Development Centre of the Ministry of Health which provides services to facilitate the diagnosis, assessment, treatment and support therapy for children in order to ensure their optimal health and development.

- Education is provided free to all Brunei citizens. Our inclusive education policy provided through special needs teachers in many schools ensures the mainstreaming of PWDs perspectives in development. 9 Model Inclusive schools have been established as centres of Excellence for special needs students who excel in their studies. Such schools are located additional funding and support to ensure they have the necessary school facilities, special learning equipment and resources, specialist support services, and teacher training programmes to provide quality inclusive education for a wide range of students with diverse learning needs.

- In terms of access to buildings, legislative provision to provide a disabled friendly environment is being drafted in the Building Control Order, under the purview of the 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.
6. In terms of access to information and communications, the Ministry of Communication is also considering a disabled friendly approach in access to information and technologies which focuses towards the visual, hearing and intellectual impaired.

- Skills training and job attachments programmes are also provided for PWDs by the Government through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports as well as NGOs. There is an increased public awareness on the capabilities of persons with disabilities which is reflected in the increasing number of PWDs being employed either in the public and private sectors.

- Social security in the form of financial pensions are provided to PWDs and their dependants under the Old Age and Disability Pensions Act, 1954.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brunei Darussalam has ratified the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on the 11th April 2016. Brunei Darussalam is also drafting our Disability Order which is in the pipeline for adoption. This will reinforce the right-based approach to disability issues. This will further ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of the disabled from a right-based approach towards and inclusive and barrier free society for PWDs.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
We are making reasonably good progress in compliance with Incheon Strategy’s goals, however we still have more challenges ahead from the aspect of social safety net and financial security, more so in providing better access to facilities, access to public premises for their development and towards protecting their rights and dignity. We hope that with the final adoption of the disability Order in our National Legislation, practical policies and measures will be put in place to make a real change in the lives of persons with disabilities. Our Government is committed towards enhancing efforts to educate, raise awareness and change the mindset of our people in the capabilities of PWDs.

e look forward to participating in the forthcoming Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

Thank You.