



جائتین قرآن منبری
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Prepared and Published by:

Secretariat to the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs Brunei Darussalam
Prime Minister's Office
Jalan Perdana Menteri
Bandar Seri Begawan BB3913
Negara Brunei Darussalam
www.pmo.gov.bn

In collaboration with:

Ministry of Finance and Economy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism
Ministry of Development
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Religious Affairs
Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications
Ministry of Energy
Employee Trust Fund
Authority for Info-Communications Technology Industry of Brunei Darussalam
Brunei Darussalam Central Bank

© Prime Minister's Office, 2021

All rights reserved. The contents may be freely reproduced for non-commercial purposes with attribution to the copyright holders.

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

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Brunei**Cataloguing-in-publication**




BRUNEI Darussalam sustainable development goals annual report 2021. --
Bandar Seri Begawan : Secretariat to the Special Coordination Committee on
SDGs Brunei Darussalam, Prime Minister's Office, 2022.

28 pages ; 21 x 29.7cm

ISBN 978-99917-36-33-4 (paperback)

1. Sustainable development -- Brunei Darussalam 2. Sustainable
development reporting -- Brunei Darussalam 3. Sustainable development
Economic aspect -- Brunei Darussalam

CONTENTS

	Introduction	05
	Overall Progress of The SDGs in Brunei Darussalam	06
	Part 1: General Progress Within Nine (9) Focused Goals	07
	Part 2: Whole-of-Nation Approach in Combating COVID-19 Pandemic	17
	COVID-19 Recovery Framework	25
	Strengthening The SDGs Agenda for Brunei Darussalam	26
	Conclusion	28

FOREWORD

Following Brunei Darussalam's submission of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2020 United Nations High-Level Political Forum, Brunei Darussalam took a strategic step forward to support global ambition in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By the consent of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the Prime Minister's Office assumed the role of the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs, from the Ministry of Finance and Economy, to further strengthen the coordination efforts especially in catalysing the integration of the 2030 Agenda with our own National Vision for the Development – *Wawasan Brunei 2035*.

Alhamdulillah, the progress of shared efforts in many areas within the SDGs is encouraging despite the unfortunate disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic. Ministries, agencies, and our social partners have all continued to work together and ensure that our country can reach the targets set out in the global development framework. I believe that together, we can step up our whole-of-nation efforts to provide a greater impetus to Brunei Darussalam's transformative agenda for global sustainability.

On that note, it gives me great pleasure to introduce The Brunei Darussalam Sustainable Development Goals Annual Report 2021. The collective efforts of the Committee members were valuable in producing this report, to which we very much appreciate. This report provides us a reminder of our journey towards attaining the goals and targets of the SDGs agenda and also highlights the challenges that we need to address to keep us on the path of progress. This will no doubt help us to stay on our trajectory of success.

Pengiran Hajah Siti Nirmala binti Pengiran Haji Mohammad
Chairperson of the Special National Coordination Committee
on Sustainable Development Goals
Prime Minister's Office
Negara Brunei Darussalam

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the world committed itself to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting the world on a sustainable path for people, planet, peace, partnership and prosperity. The 2030 Agenda encompassing aspects of human and planetary well-being promises the prospect of global stability, prosperity, and harmony. Brunei Darussalam's endorsement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the 70th Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly with the other Member States marked our commitment to the shared vision to end poverty, inequality and injustice, and to tackle climate change by 2030.

Since the adoption of the SDGs, progress has been good in certain areas for Brunei Darussalam. However, there are also areas that need improvement in both the rate of change and the progress which have been made. In 2020, Brunei Darussalam shared its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2020 High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development with a message from His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam announcing the national efforts thus far in accomplishing the SDGs, building upon its early achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Brunei Darussalam also reaffirmed its commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, in line with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, to ensure that ***No one is left behind***.

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) for the year 2021 discussed ways to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19, with the theme "**Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**".

The HLPF in 2021 focused on nine (9) SDGs namely, **Goal 1** on no poverty, **Goal 2** on zero hunger, **Goal 3** on good health and well-being, **Goal 8** on decent work and economic growth, **Goal 10** on reduced inequalities, **Goal 12** on responsible consumption and production, **Goal 13** on climate action, **Goal 16** on peace, justice and strong institutions, and **Goal 17** on partnerships in depth. The Forum also considered the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the SDGs.

Thus, this report provides a snapshot of where Brunei Darussalam stands in SDGs implementation with more emphasis on this year's HLPF theme and focused goals. This report also aims to highlight areas where more action is needed to advance the SDGs implementation in Brunei Darussalam, whilst making further improvement in the monitoring and evaluation capability as well as ensuring the integration of the SDGs indicators in national development plans.



OVERALL PROGRESS OF SDGs IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

In line with the theme of the HLPF in 2021, the Special National Coordination Committee on the SDGs has focused on reporting two main sections. The first part reports on the general progress and developments of the SDGs since Brunei Darussalam's submission of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report within nine (9) areas of focus namely, Goal 1 on no poverty, Goal 2 on zero hunger, Goal 3 on good health and well-being, Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, Goal 10 on reduced inequalities, Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production, Goal 13 on climate action, Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and Goal 17 on partnerships. The second part will report on some of the initiatives that were put in place as a response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

PART 1: GENERAL PROGRESS WITHIN NINE (9) FOCUSED GOALS

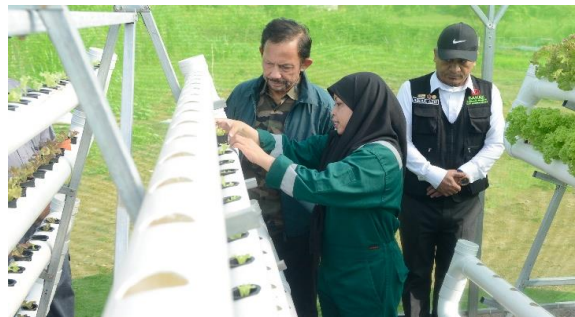
In general, Brunei Darussalam has shown good progress in SDGs, particularly in Health and Well-Being, Quality Education and the country continues to enjoy a safe, secure and prosperous environment. Further progress and development in the nine (9) goals are as follows:

Goal 1 No Poverty

The nation remains committed to caring for the well-being and welfare of its people and continues its efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms. Through Brunei Darussalam's National Plan of Action on Poverty Eradication (2020-2024), several strategies are being undertaken to strengthen the social protection eco-system through a Whole-of-Nation Approach, as overseen by the National Council of Social Issues (MKIS).

Amongst others, is through the improvement of social service access and delivery across all sectors. The digitalisation of the National Welfare System that was established in July 2020 as a centralised system, has utilized Business Intelligence for welfare assistance applications, and this will further strengthen data-driven policy formulation and intervention programmes on poverty eradication. In addition, during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and as part of the government's COVID-19 stimulus measures, in September 2021, the National Welfare System incorporated short-term financial assistance for workers in the sectors affected by COVID-19. Subsequent phases of the National Welfare System will integrate applications for in-kind educational assistance as well as the disbursement of Old Age Pension and Disability Allowances. The long-term goal is to ensure support is given to those who need it most, regardless of background.

The Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB) also continues to be active in its efforts through the distribution of alms to recipients of *Asnaf Zakat*. To empower those in need, an agricultural training programme (PROPАЗ) was introduced to provide skills on the planting of vegetables and fruits, pest control, post-harvest management, and business matching.



Pilot farming programme for zakat recipients graced by His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam
Source: The Scoop

Goal 2 Zero Hunger

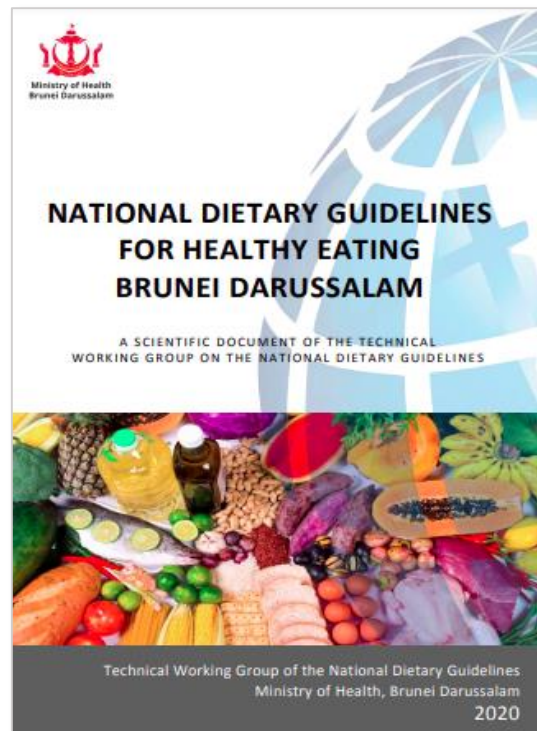
Various progress has been made to achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. With the COVID-19 pandemic putting pressure on food security, efforts have been made to accelerate and ensure a more sustainable food system. This also includes the disbursement of food rations to families and individuals affected by COVID-19.

Brunei Darussalam remains committed to strengthening the food system by accelerating the production growth of the agriculture and fisheries sector; promoting both domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI); and increasing productivity through the use of technology to meet domestic demand and for export. The National Food Industry Roadmap has been prepared to increase the production of safe, Halal, and high-quality food, and strengthen the value chain of the food system.

According to the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), for the year 2020, Brunei Darussalam has achieved 100% self-sufficient in chicken eggs and 99% self-sufficient in whole chicken (broiler meat); 62% self-sufficient in beef and buffalo meat; 20% in mutton; 67% in tropical vegetables; 46% in tropical fruits; and 8% in rice. In terms of output from the agriculture and fishery sectors, as of Jun 2021, both sectors recorded positive growth as compared to last year's output for the same period, that is, an increase of 38% for the agriculture sector, from \$212 million (2020) to \$292 million (2021); and 42% for the fishery sector, from \$60 million (2020) to \$85 million (2021).

Another significant development to support the food system has been the establishment of the Brunei Darussalam Food Authority (BDFA) as a regulator and competent authority for food safety and quality in Brunei Darussalam. BDFA primarily seeks to ensure that the food product in Brunei Darussalam is safe, clean, and of good quality. Ultimately, protecting consumer safety and health as well as establishing a robust and effective food regulatory and safety system in Brunei is a priority.

Several efforts have been made to address nutrition in the food system especially child nutrition. The Ministry of Health (MOH) continuously monitors the progress of achieving various national targets including reducing stunting amongst under-fives, low birth weight, controlling childhood obesity, and reducing childhood wasting. In line with this priority, the National Dietary Guidelines for Healthy Eating Brunei Darussalam were revised as a guideline for School Canteen Guidelines and School Feeding Scheme by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Brunei Darussalam's Healthier Choice initiative.



National Dietary Guidelines for Health Eating Brunei Darussalam. Source: Ministry of Health

Goal 3 Good Health and Well-Being

Significant progress has been made in terms of good health and well-being. The MOH continues its efforts in ensuring the population is in good overall physical and mental health. In battling the COVID-19 pandemic, nationwide public health measures and non-pharmaceutical interventions have been operationalized and steps taken to ensure the local adult and adolescent population will be fully vaccinated by the end of the year 2021.

In addition to physical health, good mental health is also seen as key in achieving holistic well-being. In recognising its importance, the promotion of good mental health has been identified as one of the 5 key cross-functional areas of focus under the Multisectoral Task Force for Health (MSTFH), chaired by the Minister of Health with representatives from various government and non-government agencies.

Programmes and actions are spearheaded by the Mental Health Strategy Team under the Health Promotion Centre (HPC) targeting 3 major settings i.e. schools, workplaces and the community in collaboration with other MOH departments, non-health sectors, private sectors as well as NGOs. Issues covered range from recognising and addressing stress, anxiety, depression, burn out, bullying, and among others, training on mental health and first aid. The other 4 areas under the purview of the MSTFH are preventive actions identified in the Brunei Darussalam Multisectoral Action Plan on the Prevention and Control of NCDs (BruMAP-NCD) 2021-2025, that address the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity, reduction of tobacco use and giving every child the best start in life.

Brunei recognizes the importance of investing in our children’s health to prevent chronic disease and risk factors later in life; to this end, several preventive measures have been initiated recently in addition to ongoing school health services and school-based interventions, such as the introduction of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Childcare Centres in 2020 and also the Code on Responsible Marketing of Food and Beverages to Children in Brunei Darussalam in early 2021.



Code on responsible marketing of food and beverages to children in Brunei Darussalam. Source: Ministry of Health

Comprehensive services addressing children’s health needs have been established through a network of child health clinics in primary healthcare to a Child Development Centre to pediatric medical care in all the district hospitals. A wide range of clinical services are also available at the Women and Children Centre in RIPAS Hospital in the capital.

The MOH also encourages workplaces to provide supportive environments and actions for employees in taking preventative measures to control non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In line with this effort, HPC introduced the Workplace and Health (WAH) Programme which focuses on encouraging the workplaces to provide a supportive environment where employees can be more active, eat healthy diets and also have good mental well-being. This programme is funded by Gleneagles JPMC following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between MOH and Gleneagles JPMC, showcasing one of the biggest collaboration of a public private partnership (PPP) ever held.

The WAH Programme consists of group health talks, counselling, exhibition, BMI health screening, as well as free after-work hours’ group exercise sessions for all civil servants. To date, over 10,000 government personnel from 13 ministries have participated in the WAH health screening and over 200 WAH exercises have been conducted through their appointed Fitness Studio Facilitators. The team has also been extensively consulted by the private sector in the country.

Most of BruMAP-NCD’s actions and targets are aligned with WHO’s Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable diseases, 2013-2030 (NCD-GAP) and also the NCDs Global Monitoring Framework with a target to combat a global NCDs mortality rate by 2025.

The global indicators also include targets for overweight, obesity, tobacco use and raised blood pressure, among others. These indicators have also been adapted and used for monitoring and reporting of key performance indicators in MOH's Strategic Plan 2019-2023 as well as Brunei's National Vision 2035.



BruMAP-NCD. Source: Ministry of Health

Brunei Darussalam, as the ASEAN Chair 2021, also placed emphasis on caring for the people and each other's well-being. Towards this, among others, in October 2021, the Declaration on the Elimination of Bullying of Children in ASEAN was adopted, to strengthen concerted efforts and undertake appropriate measures to promote and protect children in ASEAN against all forms of bullying in different settings, ensuring that their best interests and welfare are upheld. At the same time, ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners also recognised the importance of strengthening regional cooperation especially towards addressing the impacts of the pandemic on mental health.

The ASEAN Plus Three Leaders' Statement on Cooperation on Mental Health against Adolescents and Young Children was adopted at the 24th APT Summit, while the East Asia Summit (EAS) Leaders' Statement on Mental Health Cooperation was adopted at the 16th EAS. The EAS Workshop on Mental Health Cooperation in the COVID-19 Recovery was held on 22-23 November 2021, co-hosted by Brunei Darussalam and Australia.

Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

As with other countries, some regression was seen in areas such as decent work and economic growth largely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges, there are continuous and ongoing efforts to reduce unemployment rates and ensure productive employment and decent work for all.

In addressing decent work, entrepreneurship plays an important role in the development of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Brunei Darussalam. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) introduced a development grant called *Belia Membangun* to promote entrepreneurship and economic activities. It is intended for entrepreneurs registered under the patronage of their respective Mukim and Village Consultative Councils, who have succeeded in carrying out economic projects of great potential and sustainability towards accomplishing *Wawasan Brunei 2035*. It is hoped that the grant will act as a catalyst for the improvement of potential economic projects and can be raised as One Village, One Product (1K1P) projects that represent the respective villages.

The Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC) continues to tackle the unemployment issue in the country, and a number of initiatives are currently being implemented to tackle the issue in three main aspects.

Firstly, from the supply aspect, efforts are currently being carried out to further strengthen the supply of local workforce as it can fulfill industry needs, the provision of sustainable workforce from the aspects of mindset and work ethics as well as enhancing skills and competencies through up-skilling and re-skilling.

Secondly, from the demand aspect, which is focused on generating employment such as policy reviews and reforms as well as workforce processes. This includes enhancing cooperation between every ministry with the industrial private sector and FDI companies in generating economic growth to increase the number of quality employment in the public and private sectors.

Thirdly, from the aspect of Enablers, a matching activity between supply and demand including One-Stop Career Centre, synchronization, collection, and verification of the workforce information for the use of manpower planning and infrastructure provision. Towards that, JobCentre Brunei (JCB) has also introduced several programmes such as District Connect and Institution Outreach, aimed to disseminate JCB services such as Curriculum Vitae writing and tips for job interviews.

To ensure economic growth and ultimately achieve the third goal of *Wawasan Brunei 2035* – a dynamic and sustainable economy – the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) launched the “*Brunei Darussalam Economic Blueprint (BEB)*” in early January 2021.

The blueprint acts as a guide for stakeholders to build on the country’s economic successes through well-defined aspirations and policy directions. There are six (6) aspirations in the economic blueprint: Aspiration 1 - Productive and Vibrant Businesses; Aspiration 2 - Skilled, Adaptive and Innovative People;

Aspiration 3 - Open and Globally Connected Economy;

Aspiration 4 - Sustainable Environment; (v) Aspiration 5 - High Quality and Competitive Economic Infrastructure; and Aspiration 6 - Good Governance and Public Service Excellence.

In addition, the blueprint has identified five (5) priority sectors: Downstream Oil and Gas, Food, Tourism, Info-communications and Technology (ICT) and Services as the engine of growth to spearhead economic development and diversification.

The Government is actively implementing initiatives to stimulate industries activities and increase exports in selected priority sectors. Several notable achievements are as follows:

- In boosting the contribution of fisheries industries to the economy, the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) signed an agreement with Muara Port Company Sdn Bhd (MPC) to help advance production in the fisheries sector from 100 million in 2019 to 175 million in 2022 and generate over 200 job opportunities for local employment. The Ministry also signed the protocol on inspection, quarantine and veterinary sanitary requirements for farmed aquatic products such as prawns and fish, to be exported from Brunei Darussalam to the People’s Republic of China. This will benefit 68 aquaculture companies of which three companies are FDI from the People’s Republic of China; and
- As of 2020, financial services accounted for 5.5% of GDP. In supporting the development of the financial sector, Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB, formerly known as Autoriti Monetari Brunei Darussalam) has developed a white paper on the State of Fintech in Brunei Darussalam, eyeing on the formation of the Fintech companies to operate in Brunei and as the key driver in achieving the 2035 target of 8% contribution to GDP.

The hydrocarbon sector remains the key driver of economic prosperity, contributing about 47% of the country's GDP and more than 50%¹ of exports in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on oil demand, with domestic production declining to 105,100 barrels per day in the fourth quarter of 2020. As exploratory drilling in deepwater wells Merbah Deep-1 and Jagus Subthrust-1 begins, the Government is targeting to triple oil production to 350,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day by 2025.

Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities

For Brunei Darussalam, reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind remains as a priority, particularly for the welfare of persons with different abilities. In this regard, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam announced the amendment of the Old Age Pension and Disability Act (Amendment) Order, 2021 effective 1st October 2021. In ensuring no one is left behind as well as continued welfare, the amendment includes ensuring persons with disabilities will also be entitled to continue receiving disability allowances in addition to old-age pensions upon reaching the age of 60.

In addition, a provision for care providers with the Care Provider Allowance in the amount of BND250 per month was introduced to help support them in caring for different-abled family members. Other amendments include revising the criteria in assessing the eligibility for disability allowances, by eliminating the condition of being "unable to work", thus empowering persons with disabilities with the right to be employed, regardless of whether they receive disability allowances. In another effort to widen welfare assistance is the ongoing study to assess the effectiveness of the Employee Trust Fund (TAP) in making sure there are sufficient retirement funds through mandatory savings for civil servants when reaching 60 years of retirement age.

Note: ¹ Crude oil, LNG and methanol

Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

The Government adopts a whole-of-nation approach to preserve the environment by making changes to our consumption and production patterns. Continuous engagement with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private companies were in place to address this. One particular focus is the efforts made by Green Brunei, a social enterprise that promotes environmental sustainability, by supporting the Plastic Bottle Free Initiative coordinated by the Department of Environment, Parks, and Recreation (JASTRe) and the Green Protocol launched by the Brunei Darussalam National Council on Climate Change (BDNCCC). A national drive was also organised to mark the 37th National Day celebration, in partnership with Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sdn Bhd (BSP) and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS), JASTRe, the BSB Municipal Department, and the Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS).



*Cleaning campaign by Green Brunei.
Source: Borneo Bulletin*

Efforts are also increasingly supported by corporate bodies. Bank Islam Brunei Darussalam (BIBD), Brunei's largest bank and flagship Islamic financial institution is also playing an active role in supporting the sustainability agenda. Their initiatives to reduce waste consumption include: distribution of non-woven recyclable bags at Ramadhan bazaar; *Coastal Marvel Beach Cleanup* campaign; encouraging customers to subscribe to e-statements; use of reusable glass bottles for meeting rooms; and providing recycling bins to recycle BIBD Hari Raya packets.

Goal 13 Climate Action

Brunei Darussalam recognizes the urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. A whole-of-nation approach continues to be adopted in addressing climate change with several developments in this area. For example, the commitments made through The Brunei Darussalam National Climate Change Policy (BNCCP) i.e. a low-carbon and climate-resilient pathways for a sustainable nation through ten main strategies, namely: Industrial Emissions; Forest Cover; Electric Vehicles; Renewable Energy; Power Management; Carbon Pricing; Waste Management; Climate Resilience and Adaptation; Carbon Inventory; and Awareness and Education.

Brunei Darussalam also submitted its first Nationally Determined Conditions (NDC) Synthesis Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat with a pledge to reduce 20% of total national global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 under the Paris Agreement.

Part of the plan is also to develop a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) through the Adaptation and Resilience Working Group which is a comprehensive climate adaptation planning to assist in integration. These efforts reflect the nation's commitment to achieving long-term sustainability.

In line with this support of national resilience in climate change and low carbon emissions, the Ministry of Transport and Info-Communication (MTIC) launched a pilot project with the theme of *“Driving Towards a Greener Nation”* in line with BNCCP's strategy on electric vehicles (EVs). The project aims to test public response whilst raising awareness on the use of EVs.

Recognising the shift towards an integration of sustainability into transportation, the Electric Vehicles Joint Task Force (EVJTF) through co-chairmanship of the Ministry of Energy (ME) and Ministry of Transport and Info-Communication (MTIC) was formed to oversee the development of EV in Brunei Darussalam.



“Driving Towards a Greener Nation” pilot project launched . Source: Borneo Bulletin



Electronic vehicles launched at BRIDEX. Source: Borneo Bulletin

Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Brunei Darussalam strives to promote sustainable development through preserving peace and stability among its people by providing protection against various types of crimes. Examples of efforts that have been made are those in cyber security and in ensuring children's rights and protecting persons with disabilities

Brunei Darussalam demonstrated significant progress and commitment to cyber security. The establishment of Cyber Security Brunei (CSB) as the national cyber security agency of Negara Brunei Darussalam, marks the efforts made to monitor and coordinate national efforts in addressing cyber security threats and cybercrime. Operating under MTIC, CSB provides cyber security services for the public, private and public sectors in Negara Brunei Darussalam. This progress has been reflected in the Global Cybersecurity Index 2020 report by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in which Brunei Darussalam ranked 16th in the Asia Pacific and 85th out of 194 countries globally.

To further support child welfare and the UN Convention on the Child Rights, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports (MCYS) has launched the National Framework on Child Protection (NFPC) in December 2020, which serves as a guideline that aims to strengthen the existing child protection ecosystem. This is aimed to ensure that every child lives in a healthy environment so that they can reach their full potential and no child will be left behind. Another initiative is the establishment of a *“Register of Children and Young Person in Need of Protection”* to facilitate inter-agency monitoring of children or young people who need immediate protection.

In addition to that, the Persons with Disabilities Order 2021, has also been enacted and came into force on 1 October 2021, to ensure that persons with different abilities are accorded due recognition and protection. Amongst others, these laws introduces specific protection for persons with different abilities, through Section 4 (Offences against persons with disabilities), which outlines offences against persons with different abilities that carry severe penalties for abuse and neglect.

Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals

Brunei Darussalam continues to build stronger ties to further strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation in supporting and achieving the overarching goal of sustainable development.

As ASEAN Chair 2021, Brunei Darussalam also continued the collective efforts of ASEAN to care for its people and prepare for future challenges and opportunities, with the goal of ensuring that the whole ASEAN Community can sustainably prosper.

ASEAN also encouraged the acceleration of efforts to deliver the United Nations SDGs in view of the Decade of Action for the SDGs and the reversal in the progress of achievement of the SDGs particularly on ‘No Poverty’ (Goal 1) and ‘Reduced Inequalities’ (Goal 10) caused by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The alignment of the Work Plans / Work Programmes of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Sectoral Bodies with the 2030 UN SDGs and other regional priorities, will lead to consistent efforts in helping the community advance to 2025 and beyond.

Aligned to Goal 17, the following priorities, among others, have been successfully accomplished:

- Establish a Dialogue Partnership with the United Kingdom;
- Establish a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Australia;
- Establish a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with China;
- Launching of the ASEAN-Canada Free Trade Agreement Negotiations;
- Adoption of the ASEAN Investment Facilitation Framework;

- Adoption of the ASEAN Framework to support food, agriculture and forestry small producers, cooperatives and MSMEs to improve product quality to meet regional/international standards and ensure competitiveness;
- Adoption of the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD), which is a strategic, holistic, cross-sectoral and coordinated approach across the three ASEAN Community Pillars, to ensure ASEAN's collective, rapid, effective and timely response in mitigating the impacts of different types of emergencies and disasters that have or may affect the Southeast Asian region, with a view to better protect the society, economy and the broader developmental agenda;
- Adoption of the Framework on Circular Economy;
- Adoption of the Consolidated Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for ASEAN;
- Adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on the Blue Economy; and
- Adoption of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Upholding Multilateralism; and
- Adoption of the ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy, which serves to guide ASEAN's development of the care economy in response to complex crises and growing challenges in order to protect different segments of populations and sectors and to also become an indispensable part of ASEAN inclusive socio-economic growth towards sustainable development in the region.



Brunei Darussalam as ASEAN Chair 2021
 Source: ASEAN2021

Other examples of cooperation efforts include cooperation in several key sectors such as trade, volunteering, and supporting youth efforts. Brunei Darussalam is committed to pursue free trade policies aimed at promoting trade liberalisation and facilitation among trade partners. This year, for example, the Government signed an agreement with the Philippines for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income. The agreement is expected to enhance economic, trade and investment cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines in exchanging information, while ensuring greater transparency on tax matters to be in line with developed global standards.

Cooperation efforts are also in areas of the halal industry, for example, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Syariah Compliance Products, Development and Trade between Brunei Darussalam BIMP-EAGA Business Council (BD-BEBC) and Taiwan was signed to boost the development of the Halal Economy in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) region, with focus on Halal products and certifications. This acts as a catalyst and platform for better connectivity and cooperation linking Taiwan, Brunei Darussalam, and the global halal industry.

Meanwhile, the government and people of Brunei Darussalam continue to take part in providing relief efforts to other countries. In April 2021, Brunei Darussalam witnessed the handover for 25 housing units and a Mosque under Phase II of the ASEAN Village project, in Palu City, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. This is in addition to the 31 housing units funded by the people of Brunei Darussalam in Phase I of the project which was handed over on 16 April 2020.



Housing units for ASEAN Village Project, Palu City. Source: ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management

With this, the total contribution from the people of Brunei Darussalam for the ASEAN Village Project consists of 56 housing units and a mosque that can accommodate a congregation of up to 200 people. The funding for the project was collected through the establishment of the Sulawesi Disaster Humanitarian Fund or Tabung Kemanusiaan Bencana Sulawesi which collected donations from the people and residents of Brunei Darussalam, which shows the concern and sense of solidarity of the people in Brunei Darussalam to the people impacted by the earthquake and tsunami in Central Sulawesi which happened in September 2018.

Recently, the Palestine 2021 Humanitarian Fund or Tabung Kemanusiaan Palestin 2021 was set up in May 2021 until August 2021 as a national platform for donors to contribute monetary donations directly and to enable groups to organize charitable activities and collect donations that will be channeled to address the most urgent needs of the Palestinians. NGOs are also working towards supporting the work in this area. In the regional context, Brunei Darussalam is also working with the ASEAN Member States to review the Financial Rules of the ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief (ADMER) Fund to enable the peoples of ASEAN to make contributions during natural disasters, consistent with the ASEAN Chairmanship priorities of harnessing the caring nature of ASEAN.

Volunteerism is seen as an effort to build up a sustainable society and there has been much progress that has been made. For example, as an effort to enhance volunteering activities as a shared responsibility, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) signed an MoU with the Baiduri Bank for 'Mengalinga' Volunteer Mobile Application, which provides a platform for event organisers and NGOs to share volunteering opportunities for those who are interested.



'Mengalinga' app. Source: Borneo Bulletin

The Volunteer Guideline Book was also launched to provide a more comprehensive guide and acts as a reference in organising voluntary activities and work. These initiatives will help spearhead volunteerism, especially amongst the younger generation, and explain the rights and privileges of volunteers. Since 2018, Brunei Darussalam, through the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, together with youth associations, non-governmental organisations, private and government agencies, organised the Day of Action Campaign every 5th December, in conjunction with International Volunteers Day.

Under Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021, ASEAN also recognised the need to ensure sustainability and progress in ASEAN's work through equipping junior officers of ASEAN Member States with the knowledge and skills to face new challenges. To this end, ASEAN established the ASEAN Junior Fellowship Programme with the ASEAN Secretariat, and welcomed the funding to the Programme by Brunei Darussalam for the next ten (10) years.

PART 2: WHOLE-OF-NATION APPROACH IN COMBATING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The world found itself in an unprecedented situation disrupting progress in health, economy, and society mainly affecting the world's poorest and most vulnerable people the most. The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2020 highlighted to member states the risk of this pandemic to the development of the SDGs and its possible impact on many sectors of society. COVID-19 has however presented an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and global solidarity to address shared challenges and accelerate actions to *Build Back Better*.

For Brunei Darussalam, COVID-19 has shown us the wisdom of what is inherent within the 2030 Agenda and at the same time strengthened the need for solutions to be dealt with collaboratively and collectively. As with many countries, we continue to respond to the pandemic and prepare for recovery. This section will mention some of the efforts which have been introduced by Brunei Darussalam whilst dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brunei Darussalam continues to sustain and restore economic and social disruption brought upon by the pandemic through a whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approaches. The measures undertaken focused on the following four main areas: (i) Maintaining the well-being of the public; (ii) Protecting jobs and providing support for individuals; (iii) Supporting and assisting businesses; and (iv) National vaccination programme.

1 MAINTAINING THE WELL-BEING OF THE PUBLIC

1.1 High quality and comprehensive healthcare system

Brunei Darussalam strives to ensure that the health system is of high quality and comprehensive so that it will be able to respond effectively and efficiently. Several key actions were put in place to respond to the COVID-19. In addition to setting up major swabbing centres, an additional National Virology Laboratory in Kampong Sumbiling, Bandar Seri Begawan was constructed to increase the capacity and accelerate the testing process for COVID-19 in the country by 10-fold. To tackle the second wave, an additional virology laboratory called the Brunei COVID-19 AirLab was set up. The new lab was a result of cooperation between the Government and the Beijing Genomic Institution (BGI). Additional isolations centres were established including a new extension to the National Isolation Centre. All centres are equipped with new medical facilities to treat and monitor confirmed positive-infected COVID-19 patients.



A ward at the extension for the National Isolation Centre. Source: The Scoop

Quarantine facilities and arrangements are also prepared for arrivals into Brunei Darussalam from abroad who are required to undergo self-isolation at designated accommodations upon arrival.



Introduction of the BruHealth application as an epidemic response and population engagement platform

One of the most significant efforts made was the introduction of the BruHealth application. As an epidemic response and population engagement platform, BruHealth assists the Ministry of Health (MOH) in sharing information and for contact tracing. The application also allows additional features, supporting the digitalisation of healthcare services such as online booking of vaccinations, medical appointments, personal health records tracker, access to video consultations, and online payment platform. A self-assessment tool was also made available on the BruHealth application to help individuals to self-assess possible COVID-19 symptoms and to assist the provision of real-time information.

In an attempt to ensure information is delivered in a timely and efficient manner, regular press conferences were held to provide the latest information on COVID-19 in Brunei Darussalam. The Health Advice Line 148 was also set up for members of the public who required additional information and health advice. Additional sources of information were also made available through other means for example the mobile application Telegram for Gov.bn.

1.2 Public Services continue through the implementation of Business Continuity Plan (BCP) at the workplace

To minimise disruptions in service delivery and to ensure essential services are still operational even during the outbreak, business continuity plans were put in place. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) established guidelines on BCP for the civil service, in accordance with existing circulars and standard operating procedures issued by the MOH and other government agencies. All agencies were also required to formulate their BCP taking into account their respective functions and roles. As a result, flexible working arrangements for all employees, including high-risk personnel, were introduced.

Public health response measures were also introduced such as mandatory registration for contract tracing, temperature check at entry points, and social distancing. "*The PMO Circular 8/2020: Guidelines On Measures To Control And Deal With COVID-19 Infection For The Civil Service Of Brunei Darussalam*" was published to regulate workplace hygiene standards and implement measures controlling the movement of civil servants out of the country with regards to international meetings and workshops.

1.3 Special allowance for frontliners

In March 2020, the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam awarded a monthly special allowance of BND400 for frontliners in appreciation for their service and their efforts in tackling the pandemic of COVID-19. This allowance was extended to doctors, nurses, paramedics, ambulance drivers, volunteers, and support staff under the MOH.

1.4 Travel Restrictions

Travel ban out of Brunei Darussalam came into effect on 16th March 2020. As a result, application guidelines for all citizens and permanent residents excluding essential travel was introduced. Entry to Brunei Darussalam via land, air, and sea has also been strictly regulated by the relevant agencies.

In order to control the entry of foreign nationals to Brunei Darussalam, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) issued Entry Travel Pass (ETP) to those who are permitted to enter Brunei Darussalam before arrival. The ETP will be presented to the authority upon arrival and they are required to comply with the post-arrival health procedures. In dealing with COVID-19 cases, the Department of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Transport and Info-communications (MTIC) has issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for passengers arriving at the airport in case there are inbound passengers suspected of being infected. The operation hours at Land Control Post were shortened to 12 hours from 6.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. to limit the movement via land to those with special circumstances. Foreign nationals residing in Sabah, Sarawak, and the Federal Territory of Labuan wishing to transit through Brunei Darussalam via road are required to apply for a permission letter from the Department of Immigration and National Registration, MOHA. The purpose of the letter is to ensure that the travellers comply with the regulations and will not stop anywhere in Brunei Darussalam whilst transiting.

1.5 Consumer affairs

The Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) continuously monitors and regulates the prices of necessities such as rice, sugar, and other essentials. Temporary elimination of import and excise duties on personal hygiene products were implemented to assist retailers and consumers to meet the increasing demand

for these products especially in combatting COVID-19. Stocks of imported rice and sugar are continuously monitored to ensure that they are sufficient for the population's daily consumption in line with the Treasury Department's mandate to have at least 6-months of stock available at all times.

1.6 United in assistance

His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam consented for the Government to establish a COVID-19 Relief Fund to enable the general public to make contributions to help deal with the spread of COVID-19.

The establishment of the funds followed suggestions from companies and the public who wish to make voluntary donations to help the government, especially the Ministry of Health (MOH) to purchase equipment and essentials to curb the transmission of COVID-19. Donations in kind were also received by the MOH which showed the Bruneian collective spirit to support the COVID-19 response efforts.

Many dedicated members of the community also contributed by volunteering and providing medical and non-medical assistance to assist in COVID-19 efforts. For example, the Youth Volunteer which is a youth-led movement supported by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) deployed volunteers to Health Centres, designated hotels, and National Isolation Centre, Airport, Mosques; assisting frontliners from the Ministry of Health (MOH), National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and other key government agencies to help ensure that directives and guidelines were complied to; distributing food rations to Isolation Centres and designated quarantine venues; and ensuring facilitating standard arrival procedures protocols for passengers arriving at the Brunei International Airport.

In addition, the youth volunteers also spearheaded a drive-through donation to aid families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Drive-through donation. Source: Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports

1.7 Online learning

The closure of schools and restrictions of mass gathering activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Brunei Darussalam prompted the Ministry of Education (MOE) to develop the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) document as a guideline for the education institutions at all levels in mitigating disruption to the education system, especially in minimising learning loss.



Online learning at home. Source: Borneo Bulletin

Teaching and learning were continued through various platforms. Home-based online learning was quickly introduced by the MOE and Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and in addition to physical Home-Learning Packs.

MOE through its community partnerships and the support of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provided disadvantaged student households with access to electronic devices. Likewise, working closely with relevant parties resulted in reduced data costs for accessing education platforms. An example of a community effort is one by the Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry (AITI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport and Info-communications (MTIC) and MOE which organised an ICT Donation Drive which allowed the public and private sectors to donate computers, laptops, and tablets for students in need of the devices.

1.8 Religious and Spiritual Initiatives

His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam, emphasized the need to remain steadfast in faith and observe prayers and doa, whilst abiding to the Social Operating Procedures (SOPs) provided by the Government.

Several initiatives were undertaken to strengthen unity of Bruneians through religious and spiritual activities. For example digital and physical copies of COVID-19 zikir dan prayer books by Jabatan Hal Ehwal Masjid where distributed throughout the country. In addition, virtual events such as reading of Surah Yaasin, Hajat Prayers and Doa to seek protection of Allah where also organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.



Virtual event held by Ministry of Religious Affairs. Source: RTB News

1.9 Alternative service delivery and digitalisation of government services

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the provision of alternative service delivery and the digitalisation of government services. Amongst some of the efforts that were put in place were drive-through payment service for pensions, disbursement of payments through digital platforms, and additional services which allow government agencies to make necessary payments through online platforms. Most government agencies have also started to provide online services for the convenience of the public.

2 PROTECTING JOBS & PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

2.1 Deferment on TAP and SCP contributions for MSMEs

COVID-19 has impacted economies and lives around the world. Businesses have had to pivot their strategies, policies, and offerings to stay in business. To support businesses and companies, the Government introduced several measures including a deferment on Employee Trust Fund (TAP) and Supplemental Contributory Pensions (SCP) for local employees earning less than BND1,500 per month in all sectors under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with less than 100 employees. The government continues monthly contributions to ensure that the annual dividend payments to employees are not affected. Eligible MSMEs are required to apply for the deferment and are to repay the contributions within a year after the final month of deferment. This temporary measure is to ensure that the financial burden of businesses will be reduced so that they are able to continue hiring and avoid terminating workers and to ensure continuous retirement savings and that their beneficiaries are protected.

2.2 Salary subsidies for MSMEs

In an effort to limit retrenchment and support businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government provided salary subsidies for local employees earning less than BND1,500 per month in all sectors under the MSMEs with less than 100 employees for a period of three months. The Government paid out grants covering up to 25% of the salary of workers if companies kept workers on their payroll rather than lay them off. This move is to ensure that the financial burdens of businesses will be reduced to protect jobs and provide support for individuals.

2.3 Support for self-employed individuals

In addition to the deferment of payments to the SCP and TAP by MSMEs, the Government also provided full SCP contribution for self-employed individuals. This move is to ensure the self-employed individuals have continuous coverage of Survivorship Fund

2.4 Life-long learning

In times of uncertainty and slow activity, companies were encouraged to conduct upskilling, and reskilling trainings for their local staff, provided for by the Manpower Planning and Employment Council (MPEC). Online and hands-on courses in IT, programming and data analytic as well as in the food and beverage sector were provided. The Industry Business Academy (IBA), Darussalam Enterprise (DARe) offered sponsored courses to businesses through Coursera in over 300 business-related courses in seven key domains including marketing and sales, finance and accounting, innovation and design, and data skills. This was also in line with the Ministry of Education's (MOE) efforts with the Lifelong Learning Centre. Currently, the centre aims to develop policy, framework, and guidelines to promote access to lifelong learning (LLL) programmes, review the provision of LLL, and promote enrolment for learners of all ages.

2.5 I-Ready apprenticeship program

A contract extension was given for i-Ready apprentices in both the public and private sectors for a period of six months. The I-Ready apprenticeship program was also expanded to include two additional tiers namely the Level 5 Diploma (HND or Advanced Diploma equivalent) and the Level 2 to 4 under Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

2.6 Improved job matching services

The JobCentre Brunei (JCB) website was revamped to reveal new features such as job matching, real-time notifications for job matches, and enable companies to get talent profiles and compatibility reports based on the criteria set for the jobs. JCB also actively supported private companies, especially the sectors of manufacturing, security, online services, and logistics which required a larger workforce by providing services such as sending alert SMS to local jobseekers, providing pool talent for the companies' reference, and conducting interviews through its virtual platform.

2.7 Eligibility for paid medical leave

To ensure that newly appointed workers will continue to be paid even in instances where they will have to undergo self-isolation, medical treatment, or quarantine, the Labour Department, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) reduced the eligibility for workers to apply for paid medical leave from six months to one month from start of employment.

2.8 COVID-19 Financial Assistance via National Welfare System (SKN)

Effective 1st September 2021 to 30th November 2021, the Government had also provided financial assistance for the private sector employees affected (basic salary is \$1,500.00 and below per month), who had been terminated due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic but not due to

disciplinary action or resignation.

At the same time covering for those on unpaid leave for more than 7 days either due to the impact of the pandemic issued by the company or issued a Quarantine Order (QO) by the Ministry of Health. This assistance also covers the self-employed as well as freelancers. The financial assistance given is B\$250.00 per month and B\$50.00 for each dependent including husband or wife and child up to 4 children who are under the age of 18 years old.

3 SUPPORTING AND ASSISTING BUSINESSES

3.1 Reducing financial burden on affected businesses and individuals

With the support of the Brunei Darussalam Central Bank (BDCB), a set of interim measures have been undertaken by members of the Brunei Association of Banks (BAB) which aimed towards reducing the financial burden of affected businesses and individuals due to sudden disruptions to cash flows and to support working capital to ensure their sustainability.

These measures include deferment on principal repayments on loans for businesses and individuals affected in all sectors; trade and waiving the payment for transaction fees for companies in the tourism, restaurants/cafes, air transport and imports of food and medicine sectors; deferment on principal repayments on personal financing/loans and vehicle financing/loans, or restructuring loans/repayments with a period of not exceeding 10 years; deferment on principal repayments on personal financing/loans related to land, either for ownership or for investment purpose; and conversion of outstanding balances on credit cards into a term loan for a period not exceeding three years for affected individuals working in the private sector only, including the self-employed.

All banks also agreed for fee charges for deferment and restructuring applications, and all charges and bank payments for interbank transfers, excluding third-party charges, to be waived.

3.2 Discounts and exemptions on taxes, fees, charges, and rent

Rental charges for markets and stalls under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) were also temporarily waived as an effort to support vendors affected by the closure of stalls and markets due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

To support and assist businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, a 30% discount on rental rates of government buildings is given for MSMEs according to the selected sectors such as tourism, hospitality (including hotels and lodging houses), restaurants & cafes, and sea & air passenger transport services. In addition, a 20% discount on water and electricity bills, and a 50% discount on corporate income tax for the Year of Assessment 2022 is also given to the affected sectors above.

3.3 Support for the agri-food sector

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on most of the farmers' operations who are actively engaging in both agriculture and fisheries sectors in the country, particularly in acquiring 'farm inputs' such as 'day old chick' for the poultry industry and 'fish fingerlings' for the aquaculture industry from overseas suppliers. This has necessitated the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT) to implement interim measures in facilitating transportation of 'farm input' from overseas suppliers with the cooperation of the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) and Royal Brunei Airlines (RB).

'Pasar Kitani' program and 'Buy Local Produce' campaign, were also launched to provide alternative platform to help farmers and market vendors sell their agricultural produce and not be affected by the temporary closures of markets and stalls. These initiatives have also ensured stability in the prices of agricultural products such as vegetables and fruits and promoted continuous agricultural production.



'Pasar Kitani' program and 'Buy Local Produce' campaign help local farmers access markets during pandemic. Source: Department of Agriculture and Agrifood

Another effort was that the Government provided a 50% reduction in price for glutinous rice for one month starting 8th April 2020 at the Supply and State Store Complex to MSMEs and self-employed businesses in their preparation and sale of local *kuih* and cakes using glutinous rice as the main ingredient such as *kelupis*, *wajid*, *seri muka*, and others. This initiative was extended for two additional months as it was well-received by the private sector and general public.

4 NATIONAL VACCINATION PROGRAMME

The Government of His Majesty The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has developed a vaccination strategy for the citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam. The Ministry of Health (MOH) highlighted that vaccination is the most effective measure to break the COVID-19 transmission chain. Consequently, the more people receive the COVID-19 vaccination, the higher the people's immunity will be against COVID-19, including a lower risk of effects of coronavirus towards public health.

In April 2021, Brunei officially launched the National Vaccination Programme for COVID-19 for the citizens and residents of Brunei Darussalam. The National Vaccination Programme is free for all citizens and people residing in Brunei who are aged 18 years old and above and is implemented in three phases: (i) Phase 1 is for the frontliners and high-risk individuals; (ii) Phase 2 is for individuals at moderate risk and other essential workers; and (iii) Phase 3 is for the general public. The Ministry of Health also adjusted plans to provide COVID-19 vaccination shots for children aged 12-17 years and booster shots for eligible adults in stages at the end of 2021.



The National Vaccination Program is being implemented in phases. Source: Borneo Bulletin; The Scoop

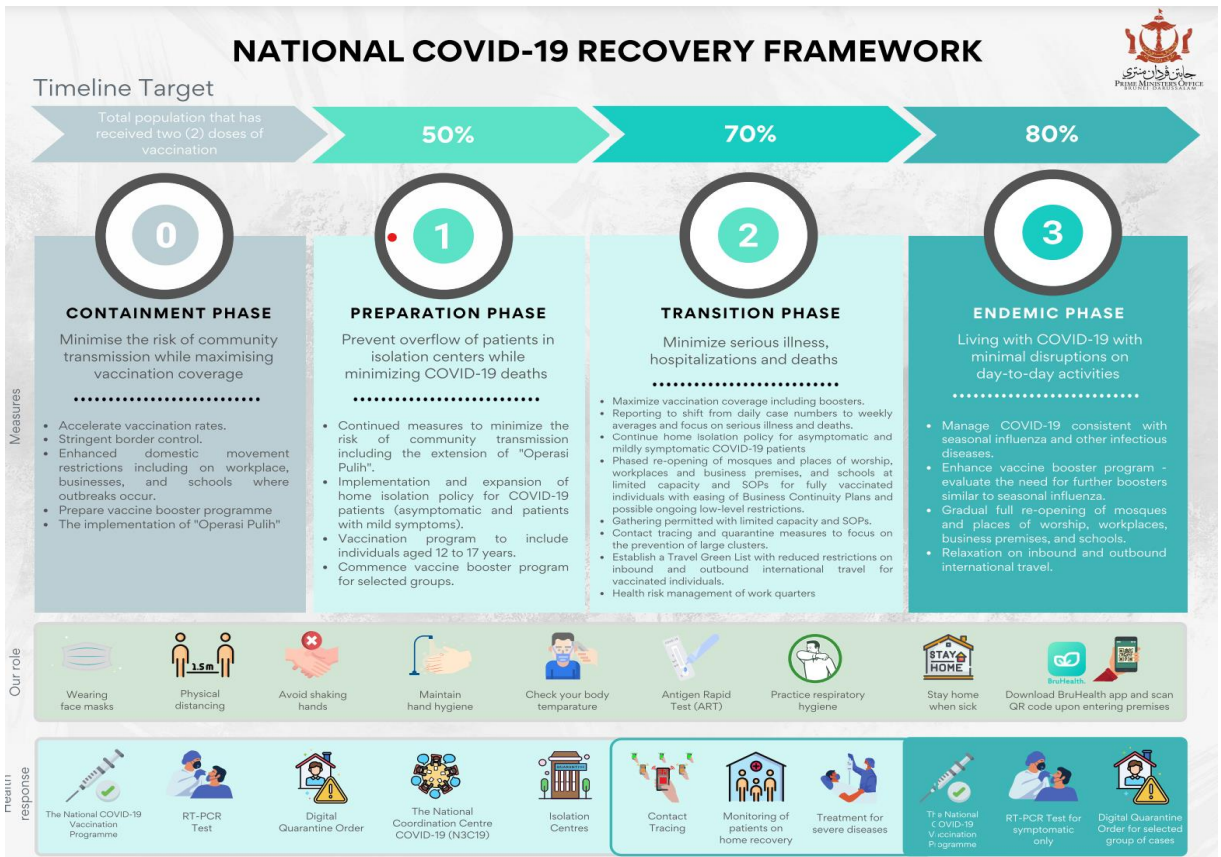
COVID-19 RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Brunei Darussalam is turning attention towards recovery and reopening to transition into life under new norms. There have been several measures put in place to ease the transition outlined in the National COVID-19 Recovery Framework. Authorities plan to ease further restrictions and move to the transition phase when at least 70 percent of the population is vaccinated.

In October 2021, Brunei was transitioning into the second or “transition phase” of the National COVID-19 Recovery Plan, where plans included to allow for inbound and outbound travel to low-risk countries for fully vaccinated individuals, and a “green” list will be drawn up to guide travelers on quarantine requirements.

The travel ban has been in place since the pandemic began in March last year, with only essential travelers permitted to enter and leave the country after seeking approval from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

The recovery plan consists of four phases, namely the containment, preparation, transition, and endemic phases. The latter is set to take effect when the country hits its 80 percent vaccination target. The exit strategy plan aims to facilitate a safe transition from pandemic to endemic, with hopes of minimising disruptions to everyday life.



National COVID-19 Recovery Framework. Source: Prime Minister’s Office, Brunei Darussalam

STRENGTHENING THE SDGs AGENDA FOR BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Brunei Darussalam's 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) allowed for the opportunity to share experiences, successes, challenges, and lessons learnt with the global community. More importantly, it allowed us to review progress with a lens to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

There were several key lessons post-VNR that will be used to strengthen the 2030 Agenda. The process of undergoing a VNR revealed the importance of strengthening coordination, alignment, and harmonization. Re-strategising efforts by the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs under the Prime Minister's Office was to ensure that the Committee remains a critical mechanism of national coordination and leadership to produce results.

It was also seen as necessary to harmonise SDGs with *Wawasan Brunei 2035*, to ensure connection and alignment with our own national development goals. This can help to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs. The work to align the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* continues.

The VNR process was inherently useful for taking stock of progress. Monitoring progress however requires up-to-date, reliable, and credible data. A more rigorous and systematic approach is needed to monitor data and action to better diagnose the situation, design actions, monitor progress, make necessary adjustments, and scale up the approaches that work. This will allow for meaningful conversations about the SDGs across all ministries to ensure coherence across all 17 SDG Goals.

The VNR process has also revealed the need to strengthen stakeholder engagement. The 2030 Agenda has ambitious targets, covering multiple and interconnected sectors and it requires the contribution of all segments of society. It is critical to involve all segments of society including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses, grass-root leaders, and the youth. Finally, cooperation and collaboration are now more important than ever, and the international community needs to continue to work together to accelerate this global agenda.

Challenges

To ensure Brunei Darussalam focuses its attention on strengthening the global agenda, several interrelated challenges have been identified. This includes the absence of required data, appropriate tools, and capacities to monitor and evaluate the implementation status of the SDGs. At this stage, the current assessment is only based on identifying projects, programmes, and initiatives related to the SDGs instead of assessing tangible outcomes. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to use third-party data and tools as provided by different organizations, for example, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) as proxy measures.

At present, there are limited national targets for the goals which result in uneven progress in SDG targets. Coupled with data gaps and a lack of evaluation tools, the identification of such targeted goals is challenging. There are also no specific financial allocations for SDG projects, programmes, or initiatives which makes the evaluation of outcomes based on return of investments difficult to make.

Actions to address challenges

Several key actions are in place to address the challenges in strengthening the global agenda for Brunei Darussalam.

1. Narrowing Data and Capacities Gap

Several United Nations agencies are assisting Brunei Darussalam to address identified gaps. SDG Secretariat has engaged with organisations such as UN ESCAP and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to explore expertise for guidance and appropriate tools that could be utilized and tailored to Brunei Darussalam's needs. This technical assistance will add value in realising Brunei Darussalam's desire to prepare for the Second Voluntary National Review Report in 2023.

2. Targeted achievement by 2030

Prioritising some SDG goals with a clear timeline can promote a realistic, targeted, and effective implementation of SDGs towards 2030. Brunei Darussalam is working towards integrating goal under each 5Ps: 'People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership' and priorities under the *Wawasan Brunei 2035* in the coming years.

3. Technical Working Group

SDG Technical Working Group (SDGTWG) Brunei Darussalam has been established as part of the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs to specifically address concerns related to data. The SDGTWG supports the compilation, dissemination, and communication of SDG indicators for Brunei Darussalam. The SDGTWG will also work towards adopting internationally accepted definitions, concepts, methodology of agreed SDG indicators, which will lead to the report on the progress of the production and dissemination of the SDG indicators to the Special National Coordination Committee on SDGs.

4. Mobilization of Resources

Creative ways are being explored to ensure the effective mobilisation of resources. For example, blended financing (Public-Private Partnership), participation and contribution of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs), education institutions involvement, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In the longer term, linking *Rancangan Kemajuan Negara* (RKN) with SDGs could be explored as conceptually they serve the same purpose.

Mobilization efforts are also planned for communicating the SDGs to ensure citizens are aware of their role in achieving the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda requires a whole-of-society approach to steer, and a strong partnership with the NGOs and private sector to reach the desired destination and potentially mould the value of sustainability into a daily livelihood and day-to-day living.

CONCLUSION

Brunei Darussalam recognises that achieving the 2030 Agenda requires collaborative and coordinated efforts from all segments of society.

Brunei Darussalam continues to make good progress mainly on indicators relating to health and well-being, education, gender equality, affordable and clean energy, clean water and sanitation, industry, innovation, and infrastructure. It will continue to make progress in other key areas whilst also paying attention to areas that need strengthening.

The Decade of Action is upon us and with less than 10 years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Brunei Darussalam will remain resolute. COVID-19 has posed further challenges to reaching the SDGs by 2030, yet Brunei Darussalam is committed to this aim and will leave no one behind.

Brunei Darussalam will leverage the power of our community to contribute to the global sustainable goals. Our commitments are a work in progress and Brunei Darussalam shall work to ensure that this continues. We will unite around these to ensure we play our part in delivering a thriving and sustainable future for Brunei Darussalam and the world, and we will report our shared progress each year in Brunei Darussalam's SDGs Annual Report.





**SECRETARIAT TO SPECIAL NATIONAL COORDINATION
COMMITTEE ON SDGs BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**Prime Minister's Office
Jalan Perdana Menteri,
Bandar Seri Begawan BB3913
Negara Brunei Darussalam**

sdg@jpm.gov.bn

ISBN 978-99917-36-33-4



9 789991 736334