



NATIONAL STATEMENT

**HER EXCELLENCY DATIN PADUKA MALAI HAJAH HALIMAH
MALAI HAJI YUSSOF**

**AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM TO FRANCE
PERMANENT DELEGATE TO UNESCO**

**41ST SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
GENERAL POLICY DEBATE**

Wednesday
10 November 2021

Your Excellency, Mr. Santiago Irazabal Mourao, President of the General Conference;

Your Excellency, Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO;

Your Excellencies Ministers and Heads of Delegation;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Bismillah hirrahman nirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and a very good morning

1. Firstly, I would like to welcome our newly elected President of the 41st UNESCO General Conference. You have our full support and we look forward to the convening of this Conference.
2. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to Her Excellency Madam Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO, for her leadership and remarkable work and efforts in promoting multilateralism and values of humanism, reinforcing UNESCO's core mandate for the creation of peaceful societies, by endorsing and protecting heritage, cultural diversity, and global citizenship education, particularly in our attempt to adapt to the new normal.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted and caused profound changes to our structure and routine, not to mention our efforts towards achieving strategies that have been in place to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030

Agenda. Governments and organisations all over the world are prioritising discussions and action plans to overcome the health emergency as well as implementing rapid economic mitigation measures, aiming at protecting livelihoods in the face of abrupt losses of income.

4. With this, the pandemic has not only posed unprecedented challenges, but it also has presented us with great opportunities to redefine our sectoral landscapes by identifying numerous measures not only in the health sector, but also strengthening efforts in other areas for its recovery.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Despite all obstacles, Brunei Darussalam remains committed to building back stronger the progress of the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda complements Brunei Darussalam's national vision, **Wawasan Brunei 2035**, where the country aspires to be widely recognised for its educated, highly skilled and accomplished people, with a high quality of life and a dynamic and sustainable economy by 2035.
6. Brunei Darussalam aims to ensure that the country and its people will continue to thrive and prosper in the fast-evolving world whilst preserving its unique social, cultural and traditional values.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. Due to global disruptions and the 4th Industrial Revolution, digital transformation of the education system now has become one of the common coping measures. The Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam is fortunate to have established the **Educational Technology Centre**, prior to the pandemic, and as part of its Strategic Plan 2018-2022, to support the use of educational technology in teaching and learning towards producing digitally literate learners.

8. However, the pandemic has revealed some digital gaps. As a long-term strategy, the Ministry is embarking on the “**Ministry of Education Digital Transformation Plan**”, in making digital learning a new norm in our education system, underlining three main areas; **Education Technology**, **Management Technology**, and **Enabling Policies and Infrastructure**.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. The adoption of digital literacy for our students, teachers and school leaders has accelerated, enabling them to work side-by-side with technology. A variety of professional development initiatives have been developed to enhance the digital readiness of our teachers, school leaders and system leaders. In this regard, the Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam is currently developing its digital citizenship framework and guidelines, keeping in mind on the issue of privacy and ethics.

10. This transformative journey cannot be done alone by the Ministry of Education Brunei Darussalam. There have been concerted efforts and strong collaboration with various key stakeholders, through our **whole-of-nation approach** in ensuring equitable access to digital learning for our students, particularly for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

11. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the world with far-reaching effects in various aspects of life, in particular, with socio-economic activities. In Brunei Darussalam, resilience to overcome the disruptions can be described through digitalisation in the delivery of public services and the efforts being made towards a **SMART Nation**.
12. Brunei Darussalam continues to take steps by leveraging on digital technology not only to tackle the pandemic but also to strengthen our readiness for the digital technology revolution.
13. Thus, the digital government is an agenda that the Ministry of Transport and Infocommunications has been spearheading, since the launch of our very first national **Digital Economy Masterplan 2025** with the vision of “Smart Nation through Digital Transformation”. This effort ensures that government services can continue to be given to the public with the least disruption and therefore better impact the lives of its citizens.

14. In addition, we continue to foster good relations with our regional and international counterparts, where we work together in sharing the best practices in our journey during this transformation with each country having its own unique sets of objectives, approaches and measures.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

15. To conclude, we look forward and reaffirm our strong commitments to further strategic cooperation under the Draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029, and strengthen regional and international cooperation and partnership, including capacity building and assistance, towards attainment of the SDGs. I would also like to state that Brunei Darussalam remains committed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and UNESCO's constructive contribution towards the education, science and culture agenda around the world.

Thank you.