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The Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the latter's note No. DESA-20/00542 dated 28 February 2020, inviting Governments, agencies and bodies of the United Nations system to provide information in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution 74/124, entitled "Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond".

In this regard, the Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam has the further honour to enclose herewith submission of information entitled **The Family Institution in Brunei Darussalam** for consideration.

The Permanent Mission of Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

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Focal Point on the Family/SIP Branch
Division for Inclusive Social Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Secretariat Building, 25th Floor
New York, NY 10017
E-mail: kaczmarska@un.org

THE FAMILY INSTITUTION IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

The strengthening of the Family Institution is of utmost importance in ensuring the well-being and harmony of any nation, especially in helping to address social issues. As a fundamental unit of society, the role played by strong and harmonious family institutions is crucial for an integrated and empowered society, and in line with Brunei Vision 2035 to achieve the Highest Quality of Life. As such, the family institution forms the pillar of the nation's strength, and is viewed as the primary support system for individuals.

National Machinery

Established in April 2008, a ministerial level National Council on Social Issues (MKIS), under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) undertakes the responsibility of, among others: identifying current social issues; formulating policies, legislation and plan of actions for social issues; and, coordinating and ensuring its implementation by relevant agencies. Members of the Council include the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II, the Minister of Education and the Chairman of the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Foundation.

Under the Council, several Special Committees have been established, including the Special Committee on Family Institution, Women and Children, in order to better coordinate national efforts towards promoting and protecting the rights of women and the family institution. This Special Committee is chaired by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, and the Secretary is Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. Members of the Special Committee include Permanent Secretaries at the PMO, Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); the Royal Brunei Police Commissioner; the Director General of Civil Service; and representatives from the Attorney General's Chambers (AGC), the Syari'ah Court and the Council of Women of Brunei Darussalam (CWBD). The Department of Community Development is the Secretariat of the Special Committee.

Plan of Action on Family Institution

Under this Special Committee on Family Institutions, Women and Children, a Plan of Action on Family Institution has been approved by the National Council of Social Issues on 27 March 2018, to strengthen national efforts in empowering the role of a loving and resilient family institution, towards national development and unity. The Plan of Action has two main objectives:

- (1) Family Welfare: To ensure a strong social safety net and resilient family support system, by enhancing financial literacy and providing a comprehensive social system.
- (2) Family Unity and Well-being: To improve family protection systems by strengthening the family institution, through a “family first policy” and nurturing a greater sense of caring and compassion amongst family members.

Brunei Darussalam National Family Day

In due recognition of the importance of the family institution, the first Sunday in May every year has been declared by His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam as National Family Day since 2012. Celebrated by all walks of life through a ‘Whole of Nation’ approach, this annual occasion is a celebration of the central role of the family institution as the pillar of the society and nation, as well as the beacon of hope and the primary support system of all Bruneians as reflected by its theme: “My Family, My Hope”.

Indeed, as the embodiment of the continuous role played by the family towards maintaining a harmonious society, the National Family Day is marked by various collaborative activities to instill a greater awareness amongst the general public on the importance of family institutions in the society at all levels as well as religious programmes to inculcate spirituality and deepen bonds within the family. This is in line with realising a pious and caring society under the Malay, Islamic, Monarchy National Philosophy.

In 2019, the focus of celebration was for a more positive change of mindset, to foster greater awareness and responsibility of every family member in caring for their family, whether at ease or hardship, and especially when family members experience social problems such as drug abuse, and neglect of the elderly including those with dementia. In addition, the 2019 National Family Day was jointly celebrated with the National Youth Day to encourage the youth as the future generation of leaders to continue to recognize and uphold the central role of family institutions in our society and to instil a greater sense of responsibility towards caring, especially the elder generation. Ultimately, by continuing to safeguard the central role played by the family institution in our society, our current and future generations will continue to advance the nation and realise our National Vision 2035.