



**PERMANENT MISSION OF BRUNEI
DARUSSALAM TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**771 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, NEW YORK,
NY 10017**

Address By

**The Honourable Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof,
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**At the General Debate of
the 73rd Session of the United Nations General
Assembly**

**29 September 2018
New York**

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Madam President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour and privilege to be here today and to convey the warm greetings of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

My congratulations to Her Excellency María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés and the people of Ecuador, on assuming the Presidency of this seventy-third session. My appreciation also to Secretary-General António Guterres on his hard work in serving the international community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to join others in expressing our condolences to the family of the late Secretary-General Kofi Atta Annan, whose remarkable service to this Organisation and many valuable contributions to advancing global peace, humanity and development serve as an inspiration to us all.

Amidst reports on the devastating impact of the earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi, I would also like to express our sympathies and condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia.

Excellencies,

We are currently living in a world with ever increasing geo-political and geo-economic uncertainty. The foundations and principles of the international order that usually guides our expectations are in some cases being questioned, whilst in others being ignored.

For a small country like Brunei Darussalam, such unpredictability can be very daunting and runs counter to regional and international efforts in building peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies.

In order for us to achieve our goals of maintaining peace, promoting prosperity and sustainable development, we greatly depend upon the consistency and stability underpinned by our adherence to international obligations and the rule of law.

It is crucial that we all commit to an effective multilateralism that addresses global challenges, ranging from conflict prevention, economic uncertainty to environmental degradation.

In doing so, we have to work together in ensuring the relevance of the UN to all, and everybody needs to play their part in honouring the international frameworks and agreements that we have worked so hard to achieve.

One such agreement is the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* which helps realise our vision of improving people's lives, without leaving anyone behind. We are fully committed to attaining the goals under the Agenda, which we hope will safeguard the welfare of our citizens for generations to come.

In all our efforts to achieve the SDGs, it is imperative to understand and respect the right of each country to choose its own developmental path, including adopting legislations that are suitable to its own national circumstances.

Excellencies,

A challenge for many developing countries in pursuing sustained economic development is in addressing the uneven growth prospects amid many risks including volatility in energy prices. Brunei Darussalam is no exception. To address this, we are concentrating on diversifying our economy.

Underlying these efforts are our commitment to free trade and the rules-based multilateral trading system, and its benefits by all is critical, especially during these times of increasing trade tensions.

Our stand on this is evident through our participation in various platforms such as the WTO and ASEAN that support efforts to facilitate trade and investment.

Our involvement in various bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements is also testament to this. Such agreements provide us with greater certainty in market access and strengthened trade links with our partners within and outside the region.

They are particularly beneficial to small developing countries because they also spur other forms of cooperation, including human resources development and technical assistance. All of these are vital as we prepare ourselves to take advantage of potential opportunities brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

That being said, we also need to remain mindful that efforts in increasing economic growth should be aligned with our shared responsibilities in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our future. As climate change poses a serious threat, the Paris Agreement remains our greatest hope in addressing this global challenge together.

Excellencies,

Our progress in meeting the economic and environmental goals under the 2030 Agenda is determined by our ability to maintain durable peace and stability. The work of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy, mediation and peacekeeping are key to the prevention and resolution of conflict and violence.

In this regard, we appreciate the Secretary-General's efforts in strengthening peacekeeping operations through his *Action for Peacekeeping Initiative*. This will enhance the global support for peacekeeping missions, with the view to contributing towards sustainable peace.

We truly value the selfless work and sacrifice that our peacekeepers make in securing a better world. Therefore, we are also pleased to join others in endorsing the *Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations*. This underscores our collective investment in the success and performance of our peacekeepers.

Lastly, in building a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world, it is important that the UN continues to promote the rule of law.

On this note, we are particularly concerned with the unresolved question of Palestine. For more than half a century, Palestinians are denied peace, justice and freedom.

In solidarity with the Palestinian people, we strongly condemn actions and measures that blatantly violate their rights and dignity. These violations are against international law, including the UN Charter.

Like many countries, we have been alarmed by the developments in Jerusalem, and the continued violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. We remain firm in supporting the call to protect the Palestinian population, as well as the creation of a fully independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

It is Brunei Darussalam's greatest hope for Palestine that all member states of the UN and other organisations would work together to realise the vision of a two-state solution, in full conformity with international law, the UN Charter and all relevant UN resolutions.

We are also encouraged by the State of Palestine's assumption of the chairmanship of the Group of 77 next year, which is a significant milestone not only for its own history but for the Group as a whole.

Excellencies,

Our unwavering commitment to international norms and multilateral partnerships is central to advancing our mutual aspirations of living together in peace and harmony. A significant part of this commitment is our continued support to the United Nations.

For more than 70 years, the UN has been the epicentre of our rules-based multilateral system, where its work, from advocating values of mutual respect to promoting development, has made an impact on people all over the globe.

And in spite of this, it still faces its fair share of criticism. The United Nations may not be perfect, but it is the best hope that we have to achieve a future that we want together.

As the late Kofi Annan once said, "We need to keep hope alive and strive to do better".

On our part, Brunei Darussalam will continue to be a reliable partner and a friend to all for the betterment of the United Nations and the world at large.

Thank you.
