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

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STATEMENT

BY

**THE HONOURABLE
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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS II
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**AT THE 76TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK, 27 SEPTEMBER 2021
(Pre-recorded)**

THEME:

***"Building Resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19,
rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet,
respect the rights of people,
and revitalise the United Nations."***

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

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

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and Peace Be Upon You All

Let me at the outset, convey the warm greetings of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to this august assembly.

I would also like to congratulate His Excellency Abdulla Shahid on assuming the Presidency of the Seventy-Sixth Session of the General Assembly, and wish him much success in his new role.

I wish to also congratulate Secretary-General, António Guterres on his re-appointment. This serves as a testament of Member States' confidence towards his able leadership, and I welcome his continued dedication and commitment towards serving the international community.

Mr. President,

For more than 18 months, Brunei Darussalam, and the rest of the world, continues to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. After a year of being free of local transmissions, Brunei Darussalam now faced another wave of the pandemic.

In our efforts to control the spread of the virus and its variants, the Government of His Majesty has swiftly implemented several measures, similar to other countries, including restricted movements and international travel as well as ramping up vaccination efforts.

Although our experience is one of many that demonstrates the need to remain vigilant, it is still vaccinations that is key to controlling the spread and ensure the safety of our people.

However, the current global system of vaccine distribution remains to be of much concern. Although over 3.5 billion doses of vaccines have been distributed globally, 75% of these vaccines only go to 10 countries. On top of that, low-income countries are only able to vaccinate less than 2% of their population.

It is therefore urgent for Members States to work together with pharmaceutical companies to ensure that COVAX are able to fulfil its commitments to supply and deliver equitable, accessible and affordable vaccines for all.

The message of the Secretary General rings true – no one is safe until everyone is safe.

As we recover from the pandemic, another long-term challenge that is emerging due to repeated lockdowns and quarantines, is the issue of mental health.

If remain unaddressed, our next generation of workforce and the generation after that will be greatly affected, ultimately resulting in the slow down of the global economy and developmental progress.

In this regard, we welcome the inclusion of an indicator on preparedness for providing mental health and psychosocial support during emergencies in the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan by the World Health Assembly.

In our region, Brunei Darussalam is working closely with Australia and Malaysia in adopting the East Asia Leaders Statement on Mental Health Cooperation in October at the 16th East Asia Summit.

This will help strengthen regional efforts towards addressing mental health, and encourage other member states to take concrete collective action in promoting better mental health in the region.

At the crux of it all, the people's health and well-being are fundamental to build back better and stronger towards a resilient global community.

Mr. President,

In addressing the adverse impacts of the pandemic, it has not only compromised ongoing national development plans but also the resources of many countries, notably the small developing states, and recently there have been reports that the effects of the pandemic will inevitably delay progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

In this regard, we must ensure that our recovery efforts prioritise the recovery of our economies by ramping up trade and investments so that livelihoods and employment can recover quickly.

This means we must continue to uphold free and open trade and investments, encourage greater technological collaboration and transfer, as well as strengthen global developmental cooperation to ensure no country is left behind.

In pursuing our recovery plans from the pandemic, it is also timely for us to incorporate green initiatives.

This is because the threat of climate change continues to exist during the pandemic, and the recent forecast of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report is not positive at all.

We already made commitments under the Paris Agreement, and all that remains is for us to uphold and implement them.

In this important 'climate year', we welcome the UK's Presidency and hosting of the COP26, and their calls for the world to come together, deliver, and raise climate ambitions where possible. We look forward to a meaningful outcome at the COP26 in Glasgow, that would set the tone and direction for global efforts in the future.

In our region, we are launching the ASEAN Framework for Circular Economy to close the loop on finite resource wastage while enhancing economic growth and reducing pressure on the environment.

Mr. President,

ASEAN, under the Chairmanship of Brunei Darussalam this year, with the theme – We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper – intends to make good on the promise of building resilience through hope.

The alignment with the General Assembly's theme shows the importance of ensuring that there is hope for our people and planet in the future.

Our ASEAN deliverables also demonstrate our commitment to maintaining regional peace and security.

This is why this year, when the situation in one of our fellow ASEAN family member could affect the stability of the region, ASEAN Leaders quickly met and agreed on the Five-Point Consensus to ensure a peaceful return to democracy in that member state in accordance to the will and interests of its people.

The Five-Point Consensus, among others, also calls for an immediate cessation of violence as well as for the commencement of dialogue among all parties concerned and to allow for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

To this end, on behalf of ASEAN, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to our external partners, including the United Nations, for their assistance and also for the generous contributions accorded at the Humanitarian Pledging Conference last month.

We welcome the continued support of the international community in ASEAN's efforts.

Mr. President,

The question of Palestine remains very much in our thoughts for over seven decades. Up until now, there has not been any concrete resolution.

We continue to see forced eviction, destruction of homes and expansion of illegal settlements by the Occupying Power. This has not only deprived the Palestinians of their basic human rights but also have denied them of any chance for their right to self-determination.

The UN Security Council has a special responsibility to call for cessation of all violence, and fulfil its obligations of upholding international peace and work towards finding a comprehensive and lasting peace on the basis of the two-state solution.

We also call on the international community to remain resolute in their commitment to safeguarding the two-state solution towards achieving an independent state of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President,

Brunei Darussalam stands here today to reiterate our support and commitment to preserving international peace and security, promote prosperity and sustainable development, underpinned by the adherence to international obligations and rule of law, as enshrined in the UN Charter.

Let us move forward in this new normal, with the renewed spirit of upholding multilateralism and continued hope to achieve international peace, prosperity and security for all of our people.

Thank you.
