

Brunei Darussalam's Review and Assessment of Progress Achieved in Implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action.

The total population of Brunei Darussalam is estimated to be 322,900 people in 1998 of which 151,763 or 47% are women. The median age range of the female population is 23 years.

The status of women has significantly improved over the past decade. There has been a noticeable increase in the participation of women in all areas of national, social and economic activity. Bruneian women have benefited a great deal from the country's economic growth and development, despite evidence that the government's policy on women. The Bruneian women have had a significant impact on policy making. Efforts on National Development being pursued for the betterment of all Bruneians.

In the effort to implement the Platform of action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, strategies and plans of actions for the advancement of women in the country was prepared. Several issues had been identified which include:

1. The need to create A National Commission on Women.
2. The need to establish focal points for the advancement of women in all government departments and non-governmental organisations.
3. The need to strengthen the National Machinery for Women.

4. To improve under representation of women in decision making level.
5. Inadequate data on women.
6. The integration of gender issues in all national policies, plans and programmes.

7. Legal Literacy in order to promote and defend women's rights and outlaw all violence against women and girls.

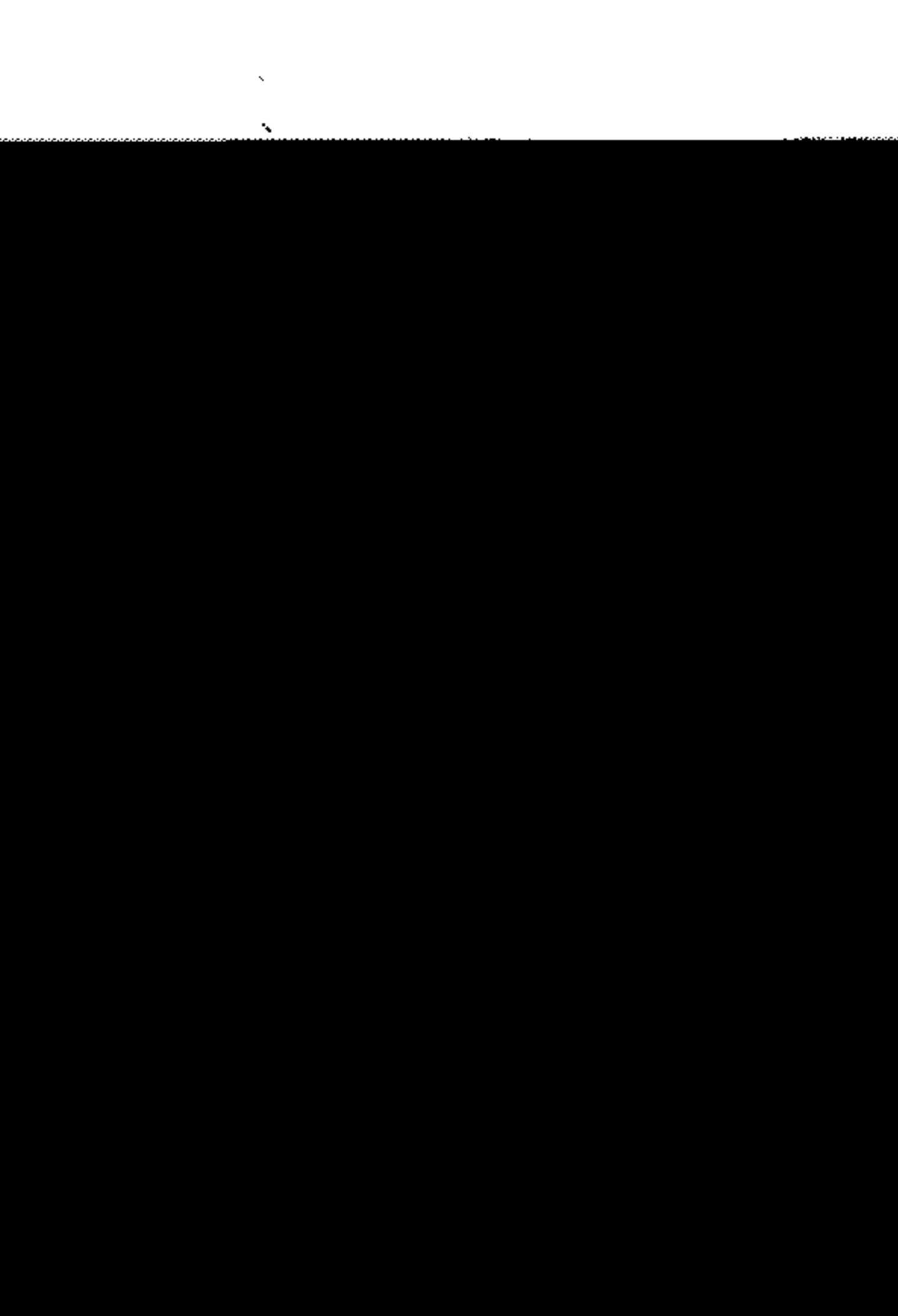
8. The need to address the increasing number of domestic violence cases

9. The need to revise some of the legislation in the protection of women and children, and

10. The need to ensure that women have access to information in relation to all areas of concern.

Immediately after the 4th World Conference on Women, Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports as the focal point, organized a meeting with women leaders from various state agencies to take forward on issues related to the advancement of women in the country taking into account the National Plan of Actions mentioned above.

One of the major actions taken is the appointment of A Drafting Committee for the Advancement of Women. One of the functions of this Committee is to prepare the terms of reference for the proposal to establish a Brunei Darussalam National Commission.



More women are now seen in institution of learning including at the tertiary level. The equal access to education has enabled nearly 85% of the female population to be literate, and today illiteracy is primarily confined to the older generation.

With better education and due to labour-shortage at all levels, employment opportunities for women as well as men are always available in the public and private sectors. Now more women are joining the labour force and have full time career. The labour force participation rate of women has now increased from 46% in 1991 to 54% in 1995. We are now witnessing an increasing

number of them in positions of executives, managerial and

professional categories.

Another factor which has contributed significantly towards development of the country as a whole is good health. Women

have equal access to comprehensive and accessible medical and health services. The provision of maternal and child health care is a priority. On-going health promotion activities are to educate women on antenatal care, breast feeding, advice for both mother and child and also on child

a separate allocation of budget for women in both the Development Budget. However, through Ministries and its allocation of various programs and projects are

being planned and implemented to cater a broader aspect of

national development by improving the quality of life.

of the Department of Social Services, including women. Such programmes
the proposal of setting up of gov-care projects for
working for working mothers and the
for women and children.

in women's concern in the National

There are no separate

development plans. The Advocates an equal opportunity policy
in both the sexes in all sectors, based on the principle of
meritocracy. This policy is incorporated in the planning and
implementing of policies and programmes of the various
Government Ministries.

for the 5th Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible

for Women Affairs held in Trinidad and Tobago 1992

was prepared to address the issues of

At this point, while the goals of gender

equality and development of women

priority in the activities and programmes

programmes and plans carried out in Brunei Darussalam are not

it is important to note that the

As far as the Beijing Plan critical areas of concern

1. Women and Poverty

The government of

ei Darussalam has introduced a

for women in particular on the
of the monthly assistance allowance

Just recently a new Islamic Family Law was drafted and has been submitted to the relevant authority for final approval. This law will cover divorced women, custody of children and other issues.

6. Women and Armed Conflict

In Brunei Darussalam the issues of armed conflicts are not present therefore this is not applicable to Brunei Darussalam.

7. Women and the Economy

In times of economic crisis, women in Brunei are very lucky. They are not severely affected. Opportunities are given equally both to men and women to participate in the development of the economy. In fact today, there is an increase in number of women, many of them successful entrepreneurs.

7. Women in Power and Decision Making.

In 1997, an unexpected appointment of 2 female permanent secretaries, an Ambassador At-Large and a Lady Ambassador.

8. Government of Women

Committee for the Committee of Women. At present all matters dealt with by The Social Affairs Services Unit, one of the

8. Institutional Mechanism for the advancement of Women

The setting up of a Unit for the establishment of a National Council for Women. At present all matters dealt with by The Social Affairs Services Unit, one of the

9. Human Rights of Women.

At present, Brunei are actively looking into CEDAW.

10. Women and the media

The Social Affairs Services Unit has made progress in acquiring a special column in the Government newspaper

ments and

called "Pelita Brunei" to highlight women's activities throughout the country.

The Brunei Darussalam Women's Council is the coordinating body for the Women Organisations. The Brunei Darussalam Women's Council consists of more than 2,000 members. About 11 Women Organisations are affiliated under the Brunei Women's Council. The establishment of the Brunei Darussalam Women's Council and other Women Voluntary Organisations have made it possible for

women to participate actively in the nation's development and also for issues pertaining to women's development both in the public and private sectors.

The most recent development of close partnership between Women NGO's and government pertaining to women are:

1. The celebration of the first ASEAN Women's day, 5th July 1999.
2. Volunteer Counselling Services for cases referred to the Women's Services Unit.
3. Formation of a Working Committee on Conventions On Rights of The Child, 1998.
4. Establishment of A Committee on Social Issues, 1998.
5. Establishment of The HIV/AIDS Foundation, 1998.
6. Establishment of a Drafting Committee for the Commission on Women, 1997.

The achievements attained by Women in Brunei is indeed a lot of progress been made towards of Women within the context of culture, religion and social of the country.

Judging from Darussalam the advancement and social

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