



Brunei Darussalam

Pehin Dato Abdul Rahman Taib
Minister of Education



Born on the 5 December 1942. Graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours from the University of Malaya, Malaysia and has also attended advanced courses on management and diplomacy at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom. He was also conferred with a number of awards, including the Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) at the University of Hull in 1991 and Doctors of Letters (honoris causa) from Universiti Brunei Darussalam in 1996. He has held various civil service positions since 1966 prior to his political appointment as minister in 1984, including: as Director of Establishment, Senior Administrative Officer at the Office of the General Advisor to His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, and as State Secretary of the Government of Brunei Darussalam. In 1984, he was appointed as Minister of Development, responsible for national development in agriculture, infrastructure such as road, public utilities, land, public buildings, and urban and rural development. In 1986, he took the Education portfolio and was concurrently Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam before moving in 1989 into a new Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources. In 2005, he returned to The Ministry of Education. As Minister he also holds other responsibilities, including: as Chairman of the Universiti Brunei Darussalam Council, member of the Council of Ministers, Privy Council and an Ex-Officio member of the Legislative Council.

Inclusive Education: From Vision to Practice

I would like to congratulate the International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO for organising this International Conference on Education. This year's theme, "Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future" is indeed timely and can further assist Member States to further their work towards quality education for all by providing equal opportunity for vulnerable groups of learners achieve through innovative curriculum development and implementation. This major international forum for education policy dialogue will provide many opportunities for Ministers of Education and other stakeholders (researchers, practitioners, representatives of intergovernmental organizations and civil society) to exchange views, ideas, research data and experiences on best practice.

For your information, Brunei Darussalam introduced an inclusive education policy in the mid 1990s in response to the needs of children most vulnerable in our society and the awareness on the rights of all children to equal opportunity and access to education. Our aim is towards a caring society. Part of that aim is to create in our school a learning environment that is caring, that is inclusive of children with special needs, those considered at-risk and those with gifts and talents to study along with their same age peers. This would require the schools to provide appropriate resources to all children within mainstream schools to succeed to their fullest potential.

A Special Education Unit (SEU) at the Ministry of Education was established at the same time to carry out the planning and monitoring of the policy implementation. It reinforces the government's commitment to the development of every child, in

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an inclusive school system, into well rounded citizens that are caring of others and able to participate in the sustainable development of the country.

We recognised that our aim cannot be achieved if teachers were not given the pedagogic tools to teach effectively in an inclusive classroom with a wide range of abilities and differences in the pace of development individual learners that they are likely to face. We began with a systematic series of training for teachers, beginning with a 14-month part time Certificate Course in Special Education provided by University Brunei Darussalam with the support of SEU. The implementation of the Inclusive Policy in Brunei Darussalam was started in 1996 by a group of teachers, head teachers and supervisors who graduated from Certificate Course as well as trained overseas teachers and experts. Some of them were appointed as Learning Assistant Teachers (LAT) and acting as resource persons in their schools that include take the lead responsibility in the planning of a child's Individualised Education Plan, implementation and monitoring of the learning outcomes and liaising with the appropriate support services for any students with special needs in their respective schools.

We will continue with the development and refinement of our Inclusive Education Policy with the introduction of a new National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21) in 2009. The new system will provide multiple pathways to accommodate the diverse learning needs of learners. The curriculum is designed to be broad based and offers seamless pathways to higher education from mainstream schools and vocational institutions.

I am confident that this conference will enrich the debates about the concept of inclusive education, provide an insight into the role of governments in the development and the implementation of policies on inclusive education, draw attention to education systems that offer opportunities for life-long learning and emphasize the role of teachers to meet the learners' diverse expectations and needs. I look forward to participating in the conference and I wish you all the success in your deliberations and endeavour.