

**MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORTS
IN CONJUNCTION WITH WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY 2025
(HARI KANAK-KANAK SEDUNIA 2025)**

1. Since 1954, World Children's Day (WCD) has been celebrated on 20th November, to commemorate and reaffirm the global commitment to the principles contained in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**.

2. This year marks the 19th celebration of World Children's Day in Brunei Darussalam, with the theme '**Listen to the Future**', which underscores the importance of **listening to** and **valuing children's views as a reflection of the nation's future** and that their voices guide the creation of a **safe, ethical, and caring environment for them**.

3. Aligned with Wawasan Brunei 2035, various efforts and strategies have been outlined to strengthen family institutions, protect children, and empower communities through a holistic and whole-of-nation approach. These include the implementation of the **Plan of Action on Children Wellbeing** under the **National Social Issues Council (MKIS)** and the Wawasan Brunei 2035 **Social Blueprint**. Initiatives within these plans include **the Child Online Protection Framework (2013)**, which coordinates multi-agency efforts to protect children's safety in cyberspace, and **the National Framework on Child Protection (2021)**, which serves as a national guide for enhancing the existing child protection ecosystem.

4. Nationally, in 2024, there are 114,500 children and young people aged below 18 years old which comprises of 25.14% of the population. Brunei Darussalam continues to demonstrate strong commitment to safeguarding the rights and protection of children, because our society emphasizes the importance of education, health, welfare, safety, and protection to ensure that children grow up in an environment of peace, security, and compassion, as children are indeed the nation's future assets.

5. The early years of a child's development are also critical in shaping their overall growth and future well-being. Recognizing this importance, in conjunction with the 35th National Teachers' Day Celebration 2025, His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, announced the establishment of a Comprehensive National Early Childhood Care and Education Framework, to be jointly led by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, together with relevant stakeholders to ensure an inclusive, high-quality, and values-based early childhood education rooted in Islamic principles.

6. In today's challenging modern and digital world, children also need to be guided and nurtured wisely, and protected from increasingly complex threats which may come especially through the digital space. As such, we welcome efforts made by various agencies to develop and protect our children through various programmes, including:

- a) **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Youth Camp** organised by the Prime Minister's Office with support from multiple agencies in **August 2024**, to enhance awareness of the SDGs and build leadership and critical thinking skills.
- b) The launch of the **Screen Use Guidelines** published by Child Development Centre (CDC) in December 2024, under the "Disconnect to Reconnect" campaign, aimed to help parents manage children's screen use and promote healthier family relationships.

- c) The implementation of the **ASEAN Regional Action Plan on Eliminating Violence Against Children (RPA on EVAC)** in June 2025, where consultations with vulnerable children on cyberbullying issues have underscored the importance of children's voices in formulating more comprehensive policy and protection strategies.
- d) The **Child Online Protection Workshop** organised by CyberSecurity Brunei, in June 2025 which called for cross-sectoral collaboration with different agencies to strengthen prevention, reporting, and online protection mechanisms.
- e) Awareness programmes by *Jabatan Pendidikan Islam (JPI)* on the Influence of social media on students, along with *Program Celik IT* and *Program Hidup Berpandukan Sunnah*, which emphasised the ethics and balance in technology use, and to teach students to be responsible digital users in the current era of cybersecurity.

7. The highlight event of this year's World Children's Day in Brunei Darussalam is the '**World Children's Day Celebration**', which is a collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, supported by the Department of Community Development (JAPEM), and organized by the **Brunei Pediatric Society**. The event will be held on **Sunday, 23 November 2025**, at One City Shopping Complex, and aims to raise public awareness on children's health, welfare, safety, and wellbeing. In addition, several other events have been planned for this year's celebration, such as:

- a) *Majlis Kesyukuran and Doa Selamat* in conjunction with World Children Day, held in schools across all districts, including *Doa Qunut Nazilah* for children in Gaza, Palestine.
- b) Forum and Workshop: Voices of Children – Listen to the Future: Connect and Protect;
- c) World Children's Day "Series of Talks" 2025;
- d) *Program Keugamaan Senegara (PKS)* in conjunction with World Children's Day 2025.

8. Alhamdulillah, children in Brunei Darussalam live in peace and prosperity. In marking World Children's Day 2025, I urge all members of society to remain mindful of the suffering of children in Palestine, who continue to endure the impacts of ongoing conflict. Let us contribute to the ***Tabung Kemanusiaan Rakyat Palestin di Gaza 2023*** whose collection period has been extended until **18 April 2026**, as part of our collective efforts to protect their rights, wellbeing, and future.

9. With sincere hope and prayer that our community serves to care for and cherish every child, I am pleased to extend my warmest wishes: "**Happy World Children's Day**" to all children and young people in Brunei Darussalam.

Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

"Voices of the Children, Voices of the Future"