Introduction

The changing composition of the population has major implications for the government. The population of Brunei Darussalam is estimated to have been 422,675 in July 2014. According to the Department of Economic Planning and Development, Brunei Darussalam, Brunei’s annual population growth rate remained 1.7 per cent in 2011 down from 2.5 per cent in 2001. The country’s low fertility rate has resulted in an ageing population, a phenomenon which affects nation’s ability to sustain economic productivity.

The elderly population in Brunei Darussalam is still relatively small compared to the rest of the region. The number of elderly population however has doubled in numbers during the period 1971 to 2001. These population of elderly persons in Brunei Darussalam is estimated to be 73,139 in 2025 and 168,058 in 2050 (U.S Census Bureau). On the other hand, in Brunei Darussalam, the retirement age for civil servants has been increased from 55 to 60 years to enable skilled and experienced officials to continue their services for the nation. The elderly consists of those whose age is 60 years and over. Ageing population is not a severe concern at the moment however, we cannot be complacent.

Demographic transitions have created a tremendous challenge to creating sustainable pension systems or other systems providing economic security for the rising number of older persons. Brunei will be facing global phenomenon of population ageing with older population estimated to be doubled in the next decade. The 2011 census showed that 25.3 per cent of the population were below 15 years of age, while 71.2 per cent were aged 15-64 years, and 3.5 per cent were 65 and older.

Brunei Darussalam recognises “Active and Healthy Ageing” need multi-sectorial government agencies cooperation. A national task force was set up and has met to discuss issues and intervention on health and welfare of older people.

Health care and healthy life style for the elderly by utilizing the potential of communities

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is responsible for the provision, management, delivery and regulatory functions of universal health care in Brunei Darussalam. The delivery of health care services is mainly distributed through two main areas, hospitals and health centres.

Non communicable diseases (NCD) are the major threat to functional decline in older people, MOH has launched Brunei National Multi-sector Action Plan for The Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (BruMAP-NCD) 2013-2018. The aim is to
reduce NCD and promote healthy living. Recently, MOH held campaign against NCD with health talks, free health check and healthy cooking demonstration.

Senior Citizens Activity Centre is a senior citizen activities centre, a pilot project of government agencies to provide a venue for older adults to interact in the community. The centre is run by older adults with support of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS). MOH, MCYS and the senior citizen centre had just completed a pilot programme of healthy ageing focusing on health talks, health screening and physical activities. As a result of such programme, the centre will be holding weekly physical activities especially for older adults.

**Long term care service for elderly and human resource development**

Older persons usually experience a deadline in living standard. Difficulties in finding appropriate jobs and worsening health conditions often make old persons very vulnerable to poverty. Among ways to facilitate the growing trend of an ageing population is to promote “**Active and Healthy Ageing**”. Active ageing is not only involves the physical aspects of keeping healthy but also includes the mental and emotional aspects of ageing. In Brunei we are so fortunate that we have a caring society, whereby looking after the elderly is still part of the country’s tradition with extended families still in place. This strong family institution has allowed Brunei Darussalam to be able oppose ideas about institutionalizing the elderly.

There is no long term institutional home for elderly in Brunei. Brunei Darussalam strongly advocates the concept of family institution where family are expected to care for the older adults in the family. Every 1st Sunday in May, Brunei celebrates National Family Day to reinforce the importance of family as a unit, caring for one another in the family.
Therefore, it is very important to provide supports for families to care for their loved ones at home. Human resources remain a main challenge and ongoing efforts to work with the relevant agencies to promote training of healthcare professionals.

A care for the elderly project run by the Department of Community Development, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports was launched in 2005 aim to care for senior citizens. This project has involved volunteers as well as the family member to care for the elderly especially those senior citizens who are left alone without any family left and the elderly citizens deserted by their own family. In brief, the setting up of Home Care Program for Elderly in 2005 aimed to improve the quality of life of the elderly person’s physically, emotionally and social as to provide assistance in the achievements of daily living. With this emotional support from the families, the elderly will get motivated and socially care. Since this project was established, it has seen an increase in the quality of life of senior citizens.

To support the programme, the Community Development Department, Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports of Brunei Darussalam has conducted and organised various short courses for volunteers in providing more knowledge and skills on caring for older persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICTS</th>
<th>OLDER PERSONS</th>
<th>VOLUNTEERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRUNEI MUARA</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUTONG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELAIT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMBURONG</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Statistics of Older Persons (OPs) and volunteers registered

Table 2 shows the number of older persons and volunteers registered under the Home Care Program for the elderly since its establishment in 2005 in Brunei Darussalam. Out of 84 volunteers, ¼ of them comprise of retired senior citizens who are keen to do volunteer jobs and helping out vulnerable elderly people.

The establishment of Senior Citizens Activity Centre in March 2013 in the Brunei Muara District is a strategy towards establishing prosperous senior citizens in the country so that they will be able to lead active and productive life. Seniors Citizen Activity Centre is an initiative of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in cooperation with the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide a community-support centre
for the elderly so that they can participate in the constructive, recreational and sports activities toward promoting active senior citizen.

The centre is meant as a gathering place for senior citizen engaging in programmes intended to fulfil their free time of the senior citizen who experience ‘Empty Nest Syndrome’ who feel lonely when their children and grandchildren are at work or schools during the day time. This also enable the elder contribute to the development of local community based on the experience, skill and knowledge of the senior citizen such as in the field of religion, culture, entrepreneurship, education and handicraft.

At the centre, which opens Monday to Thursday provide daily activities for the elderly. This includes social and religious activities. The elderly can go to and take part in various activities. Part of the activities includes schedule visit by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Religious Affairs to visit the centre from time to time to help raise awareness among the elderly on how to look after their health and to talk to them about the spiritual aspect of growing old. Besides that, facilities like gym and exercise equipment are provided to cater for the elderly.

**Age-Friendly cities and communities**

The Ministry of Health has taken steps towards Brunei’s ageing population. One of the ways is through the expansion of healthcare services to cater for the elderly. Ministry of Health generally emphasised on the need to develop expert services for the elderly. Apart from that, the ministry is working on improving the skills and expertise of basic healthcare doctors, nurses and health professionals such as physio-therapists, nutritionists and geriatrics support staff. Recently, the Ministry of Health was conducted a Healthy Living for senior citizens programme at Senior Citizens Activity Centre in March 2014. The 72 weeks programme included various activities such as aerobics and briefings by health professionals in an effort to provide education and awareness on the importance of practising a healthy lifestyle. Older people in Brunei are staying with their families where families play a major role ensuring a safe and healthy environment. However, it is important to start educating and promote age-friendly communities environment, for example providing wheelchairs accessibility to government and commercial buildings. MOH has been setting up health centre in densely populated communities, providing priority services such as pharmacy and phlebotomy for older people.

**Social participation and contribution of elderly**

Government of His Majesty has not been working alone to fulfil the necessities of ageing population. NGOs are also actively participated in caring for the elderly. For example, Brunei Council on Social Welfare is very active to help out those needy in the country especially elderly to raise fund and doing the home visit from time to time. Brunei Council on Social Welfare was established to help complement and supplement efforts on social welfare programs, initiatives and activities made by His Majesty’s Government of Brunei Darussalam. During the First Executive Meeting held last 21 March 2010, the Council agreed to address the social issues of the following five core groups namely Children, Persons with disabilities, Elderly, Poor/Needy and Vulnerable Families.
The primary goal of welfare program in the country is to promote the well-being of the country’s needy sector including the elderly and the disabled people. The Old Age and Disability Pensions Act 1954, stipulates that those who reach the age of sixty receive monthly allowances of BND $250.

The old age pensions scheme in Brunei Darussalam was enforced since 1st January 1955. Through the intention of the late His Majesty Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien, the old age pensions scheme was included in the First National Development Plan. The pensions and allowances provided under this Act are non-contributory and non-means-tested benefits. To be eligible to apply for old age pension a person must reside in Brunei Darussalam for not less than ten years for those born in the country and not less than thirty years for those born outside the country. The person must not leave the country for more than three months consecutively. An elderly person (age 60 and above) who is blind is also eligible for disability pension for himself and his dependents.

The number of recipients for old age and disability pension in September 2014 was 29,150 persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICTS</th>
<th>OLD AGE</th>
<th>BLIND</th>
<th>MENTAL</th>
<th>HANSEN</th>
<th>DISABLED</th>
<th>Total per district</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei Muara</td>
<td>16792</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>17,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutong</td>
<td>3927</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>4,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuala Belait</td>
<td>5527</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>5,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temburong</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total by types</td>
<td>27,166</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td>29,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of pensions/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>allowances</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Employees up to age 60 years and older who are citizens or permanent citizens of Brunei Darussalam including government civil servants who began service on or after January 1, 1993 are covered by the government pension scheme.

In addition, the Employee Trust Fund (ETF) has another scheme that was developed by the government to ensure social security as financial preparations for the elderly upon reaching retirement age, which was recently raised from 55 to 60 years. The Employees Trust Fund (ETF) is an important institution for Brunei as it was introduced as a retirement saving scheme that enables citizens and permanent residents of Brunei to save for their retirement benefits.

Supplementary Contribution Pension (SCP) was established in 2009 is an additional scheme that complements the existing Employees Trust Fund (ETF). The objective of SCP scheme is to ensure that the citizens and permanent residents of Brunei Darussalam who have fulfilled all the basic requirements aside from receiving the Old Age Pension.
Age Pensions of B$250 upon reaching the age of 60 years old. The objective of the catch-up incentive is to ensure that all participants have sufficient savings before they mandatorily retire to enable them to enjoy free benefit of SCP scheme.

The government is encouraged the participation and interest of the elderly. Several projects and awareness programs were carried out to encourage the elderly to participate in the society. With regards to economic development, most of the elderly are actively engaged in the production of local handicrafts and the government helps to promote their products through expos and exhibitions.

**Future cooperation with and among ASEAN countries for the ageing population**

It is important to continue sharing and exchange experiences in facing aging population in ASEAN countries. This in turns can lead to memorandum of understanding between countries by exchange programmes and mutual cooperation.

**Follow-up for the 11th HLOM**

- Brunei Darussalam has initiated National Multi-sectorial Intervention on older adults, looking at improving welfare and healthcare for older adults.

- MOH launched campaign to combat NCD by raising awareness of healthy lifestyles. Pilot health promotion programme especially for elderly by providing health talks, health screening and appropriate health physical activities.

- MOH is planning to improve current home healthcare services, expanding current nursing services. In addition, MOH is also looking into starting pilot projects such as day center and medical equipment resource center.