1. INTRODUCTION

The Brunei Museums Department was set up in 1965. Brunei Museums Department plays significant roles to protect and preserve our national and cultural heritage with efficient and quality services. The main aim of the Brunei Museum is to create, among all Bruneians, an awareness of, pride in and appreciation of the country’s cultural heritage and national glory that can be achieved through the dissemination of information and knowledge that is complete, organized and authoritative.

In managing various issues of uncontrolled trades on Brunei cultural heritage, a law known as the Antiquities and Treasure Trove 1967 Rev. 1984, 1991 & 2002 was drafted and came into force. However, Brunei Darussalam is aware that there are already existing legal instruments and conventions specifically relating to this illicit trafficking of cultural property. In this context Brunei Darussalam has been organizing several meetings with UNESCO representatives in dealing with various programs.

Besides laws enforcement the Government of Brunei Darussalam, through the services of Brunei Museums Department has also organized various public awareness activities such as education exhibitions, dissemination of posters, media cooperation, public awareness and schools participation.

It is only in 1967, the Brunei Museum's Department was granted by the Brunei Government with a legislation act called the Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act, 1967 and this Act was only in operation in 1984. The Act was reviewed amended in 1991 and lastly in 2002.

In general, the Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act 1967 which came into force in 1984 provides the preservation and management of ancient and historical monuments, archaeological sites, to regulate the law relating to treasure trove, export and import of antiquities.

Several provisions in the Act which relevant to the topic of the symposium;

1. Part III: Excavations
   States that no person can excavate any archaeological site unless an excavation license is issued by the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

2. Part VII: Export of Antiquities
   States that no person can export any antiquities from the country unless an export license is issued by the Director of Brunei Museum's Department.

3. Part VIII: Powers of Director
   States that the Director of the Museum's Department has the power to inspect any treasure trove or archaeological sites including the antique shops or antiques owner.

4. Part X: Miscellaneous Rules no.43
States that no person can deal commercially in antiquities unless a dealer's license has been issued by the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

In our national Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act 1967 Rev. 1984, 1991 & 2002, a definition of “Cultural Property” is referred to as below;

1. **Antiquity** can be defined as any object movable or immovable or any part of the soil or of the bed of a river or lake or of the sea, which has been constructed, shape, inscribed, erected, excavated or otherwise produced or modified by human agency and this includes any part of any such object and any human, plant or animal remains at any date prior to or reasonably believed to be dated to 50 years onwards.

2. **Historical Object** means any artefacts or other objects to which religious, artistic or historic interest are attached and included any ethnographic materials (such as household or agricultural implement decorative articles, personal ornaments), works of art (such as carvings, sculptures, paintings, architectures, textiles, musical instruments, weapons and any other handicrafts), manuscripts, coins, currency notes, medals, badges, insignias, coats of arms, crest flags, arms and armors, vehicles, ships and boats, in part or in whole, whose production has ceased.

The Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has consented the forming of the "Museums Board" in June 1990. One of the Museum Board roles is to enforce and combat trafficking and ensure international cooperation for the protection of cultural heritage. The Museum Board is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports with the Director of Brunei Museums Department as the Secretary. In this board seven other members were also appointed by the Minister of Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

3. **INVENTORIES AND IDENTIFICATION**
A museum is an institution that cares for their collections. Most museums need to use several different numbering sequences within their documentation system. Brunei Museums Department also provides a registration number to our collections. Registration numbers assigned to each artifact is an unique identification number that helps to distinguish similar objects and simplify inventory tracking. This number is written clearly and in an appropriate order to preserve the aesthetic artefacts. In this context Brunei Museums Department has set-up the Acquisition Section in 2003 with its main tasks such as responsible for the management of the Museum collections for public references through exhibitions, publications or web sites, gathering and managing Museum collections since 1952.

New collections that have been acquired should produce identification. Taking pictures and registration of the collections are first priority. Registration of the collections describe the conditions of the items collected, in-and-out handling of the collections, brief and clear descriptions of the collections in writing or by pictures. Inventory of the collections is the recording of items to be logged in the lager book. Also an additional form known as the 'Object ID' was introduced to precisely recognize criteria of the collected items in case of theft. This Object ID form has been introduced by the Brunei Museum Director in 2004.

4. MUSEUMS AND AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Brunei Museums Department is committed, fully responsible and has a high priority in protecting and preserving national heritage. However it has an obstacle to meet such tasks. This has been the case in 2002 of unlawful activities by a foreign national working in Brunei was caught at the Brunei International Airport while trying to smuggle some 1,000 late 19th century North Borneo coins out of the country.
The above incident leads the Brunei Museums Department to take initiatives in organizing public awareness activities highlighting the importance of protecting and preserving national cultural heritage. Such activities are;

1. Setting-up of sign boards at strategic locations in all districts of the country signifying antiquities protected by the “Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act 1967. Dissemination of posters to members of public relating antiquities that are protected by the “Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act 1967.
3. Organizing talks to schools on the importance of the Brunei Museums Department responsibility in protecting and preserving the national cultural heritage.
4. Organizing a roadshow highlighting the key roles of Brunei Museums Department that triggers public awareness on the importance of the national cultural heritage which need to be protected and preserved.

5. THE ROLES OF OTHER RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS

In additional to the Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act, the Government of His Majesty of Brunei Darussalam also empowers the Controller of Royal Custom and Excise, under the customs Act, 1955, section 28, to prohibit the export and import of cultural material under the Fourth Schedule which states that any “antique of historical native discovered in Brunei”.

Therefore, by highlighting the above relevant Legislation, it is clear that Brunei Darussalam has mechanism within the Government machinery to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property in our country.

Brunei Museums Department has a standard procedure in dealing with the export of national cultural property. Inspection will be conducted to every items involved and license of export will be issued except certain unique collections are subjected to further investigation.
The “Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act 1967” does not solely emphasizing on importation of antiquities, however the Royal Custom and Exercise will issue “Notice of Seizure” that required an approval letter from Brunei Museums Department. This is an initiative to deter illicit trafficking activities in avoiding the Brunei Museums Department to become a transit-hub of smuggling. If the antique weapons such as cannons and other explosives are imported, the police authorities will be called for further inspection.

6. CHALLENGES TO OUR MUSEUM

People awareness has to be raised in appreciating our national property. In our plan of actions to protect our national heritage, our local people are jointly included as the guardian. Their participation is a must in investing interest to protect cultural heritage preservation and promotion.

The Brunei Museums Department has a few skilled and professional staff to deal with the illicit trafficking in cultural property in our country. However, we are very fortunate because they are very dedicated and highly committed in their works. With such close cooperation with those relevant government agencies to date we are able to prevent the illicit activity and I am confident we will also be able to meet those challenges.

7. CONCLUSION

Brunei Museums Department has been actively enforced its “Antiquities and Treasure Trove Act 1967” and since then illicit trafficking activities do not prevail. Brunei Museums Department has taken some challenging initiatives such as organizing talks to schools and government agencies, conducting roadshow and disseminating posters had substantially and positively improved public awareness on the negative impacts of illicit trafficking activities.

Joint collaboration between the Brunei Museums Department, the Royal Custom and Exercise Department, the Attorney’s Chamber and the Royal Police Arm Forces
had successfully triggered alertness at the least marginalized, if not eliminated, most of the illicit trafficking activities. Lastly but not the least the Brunei Museums Department has set-up an effective Acquisition Section in 2003 that provides documentation procedures and other regulations making material cultures well protected and preserved.