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GREETINGS
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO ASSOCIATION OF
RETIRED PERSONS(TTARP)
‘WALK FOR RESILIENCE’

SATURDAY OCTOBER 1st, 2022
NELSON MANDELA PARK

3:00 PM

Good Afternoon,

I am indeed pleased to be a part of today's activity and I bring greetings on behalf of the Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator, the Honourable Donna Cox, who would have liked to be here but is otherwise engaged in Parliamentary duties. She sends her regards and best wishes for success at today's event.

I must begin by commending the Trinidad & Tobago Association for Retired Persons(TTARP) for their continued commitment for the past twenty-nine (29) years, to encourage the independence of older persons, contribute towards the enhancement of their lives and promote a healthy and encouraging image of the ageing process.

Resilience seems to be the new 'buzz' word emerging out of the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Undeniably, the resilience of all sectors of our citizenry continues to be visible as we work towards recovery and stabilization after adverse socioeconomic impacts within recent times. This year's theme for the International Day of Older Persons(IDOP) - **“Resilience of Older Persons in a Changing World”**, amended to **“The Resilience and Contributions of Older Persons in our Society for the past Sixty Years”**, for the purpose of this activity, speaks to the need to highlight the value of older persons and their contributions to society; while simultaneously raising awareness of the issues and challenges of the world's ageing population.

I am sure that we can agree, that many individuals have certainly proven their resilience, most recently by navigating through the perils of the pandemic, but also traversing the challenges faced on a daily basis, during the advancement of their careers, family and personal lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, resilience is not just the ability to survive a difficult experience, but the ability to adapt and manage circumstances in a way that empowers one to emerge stronger, to thrive in the outcome, and to integrate the lessons learned, in moving forward.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) anticipates that by the year 2050, there will be two billion persons in the world over the age of 60, and further adds that the number of persons aged 80 and older will quadruple in the period 2000 to 2050. Therefore, it is important that all sectors of society work together to ensure that our older citizens are treated with the respect, dignity and honour that they deserve.

In this regard, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, recognizing the tremendous importance of older persons, and the essential role they still play in the development of families and communities continue to offer several services and programmes to help, empower and transform the lives of our elders.

The Ministry, through its Social Welfare Division, the Division of Ageing and National Family Services Division; has sought to prioritise the care of the older persons who have contributed greatly to the development of our society and country. In addition to the Senior Citizens Pension, which

within recent times, can be accessed via an automated option, the Grandparenting Programme was launched in 2021 seeks to equip grandparents with the necessary knowledge and skills, to make responsible decisions regarding the safety and well-being of grandchildren and other children under their care.

Through the Division of Ageing there is also a plethora of services available to assist older person, inclusive of the subventions we provide for Homes for Older Persons, our Community care Programme, and free hotline services for those exposed to elder abuse. The ministry also relaunched the Centenarian programme where persons 100 years and older are recognized and honoured for their outstanding contributions. For more information on the programmes, services and initiatives available to older persons I invite you to log on to our Ministry's website: www.social.gov.tt

While on the topic of the Centenarian programme, it has been observed during our centenarian visits, that several of the centenarians celebrated have credited gardening as a key contributor to their long life. As such, through the Division of Ageing, the Ministry is pleased to launch the '**Seeds of Hope**' initiative. This initiative seeks to promote a sense of social inclusion and esteem among centenarians and older persons while simultaneously, provide an opportunity for recreation and bonding between caregivers and/or family members and older persons. This activity is also intended to motivate younger citizens of Trinidad and

Tobago to invest in sustainable food production, with the expectation that this would encourage healthy eating practices as well as contribute towards a reduced imported food bill.

As I close, on behalf the Minister, Executive, Management and Staff of the Ministry, I wish you best wishes on this International Day of Older Persons. I also wish to re-assure TTARP that the MSDFS is here to work hand in hand in the provision of support to older persons in Trinidad and Tobago ensuring that no one is left behind.

I thank you.