

It is an honour for me to meet with and briefly address you as newly appointed members of our Local Boards.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains steadfast in our commitment to those citizens who are most in need of temporary support, and in some instances, long-term assistance to be able to make positive changes in their personal lives, their communities, our society and national economy. Therefore, today's appointments are valuable because they form part of our continued efforts to achieve the national strategic goals outlined in the National Development Strategy (2016-2030)/ (Vision 2030) regarding the eradication of poverty and the enhancement of the lives of the vulnerable.

The Local Boards that operate as part of our Social Welfare system serve as liaisons between our clients and the Ministry and are agents of effective and efficient social services delivery.

The execution of your duties would require familiarity with the two major pieces of legislation which guide the Social Welfare Division, namely, the Senior Citizens Pension Act Chap 32:02 and the Public Assistance Act Chap 32:03, in addition to the Rules made by the Central Public Assistance Board under the provisions of S. 6(3)(b) and (c) of the Public Assistance Act, regulating the proceedings of Local Public Assistance Boards and regulations made by Minister in accordance with **section 10 of the Senior Citizens Pension Act.**

Furthermore, Local Board Members would be required to attend Local Board and Assessment Meetings for the purpose of scrutinizing applications for the Senior Citizens Pension as well as the Public, Disability and Burial Assistance Grants and for making decisions only on the merits of each application, according to the Acts, policies, regulations and guidelines under which they operate.

In this regard, Local Board members are required to:

- Control, direct and assist Local Boards in administering public assistance (Senior citizens Pension and Disability Assistance Grants) and where necessary.
- Co-operate with voluntary associations in administering public assistance.

On behalf of the Executive and staff of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, I thank all the previous Members who served with distinction during the previous terms of our Local Boards, I take this opportunity to offer my full support to you the Local Boards and wish you a successful and productive tenure.

As I close, I thank you for your presence here today and wish you well in your future endeavours. May God Bless you.

I thank you!