



**REMARKS BY**  
*SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DONNA COX*  
**MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**MSDFS/DIGICEL FOUNDATION SIGNING OF  
AGREEMENT**

**FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 2023**

**10:00 AM**

## **SALUTATIONS:**

- Ms. Desha Clifford-Chairperson-Digicel Foundation;
- Ms. Penny Gomez - CEO, Digicel Foundation;
- Permanent Secretaries of the MSDFS-Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons and Mr. Ryan Ramcharan;
- Deputy Permanent Secretary-Mrs. Vera Deonanan-Balkaran;
- Dr. Rohit Doon, Consultant and Chairman of the Technical Oversight Committee - NTRC;
- Heads of Departments and Staff of the MSDFS;
- Other Specially Invited Guests;
- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning,

It is an honour to address you today, as we witness the signing of this historic agreement between the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and Digicel Trinidad and Tobago Foundation. This Agreement is critical to enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago and aligns with the GoRTT's Vision 2030. It will facilitate far-reaching benefits for the community of persons with disabilities, their parents and caregivers.

I must commend the Digicel Foundation for their continuous commitment to investing in sustainable development programmes, building stronger, more resilient individuals, families and communities, empowering persons with disabilities and to *leaving no one behind*.

The Ministry has recognised the critical need for the establishment of multidisciplinary centres within Trinidad and Tobago to provide rehabilitative services to persons with disabilities. In this regard, the National Therapeutic and Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities (formerly the

National Enrichment Centre), would provide therapeutic services to persons with disabilities (PwDs) who are citizens or residents of Trinidad and Tobago

The Centre will serve as a multidisciplinary resource centre for persons with disabilities; providing assessment, therapy and training. A community – based therapeutic approach will be used in order to improve the quality of life experienced by persons with disabilities. They will receive adequate and effective *habilitative and rehabilitative services*.

The suite of services will be offered in phases, Phase 1 would include Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Behavioural Therapy. Phase 11 would offer Aqua Therapy, Physio Therapy, Music, Art and Drama. Further, parents and caregivers would be equipped with necessary skills to continue therapy at home and student social workers and therapists will also have the opportunity to be trained there.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Agreement will see the Digicel Foundation procuring physical therapy equipment, occupational therapy equipment, speech therapy resources and

behavioural therapy equipment and resources for an Adult Therapy Gym and Paediatric Therapy Gym. The Foundation will also acquire furniture for an Adult Daily Living Suite and Computer equipment and accessories for a Resource Room, which can be utilised by parents/caregivers and NGOs. In the long term, it is hoped that this community-based model can be replicated to serve other parts of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Agreement will also provide greater access to opportunities for personal and professional development of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, this partnership forms part of a collective response to providing adequate support to this community, contributing to the achievement of the United Nations' 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals.

In closing, I look forward to a continued fruitful and mutually beneficial partnership between both parties as we all work together to help, empower and transform the lives of persons with disabilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, we commit ourselves to helping, empowering and transforming lives.

Digicel Foundation, our partners, again on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, we thank you.

May God Bless You.

I thank you.