



Senator the Honourable Donna Cox

Minister of Social Development and Family Services

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

Social Services Building

132 Henry Street, POS

Monday 26th August, 2024

Good Morning,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to greet you today at this ribbon cutting ceremony for the official opening of this Social Service Centre that accommodates four social service delivery Divisions of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, specifically, the Social Welfare Division, National Family Services Division, National Social Development Programme and the Citizen Engagement and Outreach Unit.

This multi-service Office highlights the decision of the Ministry to move in a different direction to establish social services that work hand in hand to help, empower and transform the lives of our poor and vulnerable clients. The collaboration of these Divisions is necessary to expand and improve this Ministry's customer service delivery and to enhance convenience and access to the public. I look forward to the Social Welfare Division, National Family Services Division, National Social Development

Programme and the Citizen Engagement and Outreach Unit working together to respond to the needs of eligible poor and vulnerable persons in this country.

This convenient One Stop Shop, single door initiative provides clients with an integrated approach and a greater ease of doing business with this Ministry. No longer will persons be required to go to several of this Ministry's offices around Port of Spain to get the services they need. Their money and time will be better utilized coming to this one stop shop.

This is just one of the many Offices that we will be opening. The Ministry will be opening an additional centre in Arima, for fiscal 2025. The Resolution for dividing the Local Public Assistance District of St George East, which is located in Tunapuna was approved on Thursday 22nd August, 2024 by the Central Public Assistance Board. The Resolution also states that the Local Public Assistance

Board of Arima will be established and the Local Public Assistance Board of St. George East will now be called the Local Public Assistance Board of Tunapuna. Most of our clients who live in the Borough of Arima and environs will now be required to go to the Local Public Assistance Board in Arima. More details will be shared about this in the near future. These changes will positively impact our clients and our staff. We continue to look for Buildings that can adequately and comfortably accommodate or staff in Aranguez, and Point Fortin, Couva and Sangre Grande. These are the Local Public Assistance Boards that will be our focus for fiscal 2025.

Creating comfortable work spaces for our staff is of utmost importance. The Executive and I want you to know that we care about the quality of your physical work environment. We believe that providing a comfortable workspace can positively influence employee morale and productivity. We also look forward to hearing good testimonials from

our clients who experienced positive, professional and customer focused services from you all.

Today, I want to encourage the staff to be professional, compassionate and kind to the clients. Remember, Psalm 41:1-3 which says, “Blessed is he that considers the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.” Ladies and gentlemen, God promises to bless you when you look after the poor and vulnerable. I don’t know about you, but I want that blessing.

I also want to stress the need for all staff members to follow the dress code for work. Slippers, and sleeveless tops are not an option. Before you leave home in the morning, take a look at yourself, and ask how would my clients feel about

me. First impressions always last. We want to raise the bar of professionalism of our offices, not only by what you do but in the way you look.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering dedication, tireless commitment, and invaluable service in empowering and transforming lives throughout the years. Despite the inevitable challenges that may arise, let us remain steadfast in our resolve to prioritize the well-being of those we serve. Together, let us strive for a future where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and flourish. Let us continue to treat everyone the way would like to be treated. Please take care of yourself and keep this environment safe and inviting to others.

May God bless and favour you all continually. May God bless our Nation and the clients we serve.

I thank you.