



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday October 9, 2020

Priority: **HIGH**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EYE ON THE BUDGET

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services shares insight on what to expect from Government's Social Sector Investment Programme 2021

Friday October 9, 2020 --- One of the several documents that is included in the budget package is a document entitled: **The Social Sector Investment Programme or SSIP**. The SSIP examines the social landscape of Trinidad and Tobago, highlighting progress made towards attaining social transformation and development. It provides an overview of the international, Caribbean and national social situations; examines existing and new social sector initiatives and the investment made by the key social sector Ministries and the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) towards social development during fiscal 2020 and plans for the 2021 fiscal year. As the lead social sector agency, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is responsible for the preparation of this very important document through the coordination of information from all social sector Ministries and agencies.

Under the focal theme chosen for 2021: *Resetting the Economy for Growth and Innovation*, this year's version of the SSIP, was an abridged document; comprising only three (3) chapters instead of five (5), as it places focus on the national position. While the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacted local, Caribbean and international situations, this year's SSIP provides a snapshot of the national socioeconomic events as these unfolded due to unprecedented challenges COVID-19 posed to the sector. *A Roadmap to Recovery* was however developed, to guide the actions going forward, as the Government seeks to establish a solid foundation for transforming the economy, over the medium to long term. **The Roadmap Report has identified two specific objectives relative to the social sector, namely: Social Protection: Leave No One Behind and Retain and Create Jobs.** This is therefore meant to provide direct support to families, sectors and segments of the society that have been most impacted by COVID-19.

Accordingly, the Government's Budget theme – *Resetting the Economy for Growth and Innovation* will also serve as a guide for the Ministry's National Social Mitigation Plan (2017 – 2022), which will see more focus being placed on the enhancement of productivity and innovation, and a multifaceted approach to social services delivery. The Mitigation Plan which is being implemented under the theme: *"Building Resilience to Secure our Nation"*, will also target existing and new vulnerable populations, inclusive of women, children and persons who have become unemployed because of the Pandemic. In this regard, the Ministry's aim is to improve the individual's or family's well-being and resilience; as well as promote sustainable development and an enhanced human capital base.

Three major initiatives will be rolled out in support of this goal. Among them include the establishment of a **Social Support and Empowerment Unit (SSE)** which will act as an integrated “*one-door*” delivery arm of the Ministry, using a whole of Government approach. The SSE will be a primary information source and central repository on existing social programmes, and application processes, and will facilitate a database through registration of vulnerable persons, connecting them to the required relief and support.

Secondly, the Ministry will also implement **STEP-UP, which is a Social Transformation and Empowerment Programme - Uplifting People** which is geared to provide psychological support to facilitate families from programme entry to exit. The expected result is that families will recover, recognise and draw on their own capacity in order to successfully navigate community and other resources, to resolve their issues and graduate from State support.

Thirdly, the Ministry will continue the implementation of **the Integrated Social Enterprise Management System also called ISEMS**. This planning solution will help to improve service delivery through digitization. The solution will inter alia, facilitate integrated case management capabilities, improve client access by providing a *no wrong door approach* for services and enable referrals within and across social sector programmes and services.

Members of the public will be able to access the SSIP document via the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services’ website at <http://www.social.gov.tt>

-End-

For more information:

Corporate Communications and Education Unit
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
(868) 623-2608; Ext 5405/5424/5432
Website: www.social.gov.tt
corporatecomm.msd@gmail.com