



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

Minister Cox and TTBWA discuss plans for advancement of persons with visual impairment

Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator, The Honourable Donna Cox continued her discussions with NGOs and civil society organizations when she met with the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA) at the Ministry's Head Office on November 17, 2020.

Minister Cox and a team from the Ministry including Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan and Chief Technical Officer Michael Reid met with the TTBWA's President Felix Cazoe, Executive Officer, Kenneth Surratt, and Accountant Shiva Ramroop to discuss the key focal areas where the Ministry can provide further advice and technical support.

During the meeting, Mr Surratt commended Minister Cox for the significant improvements her Ministry and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago have made towards the advancement of persons with visual impairment, including the introduction of Polymer notes with features for persons with disabilities by the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. He also cited the MOU with the National Library and Information System (NALIS) to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled; and the introduction of the 'white cane' symbol on traffic signals by the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Surratt also commended Minister Cox for making the Ministry's website more accessible to persons who are blind or visually impaired, indicating that it has been quite useful and has encouraged other State Agencies such as the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago to follow suit.

Among the other matters raised at the meeting were Government representation on the Council of the TTBWA; governance, accountability and managerial issues within the Association; the Association's development programme; and tax exemptions for persons with disabilities. Minister Cox promised to support the Association's attempts to secure legislation that is relevant to persons with disabilities.

Minister Cox indicated that as the core social sector Ministry with responsibility for ensuring equality and equity in the provision and development of plans and services to the community of persons with disabilities, she will deal with matters brought forward by the Association. The Minister also sought to address concerns raised recently by the Advocates of the Blind and Vision Impaired. Commenting on the matter, Minister Cox encouraged the groups to work together and formed an internal committee to assist both organizations with resolving their differences for the benefit of the people they serve.

In closing, Minister Cox thanked the Association for the commendable work it has been doing for the community of blind and visually impaired persons, and assured the Association that the Ministry remains committed to encouraging and facilitating their development.





Caption 1: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox and officials of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association.



Caption 2: Left to right - Shiva Ramroop, (Accountant at the TTBWA); Felix Cazoe, (President, TTBWA), Senator the Honourable Donna Cox; Kenneth Suratt (Executive Officer, TTBWA) and Sheila Seecharan, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services.





Caption 3: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox chats with Kenneth Suratt, Executive Officer of the TTBWA and Permanent Secretary, Sheila Seecharan.

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