



MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday, 12 December 2020

Priority: **HIGH**

For Immediate Release

Ministry provides immediate assistance to struggling Couva family following newspaper report

December 12 2020----- Mere hours after a newspaper report, "Couva family struggling on \$2,000 a month: We need food" was published, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox has reached out to the family to provide immediate assistance.

According to the report, life has been difficult for Devica Ramoutar, 40, of Dow Village, California and her five young daughters since her husband lost his job during the pandemic. Their sole income is a monthly disability grant of \$2,000.

Accompanied by a team from the Ministry including Permanent Secretary Ms Sheila Seecharan, Minister Cox met with Ms Ramoutar today at her home in Dow Village and presented Ms Ramoutar with groceries, poultry, Temporary Food Support and a tablet to assist her children with their online learning.

Speaking with the family, Minister Cox indicated that as part of the Ministry's First Responder System, the Ministry has reached out immediately to provide support for the family.

Ms Ramoutar was also assessed by National Director of the National Social Development Programme Ms Patricia De Leon-Henry to determine what further support can be provided by the Ministry. Ms Kathleen Sarkar, Deputy Director of the National Family Services Division was also on hand and informed the family of counselling and psychosocial support available to them.

Ms Ramoutar indicated that she is grateful for the assistance from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and they "will now be able to have a Merry Christmas." Minister Cox assured Ms Ramoutar that the Ministry will continue to follow up on her case to help her, and her family gain a better quality of life.

Following the visit, led by long-time friend and resident Mr Curtis Gokool, Minister Cox toured the area to hear some concerns of residents in the area and indicated that the Ministry will be following up on queries and applications for grants and services.

Minister Cox also indicated that she will speak to area representatives for a joint effort to bring assistance to the families. In the interim, the Ministry will provide immediate food support next week to families identified needing assistance.



Minister Cox presents Temporary Food Support to Ms Devica Ramoutar following a visit to her home earlier today.



Minister Cox presents a tablet to Ms Ramoutar's daughter. The tablet will go towards assisting the children with their online learning.



Minister Cox tours the area to hear some of the concerns of the residents.



Minister Cox speaks to one of the longest residents of the area, Ms Sonardaye Sooknanan as she tours Dow Village to hear the concerns of residents.

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For more information:

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