



MEDIA RELEASE

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Priority: HIGH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MSDFS meets with SATT Board to continue discussions on food security for the vulnerable

Port-of-Spain --- Minister of Social Development and Family Services Donna Cox, met with representatives of the Supermarkets Association of Trinidad and Tobago (SATT) on Wednesday February 24, 2021 to continue discussions on the Association's role in building a robust framework for food security for the most vulnerable in our country. Minister Cox was accompanied by one of the Ministry's Permanent Secretaries, Sheila Seecharan and Deputy Permanent Secretary Vijay Gangapersad. In welcoming the Minister and her team, President of the Supermarkets Association Rajiv Diptee, told his Board members that he was privileged to have ongoing dialogues with the Ministry and invited his membership to be fully engaged in the discussions.

During her contributions, Minister Cox noted that the Ministry had been able to achieve several significant milestones with the support of the SATT within the last six months. Referring to the Ministry's enhanced focus on the implementation of the National Social Mitigation Plan as a crucial component building resilience and self-reliance throughout households and communities, Minister Cox reiterated the importance of maintaining and evaluating the Ministry's relationship with SATT, as a key stakeholder particularly within the context of:

- Use of New Debit Cards or Food Support at Merchants/Grocers' locations;
- Issues relating to the changing of Cheques (Pension/Disability Assistance) at Supermarkets;
- Fraud prevention;
- Use of Merchants Stores for communication and promotion purposes;
- Promotion of 'Grow your own food initiative under the NSMP';
- Employment Opportunities for clients of the Ministry.

The Executive of the Ministry closed by expressing gratitude to the Association for their support over the years, as the Ministry continues to provide the much needed support to their new and existing clients; as well as all citizens in Trinidad and Tobago. In response members of the Association welcomed the opportunity to partner and work closer with the Ministry, to improve the social services delivery system and gave its commitment towards continued discussions in this regard.

Among the next steps, both parties agreed that there will be an exchange of learning and experiences, as sensitization sessions will be conducted for front line staff at various supermarkets and groceries in the coming weeks. The meeting ended with a small presentation of 2021 corporate calendars to SATT's President and members by the Minister.



Minister Cox and Deputy Permanent Secretary, Mr. Vijay Gangapersad listen closely to the fruitful discussion



Minister Cox presents the President of SATT, Mr. Rajiv Diptee with a small token.



Minister Cox, her Executive and members of the Supermarkets Association of Trinidad and Tobago

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