



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Priority: **HIGH**

### **Cox: It's time to band together and play our part in protecting our Women and Girls**

*Port of Spain...* Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox has called on all sectors of society to band together in protecting our nation's women and girls from gender-based violence and abuse. This call to action was made by the Minister during her contributions to a motion raised by Independent Senator, Paul Richards to 'Effectively Address the Rising Incidence of Violence Against Women and Girls.'

According to the Minister, "This motion is a call to action, to effectively address the rising incidence of violence against women and girls. As a society we can always do more; we can always do better". The Minister launched her contributions stating "One case of violence against a woman is too many. We must never sit down and comfort ourselves with numbers. We must assert that violence against any woman is violence against all of society. Until this is achieved, there is nothing heartening when the discussion on the pervasiveness of violence against women and girls in our country comes up from time to time, as it does"

Minister Cox highlighted that the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has established and continues to maintain strategic partnerships with key governmental agencies and non-governmental entities, to combat violence and associated issues being faced by women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these partners include the Ministry of Gender and Child Affairs under the OPM, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations that focus on Gender Based Violence. She recognized that there is a need to strengthen the collaboration, coordination and setting of an agenda of planned and deliberate actions, activities and a similar measure of advocacy, in order to effectively address the issue.

In speaking of the role of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Minister commended the TTPS for the wide range of initiatives they have put in place to treat with both victims of abuse and domestic violence, as well as the perpetrators. Among these, she cited that with the establishment of the Gender-Based-Violence Unit, officers were strategically placed in nine (9) Policing Divisions across the country. She stated further, that the officers themselves, are highly trained and continue to be provided with training in areas like gender-based violence and the law, the dynamics of domestic violence, cybercrime, and the economic consequences of breakdown in

relationships, to name a few. The Minister also stated that the statistics from the TTPS shows that the Unit has generated more public acceptance, as many victims are now coming forward.

The Minister posited that in order to combat the issue of gender-based violence, she firmly believes that a collaborative and systematic approach is necessary. For this reason, she looks forward to deepening the Ministry's relationship with both governmental and non-governmental partners to secure and protect women and girls in our country.

In conclusion, Minister Cox stated that while the Government is called upon to assess deficiencies in the system to deal with violent crimes, we also need to take a look at 'the man in the mirror' and what each of us, as responsible citizens, can do to address the issue.



Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox argues her point during debate on a private motion moved by Independent Senator, Sen. Paul Richards.

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**For more information:**

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