



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 meets with NGO – Is There Not a Cause

With the devastating socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, families and communities, the need to forge deeper alliances with non-governmental and civil society organisations, also called ‘the third sector’, has now become imperative, especially at the local level. There is also a greater need to find the vulnerable where they are, and provide real time and relevant assistance to those most in need. Against this background, Senator The Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, joined by members of the Ministry’s Executive, earlier today, met with the Founder and Team Lead of **Is There Not A Cause (ITNAC)**, Avonelle Hector-Joseph. The meeting was held at the Ministry’s Head Office on St Vincent Street, Port of Spain

In her opening remarks, the Minister indicated that the main objective of meeting with the organisation is to foster deeper engagement with the NGO sector, so that there is more sharing of experiences, resources, advice and support, in order to help, empower and transform the lives of the vulnerable in Trinidad and Tobago. According to the Minister: “The Ministry believes that it is the NGOs, CBOs and FBOs that assist us in our mandate for social transformation”. She then invited Ms Hector to provide an overview of her organisation, which has been in existence for the past nineteen (19) years (since 2002) and is known for its first responder humanitarian and disaster relief work locally, regionally and internationally.

Mrs Hector-Joseph, shared with those present that ITNAC’s core target includes single mothers, deportees, victims of natural disasters, to name a few. Among the various projects and initiatives undertaken by the NGO include transitional housing, shelters for victims of domestic violence and eviction, mobile kitchen, outreach to street dwellers, as well as a school for migrant children. ITNAC have also functioned to provide assistance to Guyana, Kenya, Haiti, India, St Lucia and St Vincent.

PS Bailey-Sobers also shared some insights on the various projects and initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry, which all aim at poverty alleviation and support to vulnerable populations, helping them to become self-sufficient and resilient, through a seamless, integrated package of social services.

Minister Cox commended Ms Hector for the tremendous work ITNAC has been doing to promote social development across the diaspora. She further indicated that ITNAC's work aligns well with that of the Ministry's and therefore calls for deeper collaboration and partnership going forward. The Minister also indicated that the Ministry intends to establish a Citizen's Engagement Unit soon, to provide direct contact and social response to all vulnerable citizens in Trinidad and Tobago; and that civil society organisations will play a key role. She indicated that there was need for further discussion on ways in which the Ministry and by extension the Government could help support NGOs like ITNAC. In this regard, a follow up meeting with the Ministry's NGO Unit will be arranged as a follow up to the meeting

In closing, the Minister gave the assurance that the Ministry's support will be available to ITNAC and other similar NGOs that possess an admirable track record of impacting and changing the lives of the vulnerable, through innovative and creative programmes, projects and initiatives.

-END-



In deep discussion: from L-R Avonelle Hector-Joseph of ITNAC, Minister Donna Cox, and PS Jacinta Bailey-Sobers



Caption: Avonelle Hector-Joseph presents a copy of her NGO's portfolio to Minister Cox, following the meeting



Caption: Minister Cox discusses plans of the Ministry to work closer with NGOs with PS Bailey-Sobers and Avonelle Hector of ITNAC)

For more information:

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