



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

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Priority: **HIGH**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Widows Inducted as a Vulnerable Group by Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

Port of Spain --- History was made earlier today when the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services inducted Widows as a vulnerable group in Trinidad and Tobago. The induction took place during a brief ceremony held at the Ministry's Head Office on St. Vincent Street, Port-of-Spain at 10:00 am. The Ministry continues to work diligently in providing much needed support and assistance to the various vulnerable populations, particularly following the socio-economic impacts caused by COVID-19 efforts are continuously being made to leave no one behind.

In this regard, Senator The Honourable Donna Cox, following earlier meetings with the Widows Association of Trinidad and Tobago as well as engagement with Widow Support TT, recognised that there was need for further collaboration with regard to this segment of vulnerable persons could be catered for. During the ceremony, the Minister also took the opportunity to present seven (7) Widows with fresh produce hampers as a direct gesture in providing support to their families.

According to Minister Cox, "As the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose several challenges including the sudden death of loved ones, the Ministry is dedicated to providing support to widows and their families". She further stated that "Through the National Family Services Division, the Ministry will be able to offer free counselling and psychosocial support to help widows cope with stress, grief and trauma as well as all other mental health issues related to the loss of a loved one. The Ministry will also be able to create opportunities for widows to support their households financially through the Sowing and Empowerment through Entrepreneurship (SEED) Programme, where they will have access to a grant and training to start their own small businesses."

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Minister Cox disclosed that the Public Assistance Grant is also available to meet the needs of persons whose household income is deemed inadequate as a result of the loss of a spouse or breadwinner, so that they are able to provide for the children accordingly.

In closing, Apostle Terrence Honore, President and Founder of the Widows Association of TT expressed his immense gratitude to Minister Cox stating that “Seven years ago, Widows Association wrote a letter requesting assistance and support from the Ministry. Seven years after, at the right time with the right person at the helm, we were able to forge an alliance with the Ministry.” Ms Soraya Nanan, Founder and President of Widow Support TT echoed similar sentiments and is equally grateful that the Ministry recognizes Widows as part of the vulnerable sector.

Minister Cox re-affirmed the Ministry’s commitment to partnering with similar organizations in an effort to ensure that those most in need are afforded a comfortable standard of living. Moreover, the Ministry recognises the need for the expansion of our mandate to include strategies, which would mitigate the negative effects and socioeconomic impacts on all vulnerable populations in Trinidad and Tobago.

-End-

For more information:

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Minister Cox delivers the keynote address to Widows Association of Trinidad and Tobago and Widow Support TT



Minister Cox presents a hamper to Ms. Roselyn Seenath



Minister Cox presents a hamper to Ms. Carol Mongroo



Minister Cox presents a hamper to Ms. Roselyn Pulwarty



Minister Cox presents a hamper to Ms. Christin Ramdial



Apostle Terrence Honore, President and Founder of the Widows Association of TT expresses his immense gratitude to Minister Cox



(l-r) Ms. Hassanal, Ms Soraya Nanan (representatives from Widows Support TT), Minister Cox, Apostle Terrence Honore, Bishop Dave Alleyne



Minister Cox chats with Founder and President of Widow Support TT, Ms. Soraya Nanan and Ms. Hassanali about the assistance available to widows from the Ministry