



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services launches #EndPovertyTT Week in commemoration of International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2021

In support of the United Nations' observance of International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP), the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has officially launched #EndPovertyTT Week. The event took place today, Friday October 15th at the Ministry's Head Office on St. Vincent Street in Port-of-Spain, under the theme "*Building Forward Together: Ending Persistent Poverty, Respecting All People and our Planet*".

Held annually on October 17th, IDEP is used as a platform to, amongst other things, generate awareness and highlight the reality of living in poverty and challenge the stereotypes that exist about those who experience impoverishment. Delivering her remarks, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox indicated that the international theme for this year's observance resonates with the social agenda of the Ministry and as such, the Ministry will soon implement two initiatives within its delivery framework to address the challenges of poverty.

According to Minister Cox, "For us at the Ministry, this day affords us the opportunity to renew and spotlight our commitment to addressing the challenges of poverty, extreme poverty and hunger, as well as to demonstrate our solidarity with the poor, indigent and vulnerable. As part our responsive and multifaceted approach to social services delivery to vulnerable groups, the Ministry will soon establish its Social Support and Empowerment Unit which will serve as a one stop shop facility for all Government Services and the STEP-UP Model which means: Social Transformation and Empowerment Programme - Uplifting People, which is intended to position clients and beneficiaries to graduate from social support and transition into more self-sufficiency and a better quality of life."

These two projects, Minister Cox said will present new mechanisms by which citizens can readily access support services and ensure that citizens have easier access to services through three access points: the internet, the telephone and walk-ins.

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated poverty reduction efforts on the vulnerable, Minister Cox also informed the audience that the Ministry is fully cognizant of its role in the protection, empowerment and transformation of the lives of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and will continue to maintain its commitment to vulnerable segments of our population to deliver social support measures to cushion the repercussions of the pandemic and to ensure that persons who are affected can maintain a basic standard of life.

Speaking also was Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan who indicated that #EndPovertyWeekTT is timely so that staff of the Ministry gets a first-hand look into the various aspects and dimensions of poverty, and how they contribute on a daily basis towards ending poverty at the community and national levels.

Also in attendance was Ms. Ishyta Andrews recipient of the Ministry's Sowing Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) Grant. Ms. Andrews explained to the audience that as a single mother affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEED Grant helped her transition out of poverty.

Following the launch of #EndPovertyTT Week, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services will host a number of activities to promote awareness of poverty-related issues and encourage transformative actions in the fight against poverty. These include a Virtual Webinar and Panel Discussion to be held on Wednesday October 20, 2021 at 9:00 am, featuring advocates for the eradication of poverty and technical experts in the field of poverty, gender, inclusion, climate change and research studies associated with poverty. There will also be a spoken word and essay competition targeting young persons between the ages of 14 to 18 years.



Minister Cox delivers the feature address at the launch of #EndPovertyTT Week 2021.



Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox joined by (R-L) Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan, Mr Seon Raymond Director of the Social Investigations Division and Maxine Hunte, Senior Research Specialist of the SID, cut the ribbon officially launching Poverty Week.



Minister Cox tours the #EndPovertyTT Week Display following the official launch.



SEED Grant recipient Ms. Ishyta Andrews shows Minister Cox some of her handmade products.

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