



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 21 March 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Social Development commemorates World Down Syndrome Day!

Port-of-Spain --- Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox has pledged that the Ministry will continue to provide the requisite support towards all efforts made to help, empower and transform the lives of persons with disabilities. This pledge was made as she addressed participants at the Down Syndrome Family Network's 10th Annual World Down Syndrome Conference at the Hyatt Regency on March 21st. The theme for the event was "*What Does Inclusion Mean?*" and also included presentations from the Honourable Ayana Webster Roy, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender Affairs); Dr. The Honourable Nyan Gadsby- Dolly, Minister of Education and Mrs. Sharon C. Rowley, Attorney at Law.

Minister Cox launched her address congratulating the Down Syndrome Family Network for the commendable work it has been doing for the community of down syndrome persons. According to Minister Cox, "The Ministry seeks to provide the necessary support to the most vulnerable amongst us, and as such continues to maintain partnerships with public and private entities, as well as, advocacy groups, such as DSFN where we can raise awareness and promote the interests of this community. One area where this has become necessary, is continued collaboration with regional and international partners to address the issue of inadequate research and data on the disability sector in Trinidad and Tobago."

The Minister further stated that strong focus has been placed on sensitization and awareness as the Ministry works towards fulfilling the mandates of the UNCRPD and achieving the objectives of the Action Plan of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities. She took the opportunity to highlight some upcoming and ongoing initiatives by the Ministry in support of persons with

disabilities, which included providing deaf awareness sessions to frontline staff, preparing an easy read version of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities and lastly, reviewing the Disability Assistance Grant. Conference attendees were also informed that in the near future, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services will host capacity-building workshops for NGOs that provide services for persons with disabilities. “This project is to build the capacity of organisations that represent persons with disabilities, which will assist the respective NGOs in performing at optimal level and by extension the community of persons with disabilities” said Minister Cox.

The objective of the conference was to stimulate an international discourse on issues relevant to inclusion and human rights. Under the theme, #InclusionMeans, which the Ministry fully supports, demonstrates the need for full and effective participation and inclusion in society, as prioritised by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The conversation focused on how society can engender an all-inclusive environment for persons with Down Syndrome and other disabilities, as advocates and experts shared their experiences and knowledge.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to promoting the inclusion of the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities

<ENDS>

For more information:

Communications Unit

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

(868) 623-2608; Ext 5405/5403



Minister Cox delivers remarks at the World Down Syndrome Day Conference



A down Syndrome self-advocate presents Minister Cox with a gift



Down Syndrome Family Network Board Member Lisa Ghany; Down Syndrome Family Network President Glen Niles; Minister Cox and Down Syndrome self-advocates



Down Syndrome Family Network President Glen Niles, Tyrese Niles and Minister Cox celebrate World Down Syndrome Day



A down syndrome self-advocate tells Minister Cox about her dreams and aspirations



Minister Cox speaks with Down Syndrome Family Network President Glen Niles about inclusion and legislation.



(l-r) Mrs. Sharon C. Rowley, Attorney at Law, Minister Cox, United Nations Assistant Resident Representative Mrs. Shariffa Ali- Abdullah and the Honourable Ayana Webster Roy, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender Affairs)