



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

#### **Centenarian John Gomez says 10 more years promised to him by God.**

Mr John Gomez celebrated his 102nd birthday today and according to Trinidad and Tobago's latest centenarian, he has ten more years to go. "I live a happy life with God in unity, peace, love, and respect and today, I lived to 102 years. I have a few ailments but God spoke to me in a dream and told me I have 10 more years to go" said Mr Gomez who resides at the Toco Senior Citizens Home.

Visiting the centenarian to celebrate the continued milestone on the Spiritual Baptist/Shouter Liberation Day holiday was the Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox. Minister Cox was joined by Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan and the staff of the Ministry's Division of Ageing and Corporate Communications and Education Unit.

According to the Minister, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was proud to venture to the rural and scenic area of Toco to wish Mr Gomez a very happy birthday noting that the Ministry re-launched the National Centenarian Programme to ensure that all centenarians received recognition for the achievement.

Minister Cox also commended relatives for their attendance noting that though Covid-19 still poses a threat to older persons who have a higher risk of being adversely affected, social connections are very important to the elderly, especially those living in homes for older persons.

She further commended the Toco Senior Citizens Home where Mr Gomez has been a resident for over ten years for their care and hospitality stating that it may have contributed to his longevity.

Minister Cox then presented Mr Gomez with his Certificate of Achievement and Honour, a hamper, and a personalised birthday cake sponsored by the Kiss Baking Company.

Also in attendance was former Councillor Mr Martin Terry Rondon. Mr Rondon told those gathered that Mr Gomez also called Uncle John, played an instrumental role in his life. "Fifty-six years ago, the first day pay I made was selling fish with Uncle John along the north coast. He gave me 25 cents. I took that 25 cents to my mother and she was able to buy biscuits, coffee, milk, and sugar and that made breakfast for my family. Uncle John, I thank you" said Mr Rondon.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was pleased to honour our latest centenarian and encourage family and loved ones, Members of Parliament, Local Government representatives, friends, and neighbours to salute our nation's centenarians by registering for the Programme. Persons may visit the Ministry's website at [www.social.gov.tt](http://www.social.gov.tt) and complete the online form or print a downloadable form for completion. Completed forms may be dropped off

at the nearest Social Welfare Office or emailed to the Division of Ageing at [opic@social.gov.tt](mailto:opic@social.gov.tt). For more information, persons may contact the Division of Ageing at 623 – 2608; Ext 2002 to 2009 or 800-OPIC (6742).

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*Minister Cox hears of the secret to longevity from Mr. Gomez.*



*Minister Cox presents Mr Gomez with his Certificate of Honour and Achievement.*



*Mr Gomez celebrates his 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday with family and loved ones*