



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Minister of Social Development meets with Commissioner of Police for strategy to help hurting families

Minister of Social Development and family Services, Senator, the Honourable Donna Cox, earlier today, May 3rd, held a meeting with Commissioner of Police, Mr Mc Donald Jacob, to begin discussions on a roadmap to addressing social issues related to criminal behaviour in Trinidad and Tobago.

Also in attendance were Permanent Secretary Jacqueline Johnson, other members of the Ministry's Executive Team, Officers of the National Family Services and other delivery arms of the Ministry. Joining the Commissioner were Deputy Commissioner, Joanne Archie and Assistant Commissioners of Police, Sharon Gomez Cooper and Collis Hazel, in addition to several other key representatives of the TTPS' social support services.

In welcoming persons to the meeting, Minister indicated that she convened the meeting as a strategic move to call stakeholders together, in an attempt to safeguard our families in the society. According to Minister Cox, "This is a very opportune time for us to meet, given what we can all see emerging within our society. Our society today is reflective of broken and dysfunctional families, evident by the frequency of violence in schools, domestic violence, suicides, murders and other family issues related to mental health, stress and other family challenges". The Minister stressed on the importance of key stakeholders coming together as a multi-faceted approach to building healthy, functioning families. "Family services represent at least half of our core business and it is an area that is really important to all of us" said Minister Cox.

Commissioner Jacobs expressed how grateful he was to meet with the Ministry and its technical Officers since he too agreed, on the need for synergy and coming together to deal with the social aspects of criminal behaviour in Trinidad and Tobago. He made a brief presentation which highlighted, among other things, issues related to family and community. His presentation highlighted statistics according to demographics, geographic and psychographics, relative to the gender based violence, murder and suicides from 2017 to date; reinforcing the need for a holistic and multidisciplinary intervention strategy. One area of interest revealed was the statistics related to persons over the age of sixty (60), who were vulnerable to suicide and attempted suicide.

The Commissioner indicated that there is need for community partnership, in addition to approaching criminal behaviour and violence from a more psychological perspective, in order to address the root causes.

In response, the Minister stated that the Ministry has a Parenting and Grandparenting programme, which is aimed at providing information to assist them in making responsible decisions regarding the safety and well-being of grandchildren and other children under their care. She further expounded on two other direct initiatives, which are set to have a positive impact on families. These include a Suicide Prevention hotline, as well as a First Responder System, which are both designed to support various agencies in addressing crime and social issues. “

In closing, both parties agreed on collaborative strategies and to work closer to address the issues affecting families.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that no one is left behind.



Minister Cox addresses social issues during a meeting with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service



Commissioner of Police, Mr Mc Donald Jacob, alongside Deputy Commissioner, Joanne Archie reveal the statistics on suicide to Minister Cox



(l-r) Mrs. Jennifer Harvey-Bethel, Director of Finance, MSDFS Permanent Secretary Jacqueline Johnson, Minister Cox, Commissioner of Police, Mr Mc Donald Jacob, and Deputy Commissioner, Joanne Archie



A cross section view of the meeting



Commissioner of Police, Mr Mc Donald Jacob, alongside Deputy Commissioner, discuss issues related to family and community