



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday, 13 June 2022

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Priority: **HIGH**

### **Minister Cox congratulates Blind Welfare on 75 years of incorporation!**

Port-of-Spain --- Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA) has been incorporated for the past 75 years. To celebrate with the association, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, earlier today, June 13, attended the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, at the School for Blind Children, in Santa Cruz.

In commemoration of this momentous milestone, TTBWA honoured members of long standing who are 75 years and over. The TTBWA has been providing services to improve the lives of those who are blind and visually impaired since its establishment, and works assiduously towards a brighter future where persons who are blind are treated equally and are provided with the necessary accommodations that allow them to reach their maximum potential.

Minister Cox launched her address congratulating the TTBWA for their continued work in promoting awareness and working towards an enhanced quality of life for the blind and visually impaired. According to Minister Cox, “The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services continues to work assiduously to ensure that no one is left behind, and that ALL citizens are afforded EQUAL opportunity to access social services, making sure that all our citizens, including the most vulnerable, are cared for and treated with dignity and respect. A critical element of this mandate includes the full inclusion and participation by persons with disabilities in all aspects of society.”

The Minister further stated that strong focus has been placed on sensitization and awareness as the Ministry works towards fulfilling the mandates of the UNCPRD 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 the recommissioning of the Ministry’s website and the addition of a disability microsite, and collaboration with the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago to introduce the Assistive Mobile Device Initiative, which is geared towards increasing access to information through ICT devices for persons with disabilities.

Event attendees were also informed that in the near future, the Ministry's staff will undergo braille training. "It is hoped that not only would all Persons with Disabilities, be further empowered to realise their full potential and live more independently, but our society would be equipped to provide adequate support to this community; thereby contributing to the realisation of the United Nations' 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals" said Minister Cox.

In closing, Minister Cox reassured her commitment to working with the Blind Welfare Association and all stakeholders in support of the blind and visually impaired, and encourages the development of collaborative relationships and meaningful interventions for the benefit of this community of persons.

Also in attendance were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Sheila Seecharan; Cindy Heeralal, NGO Coordinator at the Ministry, TTBWA President, Mr. Felix Cazoe and TTBWA Executive Officer, Mr. Kenneth Suratt.

TTBWA President, Mr. Felix Cazoe commended Minister Cox and by extension, the Ministry, for always being accessible. Mr Cazoe looks forward to developing the organizational capacity at TTBWA, and promoting inclusion and sustainability among society.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to providing the requisite support towards all efforts made to help, empower and transform the lives of persons with disabilities.

END



Minister Cox delivers remarks at Trinidad and Tobago's Blind Welfare 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration



Minister Cox stands alongside Trinidad and Tobago's Blind Welfare's (TTBWA) executive, Felix Cazoe and Kenneth Suratt, and long standing awardees of TTBWA, Jemetta Callendar, Marjorie Stephen-Smith, and Marva Stephen-Daniel.



Minister Cox presents a plaque to one of the awardees, Jemetta Callendar