



## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Minister Cox discusses Social Protection Systems with UNDP Trinidad and Tobago**

Minister of Social Development and Family Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, on Friday, September 9, 2022, met with Mr. Gerardo Noto, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trinidad and Tobago Interim Resident Representative to discuss the upcoming XIV Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean Conference in Cuenca, Ecuador scheduled for September 29-30, 2022. Joining the meeting was Sharifa Ali-Abdullah, Deputy Resident Representative at the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago Office. Also present at the meeting was Permanent Secretary at the Ministry, Jacqueline Johnson, as well as other technical officers at the Ministry.

The meeting included cordial discussions on opportunities for exchange programmes and initiatives, as well as greater collaboration on social protection in times of uncertainty. The meeting also formed part of the Minister's ongoing strategy to form alliances and collaborate with various Missions and Embassies toward a more responsive and multifaceted social services delivery. The UNDP, in particular, is a key partner in the social protection system as it provides ongoing technical support in various aspects of social protection in Trinidad and Tobago.

During the meeting, Minister Cox took the opportunity to provide pertinent information about the Ministry's upcoming projects, inclusive of the National Registry for Vulnerable Persons (NRVP). The Register is intended to be a cutting-edge, computerized database that will be used to collect, store, and process vital information on vulnerable persons across our Twin-island Republic, on a single platform. It forms part of the policy and research agenda for the MSDFS aimed at addressing critical policy gaps in the Ministry as well as ensuring that decision-making is data-driven. Therefore, we are looking forward to identifying data sources to populate the NRVP and act as a liaison between social sector Ministries/Agencies to ensure that information requested is submitted in the appropriate format and in a timely manner. Discussions were also held on the Ministry's impending transformation, in terms of digitalizing social services.

Minister Cox further expressed that she looks forward to participating in the upcoming roundtable discussions at the Caribbean Conference in Ecuador. Minister Cox is expected to speak at roundtable 1, addressing the topic '*Social Protection in times of uncertainty*'. She noted that it's important to share experiences and collaborate with other Ministers, as their social experiences may be similar to the ones facing Trinidad and Tobago today. The dialogue will be focused on 'Effective Governance: From National to the Local Level'; 'Unlocking Financing for Social Development'; and 'New Challenges for Social Institutionality and Regional Cooperation'.

From the discussions held, Mr. Noto noted that the conference will bring a plethora of benefits to Trinidad and Tobago, as it will explore the need to rethink social protection systems in the region in order to collectively manage risks, particularly given the changing dynamics within the Caribbean diaspora.

In closing, Minister Cox extended her gratitude to the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago Office for their continued support in the areas of sustainable, social development, and looks forward to further meetings aimed at enhancing the lives of vulnerable citizens.

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**For more information:**

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Minister Cox discusses best practices with Mr. Gerardo Noto, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trinidad and Tobago Interim Resident Representative and Sharifa Ali-Abdullah, Deputy Resident Representative at the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago Office





Minister Cox presents Mr. Gerardo Noto with a token of appreciation



(l-r) Sharifa Ali-Abdullah, Deputy Resident Representative at the UNDP Trinidad and Tobago Office, Minister Cox and Mr. Gerardo Noto, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trinidad and Tobago Interim Resident Representative