



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Priority: **HIGH**

#### **Ministry of Social Development meets with NIB to discuss data sharing**

*Port of Spain---* In keeping with its vision of being a dynamic service-driven organisation that delivers premium and timely social services towards the achievement of sustainable human and social development, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services met with representatives from the National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago (NIBTT). The meeting took place earlier today, December 22, at the Ministry's Head Office, St Vincent Street Port of Spain and included cordial discussions on data sharing and new service delivery models.

During the meeting, the Ministry took the opportunity to provide information on its information system, OPAX, and the need for data sharing. It is recognized that some existing and prospective clients are not forthright when applying for social grants, therefore there is a need for an "all of Government" approach to ensure that focus is placed on the most vulnerable in society.

According to Minister Cox, "Stronger collaboration and data sharing are key ingredients to transforming the Ministry's service delivery model. This will also help ensure that the Ministry's social grants targets those who are truly in need, as it will assist with ensuring that persons meet the eligibility criteria." She also expressed the Ministry's interest in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NIBTT, as the Ministry's main focus is to make things easier for clients.

Permanent Secretary Jacqueline Johnson also took the opportunity to emphasize on the issue of fraudulent cheques. "Fraudulent cheques have been building up to a sizable amount. The Ministry is working diligently towards dealing with the issue, and getting persons to switch to the Direct Deposit system. We have engaged several stakeholders, such as the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago to explore cashless alternative ways of paying clients."

In response, Brendon Nelson, Chief Operating Officer of Corporate Services at NIBTT agreed that Direct Deposit is a much simpler and easier process for both parties. Placing more persons on Direct Deposit could bring a lot of value to the Ministry." He also expressed that NIBTT is willing to collaborate on information communication technology (ICT) processes and data sharing.

In closing, Minister Cox thanked NIBTT for their continued support and indicated that the Ministry remains committed to working closely with the Board to ensure of service excellence.

In attendance were Brendon Nelson, Chief Operating Officer of Corporate Services at NIBTT; and Feyaad Khan, Chief Operating Officer of Business Services at NIBTT. The executive team representing the Ministry were Permanent Secretaries, Jacqueline Johnson and Sheila Seecharan; Deputy Permanent Secretaries, Jasmine Pascal and Wendy Guy-Hernandez; as well as Paul Kanneh, Director of the Information Communication Technology Division.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed towards improving the delivery of its social services for the vulnerable groups in society.

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Minister Cox, Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan, and NIBTT executives, Feyaad Khan and Brendon Nelson pay keen attention to the Ministry's presentation on data sharing.