



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 14 February 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Minister Cox meets with US Ambassador

Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services received a courtesy call from Her Excellency Candace A. Bond, newly appointed Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, at the Ministry's Head Office on St Vincent Street, Port of Spain, earlier today, February 13, 2023. The U.S. Ambassador was accompanied by Shante Moore, Charge D'Affaires at the Embassy of the United States of America; and Ryan Assiu, Climate Finance Specialist, USAID. Also present were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Sheila Seecharan and Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ryan Ramcharan.

This meeting was the first formal exchange between the Minister of Social Development and Family Services and the US Ambassador. Minister Cox took the opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the Ambassador and acknowledged the cordial relations based on a shared commitment to sustainable social development between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America.

During the courtesy call, they discussed social development related issues such as crime and human trafficking. Among other items discussed were economic diversification, transitional housing facilities, building communities and meeting the needs of the vulnerable and indigent in Trinidad and Tobago. Minister Cox enlightened the Ambassador on some of the Ministry's recent projects, particularly the parenting workshops and grandparenting programme, and emphasized the role that these programmes play in building healthy, functioning families.

Ambassador Bond reflected on some of the community based projects in the United States of America, Los Angeles to be specific, and noted that it helped reduce gang violence and instead, help empower communities. In response, the Minister noted that the Ministry can learn from their various programmes and past initiatives, and that the key components of those projects can be applied to the social issues of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ambassador Bond assured the Minister of her commitment to deeper engagement and collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to address the concerns highlighted by Minister Cox and to provide opportunities in training for social workers. Both parties assured their commitment to further active engagement on bilateral issues of mutual interest in the near future.

In closing, Minister Cox extended her gratitude to the US Embassy 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. The meeting ended with a brief presentation to Her Excellency Candace A. Bond.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to proactively exploring opportunities to ensure that no one is left behind.

For more information:

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Minister Cox and Her Excellency Candace A. Bond, newly appointed Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago discuss social issues



Minister Cox presents a token of appreciation to Her Excellency Candace A. Bond, newly appointed Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



Ryan Assiu, Climate Finance Specialist, USAID; The U.S. Ambassador was accompanied by Shante Moore, Charge D'Affaires at the Embassy of the United States of America; Her Excellency Candace A. Bond; Minister Cox; Permanent Secretary Sheila Seecharan and Ryan Ramcharan, Deputy Permanent Secretary