



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 1st March 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Minister Cox meets with TUCO to discuss Social Development matters

Port-of-Spain --- Earlier today, March 1 2023, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services and members of the Executive met with representatives of the Trinbago Unified Calypsonians Organization (TUCO), Sherma Orr, Board Member and Calston Kerr, Welfare Officer. In recent times, the Ministry has been reviewing the policy for the Special Achievers Grant and TUCO, as a key stakeholder, would have contributed to the review. The meeting included cordial discussions on ways in which the Ministry can better serve the vulnerable members of the organization.

The Ministry's Special Achievers Grant is administered to eligible local icons for their outstanding contributions to national development to ensure that their rights and dignity are protected and enhanced when they are most in need. Their eligibility for the grant is generally determined by their inability to meet general expenses, inclusive of pharmaceuticals and medical care, dietary needs, house repairs and in some instances, rental assistance.

During the meeting, Minister Cox took the opportunity to provide information on other social services available at the Ministry and how these could be accessed by those most in need, with a view to ensuring their independent living and advancement. Several issues were raised concerning the eligibility for grants, particularly Senior Citizens' Pension and special circumstances where exceptions may be given for the access to grants.

Minister Cox further highlighted the importance of financial management and encouraged the organization to continue promoting self-sufficiency to its members.

In closing, Ms. Sherma Orr, Board Member of TUCO thanked the Minister for providing her team with pertinent information, which she will further relay to the calypsonian fraternity.

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

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Minister Cox discusses the Special Achievers Grant with TUCO representatives, Sherma Orr, Board Member and Calston Kerr, Welfare Officer



(l-r) Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry Ryan Ramcharan; Calston Kerr, TUCO Welfare Officer; Sherma Orr, TUCO Board Member; and Minister Cox