



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 22 March 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Ministry participates in Trinidad's UN World Down Syndrome Day Conference

On Tuesday March 21st, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services celebrated World Down Syndrome Day by supporting the Down Syndrome Family Network's (DSFN) annual conference. Under the theme "**With Us Not For Us**", the conference served as a key human-rights-based approach to disability, which views people with disabilities as having the right to be treated fairly, and have the same opportunities as everyone else, working with others to improve their lives.

The discussion focused on how society can engender an all-inclusive environment for persons with Down Syndrome, particularly in the areas of legislative support aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities are well served and catered to, in an effort to provide a better quality of life. Among the other matters raised at the meeting were the importance of inclusion in the workplace, education for persons with disabilities and fostering and social adjustment.

During the event, policy makers and advocates from across the world addressed the need for empowering, supporting and protecting persons with disabilities. Some of the speakers who championed for change were the Honourable Ayanna Webster-Roy, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister- Gender and Child Affairs; Mrs. Sharon Clarke Rowley, wife of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and Attorney at Law; Senator the Honourable Paul Richards; Fitzherbert Glen Niles, Chairman and Founder of DSFN; Professor Rosemarie Bell Antoine, Principal of the University of the West Indies; Jordan Kough, Executive Director of the National Down Syndrome Congress, USA.

Consistent with the Ministry's mandate of helping, empowering, and transforming lives, the Ministry's participation was geared towards providing assistance and opportunities for

advancement as well as providing information on how eligible persons can access some of its core grants and services. These include grants provided under the Social Welfare Division, Disability Affairs Unit, National Social Development Programme, critical information on counselling and psycho-social support services for individuals and families, and workshops for parents and grandparents under the National Family Services Division. Of particular interest at the conference was the qualification and criterion for the Disability Assistance Grant for both adults and children. Students from various schools across the country also had the opportunity to learn about the work of the Ministry's Disability Affairs Unit.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services looks forward to working with the Down Syndrome Family Network and other similar Non-Governmental organizations to ensure that a more inclusive society is engendered for persons with disabilities.

For more information:

Communications Unit

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

(868) 623-2608; Ext 5405/5424/5403



Ministry information booth at the Down Syndrome Family Network's (DSFN) annual conference



Staff of the Ministry highlight the Ministry's various programmes and services to the event attendees



Students of St. Mary's College learn about the work of the Ministry's Disability Affairs Unit.



Event attendees- pictured are the Honourable Ayanna Webster-Roy, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister- Gender and Child Affairs; Mrs. Sharon Clarke Rowley, wife of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley and Attorney at Law; Fitzherbert Glen Niles, Chairman and Founder of DSFN, Lisa Ghany, Host; and self-advocates including Monika Myers, Model and her family