



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

Minister Cox receives courtesy call from Regional Representative for the U.S Agency for International Development of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean

Earlier today, July 19, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services received a courtesy call from the Regional Representative for the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, Mr. Mervyn Farroe. The meeting took place at the Ministry's Head Office, St Vincent Street, Port of Spain.

Over the years, USAID's focus has been to support a safe, prosperous, and resilient Caribbean region that assists its vulnerable populations and promotes accountable institutions and economic development. USAID's work in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) region directly supports United States foreign policy priorities to promote sustainable development growth programmes.

During the courtesy call, the two parties discussed mutual areas of interest such as making transformative impact on vulnerable families; homelessness; digitalization; and identifying levels of vulnerability.

Mr. Farroe took the opportunity to express the willingness of the USAID to collaborate with the Ministry on ongoing and upcoming projects to help address key social issues, particularly empowering youth, and deterring them from a life of crime.

Minister Cox noted that prioritizing family is a key area of focus for the Ministry. She further enlightened Mr. Farroe 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. She also noted that the Ministry is working towards a more holistic approach, ensuring that families are supported in crises, whether it be natural disasters or psychological issues. The Minister also expressed that the Ministry wants to provide opportunities in training for social workers and family workers, in order to equip staff with the necessary skills to identify vulnerabilities within the home and meet specific needs of today's family structure.

In response, Mr. Farroe emphasized the significance of data driven approaches in helping communities. He agreed with the Minister's stance on the importance of changing attitudes, values and behaviour in communities, as it is considered a major drive of social issues facing families today. He gave the assurance that the USAID would continue to play its part in strengthening relations between the two countries including efforts to help transition persons from welfare to a state of sustainability.

In closing, Minister Cox extended her gratitude to the Embassy of the United States of America and USAID for their continued support in the areas of sustainable, social development.

Also in attendance were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Lenor Baptiste-Simmons; and Sharon Ramsaran, USAID's Governance and Rule of Law Program Management Specialist.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed to enhancing the lives of the vulnerable, through a network of integrated and accessible social services.

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For more information:

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Minister Cox and Regional Representative for the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, Mr. Mervyn Farroe discuss key social issues during a meeting held at the Ministry's Head Office earlier today



Minister Cox presents a token of appreciation to Regional Representative for the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, Mr. Mervyn Farroe