



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

MEDIA RELEASE



Wednesday 6th September 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

Sod turned for new Assessment Centre and Temporary Housing facility for socially displaced persons

Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services along with various Government Ministers, today, September 6, 2023 turned the sod to mark the imminent start of the construction of an *Assessment Centre and temporary housing facility for socially displaced persons*. This centre, which will be located in South Quay, Port of Spain, will be a state-of-the-art, modern, 5-storey facility where homeless citizens can call home. The turning of the sod represents the resolution of the street dwelling challenges that have plagued Trinidad and Tobago for the past four decades.

Delivering her remarks, Minister Cox told those present that the ceremony is rooted in past initiatives and contributes to a positive outcome in the future. “The turning of the sod to mark the construction of this home for the homeless, represents an end of the back and forth on how to resolve the street dwelling challenges that have plagued us for over four (4) decades” said Minister Cox.

According to the Minister, “For the street dwellers and homeless persons in Port of Spain and environs, it is an end to sleeping on the streets, in front of banks, on park benches, in unsafe, unsanitary living conditions, which is beneath the dignity of which they are deserving. The Social Displacement and Assessment Centre will be a new beginning for street dwellers. This is a dedicated space for them, where they will feel at home and accepted without the stigma of feeling that they are a forgotten people and that they are being left behind.” She further noted that when the centre is completed and fully functional, it will mark a new beginning for the homeless population who will have a place where they can go to get a meal, a shower, clean clothes, see a doctor, dentist, or seek psycho-social and spiritual counselling.

Minister Cox also took the opportunity to highlight the collaborative efforts that will be made. She stated “We will provide comprehensive assessments, guidance, and support to help our socially displaced and vulnerable overcome their challenges. Through collaboration and consistent evaluation, we will offer job training, skills development programmes, and access to healthcare services; we will continue to work with other state agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations,



Community-Based Organisations and Faith Based Organisations to create sustainable pathways for our socially displaced.”

The Minister further commended the Prime Minister for his leadership, support and encouragement to persevere through the challenges and for backing this investment in the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Also in attendance were The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds, Minister of National Security; The Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Housing and Urban Development; The Honourable Stuart Young, Minister of Energy & Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister; The Honourable Terrance Deyalsingh, Minister of Health; The Honourable Adrian Leonce, Minister in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development; The Honourable Keith Scotland, Member of Parliament Port of Spain South; His Worship, Alderman Chinua Alleyne, Mayor of the City of Port of Spain and Officials of the Port of Spain City Corporation; Lenor Baptiste-Simmons and Ryan Ramcharan, Permanent Secretaries of the MSDFS; Gregory Aboud President of the Downtown Owners and Merchants Association; Noel Garcia, Chairman UDeCOTT; Tamica Charles, Chief Executive Officer UDeCOTT; and various stakeholder representatives.

The Ministry of Social Development and by extension, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago remain steadfast in its commitment towards addressing the issue of social displacement in Trinidad and Tobago

-END-

For more information:

Communications Unit

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

(868) 623-2608; Ext 5405/5424/5432

corporatecomm.msd@gmail.com



Minister Cox delivers remarks at the official ceremony of the Sod turning for new Assessment Centre and Temporary Housing facility for socially displaced persons



Minister Cox turns the sod with Government officials. (l-r) The Honourable Stuart Young, Minister of Energy & Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister; The Honourable Terrance Deyalsingh, Minister of Health; Tamica Charles, Chief Executive Officer UDeCOTT; The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds, Minister of National Security; Minister Cox; The Honourable Keith Scotland, Member of Parliament Port of Spain South; His Worship, Alderman Chinua Alleyne, Mayor of the City of Port of Spain; The Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Housing and Urban Development; and The Honourable Adrian Leonce, Minister in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.



Government Officials listen attentively during official ceremony of the Sod turning for new Assessment Centre and Temporary Housing facility for socially displaced persons. (l-r) The Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Housing and Urban Development; Deputy Mayor of Port of Spain, Abena Hartley; The Honourable Stuart Young, Minister of Energy & Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister; His Worship, Alderman Chinua Alleyne, Mayor of the City of Port of Spain and Minister Cox.