



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**

World Bank's visit to Ministry of Social Development aims to strengthen Social Protection Systems

November 6, 2023 marked the first day of a series of meetings between the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services and the representatives of the World Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance; at its Head Office on St Vincent Street Port of Spain. The series of meetings form part of the Ministry of Finance's aim to engage the World Bank Group for fee-based services to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, for the provision of a Social Protection Expenditure Review, and Error and Fraud Assessment.

As the world and national community prepare to observe and commemorate **Fraud Awareness Week 2023** from November 12th – 18th, this visit is a timely one. The Executive Team, as well as other Senior Technical Officers from the Ministry have been holding discussions with the World Bank Representatives, as they take a closer look at the functioning of the social welfare system. The Representatives have also engaged Officers from the Ministry's Investigation and Compliance Unit on matters related to Error and Fraud Assessment, with the aim of identifying, inter alia, the following areas, for improvement, based on international best practice:

- Evaluating whether the programmes are following programme rules around eligibility
- Understanding potential risks;
- Examining the lifecycle of a claim;
- Any additional measure to be undertaken by the MSDFS to prevent wrongful claims and deter such actions

As part of the engagement exercise, the World Bank representatives have also been able to observe and understand, first-hand, the operations at two of the Social Welfare local boards, where the major grants such as the Public Assistance Grant, Food Support Grant, Disability Assistance Grant and the Senior Citizens Pension are administered. It is anticipated that this visit will bring greater focus and clarity on:

- Understanding the role of each Board in administering the social benefits
- Understanding the process of eligibility determination, as well as checks and balances
- Identifying challenges and potential improvements

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is pleased to facilitate the engagement with the World Bank at this time, as it seeks to foster a more transparent, accountable approaches to the delivery of grants and services; under the social protection system in Trinidad and Tobago.



Members of the MSDFS' Executive Team, led by PS Lenor Baptiste-Simmons, engage representatives of the World Bank on Day 1 of the Series of Meetings.