



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

November 30, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minister Cox addresses WRAP-TT's Roundtable on Elimination of Violence **“Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls – A Shadow Pandemic”**

Port of Spain--- Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox earlier today, made a sterling presentation at the Women's Roundtable Action Platform – Trinidad and Tobago's (WRAPTT) Elimination of Violence (EoV) 2023 Project, which was held in commemoration of this year's global observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The session took place in Washington DC on Wednesday November 29, 2023 with participants from all around the world joining via the zoom platform.

During her discourse, the Minister highlighted the factors contributing to the rise in domestic violence and initiatives undertaken by the Ministry to reduce such incidents for the safety of women and children. According to the Minister, violence against women and girls intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, so much so that this was identified as the *shadow pandemic*.

She provided some statistics disclosing that “Data collected by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service indicated a marked increase in the number of females affected by sexual violence between the years 2020 and 2021. These increases ranged from as low as 9 percent in the 15-19 age group, to as high as 106 percent in the 30-34 age bracket. What was alarming, is that there was a 62 percent increase in the number of female victims of sexual violence who were under the age of 15. Moreover, up until September 2023, females accounted for 75 percent of the reports of domestic violence made to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, with the remaining 25 percent made by men.”

Minister Cox further added that several multi-pronged approaches, initiatives and activities are being undertaken to bring awareness to and curb the incidence of Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago, including assessment interviews of individuals and home visits to ascertain the families' immediate needs undertaken by the Ministry's National Family Services Division as well as close collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

WRAPTT has become a premier diaspora engagement partner for the Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago in Washington DC, mobilizing policy, advocacy, technical expertise and other financial assistance; to promote and protect the public policy interests of Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was pleased to participate and present at this very important Roundtable, which advances the cause for women through their Elimination of Violence Project.

-END-