



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**

#### **Shelter Management Training “No Talk Shop” says Minister Cox IOM/USAID launches training to support survivors of human trafficking**

Minister of Social Development and Family Services Senator the Honourable Donna Cox commended the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for their action-oriented approach and consistent dedication to addressing human trafficking and developing strategies towards the ultimate protection of victims and survivors of human trafficking. She also commended US Ambassador Candace Bond and USAID for their consistent dedication to addressing human trafficking internationally.

Minister Cox was speaking at the launch of the four-day Heal, Empower, Rise Counter Trafficking in Persons (HER-CTIP) Project *Shelter Management Training* for Management and Staff of TIP facilities. The training is being hosted by the IOM in partnership with USAID from Tuesday 23rd – Friday 26th January 2024 at the Hilton Hotel.

Recognizing the crucial role that shelters and transitional homes play in supporting survivors of human trafficking, Minister Cox stated that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has articulated very comprehensive plans to establish various shelters which are expected to provide, amongst other things a safe haven and temporary housing for victims of trafficking and aide them in the process of recovery and reintegration into society.

Minister Cox further stated that plans are underway to establish a dedicated facility for such victims. She expressed, “I am also pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is establishing a transitional facility to accommodate women who are victims of trafficking. This transitional facility forms part of the intervention strategies in support of a National Emergency/Transitional and Social Housing Programme. Under this Programme several transitional homes will be operationalized in 2024, for vulnerable men, women and families.”

The Shelter Management Training is anticipated to equip participants with the skills necessary to understand and address the peculiar needs for the shelter of survivors. In this regard, the Minister indicated that she was indeed pleased that the Ministry was afforded the opportunity to provide significant inputs into this course of training through our contribution during the training needs assessment exercise. According to the Minister “This partnership with the IOM is consistent with our mandate to empower the powerless, and our Government’s commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind.”

She urged everyone to remember that the commitment to providing shelter for survivors is not just a legal or moral obligation and that well-managed shelters provide a foundation for survivors to heal, regain autonomy, and reintegrate into society.

Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds, MP in his remarks noted that the training is a direct installment in the pushback against crime. Minister Hinds informed that the week's exercise will comprise of a balance of theoretical insight which is critical for the smooth and satisfactory procedural and administrative operation of shelters and the real-life experiences of those who manage shelters in Ghana and Moldova.

Her Excellency Candace Bond, US Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago in her remarks noted that human trafficking is one of the most lucrative and rapidly growing crimes in the world that often goes unreported and the US government through the USAID has provided more than USD 370 million globally towards the against human trafficking.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains steadfast in its commitment to collaborating with stakeholders to ensure that the most vulnerable individuals receive the essential support required for their empowerment and resilience.

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**For more information:**

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*Senator the Honourable Donna Cox gives remarks at the International Organization for Migration(IOM)'s Shelter Management Training (for the Survivors of Trafficking).*



*Pictured with Minister Cox are: Ms Jewel Ali, Country Representative-IOM, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds-Ministry of National Security, US Ambassador to T&T – Her Excellency Candace Bond, Mr Mervyn Farroe, USAID Regional Representative and Mr Zeke Beharry-HER CTIP Project Manager-IOM TT*