



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

MEDIA RELEASE



Monday 11th March 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

Sod Turned for New Headquarters of the Ministry of Social Development & Family Services

Port of Spain- Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services, alongside Prime Minister, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley and distinguished Government Ministers, marked a significant milestone today with the ceremonial turning of the sod, signalling the commencement of construction for the new Corporate Headquarters of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. Situated at the prominent junction of Victoria Street, and Tragarete Road in Port of Spain, (previously Government Printery), this cutting-edge facility is poised to become a beacon of modernity, spanning an impressive 117,335 square feet (16,010 square meters) across ten floors. The construction of this facility will cost taxpayers the sum of One Hundred and Forty-Four Million, Eight Hundred and Seventy-Four Thousand, One Hundred and Twenty-Five Dollars (\$144,874,125.00) VAT Inclusive.

As she addressed the audience, Minister Cox shed light on the rich historical significance of the proposed location stating that, “The grounds on which we stand, previously housed the Government Printery for 133 years, and most recently the temporary house of Desperadoes Steel Orchestra...”

Minister Cox also emphasized the meticulous design of these spaces, aimed, inter alia, at elevating staff morale and fostering creativity, productivity, and innovation. "This initiative underscores our commitment to enhancing the well-being of individuals and families nationwide," she remarked, highlighting the importance of seamless interaction between staff and the public. She informed that, “overall the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services spends approximately Twenty-Three Million Nine Hundred and Forty-Six Thousand, Six hundred and Seventy-Five dollars and Forty-Eight cents (\$23,946,675.48) annually in rental costs, on facilities which service the poor and vulnerable in our society. “The Minister also shared that “The consolidation of our Ministry’s Head office into a single location will not only save approximately \$14.7 million dollars annually in rental costs but also streamline our operations, leading to improved efficiency in service delivery”.



Furthermore, Minister Cox underscored the facility's dedication to inclusivity, particularly in catering to the needs of individuals with disabilities. She affirmed that in addition to the transformative impact this project will have on the Ministry and the citizens there will also be benefits to the broader community by providing meaningful employment opportunities during the construction phase for both skilled and unskilled workers in various fields. She indicated that in terms of what citizens can expect with the new headquarters is a consolidated experience, better cohesion and since Head Office will be digitalized, among others things clients will have access to online applications, information and services, a shorter application timeframe for approvals, a faster response rate for queries.

The ground-breaking ceremony was witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including; The Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Housing and Urban Development; The Honourable Stuart Young, Minister of Energy and Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister ; Senator the Honourable Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign Affairs and CARICOM Affairs; The Honourable Symon de Nobriga, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister-Communications; Senator the Honourable Allyson West, Minister of Public Administration; The Honourable Terrance Deyalsingh, Minister of Health; Senator the Honourable Avinash Singh, Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries; Senator the Honourable Richie Sookhai; Minister in the Ministry of Works and Transport His Worship, Alderman Chinua Alleyne, Mayor of the City of Port of Spain, Councillor Abena Hartley, Deputy Mayor and Councillor -Northern POS and Officials of the Port of Spain City Corporation; Lenor Baptiste-Simmons and Ryan Ramcharan, Permanent Secretaries of the MSDFS; Noel Garcia, Chairman UDeCOTT; Tamica Charles, Chief Executive Officer UDeCOTT; and various stakeholder representatives.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, in tandem with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, remains steadfast in its mission to construct a more inclusive, compassionate, and resilient society for present and future generations.

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For more information:

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Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago Dr the Honourable Keith Rowley (centre) turns the sod for the MSDFS Corporate Headquarters, surrounded by Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development & Family Services (left), the Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Housing & Urban Development (far left), the Honourable Stuart Young, Minister of Energy & Energy Industries and Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (right) and His Worship Alderman Chinua Alleyne, Mayor of Port-of-Spain (far right).



Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox brings remarks at the sod-turning for the new MSDFS Corporate Headquarters



Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services (centre) is supported by Executives of the MSDFS: Permanent Secretary Mrs Lenor Baptiste-Simmons (far left); Mrs Vera Deonanan-Balkaran; Deputy Permanent Secretary (left); Mrs Wendy Guy-Hernandez (right), Deputy Permanent Secretary and Mr Ryan Ramcharan, Permanent Secretary (far right)