



MEDIA RELEASE

May 8, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: HIGH

Minister Cox discusses human rights issues in Paraguay

Human rights are not merely lofty ideals, they are the cornerstone of a just and equitable society, serving as the bedrock upon which our laws, policies, and institutions must be built, said Minister of Social Development and Family Services Senator the Honourable Donna Cox at the **20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly and 8th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network in Asunción, Paraguay**. The event is being held from May 8-10, 2024, under the theme “**Building Partnerships to Strengthen Democracy and Promote Human Rights.**”

During the event, Minister Cox participated in a panel discussion during Session II of the proceedings, alongside Member of the Legislative Assembly Yonder Salas Durán (Costa Rica), President of the Committee on Disability and Elderly Affairs; Member of the Chamber of Deputies Duda Salabert (Brazil); and the Honourable Representative Catherine Juvinao (Colombia), Vice-President for South America of the Open Parliament Network, to discuss parliamentary mechanisms for the effective promotion and protection of human rights.

In her remarks, Minister Cox conveyed that parliamentary mechanisms play a pivotal role in translating human rights principles into tangible actions and outcomes. According to Minister Cox, *“Through the legislative process, we have the power to enact laws that protect and uphold the dignity, freedom, and equality of all citizens. However, the mere existence of laws is not enough. It is imperative that these laws are implemented effectively and enforced rigorously to safeguard the rights of every individual, especially the marginalized and vulnerable among us.”*

Additionally, the Minister stated that engagement with stakeholders is paramount and parliamentarians seek input from civil society organizations, human rights activists, experts, and affected communities throughout the legislative process. *“By listening to diverse perspectives and incorporating them into our deliberations, we ensure that our laws are responsive to the needs and concerns of those most directly impacted”* said the Minister.

She further highlighted some legislative measures aimed at safeguarding human rights in Trinidad and Tobago which include the Children Act which addresses the rights and welfare of children and the Equal Opportunity Act (2000), which prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including race, gender, religion, and disability. Minister Cox further added that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms must be established to ensure the implementation of human rights legislation, noting that parliamentarians have a duty to regularly review the effectiveness of laws in protecting human rights and address any gaps or shortcomings through further legislative action or policy reforms.

She closed by reaffirming the Government's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights through robust parliamentary mechanisms.

The 20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly and 8th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network convenes fifty (50) parliamentarians from twenty-one (21) countries to discuss the critical role parliaments play in fostering active democracies, promoting human rights, maintaining peace, building consensus, promoting inclusive policies, and pursuing social justice.

-END-

For more information:

Communications Unit

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

(868) 623-2608; Ext 5402-5411

cceu@social.gov.tt



Minister Cox delivers her presentation on parliamentary mechanisms for the effective promotion and protection of human rights at the 20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly in Paraguay on May 8, 2024.



Minister Cox contributes to the discussion on parliamentary mechanisms for the effective promotion and protection of human rights at the 20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly in Paraguay.



Minister Cox delivers her presentation on human rights during the 20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly and 8th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network in Paraguay on May 8, 2024



Minister Cox participates in a panel discussion during Session II of the 20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly and 8th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network on May 8, 2024.



Minister Cox attends the 20th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly and 8th Gathering of the Open Parliament Network in Asunción, Paraguay. The event is being held from May 8-10, 2024.