



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER SAYS DISABILITIES BILL IS ON THE WAY

Port of Spain, March 22, 2025- Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services has promised that the way is clear for the Trinidad and Tobago Persons with Disabilities Bill. Speaking at the Down Syndrome Family Network's World Down Syndrome Day 2025 Conference, on Friday March 21, 2025, at the Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain, Minister Cox affirmed that the Ministry has spearheaded the Trinidad and Tobago Persons with Disabilities Bill, which is prepared and is now ready, subject to a final analysis between the Policy and Bill.

Minister Cox stated that the Ministry sought and received the views and comments of civil society, the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago, the Equal Opportunities Commission, a number of Government Ministries and Agencies and from persons with disabilities. This feedback has been incorporated into the legislation to ensure that the Bill in its current form, is fit for purpose.

The Bill addresses significant areas of concern for the disabled community and seeks to ensure:

- National acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Full consideration and accommodation to the diverse needs of persons with disability
- Freedom from discrimination, equality of opportunity and just treatment and processes
- Empowerment of persons with disabilities through the creation and maintenance of environments and spaces
- Full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all affairs and sectors of our society
- Respect for differences and
- Inherent dignity, and individual autonomy for persons with disabilities.

The next step will see the Bill going before the Legislative Review Committee.

Minister Cox also alluded to other measures which the Ministry has taken to address the concerns of the disabled community. These include the operationalisation of the National Therapeutic and Resource Centre (NTRC) at Carlsen Field, which will formally be opened within the next three weeks to offer persons with disabilities this multidisciplinary resource and provide comprehensive care and rehabilitation to individuals, including children and adults with Down Syndrome; the Integrated Social Enterprise Management System (ISEMS), which allows persons with disabilities to stay in the comfort of their home and be able access the suite of social services offered by the Ministry; as well as continued support for families through the provision of the Disability Assistance Grant and the Disability Assistance Grant for minors.

Minister Cox gave the assurance that the Government will continue to listen to the voices of those affected, and work relentlessly to help, transform and empower the lives of every citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.

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Caption: Minister Cox (7th from r) with Sharon Clarke Rowley, Advocate (8th from r); Fitzherbert Glen Niles, Chairman, DSFN, Senator Dr. Paul Richards, (left) and Members of the Diplomatic Corps with some members of the Down Syndrome Community and advocates at the conference.



Caption: Minister Cox with Wendy Guy Hernandez, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MSDFS (2nd left) and Nirmala Maharaj-Sawh, Director, Disability Affairs Unit, MSDFS (2nd right) and other Ministry staff at the DSFN Conference