



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Priority: **HIGH**

Social Development Ministry Opens Landmark Therapeutic and Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities

Port of Spain, April 17, 2025- The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) formally launched the National Therapeutic and Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NTRC) on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at Carlsen Field, Chaguanas. The Centre represents a key milestone in the Government's efforts to build a more inclusive society for persons with disabilities.

The Centre, developed in alignment with Trinidad and Tobago's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Vision 2030 National Development Strategy, is designed to provide rehabilitative, therapeutic and resource services for persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services described the launch as a transformative moment in the delivery of social services in Trinidad and Tobago. She noted that, *"this facility embodies the Government's commitment to inclusivity, empowerment and dignity for persons with disabilities, through access to critical therapeutic interventions and support."*

Developed through strategic collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Regional Health Authorities, the NTRC will roll out services in two phases. Phase I will focus on occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language pathology, and behavioural therapy. Phase II will expand offerings to include art, music and aqua physiotherapy, along with psychological support.

The Centre is also intended to serve as a resource hub for parents, caregivers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working with the disability community. In this regard, the facility will provide training and developmental resources to strengthen care and advocacy.

The Ministry also recognised the significant contribution of Digicel Foundation, which generously supported the outfitting of the NTRC with therapy equipment, resources and furniture for both adult and paediatric therapy gyms, a daily living suite, and an NGO resource room.

The Centre will play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for persons living with disabilities, while also serving as a training ground for emerging professionals in therapy and social work. The NTRC will accept referrals through the Ministry's disability support services.

For more information about the services offered at the NTRC, members of the public are encouraged to contact the Ministry by visiting the official website at www.social.gov.tt.

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For more information:

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Photos and Captions:



Photo 1: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox Minister of Social Development and Family Services unveils the plaque to commemorate the official opening of the National Therapeutic and Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities. Looking on are (from left) Wendy Guy-Hernandez Deputy Permanent Secretary; Nirmala Maharaj-Sawh, Director Disability Affairs Unit; Dr. Rohit Doon Chair Technical Oversight Committee; Ryan Ramcharan Permanent Secretary (ag.); Glen Niles Founder of the Down Syndrome Family Network and Vera Deonanan-Balkaran Deputy Permanent Secretary.



Photo 2: Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services cuts the ribbon to officially open the NTRC. Minister Cox is joined by (from left) Glen Niles Founder Down Syndrome Family Network; Dr. Rohit Doon, Chair Technical Oversight Committee; Vera Deonanan-Balkaran Deputy Permanent Secretary; Wendy Guy-Hernandez Deputy Permanent Secretary; Ryan Ramcharan Permanent Secretary (ag.); Nirmala Maharaj-Sawh, Director Disability Affairs Unit and Dr. Natalie Dick, Specialist Developmental-Behavioral Paediatrician.



Photo 3: Minister Cox engages with one of the child-friendly workstations during a tour of the Speech Therapy Room at the newly launched National Therapeutic and Resource Centre. The room is specially designed to support the communication development of children with disabilities.



Photo 4: Members of the community of persons with disabilities during a tour of the National Therapeutic and Resource Centre as they were exposed to the range of services and facilities designed to enhance independence and quality of life of persons with disabilities.