The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has been charged with the development of a National Social Mitigation Plan to cushion the impact of the economic downturn on vulnerable groups in Trinidad and Tobago.

This directive has come against the backdrop of a precipitous fall in energy prices with the consequent impact on revenue streams, job losses in the public and private sectors and generally sluggish economic activity. It is anticipated that an increasing number of individuals and families who now find themselves with little or no resources to support themselves in a sustainable manner, will be at risk of slipping into poverty and suffering from the attendant socio-economic and psycho-social challenges.

As part of the development of the plan, the Ministry engaged a consultant to garner information from a large cross section of the population and generate crucial feedback as a mechanism to assess and understand the social impact of the economic downturn/recession on the various target populations. This was achieved by the hosting of a series of public consultations in Trinidad and in Tobago, interviewing key informants and public influencers, as well as conducting focus group sessions with key stakeholder groups, namely government ministries, public sector agencies, academia, the business community, youth, civil society organizations and vulnerable groups. Valuable insights were also gained to contextualize and refine the social safety net efforts.

Following this, a draft framework and working paper for the development of the plan was crafted. Comments were then received from partner Ministries and government agencies and other key stakeholders to refine the report and framework for the National Social Mitigation Plan. At present the Health Economics Unit, UWI has been tasked with writing and finalizing the National Social Mitigation Plan, which will require action by all social sector Ministries and Agencies at the stage of implementation. It is anticipated that the Plan will be completed in April and subsequently forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

Persons interested in submitting comments or making a contribution to the Social Mitigation Plan, may contact our Research Unit at 623-2608 Ext 1173.