

## **Feature Remarks**

**Senator the Honourable Donna Cox**  
**Minister of Social Development and Family Services**

**Prize Giving Ceremony**  
**International Day of Sign Languages**

**Tuesday October 06, 2020**

**Sixth Floor**

**11 a.m.**

## **Salutations**

- Permanent Secretary (Ag) Sheila Seecharan
- Deputy Permanent Vijay Gangapersad
- Mr. Michael Reid, Chief Technical Officer
- Ms. Terrez Herrera, Director (Ag) Disability Affairs Unit
- Managers and staff of the Ministry
- Specially Invited Guests
- Winners of the International Day of Sign Languages Staff Trivia

Good morning!

Today, I join with the Executives of the Ministry and of the Trinidad and Tobago Association for the Hearing Impaired, in congratulating the winners of September's staff trivia, which was hosted a few weeks ago by the Disability Affairs Unit (DAU), in support of International Day of Sign Languages 2020. Indeed, it was a worthy gesture by the DAU, as we all commit to doing our part to make the world a more inclusive place, for the deaf and hard of hearing.

According to the late Margaret Mead, an American Cultural Anthropologist, who was renowned for her public discourse on societal issues such as women's rights and world hunger, we must *never believe that a few caring people cannot change the world; for indeed, it is all that ever has*. In this regard, I am heartened to know that I am surrounded by a team of persons that is committed to protecting and enhancing the rights and dignity of those who are most vulnerable amongst us. To continue accomplishing same however, it is critical that we, as the stewards for the administration of government's core social services, remain knowledgeable, competent and trustworthy. As such, I endorse the use of internal activities, such as this trivia, to not only engage staff but to also evaluate where we are as a knowledge-based team, so that we can remain a pro-active and high performance organisation. Such qualities will auger well in the implementation of our national recovery efforts.

To Ms. Guzman De Vlught, Ms. Hunte and Mrs. Kelly-Simons, it is therefore quite fitting that each of you represents some of the essential areas within the context government's National Recovery Plan. Indeed, the value of on-going research into the social sector, complemented by efforts in the spheres of Adult Education and HIV advocacy can never be underscored enough, and as such, I encourage you to keep putting your best efforts forward.

To our friends at the Trinidad and Tobago Association for the Hearing Impaired, the Ministry remains grateful for your efforts regarding the fulfilment of a nurturing and secure environment for all, and we look forward to deepening our relationship within the context of a post COVID-19 environment. Together, we can ensure that the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing continue to be met, across the board.

Once more, congratulations to everyone on the success of this initiative and may God continue to bestow his mercy and grace upon you.

I thank you.