



**GREETINGS BY**

***SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DONNA COX***  
**MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND  
FAMILY SERVICES**

**ITNAC 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**ST. JAMES**

**SUNDAY MAY 15, 2022**

**6:00 P.M.**

It gives me great pleasure today to be here for your 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. I must congratulate and commend **Is There Not A Cause (ITNAC)** for your continued work in providing assistance to the vulnerable in areas of disaster relief, community development and poverty alleviation locally, regionally and internationally.

This twentieth year, is a major milestone in the work you have done. The Biblical meaning of twenty is redemption, a perfect period of waiting, labour or suffering that is compared to a trial and rewarded. Solomon waited 20 years for his house and the temple to be completed (1Kings 9:10-11). Jacob waited for twenty years to get possession of his wives and property, and to be freed from the control of Laban his father-in-law (Genesis 31:38-41). The children of Israel waited for 20 years to be freed of Jabin, king of Canaan, who oppressed them. In each of these instances something good happened on the 20<sup>th</sup> year.

I am certain over the twenty years, ITNAC experienced numerous waiting periods, engaged in much physical labour and toiled in prayer. Also withstanding challenges, you have all endured as an Organisation and as individuals in your effort to help the poor and vulnerable individuals in our society, both locally and internationally. The number twenty also speaks about the numerous rewards that follow the end of the period of trials. Psalm 30:5 says, *Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning.*

This is the day of rejoicing! The season of rewards is about to manifest! Rejoice in the Lord, because He has brought you this far!

ITNAC has truly lived up to its motto, “*Making a Difference, One Life at a Time Through Jesus Christ.*” The vision of the organization to make a difference, one life at a time, aligns seamlessly with the mandate of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, to help, empower and transform lives. I therefore wish to reaffirm the Ministry’s continued support in your many future endeavours.

Galatians 6:2, instructs us to “*Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ*” and indeed ITNAC, led by the passionate, purposeful and pioneering Avonelle Hector-Joseph, over the past 20 years, has continuously and diligently followed this command, through its remarkable service as a first responder in times of disaster and other critical incidents.

Today’s theme, ‘***Ebenezer! Hitherto has the Lord brought us this far***’, is indeed fitting as ITNAC over its outstanding 20-year tenure, has not only been diligent in providing humanitarian aid for the people of Trinidad and Tobago, but has extended its hands to provide much-needed relief, extending to international missions as far as Kenya.

Mrs. Hector-Joseph and the **Is There Not A Cause** team have undoubtedly set a benchmark for the management of relief efforts and continue to magnify its vision to impact the lives of the most vulnerable, by facilitating access to counselling services, transitional homes, visits to children's homes and orphanages and even unofficially 'adopting' a community.

In this regard, I must applaud the organization on the launch of its Outreach Centre today, in honour of ITNAC member Ms Keisha Edwards, who went home to be with the Lord in December 2021. This Outreach Centre, which provides services for persons who are vulnerable, yet again demonstrates that ITNAC recognizes the need for continuous development of its services in an effort to ensure that *no one is left behind*. These efforts are greatly appreciated and are wholly endorsed and supported by all of us.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services has recognized that collaboration with civil society organizations, such as ITNAC, is also crucial to sustainable development. Within recent times, the Ministry has been more intentional in establishing partnerships with Non-Government Organizations, Community-Based Organizations and Faith-Based Organizations, which are dedicated to ensuring that our vulnerable populations are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

To this end, we will continue to pursue initiatives to support social sector NGOs through capacity building, partnerships and other collaborative mechanisms within the Ministry.

Recently, there has been an increase in family violence, resulting in the death of women and children. This upsurge of violence being perpetrated by family members against each other, is quite alarming. Instinctively, the first question many persons often ask when these things happen is, what is the government doing? No doubt, we can advance a whole list of initiatives available free of charge to families. For example:

- Counselling
- Parenting Workshops
- Grand parenting Workshops
- Psychosocial support
- Partnering with the TTPS
- Suicide prevention hotline.

But the real question should be, what am I doing to curb these incidents? Am I my brother's keeper? Am I doing enough? Am I bringing up my children in the right way? The cycle of abuse needs to be broken and it can only start with us. Crimes of passion are impulsive and in that moment, only the perpetrator has the ability to stop what is taking place. Based on the frequency of these incidents, it is clear that it is not solely a physical war that is being waged against the family but also a spiritual one.

The values of honouring and cherishing life is sadly absent in our present society and a return of God as the centre of family life is desperately needed.

What is happening in our nation today is a call to action for us and the Faith Based Organizations to pray for families because there are strongholds that can only be broken through prayer. We all have a part to play in helping, empowering and intervening in a meaningful way that will bring healing and restoration to families. I therefore encourage the members of ITNAC, and other similar Non-Government Organizations, Faith Based Organisations and Civil Society Organisations, to continue to partner with the Ministry, so we can collaborate to support persons in their most critical time of need.

Once again, I pledge my support and that of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to ITNAC.

Today, I applaud you and wish you continued success as you grow from strength to strength.

May God Bless you.

I thank you!

*Senator the Honourable Donna Cox*