



# MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

February 11, 2023

For Immediate Release

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **WOMEN'S PRISON GREENHOUSE AND YOUTH TRAINING AND REHABILITATION CENTRE GROW ROOM COMMISSIONED**

**Port of Spain:** Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. joined the Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service for a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on Friday February 10, 2023 to formally open the Women's Prison Greenhouse and Youth Training and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC) Grow Room. The Greenhouse and Grow Room, which utilize hydroponics technology, were donated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and will complement the Prison Service's inmate rehabilitation initiatives in agriculture.

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Forty-eight (48) inmates and residents also received certificates for successfully completing a training course entitled *Introduction to Agriculture*, which focused on modern agricultural approaches to hydroponics and indoor farming. The Presentation of Certificates took place at the Youth Training and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC), formerly known as the Youth Training Centre, Golden Grove Road, Arouca. The training was organized by the UNDP and facilitated by the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA). Nine (9) prison officers also participated in the training sessions which were conducted at both the YTRC and the Women's Prison at Golden Grove at intervals in August, September and November 2022.

In his remarks, Minister Hinds commended the Prison Service and the UNDP for working together to bring the initiatives to fruition. He acknowledged the longstanding bilateral relationship between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the UNDP; and thanked UNDP Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto for the organization's continued technical assistance, particularly in the areas of youth and adult offender rehabilitation.

The Minister noted that the Prison Service has been making strides in the area of Restorative Justice and was continuously working to enhance rehabilitative programmes for those incarcerated which include academics, technical vocational programmes, agriculture, art, sewing and tailoring, among many others. He assured his support to the Prison Service as the institution forges on in Restorative Justice efforts. He also commended inmates, residents and officers for their enthusiastic

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participation in and successful completion of the recently concluded Introduction to Agriculture training. Speaking directly to the inmates and residents, the Minister encouraged them to use what they have learnt in the programme to build character, self-esteem and to vow to turn their lives around to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Minister Hinds also took the opportunity to congratulate YTCR resident Mr. Romel Lezama, on qualifying for the Semi Finals of the National Calypso Monarch Competition and wished Mr. Lezama all the best as he competes with his calypso "*Walls of Renovation*".

Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.) Mr. Deopersad Ramoutar thanked Minister Hinds for his continued support to the Prison Service. He also acknowledged the Prison Service's sustained partnership with the UNDP and stated that the Greenhouse and Grow Room pilot projects demonstrate a smarter, and more efficient way in producing agricultural products at prison facilities. Commissioner Ramoutar reiterated that prison officers at all the nation's prison facilities not only supervise rehabilitative programmes but through social engagement and interaction, create the environment for role model behaviour to take place, build aptitude among inmates as well as youth offenders, to ensure that persons leave the institution empowered and ready to become productive when released after incarceration.

Speaking at the event, UNDP Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto welcomed the opportunity to expand the existing collaboration with the Ministry of National Security through the Prison Service. Mr. Noto said the Greenhouse and Grow Room as well as the Introduction to Agriculture training course were designed to provide psychosocial support to inmates and residents and create an avenue to sustain livelihood in preparation for release after incarceration.

Also in attendance were Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.) in the Ministry of National Security, Ms. Deokie Sintra Maharaj; Deputy Commissioners of Prisons (Ag.) Mr. Carlos Corraspe, Mr. Sherwin Bruce, and Mr. Hayden Forde; Assistant Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Elvin Scanterbury; Superintendent of Prisons (Ag.) – YTRC, Mr. Randolph Orosco; Superintendent of Prisons (Ag.) – Women's Prison, Mr. Stephen Sambrano; and Head of Solutions Mapping - Accelerator Lab at the UNDP, Mr. Alan Cooper, along with other representatives of the UNDP and IICA.

The Greenhouse and Grow Room were constructed with the assistance of Solaris Greenhouse Agricultures Limited. Crops produced on a small-scale project to date include sweet peppers, lettuce, patchoi, celery, chive and hot peppers.

## **Photos and captions**



1. Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. (*second from left*); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto (*first from left*); and Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Deopersad Ramoutar (third from left) cut the ribbon to open the Women's Prison Greenhouse on Friday February 10, 2023. Also in the photo (*fourth from left*) is Assistant Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Elvin Scanterbury.



2. The Greenhouse at the Women's Prison in Golden Grove, Arouca was formally opened on Friday February 10, 2023 by Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. along with Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Deopersad Ramoutar and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto.

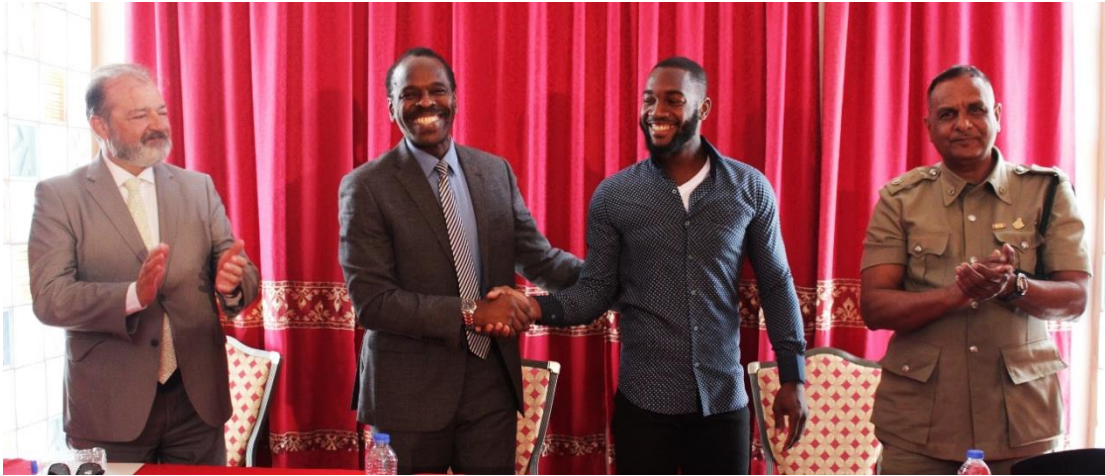


3. Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. (*third from left*); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto (*second from left*); and Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Deopersad Ramoutar (*fourth from left*) cut the ribbon to open the Youth Training and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC) Grow Room on Friday February 10, 2023. Also in the photo (*first from left*) is Superintendent of Prisons (Ag.) – YTRC, Mr. Randolph Orosco.

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4. Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto; Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Deopersad Ramoutar; and Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.) in the Ministry of National Security Ms. Deokie Sintra Maharaj tour the Youth Training and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC) Grow Room which was opened on Friday February 10, 2023.



5. Minister of National Security, the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds M.P. (*second from left*) congratulates Youth Training and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC) resident Mr. Romel Lezama (*third from left*), on qualifying for the Semi Finals of the National Calypso Monarch Competition and wished Mr. Lezama all the best as he competes with his calypso "*Walls of Renovation*". Also extending best wishes to Mr. Lezama are Commissioner of Prisons (Ag.), Mr. Deopersad Ramoutar (*fourth from left*) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative ad interim in Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Gerardo Noto (*first from left*).

*Additional photos can be accessed on the Ministry of National Security's Facebook page by clicking the following link <https://www.facebook.com/mns.tnt/posts/>*

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