



# MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

October 12, 2023

For Immediate Release

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCIES RECEIVE REGIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE TRAINING**

**Port of Spain:** Thirty-six (36) members of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (TTDF), the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (TTFS), are now equipped with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively respond and conduct search and rescue operations, during disasters and emergencies, particularly in the urban environment.

This achievement follows the completion of a five-day Regional Search and Rescue Training (RSART) Programme that was held at the TTFS' Savonetta Training Facility from Monday 02 to Friday 06 October, 2023. The intensive course provided the participants with the critical competencies necessary to effectively manoeuvre through collapsed structures, save lives, operate as a member of a local, regional and international response team, as well as to train others with the knowledge gained.

At the Closing Ceremony, which took place on Friday 06 October, 2023, at the BRIX Hotel, Port of Spain, Permanent Secretary (Ag.) of the Ministry of National Security, Ms. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan, delivered the Feature Address. She acknowledged that while the training course was operational in nature, it fulfilled several strategic goalposts for our nation, by supporting *Goals 1, 2 and 3 of Vision 2030*. These are: *Putting People First: Nurturing Our Greatest Asset; Delivering Good Governance and Service Excellence; and Improving Productivity through Quality Infrastructure and Transportation*. She noted that the training also helps achieve Priority 4 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is: *Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction*.

Additionally, the Permanent Secretary said that, "As a Caribbean Nation, the Government understands the regional implications of disasters and that during large-scale events, regional cooperation and assistance are crucial. Therefore, as a RSART responder you can expect to be rapidly deployed to assist our Caribbean neighbours,

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*in the same way we expect to receive support from our regional partners if needed. This interconnectedness highlights the importance of all of you being well-prepared and a skilled cadre of RSART responders, not only for our nation, but the entire region and beyond. "*

Further, Permanent Secretary Atiba-Dilchan appealed to the graduates to inculcate the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours gained from the course into their professional and personal lives, and encouraged them to commit to remaining ever vigilant, prepared and ready to prevent and respond to any disaster or emergency.

Remarks were also delivered by the Chief Executive Officer of the ODPM, Major General (Retired) Rodney Smart; Programme Manager, Preparedness and Response, CDEMA, Mr. Mandela Christian; President, Caribbean Association of Fire Chiefs and Chief Fire Officer, Barbados Fire Service, Mr. Errol Maynard; Canadian High Commission Counsellor, Ms. Audrey Veronneau; Disaster Risk Management Specialist, USAID/BHA, Ms. Tamara Lovell; and World Hope International Lead Instructor, Mr. Larry Mullins.

Also present at the closing ceremony were senior officers of the TTDF, the TTPS and the TTFS, along with instructors from World Hope International, the Barbados Fire Service and the Antigua and Barbuda Fire Department.

The capacity building training course was taught by a highly experienced team of instructors from World Hope International and the Caribbean Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC), who held the graduates to the standards set by the United Nations endorsed, International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). It was jointly organised by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), with sponsorship provided by Global Affairs Canada and the United States Agency for International Development, Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (USAID/BHA).

**Photos and captions:**



1. Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of National Security, Ms. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan delivered the Feature Address during the closing ceremony for the Regional Search and Rescue Training (RSART) Programme, at the BRIX Hotel, Trinidad, on Friday 06 October, 2023.

3



2. Group photograph of Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of National Security (*seated, middle*); Chief Executive Officer of the ODPM, Major General (Retired) Rodney Smart (*seated, far right*); representatives of supporting agencies; and the participants of the RSART Programme, at the BRIX Hotel, Trinidad, on Friday 06 October, 2023.

**END**