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For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

A STEP to Economic Empowerment of GBV Victims

The Gender and Child Affairs Division launched the *Survivors Transformation and Empowerment Programme* (STEP) on March 6th, 2024 at the Office of the Prime Minister's St. Clair Office as one of the activities in commemoration of International Women's Day. The STEP is designed to provide economic empowerment to victims and survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

In her address, the Honourable Ayanna Webster-Roy, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Gender and Child Affairs affirmed that '*STEP provides an opportunity for victims to turn their backs on abusive relationships and create independence and financial freedom through business opportunities for which they have a passion for and a purpose*'.

STEP provides three grants to aid survivors of GBV to start or expand their business. One grant is for civil society organisations - non-governmental, community-based, faith-based and non-profit organisations – to fund training for victims of GBV, one is for survivors to access scholarships and another to establish or improve a micro/small business. A Grant Review Committee of highly trained and experienced individuals from key government ministries and agencies will be established to review applications and implement a fair, rigorous and inclusive selection process. The Committee will also monitor grant recipients to ensure that the grants are properly utilised.

As an enabler, STEP is another tangible demonstration of how the recently launched National Strategic Action Plan on Gender-based Violence and Sexual Violence in Trinidad and Tobago 2023-2027 is being effectively rolled out. STEP also demonstrates the collective responsibility of all sectors to contribute toward ending GBV and Minister Webster-Roy urged the attending representatives of governmental and civil society organisations that ending GBV is 'all ah we business' and called for an all hands on deck approach.

Our national policies and strategies seek to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women, girls, men and boys by addressing vulnerabilities and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.

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