

Hon. Boyce leads TCI delegation to UNICEF meeting in Dominica

Turks and Caicos Islands' Minister of Social Development the Hon. Dr. Lillian Boyce, recently participated in the UNICEF Mid Term Review meeting at the Fort Young Hotel in the Caribbean country of Dominica.

Attending the meeting with the minister was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development, Leo Selver and Assistant Deputy Director of Social Services, Adella Williams.

The aim of the meeting was to review the progress made for children between 2003-2005 – the mid point of the UNICEF Programme of Cooperation between the Governments of Barbados the Eastern Caribbean Suriname, which also includes the government of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

During the meeting the Minister took the opportunity to have an internal meeting with the Senior Programme Officer for UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Office – Ms. Niloufar Pourzand and other Senior UNICEF staff and it was agreed that UNICEF will provide technical support to her Ministry in the development of a strategic plan for social development in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

This UNICEF high-level meeting was also attended by government Ministers from St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Dominica and Grenada. Present as well was UNICEF Special Envoy for the Caribbean – Karin Sham Poo and the UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean – Nils Kastberg.

In 2002, the governments of the region developed a programme of cooperation with the UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Office to cover the period from 2003-2007. During the mid-point of each programme cycle, UNICEF is mandated to conduct an assessment or a mid-term review with its partners to ascertain whether the goals and objectives of the programmes are being met and what adjustments need to be made to enable countries to reach the goals agreed to earlier.

Another objective of the meeting was for government Ministers responsible for children's issues to review and comment on the Mid-Term Report document which assesses the achievements and lessons learned of the Programme of Cooperation for children and women during the period 2003-2005.

The meeting also formulated plans for the way forward for the next 18 months of the programme cycle and help in the preparation plans for the next programme cycle – 2008-2012.

UNICEF Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean – Nils Kastberg – noted that the meeting was most timely, as it comes on the eve of a number of interesting developments taking place in the region.

“This meeting could not be more timely,” said Kastberg. “It comes at a time when countries are making steps towards achieving the Millenium Development Goals and Targets; it also comes at a time when the Caribbean is implementing the Caribbean Single Market and Economy – which will definitely have social implications for children. “In the midst of all these important developments it is important to have children and adolescents at the centre of development planning. This is necessary if countries are indeed going to achieve true development,” he added.

The meeting also comprised of a panel discussion on cross cutting issues pertaining to children namely HIV/AIDS, gender and children and youth participation, which was facilitated by Karen Sealy Director of UN AIDS; Roberta Clarke, UNIFEM Regional Representative and Christine Norton - the UNICEF Regional Advisor for Adolescent Development and Gender Equality, respectively. There was also a presentation by the UN Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the OECS on the implications of UN Reform for Children. It is expected that comments from the discussions will be incorporated into the final MTR report which will be presented to UNICEF’s Executive Board in New York later this year.

Caption: Minister of Social Development the Hon. Dr. Lillian Boyce, at the UNICEF meeting in Dominica with Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development, Leo Selver (right) and Assistant Deputy Director of Social Services, Adella Williams.