

Ministry of Public Security

Lot 6 Brickdam, Georgetown, Guyana



February 20, 2020.

For Immediate Release

PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AND CHILD-SENSITIVE FACILITIES TO PROMOTE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.

Georgetown Guyana- The Ministry of Public Security, in partnership with UNICEF, is pleased to announce several measures, following the approval of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2018. Following the commencement order, the Ministry has created a dedicated Juvenile Justice Department which has rolled out training for over 400 Police Officers (in all 10 Regions), and have put forward draft Regulations under the legislation- which will be discussed with stakeholders (in 2020). There is also a multi-sectoral committee supporting the work of the sector and the Ministry (along with UNICEF, the Rights of the Child Commission, the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic, Childcare and Protection Agency and the Ministry of Social Protection) which have also been active in the follow-up on cases for children in detention.

On **Thursday February 20 2020**, the Ministry (with support from UNICEF)- through a simple ceremony- will sign the MOUs to formalise partnerships with State and Non-State Actors on **diversionary measures** (including pre-trial options) for children in contact with the law.

With all of our partners, we are also encouraging all parents /guardians / communities- to play a greater role in preventing children/youth from coming into contact with the law (as a first response) and measure of protection.

The Ministry is also pleased to announce, in partnership with UNICEF, that it has dedicated 3 areas, the **New Amsterdam Prison, Lusignan and the New Opportunity Corps**, which will benefit from **remote court participation services** to lessen the timeline for access to justice, save costs (both time to transport prisoners to and from prison/court), strengthen security and aid in the rehabilitation of prisoners through available means for communication with their children. This will complement the efforts (already being implemented) by the judiciary and plans underway by Diamond Diagnostic Centre for remote court participation. The service is expected to benefit over 100 persons in the system (within the first year of operation).

At the Ministry, we are very happy to indicate that efforts will begin- also with the support of UNICEF- to **improve access to services for lactating mothers or pregnant mothers** who may be in prison, to ensure there are systems/training in place for them to access early childhood care, which would assist in their reintegration from detention to family and community. While exposure to parenting is important for all- we recognise that our female prisoners (particularly those who may be 18 years or younger) will need added support.

Finally, within our Ministry/Prison Services, we have recognised the need to have **a special room dedicated for mothers who may still be breastfeeding, or a safe space for parents (mothers and fathers), in cases where there may be a need**

for emergency child care at some point during the day. The space will be guided by rules of the Ministry of Public Security on its use, since this initiative forms part of the efforts of ensuring a **healthy, modern work environment which meets the needs of families.**



At Head Table from left - Director of Juvenile Justice, William Orrin Boston, Hon Minister Khemraj Ramjattan, Unicef Representative to Guyana Ms. Sylvie Fouet, Chief Magistrate Ann McLennan and all the State and Non-State partnership on diversionary measures.

The End