



# AIRPORTS AUTHORITY SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION WITH US DEPARTMENTS OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND TRANSPORTATION TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On December 19th 2024, Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (“the Authority”) together with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) formalised a memorandum of cooperation to combat human trafficking through the Blue Lightning Initiative (BLI). This landmark agreement underscores a shared commitment to join forces and take decisive action in raising awareness and enhancing vigilance within the aviation industry.

All parties have recognised human trafficking as a serious and pervasive global challenge. The objective of this partnership is to ensure a streamlined and coordinated effort with local aviation stakeholders in the fight against human trafficking. Cooperation among stakeholders is vital to leverage expertise, data, and resources to bolster prevention measures and victim support initiatives. BLI, an initiative led by DHS and DOT, trains aviation personnel to identify victims of human trafficking and potential human traffickers and report suspected instances of human trafficking. Through this partnership, the Authority will collaborate with BLI to train our employees to recognize human trafficking and safely report those instances to the relevant authorities.

General Manager of the Authority, Mr. Hayden Newton, asserted, “This partnership reflects our unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety and dignity of all persons who pass through our airports. We are pleased to join with the US Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation in this fight against human trafficking.”





U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, Candace A. Bond, stated, “The United States is proud to partner with Trinidad and Tobago and support their commitment to addressing human trafficking by joining aviation partners across the globe to combat it. When aviation personnel are trained to recognize and report suspected instances of human trafficking, actionable tips are reported that help stop this crime.”

The Minister of Works and Transport, Senator the Honourable Rohan Sinanan stated, “This Memorandum marks the strengthening of an alliance to safeguard the air transportation system from exploitation by traffickers. By working hand in hand with our U.S. counterparts, we aim to create a safer aviation environment and a united front against the scourge of human trafficking.”

The Authority remains committed to working with all stakeholders to fulfil our mandate to provide safe and secure aviation services for the benefit of all airport users.



*L to R: Christopher Alcazar - Chairman of the Board, Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago; Her Excellency Candace A. Bond - U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago; Sen. The Hon. Rohan Sinanan – Minister of Works and Transport and Mrs Sonia Francis-Yearwood – Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Transport.*