



## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, SENIORS and ENVIRONMENT

THE HON. JEANNE J. ATHERDEN, JP, MP

### REBRANDING THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOR SENIORS & PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED -AGING & DISABLED SERVICES

July 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2015

**Mr. Speaker**, Honourable Members will be aware of the role and significant work of the National Office for Seniors & the Physically Challenged (NOSPC). The Office was formed in 2000 as a means by which to centralize the coordination of services to these two communities. The Office serves as a repository of information and assistance for those in need among seniors and disabled persons. Whilst the existing name of the Office matched its original mandate, the mission has expanded and the acceptable nomenclature over time has been revised.

**Mr. Speaker**, I can advise that the Office provides services to all persons with disabilities and not just those with physical challenges. Best practice now demands that the term "physically challenged" is replaced by reference to "persons with disabilities" or alternately, "disabled" or "disabilities".

**Mr. Speaker**, other jurisdictions are replacing the term "seniors" with "aging" when referring to service delivery. The use of the term "aging" is consistent with the Government's plan to promote such initiatives as the National Aging Plan and the concept of "Aging in Place" or "Aging at Home".

Therefore, **Mr. Speaker**, as NOSPC continues to rebrand itself and develop policies and procedures best suited to the expanded remit and the delivery of services to these two critical segments of society, it is proposed to change the name of the Office to "**Aging and Disabled Services (ADS)**" with effect from **151 September 2015**. This change will be well communicated to the public and is set to form the backdrop to a Seniors Fair to be held at Victoria Park on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September from 11 - 2pm. At the event, Mr. Speaker, we will provide entertainment, lunch and in partnership with several stakeholder groups, also present healthcare displays and information sharing on services offered in the community.

**Mr. Speaker**, this rebranding forms part of an important reorganization within the National Office which will ensure that our seniors and persons with disabilities receive the best attention their issues demand.

**Mr. Speaker**, as the remit of NOSPC changes, it is important the relevant legislation should also be amended to provide better protection for our seniors and persons with disabilities.

**Mr. Speaker**, with seniors being the fastest growing population, we need to have better legislative protection for them, as well as persons with disabilities. Amendments to the current legislation are necessary in order for the National Office to operate more effectively for the benefit of these populations.

**Mr. Speaker**, The Seniors Advisory Council (SAC) was appointed at the beginning of the year and has met regularly.

Its two main objectives were identified as follows:

1. Produce a "National Aging Strategy"
2. Develop proposals for the establishment of the Seniors Advisory Council as an oversight body to identify issues affecting the island's senior population and to provide advice on policies and legislation impacting on seniors.

**Mr. Speaker**, the Council established six (6) task groups to review goals, objectives and recommendations developed by the 2013 SAC and further develop these for consideration by the Ministry of Health. These groups are:

- Active (Healthy) Aging
- Education/Workforce development
- Comprehensive planning and accountability
- Finance (Financial security for older adults and caregivers)
- Long-term care
- Public policy/legislation

**Mr. Speaker**, SAC has completed its review, and developed recommendations to:

1. Strengthen community based supports and services (CBSS).
2. Support families and informal caregivers
3. Strengthen the island's long term care system (nursing homes and residential care facilities)
4. Bolster protection for seniors (from abuse, fraud, etc.)
5. Promote active aging
6. Promote accountability, collaboration and comprehensive planning for seniors

**Mr. Speaker,** The Seniors Advisory Council will consolidate these recommendations and produce several reports, including (i) General Recommendations on Measures to Strengthen Services for Seniors, (ii) A Long-term Care Strategy and (iii) an Active Aging Strategy.

**Mr. Speaker,** this Government is committed to provide the appropriate care and network of support services for those in our disabled population. Every member of this community is valued and we intend to create a set of services that properly provide for them.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**