

Ministry of Home Affairs

Lot 6 Brickdam, Georgetown, Guyana



September 6, 2020.

For Immediate Release

Access to Justice for Juveniles in Detention and Support for the Prevention of COVID 19 for Youth in Detention

Georgetown Guyana- The Ministry of Home Affairs Juvenile Justice Department, as part of its efforts initiated with the support of UNICEF in February 2020 following the approval of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2018, is pleased to continue its partnership to ensure access to justice for youth in detention- including women and juveniles (over 18 years) who may be awaiting trial.

To this end, Skype recording units and other equipment will be installed at the Sophia Holding Centre, New Amsterdam Prison, Camp Street and Lusignan Prisons to allow the remote hearing of cases and connections with the courts, including the Children's Court, and other facilities deemed necessary for the promotion of telehealth to persons in detention. In addition to the savings from travel and other related costs, the equipment will have the double-benefit of ensuring access to justice, while maintaining physical distancing during COVID-19.

UNICEF has also provided support to the Ministry of Home Affairs to ensure the promotion of sanitation and hygiene practices for staff and youth in detention, as a means of safeguarding against the disease. With UNICEF, the Ministry will also improve its sanitation area in the facility, and support the implementation of protocols for the safety of juveniles in detention, along with hygiene management training. Based on the global guidelines for the prevention and response to COVID, UNICEF is also supporting the Ministry to ensure that there is access to legal aid, which will also have the desired effect of reducing the numbers of youth in detention. These measures precede joint discussions on the draft Juvenile Justice Regulations 2020, which will complement the legislation, aimed at strengthening the overall administration of justice for juveniles

Finally, for women in detention at New Amsterdam, the Ministry and UNICEF have recommitted efforts to assessing policies surrounding early childhood development and breastfeeding for lactating mothers who may be in prison. Here, the equipment that will be installed, will also help mothers to communicate with their children, as part of the process towards ensure reintegration of families during detention.



Center- Minister Benn Handing Over Skype Recording Unit and a Quantity of Detergents to Administrator of the Juvenile Holding Centre Ms.Yvette Sancho.



Left-Right Administrator of the Juvenile Holding Centre Ms. Yvette Sancho, Director of Juvenile Justice Department Mr. William Orrin Boston and Deputy Director Ms. Joan Ann Edghill-Stuart During the Handing Over of the Items.

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