



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services

The Honourable Vandana Mohit
Minister of the People, Social Development and
Family Services

Disaster Relief Distribution Ceremony

Saturday 8th November 2025
1:30PM

Caroni East Constituency

Salutations

- Dr. the Honourable Rishad Seecharan, Minister in the Ministry of Health and MP for Caroni East.
- Senator Dr. Natalie Chaitan-Maharaj, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Mr. Ryan Ramcharan, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Mr. Ryan Rampersad, Chairman Couva, Tabaquite, Talparo Regional Corporation
- Councillors of the Couva, Tabaquite, Talparo Regional Corporation

- Ms. Vera Deonanan Balkaran, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Ms Patricia De Leon – Henry, National Director, NSDP
- Staff of the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Esteemed grant recipients
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon everyone,

What an honour it is to stand once again in Caroni East, a community that, to me, represents the beating heart of Trinidad and Tobago's strength, endurance, and spirit. Each time I return here, I am reminded that the measure of a nation is not found in its statistics, but in the way it cares for its people when they are most in need.

Today, as we gather for this Disaster Relief Distribution Ceremony, we are doing far more than handing out cheques, we are delivering comfort, restoring dignity, and rebuilding hope.

My friends,

I have seen the faces of mothers who have lost everything in a single night of flooding, yet still smile for their children.

I have held the hands of fathers who, with trembling voices, ask only for the chance to start again.

And I have stood in homes where faith, not walls, held up the roof.

These moments remind me why we do what we do.

This is not about bureaucracy or statistics, it is about people. It is about humanity. It is about showing up when lives are disrupted by events beyond anyone's control.

Our Ministry has been walking side by side with families, providing disaster relief, home repair, and empowerment grants. We have rebuilt lives, one household at a time.

In Laventille, we supported a mother whose home collapsed. In San Fernando, we helped a father of six rebuild with renewed faith. And here in Central Trinidad, we continue to respond to the silent cries that often go unheard.

Every cheque, every grant, every visit, is an act of love. It is the Government saying to its people: you matter, you are not forgotten, and we will stand with you until you can stand again.

Today, the Ministry is distributing **forty-five (45)** disaster relief cheques to grant recipients. These 45 grants will touch **one hundred and twenty-one (121)** householders across the country. The total value of today's grant disbursement is **three hundred and ten thousand dollars (\$310,000.00)**. This includes forty-five (45) Household Items Grants totalling **two hundred and eighty-three thousand dollars (\$283,000.00)** and twenty-seven (27) Clothing Grants totalling **twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$27,000)**.

Behind every cheque lies a story, of loss, yes, but also of triumph. Of resilience that refuses to bend. Of a people who rise again and again because they know that together, we are stronger.

Under the National Social Development Programme, and in partnership with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, we continue to strengthen how help is delivered swiftly, transparently, and compassionately.

This year, we took a bold step forward. Cabinet has approved a system where disaster relief grants are now disbursed by cheque or direct deposit, ensuring faster, safer, and more efficient support, especially during this 2025 hurricane season and beyond.

This is what transformation looks like, a Ministry that meets the people where they are not the other way around.

Our disaster relief programme stands on four key pillars:

- General Assistance Grants - replacing furniture, clothing, appliances, and school supplies;
- Food Support - ensuring no child goes to bed hungry;
- Home Repair Assistance - rebuilding safety and shelter;
- Psychosocial Support - because healing must happen in both body and soul.

These are not just programmes. They are promises, that your Government will not turn away when disaster strikes.

My brothers and sisters,

Our goal is not only to rebuild houses, but to rebuild lives.

Not only to restore roofs, but to restore hope.

Not only to bring assistance, but to bring assurance, that your Government sees you, values you, and believes in you.

To the officers of the Ministry, I thank you for your unwavering dedication. You embody what service truly means, compassion in action.

To the local government representatives and all our partners, I thank you for ensuring that relief reaches every corner, every family, every heart.

As Minister, I remain deeply committed to ensuring that the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services is not an institution of walls and desks, but a movement of hands and hearts.

Together, we are redefining what social protection means: not as a favour to the people, but as a right of the people.

In closing,

Let today not only mark the distribution of relief, but the reaffirmation of our shared resilience.

Let it remind us that while disasters may shake our foundations, they will never shake our faith in one another.

Together, we will continue to build a Trinidad and Tobago that stands ready, responsive, and resilient, a nation where the people will always come first.

Thank you, Caroni East, for your courage, your faith, and your unbreakable spirit.

May God bless you all.