



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 Grant Distribution Ceremony

Monday 17th November 2025
3:00PM

St. Augustine Constituency

Salutations

- The Honourable Khadijah Ameen, Member of Parliament for St. Augustine and Minister of Rural Development and Local Government
- Senator Dr. Natalie Chaitan-Maharaj, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Mr. Ryan Ramcharan, Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Mrs. Wendy Guy-Hernandez, Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services
- Mr. Ashmead Mohammed, Adviser to the Minister of the People, Social Development and Family Services.
- Representatives of the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation.
- Ms. Patricia De Leon Henry, National Director, National Social Development Programme
- Staff of the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services

- Esteemed Grant Recipients
- Specially Invited Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon to each of you.

It is truly a privilege to stand here at the St. Augustine South Community Centre as we come together for a purpose that goes far beyond ceremony. Today is about restoring dignity, stability, and peace of mind to families who have endured difficult days. As Minister of the People, Social Development and Family Services, I consider moments like these to be among the most meaningful aspects of public service, because they remind us that real governance begins with real people and their lived realities.

And that reality, for many of our families in this region, has been shaped by the sudden disruptions of disaster events that do not merely damage structures but unsettle the very rhythm of daily life. A disaster does not ask whether one is prepared.

It comes abruptly, leaving parents struggling to piece their homes back together and children trying to regain the familiar comfort of their routines. Yet amid this disruption, we have also witnessed resilience, the quiet determination of families who refuse to give up and communities who support one another without hesitation.

It is for this reason that our Ministry is here: to ensure that no citizen is left to navigate hardship alone. Today's distribution of Disaster Relief Grants represents our government's commitment to walking with you, not only in times of celebration but especially in moments of challenge.

Through the National Social Development Programme, we distribute support to **fifty-three (53) recipients**, extending support to **168 household beneficiaries**, in the amount of **three hundred and sixty-five thousand, five hundred dollars (\$365,500.00)**. These funds include:

- **Household Items Grants – fifty- three (53) grants totalling three hundred and fifty thousand, five hundred dollars (\$350,500.00)**

- **Clothing Grants – fourteen (14) grants totalling fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000.00)**

- **School Supplies Grant – one (1) grant totalling one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00)**

These grants are not just numbers; they are tangible assurances that your Government sees you, values you, and stands ready to support your recovery.

This afternoon's event is especially significant because it marks the first in a series of disaster relief distributions that will continue throughout the Tunapuna/Piarco region. No family affected will be overlooked, and no community will be left behind.

As we move from district to district, our work will continue with the same urgency and compassion that brought us here today.

To ensure that the right assistance reaches the right households, every grant issued is approved and processed only after receiving the formal recommendation of the Disaster Management Unit of the Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation.

And it is important to highlight that the DMU is not merely an administrative office, they are the first responders within each Municipal Corporation. They are the ones who go into communities immediately after a disaster, entering homes, assessing structural impacts, and determining the extent of loss.

Their assessments guide our Ministry's actions, ensuring fairness, accuracy and transparency in every distribution.

I want to extend thanks to the DMU officers and corporation representatives who have worked tirelessly in the field, you have been the steady bridge connecting families to the support they deserve.

And it is important to acknowledge that what we are doing today did not happen by chance.

It is the result of decisive action by your Government, which moved with commendable alacrity to ensure that families received relief in a timely and efficient manner.

Too often, disaster relief in the past arrived when the need had already deepened into distress.

But this administration is determined to break with that history. When you needed us, we acted quickly; when you reached out, we responded; and when you called for help, we showed up. That is what people-centred governance demands.

Our relief efforts today are grounded in four core pillars, household assistance, clothing support, educational aid, and psychosocial support because we understand that rebuilding a home is only one part of rebuilding a life.

Families need comfort, children need continuity, and communities need emotional stability just as much as they need physical reconstruction. These pillars reflect our belief that support should be comprehensive, compassionate, and centered on real human needs.

To the staff of the Ministry, the local government teams, and all officers involved: your work embodies compassion in action. You are the ones who carry the Ministry's mission into the homes and lives of our citizens, ensuring that assistance is not only promised but delivered. Your dedication gives meaning to our mandate.

Most importantly, to the families receiving support today, I want you to know this: while the storms may have shaken your homes, they have not shaken your strength or your courage.

You are the heart of this community, and we are honoured to walk with you as you rebuild. Today represents a step forward, not a return to what was lost, but a movement toward what can be regained.

Since assumption of office, the Ministry of the People, Social Development and Family Services has been working steadily to strengthen the delivery of social support.

We cleared several longstanding grant backlogs, our aim is to improve processing times for Senior Citizens' Pension and Public Assistance applications.

We have also intervened in urgent cases involving fire victims, families in crisis and persons living in unsafe conditions.

We expanded assistance through the SEED Programme, which not only provides household support but also funding for training and retraining to empower persons to become more employable.

We also strengthened collaboration with the Ministry's NGO Unit, with one of our immediate priorities being greater accountability and efficiency in the disbursement of NGO subventions.

We also resolved numerous NIBTT-related matters through closer coordination. These efforts reflect a Ministry committed to timely action, fairness and people-centred service.

As we continue these distributions across the region in the coming days and weeks, let us remember that what defines us as a nation is not the challenges we face, but how we rise above them, together.

This Government will continue to put people first, act decisively, and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you, may God bless you, and may He continue to bless our beloved Trinidad and Tobago.