



ADDRESS BY

**Senator the Honourable Donna Cox
Minister of Social Development and Family Services**

**HOME REPAIR GANT DISTRIBUTION
CEREMONY**

**Port of Spain City Corporation
Wednesday 11th September 2024
10:00 a.m.**

Salutations

- Permanent Secretaries Mrs Lenor Baptiste-Simmons and Mr. Ryan Ramcharan;
- Deputy Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Wendy Guy-Hernandez
- National Director of the National Social Development Programme, Ms. Patricia De Leon-Henry
- Other Heads and Staff of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentleman

When we think of home, we envision a place of peace, safety, security, and rest. Unfortunately, for many, this ideal can be compromised when circumstances lead to issues like damaged roofs or inadequate facilities, turning a sanctuary into a source of worry.

Today, we gather to address these challenges and restore the essence of what a home should be; as we celebrate a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to uplift and support those among us who face the greatest challenges. Today's Home Repair Grant Distribution Ceremony is a testament to the Ministry's dedication to ensuring that every citizen has a safe, secure, and dignified living environment.

The National Social Development Programme improves the standard of living conditions of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, through the provision of basic infrastructure for essential utility services.

These utility services include

- Minor House Repair Assistance which provides up to \$15,000.00 in materials only for the repair/upgrade of dwelling houses and up to \$20,000.00 in materials only to effect repairs/upgrades in the event of a disaster;
- Sanitary Plumbing Assistance which provides up to \$15,000.00 in materials only under normal circumstances and in the event of a disaster for the repair or upgrade of toilet and bathroom facilities for the dwelling house; and
- House Wiring Assistance which assists with the wiring or rewiring of dwelling houses under normal circumstances, and in the event of a disaster, that has impacted the electrical wiring of the house.

The Programme seeks to specifically target the poor and vulnerable groups in society including but not limited to; our senior citizens, persons with disabilities, unemployed persons, victims of domestic violence and single parent households and has proven to be an instrumental component of the Ministry's plan to ensure that poor and vulnerable citizens throughout the country reside under habitable conditions.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, as part of the National Social Development Programme, we are pleased to announce that Two hundred and Twenty-Four (224) Applications or Eight Hundred (800) persons have benefitted from the Programme, in the sum of almost 3.5 million dollars in home repair grants for fiscal 2024.

- Two Million, Three Hundred and Thirty-Eight Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty-Six Dollars and Fifty Cents for Minor House Repairs to Four Hundred (2,338,226.50);
- Five Hundred and Seventy Thousand, One Hundred and Eleven Dollars and Eighty Cents (570,111,80) in Sanitary Plumbing Assistance; and
- Four Hundred Ninety-Six Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty-Nine Dollars and Twenty-Two Cents (496,459.22) in House Wiring Assistance.

A significant portion of this funding will go towards victims of disasters, some of you who are sitting with us here today. Your roofs were blown off, homes damaged due to flooding and earthquakes. While we endeavor to recover from the loss physical infrastructure, your mental infrastructure is equally important. I

therefore I encourage you to utilise the resources of our National Family Services Division. Their counselling and psychosocial support are there to support you with overcome the shock, stress and trauma.

Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr the Honourable Keith Rowley in his address on the occasion of Independence Day 2024 said it best “*Our robust Social Services continue to ensure that “no one is left behind”*”.

While I can end my speech at this juncture, I want to highlight that our social services are a cornerstone of this Government’s commitment to ensuring that the poor and vulnerable has the support they need. Just recently, the Ministry distributed .8M in grants to persons under the individuals to start or expand their business. The Ministry further continues to provide grants and services to senior citizens, persons with disabilities, widows, single parents, non-governmental organisations and more, through our suite of grants and programmes.

I quote our Prime Minister once more. ***“Thousands of our most vulnerable citizens continue to benefit from social grants, social services, free healthcare and medicine, in addition to Government subsidies for water, electricity, transportation, and education grants.”***

At the heart of our social development mission lies a fundamental belief: that everyone deserves a place they can call home, where they feel secure and valued. As we distribute these grants, we are not just providing financial assistance; we are reaffirming our commitment to each of you, acknowledging your resilience, and helping to rebuild the spaces where you build your lives.

The value of a comfortable and stable living space cannot be overstated. Our homes are the foundation of our well-being, providing not just shelter but also emotional and mental stability. As Maya Angelou beautifully expressed, “The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” We understand that a well-maintained home is not only a place of refuge but also a sanctuary that nurtures your sense of belonging and peace.

Our commitment to you goes beyond today. These grants are part of a broader effort to create a society where everyone has the opportunity to succeed and live with dignity. By investing in your homes, we are investing in your futures and in the strength of our communities.

As we move forward, let us remember that our work is not done. Our goal is to continue supporting and empowering those in need, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a safe and supportive environment. Together, we can build a future where every person can enjoy the comfort and stability they deserve.

In closing, I commend the staff of the National Social Development Programme. Their efforts in delivering social support and services have been crucial to our Ministry's plan to ensure that vulnerable citizens across the country live under habitable conditions.

I also want to acknowledge our stakeholders, including the Commissioner of State Lands, the Land and Settlement Agency, and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, for their ongoing contributions and collaboration with our

Ministry. I must also express my gratitude to the Executive of the Ministry, whose unwavering support for our projects, plans, and events I deeply value.

Rest assured, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains dedicated to building and maintaining partnerships to ensure that the most vulnerable among us receive the necessary support, leaving no one behind.

Thank you all!

Without your contributions, none of this may have been possible.

Congratulations to all of the grant recipients. May these grants bring you not only material assistance but also renewed hope and resilience.