



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday May 11, 2020

Priority: **HIGH**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MSDFS assures: Food Support Initiatives Continue to be Implemented

Port of Spain --- The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, wishes to advise that the fifteen (15) call centre mobile numbers, which were previously activated for the **Emergency Food Support Initiative**, will no longer be available from the week commencing May 11th, 2020. This initiative was intended to provide emergency food support primarily during the initial stages of the Stay at Home period. The Ministry has since transitioned to provide food support via three (3) other avenues. Among these are the *Food Box and Voucher Initiative under the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, the initiative where the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government will provide hampers and food vouchers, and also the Food Support Programme via Faith-Based Organisations*. In this regard, persons may dial toll free 800 – 1MSD, where they will be provided with information on the options for food support through these three other food initiatives, which were recently introduced.

Since the “Stay at Home” Order and restrictions, which were announced on March 2020 to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus, an Emergency Food Support initiative was launched where 1400 grocery hampers were distributed directly to the homes of beneficiaries, as each of the 14 Municipal Corporations were provided with 100 hampers each. This initiative emerged as several individuals and families were found to be in need of emergency food support at the same time the Order was enacted. The Emergency Food Support initiative targeted persons who were unable to access the social support grants, namely food support, rental assistance and income support, as well as the Salary Relief Grant, which is administered by the Ministry of Finance for contributors of NIS.

As the country moves into the first phase of re-opening, the Food Box and Voucher Initiative will be administered by the 41 Members of Parliament who will make contact with beneficiaries (which includes recipients of the National School Feeding Programme) on the dates and times for collection. Persons attempting to access the Food Support

Programme via Religious Institutions, should contact the various Faith-Based Organisations in their community to determine scheduled dates and times for hamper distributions. Details on the food initiative by the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government will be provided at a later date.

The Government through the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is happy to have provided much needed support to the 1,400 households which benefited from the Phase one of Emergency Food Support initiative and assures affected persons that the additional three ongoing food support measures will provide the much needed support to those in dire need during these challenging times.

For further information on these new initiatives persons may log on to the websites of the various Ministries where they will be directed accordingly.



Minister of Social Development and Family Services, the Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis visits NAMDEVCO's packing facility for the Food Box and Voucher Initiative.



The Honourable Major General (Ret'd) Edmund Dillon, MP for Point Fortin assists Mr Cyril Farrel of Cedros with his Food Basket and Voucher today.



A mother of five receives her food basket and voucher from the Couva North constituency.

-End-

For more information contact:

Communications Unit

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